

Research Paper: Analyzing the Performance of Rural Municipalities in Empowering and Facilitating the Participation of Rural Women (Case Study: Kermanshah's Rural Municipalities in the West of Iran)

Mashood Safari Aliakbari*

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Faculty of Law and Social Sciences, Payame Noor University, Kermanshah, Iran.



Citation: Safari Aliakbari, M. (2024). Analyzing the Performance of Rural Municipalities in Empowering and Facilitating the Participation of Rural Women (Case Study: Kermanshah's Rural Municipalities in the West of Iran). *Journal of Sustainable Rural Development*, 8(1), 103-118. <https://doi.org/10.22034/jsrd.2024.450784.1184>

doi: <https://doi.org/10.22034/jsrd.2024.450784.1184>

Article info:

Received: 06 July 2023

Accepted: 19 Dec. 2023

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Rural municipalities' performance in empowering and facilitating women's participation is a critical aspect of rural management. This study aims to analyze this performance, focusing on a case study of rural municipalities in Kermanshah.

Methods: The research method is descriptive-analytical, using data collection through surveys. The statistical population comprises women residing in villages within rural municipalities. According to the research limitations and employing Cochran's formula, a sample size of 365 individuals was determined. Experts confirmed the validity of the questionnaire, while its reliability was established by administering 30 questionnaires and calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which exceeded 0.70.

Results: The binomial test result indicated that rural municipalities' performance in the social and personal empowerment of rural women was statistically significant at a significance level of less than 0.05, with a p-value of 0.000. The average social and individual empowerment scores were 3.379 and 3.343, respectively. Rural municipalities have achieved average performance in empowering women across social and personal indicators. However, their economic performance, with an average score of 2.879, has been deemed weak. Additionally, the test results evaluating rural municipalities' performance in facilitating rural women's participation across economic (2.802), socio-cultural (2.526), and physical-environmental (2.580) aspects revealed significance at a level below 0.05, indicating a weak status. The results of the factor analysis showed that 21 factors, organized into five major categories—expansion of cooperative activities, training and capacity building, strengthening personal empowerment, women's participation in village affairs, and insurance and financial support—significantly influence the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. According to the results of the structural equations, these factors account for a 57% impact on the performance of rural municipalities regarding the empowerment and participation of rural women.

Conclusion: The research reveals that rural municipalities have not adequately prioritized the participation and empowerment of rural women in their plans and programs. Consequently, there is a pressing need to harness this demographic's economic, social, and cultural potential.

Keywords:

Rural municipalities,
Management, Empowering,
Participation, Rural women

* Corresponding Author:

Mashood Safari Aliakbari, PhD

Address: Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Faculty of Law and Social Sciences, Payame Noor University, Kermanshah, Iran.

Tel: +98 (918) 8334868

E-mail: safarimasood@pmu.ac.ir

1. Introduction

Villages with diverse lifestyles and activities need a specific management model (Sun & Lyu, 2020: 401). The economic and social structures of rural society determine the type of their governance and management (Chaudhry & Rishiwal, 2023: 4). Based on this, rural management encompasses the administration of resources, services, and activities within rural areas (Han et al., 2019: 167). It involves planning, organizing, directing, and controlling activities to achieve specific goals and objectives that enhance the quality of life for rural communities (Tomashuk, 2017: 216). In recent decades, special attention has been devoted to rural management, focusing on governance tailored to rural communities' social and economic structures to ensure effective administration (Singgalen et al., 2023: 108). In some countries, the type of rural management and development has shifted towards participatory and community-oriented patterns (Wang et al., 2021: 53). In such management, local communities play a significant role in the management, planning, and development of rural areas (Anwar et al., 2018: 4). The growing complexity of rural development issues underscores the importance and expansion of this approach (Ohta et al., 2021: 3).

A practical approach in rural management involves the participation and empowerment of the local community. Empowerment is when individuals gain greater control over their affairs and resources. They can effectively guide their lives through increased power, control over resources, trust, capacity building, and active participation (Norie Saniabadi et al., 2023: 150). Women's empowerment has become one of the critical priorities for rural management and development around the world. Even in developed countries, this factor is also being considered, as women in developed countries experience several types of discrimination in different ways (Akhter & Cheng, 2020: 1). Women constitute a significant portion of rural society as a form of social capital (Pal et al., 2022: 297). Empowering women encompasses economic, social, human, and legal empowerment across critical areas (Sharma & Das, 2021: 595).

Empowering women affect poverty reduction by addressing household deprivation in terms of education, health, and living standards, as well as enhancing community welfare (Wei et al., 2021: 609) while also contributing to improving food security (Savari et al., 2020: 10). This influence can be observed in economic ac-

tivities, including agriculture, within rural communities (Pattnaik & Lahiri-Dutt, 2020: 30). Today, many theorists and experts in social sciences argue that sustainable development is unattainable without the active participation of women in political, social, and economic spheres (Monfared, 2016: 18). According to FAO research, more than 75% of the world's poor live in rural areas, while 70% of the world's poor are women (Seydaei & Sadeghi, 2014: 16). As previously mentioned, the participation and empowerment of rural women offer a viable solution for their economic and social advancement. This, alongside the production and distribution of goods and services, can enhance the conditions of rural households, boost income levels, promote social justice, and increase women's social participation (Tantoh & Mckay, 2020: 162). In such a manner, cooperative societies have had a significant impact on the welfare of their members, enhancing participation and reducing poverty (Odetola & et al., 2015: 1983).

Rural development often hinges on the involvement of local communities. In response, governments have taken action to establish non-governmental organizations in villages (Trivelli & Morel, 2021: 639). These institutions are instrumental in implementing government orders and measures in villages while engaging the rural community in planning and development efforts (Odoom et al., 2021: 4). The local villagers view them as initiatives. In Iran, rural management has experienced significant changes. Rural municipalities and Islamic councils currently operate alongside the government in managing villages. Rural development relies on key pillars such as rural municipalities, Islamic councils, and various government institutions. These entities collaborate to facilitate rural development initiatives (Barghi et al., 2013: 122). The Rural Municipality institution was established in 1998. The institution focuses on three primary activities: implementing the Hadi Plan, managing public services, and overseeing socio-economic programs (Badri et al., 2018: 69). The establishment of rural municipalities as local non-governmental institutions reflects a strategic measure aimed at entrusting village affairs to the villagers themselves. Rural municipalities' performance is assessed using three categories of indicators: social, economic, and physical-environmental (Fallsolayman et al., 2014: 54). This evaluation occurs annually, emphasizing the ongoing importance of rural municipalities' performance. It serves as a measure of their efficiency and effectiveness.

One crucial area where rural municipality institutions can exert significant influence is in fostering attention to women's societal roles and their empowerment and

participation. Indeed, women's involvement in rural development and empowerment can catalyze the growth and development of rural society (Obayelu & Chime, 2020: 317). Women's participation in rural development and empowerment can foster the growth and development of rural society (Javani et al., 2021: 268). Women's empowerment and education have affected rural society economically, socially, and environmentally. Some of these effects were voluntary due to rural women's efforts, and some were through training and facilities provided by rural municipalities. The main issue of this research is how rural municipalities, as local and non-governmental institutions, have acted in the direction of women's empowerment and participation. This is particularly significant given that the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the involvement of the local community, especially women, can be considered a reliable and valuable indicator to show their effectiveness in rural development and management. Therefore, the importance and necessity of the problem can be explained and specified theoretically and practically. In this research, villages with rural municipalities in Kermanshah city have been utilized. The economic and social capacities of the towns in this region within the women's sector, including handicraft production, agricultural activities, education, and awareness, as well as the role played by women in this region, contribute to the significance of investigating this issue. Furthermore, prioritizing women's issues within the rural economy can significantly contribute to rural unit development. Therefore, considering the rural municipality institution's role as a participation-oriented body and the importance of addressing the needs of women in the development process, it is necessary to analyze and explain the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of women in the villages of the region. This research aims to understand the effectiveness of rural municipalities in this field and to contribute to the development of the current situation in the future.

2. Literature Review

The role of villages in economic, social, and political development across various scales, coupled with the consequences of rural underdevelopment, such as widespread poverty, increasing inequality, rapid population growth, unemployment, and urban marginalization, has drawn attention to rural development, often prioritizing it over urban development (Molaie Hashjin et al., 2017: 166). Today, the significance of rural development is widely acknowledged, particularly in developing coun-

tries where a substantial portion of the population resides in rural areas (Jonsdottir & Gisladottir, 2023: 392). Indeed, rural development necessitates a systematic and principled plan, which often relies heavily on the planning system of a country (Hilmawan et al., 2023: 3). One fundamental aspect of rural development involves addressing the management structure within these communities. Management serves as a pivotal factor in the growth and development of rural society, facilitating the transition from the current state to the desired state (Rokneddin Eftekhari et al., 2007: 1). In rural development, effective management of these spaces serves as a crucial indicator.

Participation is recognized as a significant indicator of sustainable development. It involves organizing groups of individuals to collectively address their needs through self-help initiatives (Aroogh & Shahboulaghi, 2020: 6). Over the past decades, there has been a significant emphasis on women's participation in development programs. Experts contend that without the active involvement of women across all sectors, complete and sustainable development cannot be achieved (Faraji Sabokbar et al., 2021: 51). Women constitute a crucial demographic in rural development and management. Thus, their participation and empowerment serve as foundational elements for significant advancements. Research on women's participation in various activities demonstrates their decisive role in diverse agricultural activities. Further, studies highlight their influential economic and production contributions (Barghi et al., 2013: 155). Women's participation in rural areas encompasses economic, social, environmental, and physical dimensions. Additionally, women are involved in various stages of the development and planning process, including decision-making, implementation, and evaluation (Pattnaik & Lahiri-Dutt, 2020: 26).

The empowerment of rural women stands as another crucial indicator. Empowerment refers to the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect people's lives (Lamichhane, 2020: 15). Community empowerment is a dynamic and inclusive process aimed at fostering comprehensive changes in the lives of individuals, families, groups, and social strata across various dimensions and aspects (Akhter & Cheng, 2020: 3). One of the critical prerequisites for sustainable development processes is the implementation of policies, programs, and multi-dimensional interventions aimed at empowering individuals, groups, and societies. These initiatives enable active participation in achieving long-term and medium-term goals of

comprehensive economic, social, and cultural development (Sharma & Das, 2021: 596).

Empowerment in rural areas can lead to changes in villagers' knowledge, attitudes, emotions, and work practices. The essence of empowering rural communities lies in enhancing individuals' capacity to utilize local resources independently and creatively for the benefit of the community (Dorri Sedeh, 2020: 1). Empowerment encompasses various individual, social, and economic dimensions. Therefore, rural women's empowerment should be a key focus in rural management strategies (Obayelu & Chime, 2020: 317). The empowerment and engagement of rural women in diverse activities contribute to poverty alleviation in villages and catalyze rural development. This enables rural women to enhance their social participation by fostering social capital, raising awareness, building capacity, experiencing progress, and improving problem-solving abilities (Bharti, 2021: 619).

Previous studies have explored various aspects of the research topic, contributing to our understanding of the subject. The following subsections highlight some of these critical findings. Fotovati et al. (2013) found that women were more engaged in production activities, particularly handicrafts than in other areas. However, their participation in social and cultural activities, such as decision-making roles within village Islamic councils or collaboration with village rural municipalities, fell short of ideal levels. Najafikani and Vesal (2015) investigated the role of local management in empowering rural women and found that local managers significantly influence various aspects. These include creating employment opportunities, boosting income, enhancing cooperatives and women's organizations, and addressing the skill development of rural women in their respective areas. Esmaeili et al. (2015) demonstrated a significant relationship between rural municipality administrators' performance and rural women's empowerment. Movahedi et al. (2019), in their study on factors influencing the efficiency of rural women's empowerment projects (micro-cooperatives), concluded that the empowerment's effect on profitability had the highest impact among the factors affecting the profitability of micro-credit cooperatives. Sojasi Qiedari et al. (2022) concluded, in their analysis of women's barriers to participation, that individual and personality factors, social and cultural environment, institutional and organizational, informational and communication, and economic factors were the most significant barriers to women's executive participation.

Nain and Kumar (2010) concluded that women play an essential role in the farm and the agricultural sector

management; without their participation, many production activities will not develop. Obayelu and Chime (2020) demonstrated that factors such as the absence of businesses, low literacy rates, exclusion of women from decision-making processes, and lack of economic independence are significant obstacles to the empowerment of rural women. Göncü et al. (2020) concluded in their study on women's participation in decision-making that while women play substantial roles in household activities, their involvement in public decisions is minimal. This disparity has resulted in a lack of transformation in economic and social structures. Rasanjali et al. (2021) concluded that differences in language skills and problem-solving significantly affected women's participation in the rural tourism industry. Sharma and Das (2021) concluded that empowering women requires economic independence, social freedom, welfare facilities, and access to the judicial system. Factors such as childcare responsibilities and limited experience have also impacted women's participation in this industry. Datta and Sahu (2022) concluded in their study on the empowerment of rural women that microfinance institutions play a significant role in enhancing women's empowerment, leading to economic growth, increased production, and greater participation in production activities among women.

Previous research has emphasized various factors and indicators of rural women's participation and empowerment. However, this study focuses specifically on the role of local management, particularly rural municipalities, in facilitating participation and empowerment. A review of existing literature indicates a scarcity of research in this area, with little investigation into the performance of rural municipalities in promoting women's participation and empowerment. Moreover, existing research on this topic appears fragmented. Given the significance of the involvement and empowerment in women's societal roles, rural municipalities are poised to play a crucial role in enhancing their status. Therefore, this study aims to examine this issue comprehensively.

3. Methodology

The research method is descriptive-analytical and practical in terms of purpose. Data collection was based on a survey and a questionnaire tool. The statistical population of the research includes rural women from Kermanshah. According to the research topic, villages in rural municipalities have been targeted. The number of villages with rural municipalities in Kermanshah city is 478, encompassing a significant portion of the region's population. Given the impracticality of studying all villages, determining a sample size is necessary. This in-

involved selecting several rural women in the first stage and applying Cochran’s formula to choose a sample of women in the second stage. The method used to determine the sample size was stratified.

For this study, emphasis is placed on the rural municipalities in the central Kermanshah district. This area comprises 177 rural municipalities distributed across four rural districts: Bala Darband, Dorudfaraman, Qarah Su, and Miyan Darband. Given space limitations, accessibility constraints, and challenges related to time and cost, two villages were chosen from each rural district. Eight villages were selected for this research based on the criterion of having the largest population of women in each rural district. Qazanchi and Gav Bandeh villages are situated in Miyan Darband rural district; Chub Deraz and Poshteh Kash villages are located in Qarah Su rural district; Deh Pahn and Siah Bid-e Sofla are situated in Dorudfaraman rural district; Siah Kamar and Sarab

NilooFar villages are located in Bala Darband rural district. The total population of women in these villages, including those within rural municipalities, amounted to 7,457 individuals. The sample size was determined using Cochran’s formula, resulting in a target of 365 women. The number of participants required to complete the questionnaire in each village was based on its respective population of women. Data for the survey were collected using a questionnaire tool. Experts confirmed the questionnaire’s validity, while its reliability was established by administering it outside the statistical sample. To ensure reliability, 30 individuals were randomly surveyed outside the statistical sample. The questionnaire’s reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s coefficient, with values exceeding 0.7 across different sections. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and Amos software.

Table 1. Indicators of empowerment and participation

Dimensions	Indicator	Variable	Cronbach’s alpha coefficients	Resources
Empowerment	Economic empowerment	Facilitating the establishment and sustenance of women’s individual and group enterprises, providing financial capital and production materials, revitalizing women’s handicrafts through support and assistance, soliciting donors to initiate women’s economic initiatives, facilitating women’s access to markets and product sales, and enhancing women’s saving capabilities	0.787	Esmaeili et al., (2015); Javani et al., (2021); Dorri Sedeh (2020); Akhter & cheng (2020); Lamichhane (2020)
	Social empowerment	Promoting women’s participation in social gatherings, conducting training courses tailored for women, assisting rural women in obtaining necessary permits, fostering a spirit of teamwork, and enhancing overall quality of life	0.758	
	Personal empowerment	Fostering leadership and management skills, enhancing the self-confidence of rural women, encouraging women to enhance their education and awareness, upgrading women’s skills and professional knowledge, and fostering creativity and innovation among women	0.789	
Participation	Economic participation	Promoting women’s involvement in production, encouraging women to contribute to household income generation, facilitating women’s engagement in economic and entrepreneurial endeavors, and integrating women into economic activities within rural municipalities	0.749	Barghi et al., (2013); Sojasi Qiedari et al., (2022); Fotovati et al., (2012); Bahrati (2021); Han et al., (2019); Odoom (2021)
	Socio-cultural participation	Encouraging women’s participation in village affairs, establishing dedicated associations or organizations for rural women, fostering increased responsibility among women, and seeking consultation and decision-making input from educated women within the village	0.703	
	Physical-environmental participation	Enhancing women’s participation in village civil affairs, leveraging the cultural knowledge and capacity of women to improve village health, engaging women in the maintenance of public spaces (parks, water channels, aqueducts, etc.), and utilizing women’s cultural expertise to implement Hadi plan	0.961	

Kermanshah city holds significant importance within Kermanshah province, serving as its administrative center. It shares borders with Kurdistan Province and Ravansar City to the north, Dalahu City, Eslamabad-e Gharb City to the west, Ilam Province to the south, and Sahne and Harsin City to the east. Additionally, it is adjacent to Sonqor and Koliyaei City in the northeast. In 2016, the population of this city totaled 1,083,833 individuals. According to 2016 statistics, 952,285 people resided in urban areas, while 129,719 lived in rural areas within the city (Iran Statistics Center, 2016). The city comprises five districts-Central, Bilavar, Firuzabad, Kuzaran, and Mahdasht-comprising 860 settlements. The area of this city is 1,564.7 square kilometers. The distribution of villages in the region is influenced by geographical and environmental conditions (Management and Planning Organization, 2023). The number of villages with rural municipalities in Kermanshah city has reached 478. [Figure 1](#) depicts the locations of the studied villages.

4. Findings

Sample Characteristics

The sample's age range ranged from 26 to 57 years, with the majority comprising over 44.1 percent, falling between 26 and 40. The remaining respondents were between 41 and 57 years old. Regarding education, the highest proportion, at 33.4 percent, held secondary education, followed by 23 percent with primary education. The lowest representation was among the illiterate group, constituting only 0.3 percent of the sample. Additionally, 14.8 percent possessed a high school education, 10.1 percent held a diploma, 12.6 percent had a bachelor's degree, and 5.8 percent held a master's degree.

Furthermore, assessing the level of satisfaction among rural women with the performance of rural municipali-

ties revealed that 7.9 percent selected the high satisfaction option. In comparison, 0.8 percent chose the very high satisfaction option. Additionally, 15.9 percent expressed shallow satisfaction, 39.2 percent indicated low satisfaction, and 36.2 percent reported medium satisfaction. Thus, 8.7 percent of women expressed desirable satisfaction with the performance of rural municipalities, while 91.3 percent reported low satisfaction.

Examining the significance level of the performance of rural municipalities in empowering rural women

The results of the binomial test assessing the performance of rural municipalities in empowering rural women indicate significance for all indicators except for the growth indicator of women's creativity and innovation, which yielded a value of 0.402. Out of the 16 indicators examined, those related to rural women's economic, social, and personal empowerment showed significance levels below 0.05. Analysis of the significance direction based on reported averages reveals that rural municipalities exhibit the highest performance in empowering rural women concerning the indicator of strengthening women's self-confidence, which averages 3.865. Indeed, rural municipalities have significantly contributed to enhancing women's self-confidence and self-belief. Compared to the past, rural municipalities have noticed a notable increase in attention to women's societal roles, resulting in improved conditions for their participation. Additionally, the performance of rural municipalities has shown significance across various indicators. Notably, in terms of increasing women's saving capabilities (3/819), assisting rural women in obtaining necessary permits (3/463), fostering a spirit of teamwork (3/813), promoting leadership and management skills (3/663), improving quality of life (3/449), and encouraging women to enhance their education and awareness (3/794).

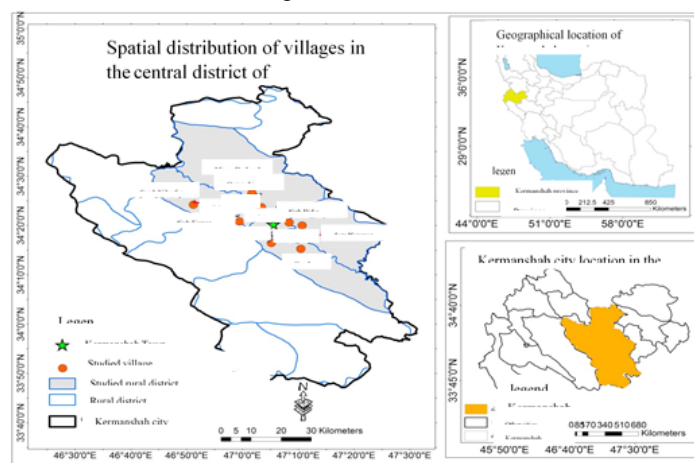


Figure 1. Geographical Location of Kermanshah City

The test results for empowerment dimensions indicate that rural municipalities have demonstrated significant performance in the rural women community’s social and personal empowerment, with a significance level of less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000$). The average score for social empowerment is 3.379, while for individual empowerment, it is 3.343, suggesting an overall average performance in empowering women across various dimensions. Additionally, the results indicate that rural municipalities’ performance in women’s economic empowerment was not significant, with a significance level greater than 0.05 ($p = 0.601$). The average score of 2.879 further suggests a poor evaluation of the situation (Table 2).

Examining the significance level of the performance of rural municipalities in facilitating the participation of rural women

The results of the evaluation assessing the performance of rural municipalities in facilitating the participation of

rural women, conducted through a binomial test, reveal significant findings. Except for the indicator related to enhancing women’s responsibility, which yielded a value of 0.530, all other indicators concerning economic, socio-cultural, and physical-environmental participation demonstrated significance levels of less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000$). The most notable performance of rural municipalities in fostering the participation of rural women was observed in the indicator of promoting women’s involvement in production, with an average of 3.789. The results indicate that other participation indicators, such as encouraging women to contribute to household income generation, facilitating women’s engagement in economic and entrepreneurial endeavors, encouraging women’s participation in village affairs, and enhancing women’s participation in village civil affairs, are sub-optimal. In essence, rural municipalities have exhibited weak performance in terms of these indicators above.

Table 2. Evaluating the performance of rural municipalities in empowering rural women (Binomial test)

Dimensions	Empowerment indicators	Viewing ratio of group 1 (less than 3)	Viewing ratio of group 2 (more than 3)	P-Value	average
Economic empowerment	Facilitating the establishment and sustenance of women’s individual and group enterprises	0.73	0.27	0.000	2.531
	Providing financial capital and production materials	0.85	0.15	0.000	2.342
	Revitalizing women’s handicrafts through support and assistance	0.76	0.24	0.000	3.082
	Soliciting donors to initiate women’s economic initiatives	0.72	0.28	0.000	2.564
	Facilitating women’s access to markets and product sales	0.45	0.55	0.047	2.934
Social empowerment	Enhancing women’s saving capabilities	0.18	0.82	0.000	3.819
	Promoting women’s participation in social gatherings	0.59	0.41	0.001	3.041
	Conducting training courses tailored for women	0.60	0.40	0.000	3.128
	Assisting rural women in obtaining necessary permits	0.40	0.60	0.000	3.463
	Fostering a spirit of teamwork	0.14	0.86	0.000	3.813
Personal empowerment	Enhancing overall quality of life	0.44	0.56	0.021	3.449
	Fostering leadership and management skills	0.40	0.60	0.000	3.663
	Enhancing the self-confidence of rural women	0.16	0.84	0.000	3.865
	Encouraging women to enhance their education and awareness	0.24	0.76	0.000	3.794
	Upgrading women’s skills and professional knowledge	0.86	0.14	0.000	2.139
	Fostering creativity and innovation among women	0.52	0.48	0.402	3.254
	Economic empowerment	0.52	0.48	0.601	2.879
	Social empowerment	0.36	0.64	0.000	3.379
	Personal empowerment	0.35	0.65	0.000	3.343

Furthermore, the test results regarding the economic, social, and physical-environmental dimensions indicate that rural municipalities' performance in these areas was statistically significant, with a significance level of less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000$). The average scores for economic participation, socio-cultural participation, and physical-environmental participation are 2.802, 2.526, and 2.580, respectively, indicating rural municipalities' subpar performance in fostering rural women's participation. Consequently, there is a pressing need to revise various policies and programs (Table 3).

Identifying and evaluating factors influencing the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women

The following section discusses the identification and categorization of factors influencing the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. Twenty-one variables or influential factors were summarized and analyzed to identify the significant influencers on the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the

participation of rural women. In the present study, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was calculated to assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis, yielding a value of 0.593, indicating an acceptable level of appropriateness. Additionally, Bartlett's test of sphericity returned a value of 17308.704, which was significant at the 99% confidence level (0.000) (Table 4).

The specific value represents each strategy's contribution to the total variance of the variables, with a more significant value indicating greater importance and impact. The results in Table 4 suggest that the first macro factor had the most significant contribution, explaining 30.869% of the variance in factors influencing the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. The second macro factor accounted for 27.643% of the dependent variable, while the third factor explained 9.874%. The fourth and fifth factors also explained 8.851% and 5.024% of the dependent variable, respectively.

Table 3. Evaluating the performance of rural municipalities in facilitating the participation of rural women (Binomial test)

Dimensions	Participation indicators	Viewing ratio of group 1 (less than 3)	Viewing ratio of group 2 (more than 3)	P-Value	Average
Economic participation	Promoting women's involvement in production	0.30	0.70	0.000	3.789
	Encouraging women to contribute to household income generation	0.85	0.15	0.000	2.256
	Facilitating women's engagement in economic and entrepreneurial endeavors	0.66	0.34	0.000	2.671
	Integrating women into economic activities within rural municipalities	0.74	0.26	0.000	2.183
Socio-cultural participation	Encouraging women's participation in village affairs	0.85	0.15	0.000	1.958
	Establishing dedicated associations or organizations for rural women	0.67	0.33	0.000	2.695
	Fostering increased responsibility among women	0.48	0.52	0.530	2.945
	Seeking consultation and decision-making input from educated women within the village	0.79	0.21	0.000	2.504
Physical-environmental participation	Enhancing women's participation in village civil affairs	0.73	0.27	0.000	2.400
	Leveraging the cultural knowledge and capacity of women to improve village health	0.66	0.34	0.000	2.717
	Engaging women in maintaining public spaces (parks, water channels, aqueducts, etc.)	0.65	0.35	0.000	2.695
	Utilizing women's cultural expertise to implement the Hadi plan	0.64	0.36	0.000	2.506
	Economic participation	0.78	0.22	0.000	2.802
	Socio-cultural participation	0.72	0.28	0.000	2.526
	Physical-environmental participation	0.66	0.34	0.000	2.580



Table 4. The value of KMO and Bartlett's test of influencing factors in the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women

KMO	(Bartlett Test)	DF	Sig
0.593	17308.704	210	0.000

**Table 5.** Extracted factors, eigenvalues, and their corresponding percentage of variance explained for determination

Factors	Eigenvalues	Variance percentage of eigenvalues	Cumulative percentage of variance
First	6.483	30.869	30.869
Second	5.805	27.643	58.513
Third	2.074	9.874	68.387
Fourth	1.859	8.851	77.238
Fifth	1.055	5.024	82.262



Based on the analysis, five macro factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted and are listed below (Table 6).

The first macro factor: The results indicate that five variables are loaded in this factor, explaining 30.869% of the total variance in factors influencing the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. Based on the variables or factors in this category, the first macro factor was named "Expansion of Cooperative Activities."

The second macro factor: The results indicate that five variables are loaded in this factor, explaining 27.643% of the total variance in factors influencing the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. The second macro factor was named "Training and Capacity Building" based on the variables or factors in this category.

The third macro factor: The results indicate that four variables are loaded in this factor, explaining 9.874% of the total variance in factors influencing the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. Based on the variables or factors in this category, the third macro factor was named "Strengthening Personal Empowerment."

The fourth macro factor: The results indicate that four variables are loaded in this factor, explaining 8.851% of the total variance in factors influencing the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. Based on the variables or factors in this category, the fourth macro factor was named "Participation of Women in Village's Affairs."

The fifth macro factor: The results indicate that three variables are loaded in this factor, explaining 5.024% of the total variance in factors influencing the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. Based on the variables or factors in this category, the fifth macro factor was named "Insurance and Financial Support."

In terms of the ranking of factors influencing the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women, the results showed that women's participation in household and village economic activities is recognized as the most important, with a factor loading of 0.894. The establishment of small workshops involving women (local products, etc.), with a weight of 0.892, and women's participation in village cultural affairs, with a weight of 0.881, are identified as the second and third most important factors, respectively.

Examining the significance level of differences in the performance of rural municipalities in facilitating the participation of rural women

In this section, the aim is to investigate the differences in the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. The Kruskal-Wallis test was employed for this analysis. The test results indicated that no significant difference was observed in the performance of rural municipalities in empowering rural women. This conclusion stems from the fact that the dimensions of economic empowerment ($p = 0.143$), social empowerment ($p = 0.132$), and personal empowerment ($p = 0.361$) were reported to be non-significant, with p-values exceeding 0.05. Therefore, it

can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the performance of rural municipalities in empowering rural women.

Furthermore, in interpreting the results regarding the performance of rural municipalities in facilitating the participation of rural women, it should be noted that no significant difference was observed among them. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that the dimensions

of economic participation ($p = 0.408$), social participation ($p = 0.165$), and personal empowerment ($p = 0.186$) were all reported as non-significant, with p-values exceeding 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the performance of rural municipalities in facilitating the participation of rural women.

Table 6. Naming and categorizing of influencing factors in the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women

Macro factor	Eigenvalue percentage	Micro factors	Factor load
Expansion of Cooperative Activities	30.869	Establishing a cooperative company for the production of handicrafts for women	0.839
		Establishing a cooperative company to develop small home processing workshops for women	0.854
		Women’s participation in the prosperity of household and village economic activities	0.894
		Attracting funds from the cooperative and charity sector for women’s businesses	0.462
		Establishment of small workshops with the participation of women (local products, etc.)	0.892
Training and Capacity Building	27.643	Handicrafts and Home Education	0.736
		Holding educational workshops for women	0.737
		Education for innovation and creativity	0.720
		Strengthening the economic spirit of women	0.684
		Conducting training courses and job skill development programs	0.641
Strengthening Personal Empowerment	9.874	Improving self-confidence	0.728
		Increasing personal skills	0.501
		Increasing knowledge and awareness	0.771
		Strengthening the spirit of risk-taking	0.836
Participation of Women in Village’s Affairs	8.851	Consulting with women in improving village affairs	0.786
		Fostering a culture of collaboration	0.718
		Holding special meetings for women	0.543
		Participation of women in the cultural affairs of the village	0.881
Insurance and Financial Support	5.024	Establishing a loan fund for women’s businesses	0.846
		Support and insurance coverage for women	0.686
		Providing loans and special credits for women	0.760



Table 7. The significance level of differences in the performance of rural municipalities in terms of empowering rural women (Kruskal-Wallis test)

Indicator	Chi-Square	DF	Sig	Significance or non-significance of the difference
Economic empowerment	10.905	7	0.143	No significant difference
Social empowerment	11.146	7	0.132	No significant difference
Personal empowerment	7.683	7	0.361	No significant difference



Table 8. The significance level of differences in the performance of rural municipalities in terms of facilitating the participation of rural women (Kruskal-Wallis test)

Indicator	Chi-Square	DF	Sig	Significance or non-significance of the difference
Economic participation	7.205	7	0.408	No significant difference
Socio-cultural participation	10.437	7	0.165	No significant difference
Physical-environmental participation	10.047	7	0.186	No significant difference



Measuring the impact of the identified factors on the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women through structural equation modeling

In this section, the effect of influential factors on the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women was evaluated and analyzed through structural equation modeling. AMOS software was utilized to provide an experimental model of the impact of identified factors on the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. A first-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model was constructed for each factor, comprising 21 indicators. Subsequently, validation was conducted for each factor within the model. The mentioned factors were classified into 21 main factors using an exploratory factor analysis model, and the identified factors were validated using confirmatory factor analysis. Examining the factor loadings related to these 21 influential factors (Figure 2) indicates that the factor loadings' values are all above 0.3, suggesting the appropriate status of the identified factors in the drawn model.

After confirming the factor loadings of the indicators, the primary model of the research was established, focusing on the impact of identified factors on the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. Figure 3 presents the final model illustrating these factors' impact on rural municipalities' performance in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. This regression model demonstrates the relationships and effects of the 21 identified factors on improving the performance of rural municipalities in this regard. Subsequently, the overall model model has been evaluated based on Table 8.

Table 9 displays the evaluation indicators used to assess the overall model regarding the impact of identified factors on the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. The fit indices of the final model demonstrate its adequacy, validity, and accuracy. Specifically, the model effectively explains the observed data, as indicated by its good fit. Key indices include a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.981, a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.074, and a Hoelter index of 221, aligning with recommended and standard values.

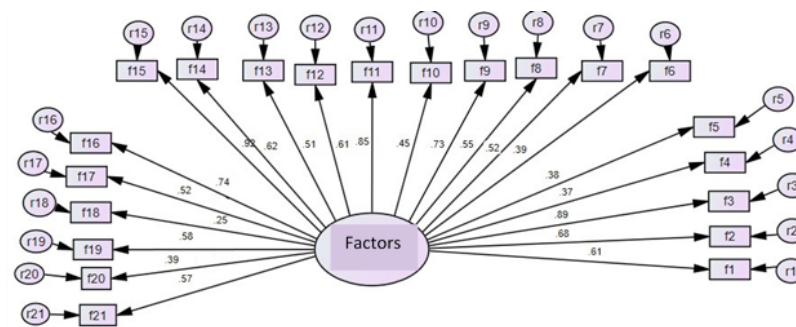


Figure 2. Factor loading related to observed variables identified factors



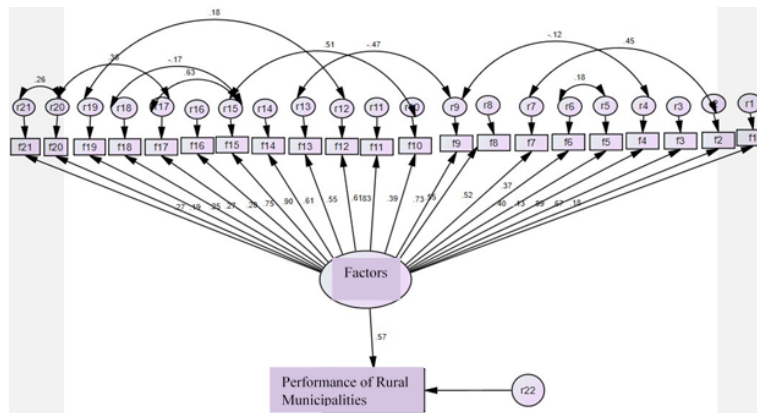


Figure 3. Structural model of the impact of the identified factors on the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women



Table 9. Evaluation indicators used to assess the overall model regarding the impact of identified factors on the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women

Index	Suggested value	Research final model
CMIN	-	7.432
DF	-	3.356
CMIN/DF	< 5	2.214
CFI	> 0.9	0.981
RMSE	< 0.8	0.074
HOELTER	> 75	221
RMR	0	0.035
GFI	> 0.9	0.959
NFI	> 0.9	0.983
PRATIO	0-1	0.235



After assessing the overall model fit regarding the influence of identified factors on the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women, the impact of independent variables on the research’s dependent variable was investigated. Table 10 demonstrates the significant role of identified factors in enhancing the performance of rural municipalities by empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women among the respondents, evident at a 99% confidence level. The critical ratio exceeding 2.58, indicative of significance, further underscores the impact of the independent variable (identified factors) on the dependent variable (performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women). In total, it can be concluded that 21 investigated factors, such as establishing a cooperative company for the production of handicrafts for women, establishing a collaborative company to develop small home processing workshops for women, women’s participation in the prosperity of household and village eco-

nomical activities, etc., contribute to the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women.

Upon examining the role of 21 influential factors, it was found that the total effect value is 0.57. Collectively, these investigated factors can account for approximately 57% of the variance, playing a significant and positive role in enhancing the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. According to the results of this model, the most influential factor, with an explanatory value of 0.90, is consulting with women in improving village affairs. This factor has the most significant impact on enhancing the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. Women’s participation in household and village economic activities, with an explanatory value of 0.89, and fostering a culture of collaboration, with a descriptive value of 0.75, are recognized as influential factors, ranking second and third, respectively.

Table 10. The coefficients of the regression model, analyzing the influence of identified factors on the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women through structural equation modeling

Significance level	Total effect	Critical Ratio	Dependent variable	Independent variable
0.001	0.18	6.436	The performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women	Establishing a cooperative company for the production of handicrafts for women
0.000	0.67	7.009		Establishing a cooperative company to develop small home processing workshops for women
0.000	0.89	7.435		Women's participation in the prosperity of household and village economic activities
0.003	0.13	6.435		Attracting funds from the cooperative and charity sector for women's businesses
0.000	0.40	7.098		Establishment of small workshops with the participation of women (local products, etc.)
0.001	0.37	6.435		Handicrafts and Home Education
0.000	0.52	5.324		Holding educational workshops for women
0.002	0.55	5.098		Education for innovation and creativity
0.001	0.73	6.567		Strengthening the economic spirit of women
0.000	0.39	6.008		Conducting training courses and job skill development programs
0.001	0.83	5.900		Improving self-confidence
0.000	0.61	5.456		Increasing personal skills
0.002	0.55	6.065		Increasing knowledge and awareness
0.000	0.61	7.409		Strengthening the spirit of risk-taking
0.000	0.90	8.234		Consulting with women in improving village affairs
0.001	0.75	6.560		Fostering a culture of collaboration
0.000	0.20	6.657		Holding special meetings for women
0.000	0.27	5.455		Participation of women in the cultural affairs of the village
0.005	0.25	4.546		Establishing a loan fund for women's businesses
0.003	0.19	8.546		Support and insurance coverage for women
0.001	0.27	7.111	Providing loans and notable credits for women	



5. Discussion

Women's empowerment and education have had various economic, social, and environmental effects on rural society. Some of these effects resulted from the voluntary efforts of rural women, while others stemmed from the training and facilities provided by rural municipalities. The primary focus of this research is to examine the role of rural municipalities, as local non-governmental institutions, in promoting women's empowerment and participation. The performance of rural municipalities in fostering community engagement, particularly among women, is a reliable indicator of their effectiveness in rural development and management. Hence, the issue's significance and necessity are evident theoretically and practically.

The results of this research indicate that rural municipalities have placed some emphasis on social and personal empowerment. However, the status of these indicators post-empowerment was found to be average. Factors such as fostering a spirit of teamwork, promoting women's education and awareness, fostering leadership and management skills, and enhancing the self-confidence of rural women were all rated as average compared to other indicators. Furthermore, the results indicate that rural municipalities exhibited weak performance in terms of economic empowerment. However, the women's community possesses significant capacity and potential to contribute to the economic development of villages and can play a pivotal role in this domain. In this regard, rural municipalities can emphasize financial support, training courses, assistance in women's production activities, and market supply to empower rural women economically. According to the findings, rural municipalities have ef-

fectively enhanced women's savings as an economic indicator. This positive influence suggests that rural municipalities may excel in other economic indicators. The study of [Esmaeili et al. \(2015\)](#) identifies a significant relationship between the performance of rural municipality administrators and the empowerment of rural women. Consistent with this finding, the results of our study also suggest a relationship; however, rural municipalities have not effectively contributed to the empowerment of rural women. [Najafikani and Vesal's research \(2015\)](#) and [Movahedi et al. \(2019\)](#) corroborate this finding and highlight the deficiencies in rural management concerning women's empowerment.

The results also revealed the inappropriate status of indicators related to rural municipalities' performance in facilitating rural women's participation. This is evident in various aspects, such as the indicators for encouraging women to participate in production, women's involvement in rural economic activities, support for increasing women's responsibilities, engagement of women in rural development affairs, utilization of women's cultural capacities, seeking consultation and decision-making input from educated women, and encouraging women to participate in village affairs. Hence, given the responsibilities of rural municipalities and the imperative of involving diverse groups in rural management and development, there appears to be a need to reassess the performance of rural municipalities in this regard. In reality, rural municipalities can offer additional platforms to encourage the participation of various demographics, including women, in rural development efforts. The findings of this study align with those of [Fotovati et al. \(2012\)](#) and [Qiedari et al. \(2022\)](#), as they also highlight the inadequacy of women's involvement in rural management and development. Factors such as personal characteristics and social, economic, and managerial elements have contributed to the limited participation of women in rural areas.

Another noteworthy finding is that, according to the research results, the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women remains consistent across all studied rural districts, with no significant differences observed. This suggests that the promotion of the involvement of women and empowerment has not been adequately emphasized within the framework of rural development initiatives. Such neglect has contributed to the limited role of women in society. Hence, rural municipalities should prioritize attention to this demographic in their annual programs and establish social and economic engagement platforms. Furthermore, the results indicate that several

factors contribute to enhancing the performance of rural municipalities in empowering and facilitating the participation of rural women. Key macro factors include expanding cooperative activities, training and capacity-building initiatives, strengthening personal empowerment, women's involvement in the village's affairs, and insurance and financial support. Therefore, to enhance the performance of rural municipalities, it is imperative to fulfill the requirements aligned with these factors. The studies conducted by [Obayelu and Chime \(2020\)](#) and [Sharma and Das \(2021\)](#) identified various factors, such as the lack of facilities, judicial support, business opportunities for women, economic independence, and social issues, as obstacles affecting the empowerment and participation of women. Based on these findings, initiatives such as consulting with women on village affairs, enhancing women's involvement in household economic activities, and fostering a culture of cooperation should be implemented to address these factors effectively.

Overall, it is evident that rural municipalities have not prioritized the empowerment and participation of rural women, which impacts their annual performance. Addressing this issue necessitates adherence to certain principles and the implementation of specific plans. The current situation fails to facilitate the active involvement of women in rural municipality affairs and their engagement. Therefore, rural municipalities should establish supportive and inclusive platforms to enhance women's participation and empowerment in rural areas. Consistent with the research findings, several suggestions are proposed. 1- Given the underperformance of rural municipalities regarding women's participation, it is recommended that initiatives to expand cooperative activities, such as small workshops and handicraft production, be planned, implemented, and reinforced in rural villages. 2- It is recommended that rural municipalities conduct training and capacity-building programs to increase women's presence. These initiatives may include educational workshops, strengthening the economic spirit, etc. 3- It is recommended to offer insurance and financial support to rural women through the establishment of various cooperatives. 4- It is recommended that rural municipalities establish an interest-free loan fund to empower women and promote their economic participation. 5- Establishing women's rural development groups to empower women and facilitate their active participation in rural municipalities' affairs is recommended.

Acknowledgements

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

References

- Akhter, J., & Cheng, K. (2020). Sustainable empowerment initiatives among rural women through microcredit borrowings in Bangladesh. *Sustainability*, 12(6),1-19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12062275>
- Anwar, S. L., Tampubolon, G., Van Hemelrijck, M., Hutajulu, S. H., Watkins, J., Wulaningsih, W., & PILAR Research Network. (2018). Determinants of cancer screening awareness and participation among Indonesian women. *BMC Cancer*, 18, 1-11. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12885-018-4125-z>
- Aroogh, M. D., & Shahboulaghi, F. M. (2020). Social participation of older adults: A concept analysis. *International Journal of community-based nursing and midwifery*, 8(1), 1-16. doi: 10.30476/IJCBNM.2019.82222.1055
- Badri, S. A., Anbarlo, M., Malek Jafariyan, Z. (2018). The Role of Rural Manager's Awareness Level of Rules and Regulations in Enhancement of Desirable Rural Management (Case Study: Tarom City). *Scientific Research Journal of Geography and Planning*, 22(66), 67-94. <https://ensani.ir/fa/article/392179>
- Barghi, H., Ghanbari, Y., & Saeedi, M. (2013). The Investigation of Islamic Rural Councils and Degree of Community Participation in Rural Development (Case: Hossainabad in Najafabad). *SPACE ECONOMY & RURAL DEVELOPMENT*, 2(2), 119-138. URL: <http://serd.khu.ac.ir/article-1-1662-fa.html>
- Barghi, H., Tagdisi, A., Taziki, R., & Naderkhani, Z. (2014). Investigating Rural Women's Participation in Agricultural Activities (case of Northern Astarabad villages of Gorgan). *Spatial Planning*, 3(4), 155-174. https://sppl.ui.ac.ir/article_15981.html
- Bharti, N. (2021). Role of cooperatives in economic empowerment of women: A review of Indian experiences. *World Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development*, 17(4), 617-631. <https://doi.org/10.1108/WJEMSD-07-2020-0095>
- Bouzarjomehri, K., Javani, K., Shayan, H., & Ghasemi, M. (2021). Investigating the Impact of the Traditional NGO "Vareh" on the Empowerment of Rural Women (Case study: Roshkhar County). *Rural Development Strategies*, 8(3), 267-284. <https://doi.org/10.22048/rdsj.2021.276876.1923>
- Chaudhry, R., & Rishiwal, V. (2023). An Efficient Task Allocation with Fuzzy Reptile Search Algorithm for Disaster Management in urban and rural areas. *Sustainable Computing: Informatics and Systems*, 39(2),1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.suscom.2023.100893>
- Datta, S., & Sahu, T. N. (2022). How far is microfinance relevant for empowering rural women? An empirical investigation. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 56(1), 97-112. doi.org/10.1080/00213624.2022.2019552
- Dorri Sedeh, S. (2021). Empowerment with an approach to sustainable rural development. *Journal of Space and Place Studies*, 17(1), 1-16. Doi: 20.1001.1.25386050.1399.1399.17.1.1
- Esmaeili, F., Nakhei, M., Khodadad, M., & Sangtarash, M. (2015). Rural municipalities' role in empowering women (case study: Atrak Rural District of Gonbad-e Kavus). First international conference on management sciences "Progresses, innovations and challenges," Tehran. <https://civilica.com/doc/560668/certificate/print/>
- Fallsolayman, M., Sadeghi, H., & Ferozan, M. (2014). The Evaluation of Dehyariha's Role in Prevention and Reduction of Health - Therapeutic Crisis in Rural Settlements. Case Study: Shosf District of Nehbandan County. *Geographical Planning of Space*, 4(12), 54-78. https://gps.gu.ac.ir/article_7503.html
- Faraji Sabokbar, H., Tahmasi, B., & Salimi, F. (2021). Analyzing the Challenges of Women's Participation in Rural Areas Management (Case study: Lavasan Kouchak Rural District, Shemiranat County). *JGSM*, 2(2), 51-69. <http://gsma.lu.ac.ir/article-1-153-fa.html>
- Fotovati, H., Baradaran, M., Salmanzadeh, S., & Ghanian, M. (2013). A Clarification of Rural Women's Role in Rural Development (A Case Study of Shavour District) in Shoush County. *Iranian Journal of Agricultural Economics and Development Research*, 43(4), 677-692. doi: 10.22059/ijaedr.2013.51353
- Göncü, S., Anitaş, Ö., Bozkurt, S., & Sucak, M. (2020). The rural women participate in decisions in small-scale livestock management. *Journal of Environmental Science and Engineering*, 2020(1),255-265. Doi:10.17265/2162-5298/2020.06.005
- Han, Z., Zeng, D., Li, Q., Cheng, C., Shi, G., & Mou, Z. (2019). Public willingness to pay and participate in domestic waste management in rural areas of China. *Resources, conservation and re-cycling*, 140, 166-174. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resconrec.2018.09.018>
- Hilmawan, R., Aprianti, Y., Vo, D. T. H., Yudaruddin, R., Bintoro, R. F. A., Fitrianto, Y., & Wahyuningsih, N. (2023). Rural development from village funds, village-owned enterprises, and village original income. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 9(4), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joitmc.2023.100159>
- Jónsdóttir, S., & Gísladóttir, G. (2023). Land use planning, sustainable food production, and rural development: A literature analysis. *Geography and Sustainability*, 4(4), 391-403. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geosus.2023.09.004>
- Lamichhane, B. D. (2020). Microfinance for women empowerment: A review of best practices. *Interdisciplinary journal of management and social sciences*, 1(1), 13-25. <https://sarawaticampus.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/final-setting.pdf#page=20>
- Molaie Hashjin, N., Amarhaji Shirkia, T., & Bagheri, A. (2017). The rural management's role in sample cases village devel-

- opment. *Space Economy & Rural Development*, 6(4), 165-176. <https://serd.khu.ac.ir/article-1-2964-fa.html>
- Monfared, N. (2016). Survey of women's cooperatives Establishment and investigating the problems of women in cooperatives (Case Study: Bushehr). *Journal of Studies in Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Agricultural Development*, 1(1), 17-33. Doi: 20.1001.1.24767735.1395.3.1.2.1
- Movahedi, Z., Haji Hashemi, Z., & Shahidi, N. (2019). Factors affecting the effectiveness of rural women's empowerment projects (case study: microcredit cooperatives in Isfahan province). *Space Economy & Rural Development*, 8(1), 161-182. <http://serd.khu.ac.ir/article-1-3270-en.html>
- Nain, M. S., & Kumar, P. (2010). A study of women participation and decision making in farm management. *Journal of Community Mobilization and Sustainable Development*, 5(1), 67-71. <https://www.indianjournals.com/ijor.aspx?target=ijor:jcmsd&volume=5&issue=1&article=014&type=pdf>
- Najafikani, A. A., & Vesal, Z. (2015). Local Management Role in The Empowerment of Rural Women (Case Study: Southern Astarabad Rural District of Gorgan). *Journal of Studies of Human Settlements Planning*, 10(30), 47-56. <https://sanad.iau.ir/journal/jshsp/Article/514693?jid=514693>
- Norie Saniabadi, J., Taj, SH., & Fallahfar, N. (2023). The effect of mental-psychological and social empowerment of women heads of rural households under the auspices of Imam Khomeini Relief Committee on the sustainable livelihood of villages in Rey city. *Geographical Engineering of Territory*, 7(1), 137-154. <https://ensani.ir/fa/article/551195>
- Obayelu, O. A., & Chime, A. C. (2020). Dimensions and drivers of women's empowerment in rural Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 47(3), 315-333. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSE-07-2019-0455>
- Odetola, S.K., Awoyemi, T.T., & Ajijola, S. (2015). Impact of cooperative society on fish Farming commercialization in Lagos state, Nigeria. *African Journal of Agricultural Research*, 10(8), 1982-1988. <https://academicjournals.org/journal/AJAR/article-full-text/09A097D52784>
- Odoom, D., Annor-Frempong, F., Akaba, S., Agyepong, L., Obeng-Mensah, A., & Obeng-Baah, J. (2021). The challenge of participation in community development activities in rural Ghana: Implications for effective development communication. *Tanzania Journal of Development Studies*, 19(1), 1-131. <https://journals.udsm.ac.tz/index.php/tjds/article/view/4429>
- Ohta, R., Sato, M., Ryu, Y., Kitayuguchi, J., Maeno, T., & Sano, C. (2021). What resources do elderly people choose for managing their symptoms? Clarification of rural older people's choices of help-seeking behaviors in Japan. *BMC Health Services Research*, 21, 1-8. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12913-021-06684-x>
- Pal, M., Gupta, H., & Joshi, Y. C. (2022). Social and economic empowerment of women through financial inclusion: empirical evidence from India. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 41(2), 294-305. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-04-2021-0113>
- Pattnaik, I., & Lahiri-Dutt, K. (2020). What determines women's agricultural participation? A comparative study of landholding households in rural India. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 76, 25-39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2020.03.008>
- Rasanjali, C., Sivashankar, P., & Mahalyanaarachchi, R. P. (2021). Women participation in rural tourism: A case of Ella, Sri Lanka. *AGRARIS: Journal of Agribusiness and Rural Development Research*, 7(2), 256-269. <https://journal.umy.ac.id/index.php/ag/article/view/11294>
- Rokneddin Eftekhari, A., Sojasi Ghidari, H., & Einali, J. (2018). New Attitude towards Rural Management with an Emphasis on Effective Institutions. *Village and Development*, 10(2), 1-30. <https://www.sid.ir/paper/94820/fa>
- Savari, M., Sheykhi, H., & Amghani, M. S. (2020). The role of educational channels in motivating rural women to improve household food security. *One Health*, 10(2), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.onehlt.2020.100150>
- Seydaei, S. E., & Sadeghi, H. (2014). *Entrepreneurship and rural development planning*, Darkhovin Publication, Isfahan.
- Sharma, E., & Das, S. (2021). Integrated model for women empowerment in rural India. *Journal of International Development*, 33(3), 594-611. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3539>
- Singgalen, Y. A., Laturiuw, A. K., Puspitarini, T., & Insani, Z. A. P. (2023). Community participation in tourism development in the village: examining from Subang district, Indonesia. *Jurnal Studi Sosial dan Politik*, 7(1), 105-118. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.19109/jssp.v7i1.14737>
- Sojasi Qiedari, H., Roumiani, A., & Jafari, N. (2022). Analysis of the Barriers of Rural Women's Tendency to Participate In the Executive Management of Villages (Case Study: Villages of Zanjan County). *Journal of Geography and Regional Development*, 20(3), 69-85. doi: 10.22067/jgrd.2021.49380.0
- Sun, J., & Lyu, S. (2020). Social participation and urban-rural disparity in mental health among older adults in China. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 274, 399-404. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2020.05.091>
- Tantoh, H. B., & McKay, T. J. (2020). Rural self-empowerment: The case of small water supply management in Northwest, Cameroon. *GeoJournal*, 85(1), 159-171. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10708-018-9952-6>
- Tomashuk, I. (2017). Problems and prospects of management of rural development. *Baltic Journal of Economic Studies*, 3(5), 214-220. <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/problems-and-prospects-of-management-of-rural-development>
- Trivelli, C., & Morel, J. (2021). Rural youth inclusion, empowerment, and participation. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 57(4), 635-649. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2020.1808194>
- Wang, L., Zhou, B., Zhao, Z., Yang, L., Zhang, M., Jiang, Y., ... & Li, X. (2021). Body-mass index and obesity in urban and rural China: findings from consecutive nationally representative surveys during 2004-18. *The Lancet*, 398(10294), 53-63. DOI:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)00798-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00798-4)
- Wei, W., Sarker, T., Żukiewicz-Sobczak, W., Roy, R., Alam, G. M., Rabbany, M. G., ... & Aziz, N. (2021). The influence of women's empowerment on poverty reduction in the rural areas of Bangladesh: Focus on health, education and living standard. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(13), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18136909>