

Research Paper: Good Governance and Sustainable Rural Development in The East of Iran

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study is a documentary and survey research with a developmental and practical nature. This is descriptive and correlative research that seeks to investigate the relationship between good governance and sustainable rural development in rural areas of south Khorasan province in Iran.

Methods: The sampling process focused on the statistical population, which included all the family caregivers living in rural areas, with 41 villages and 206 family caregivers, based on the Cochran formula. Path analysis and structural equations are used to investigate the relationship between good governance and sustainable development.

Results: The average sample obtained for rural governance and sustainable rural development in rural areas of Birjand is 2.84 and 2.72, respectively. According to the T-Test, the result is a sample less than moderate. Among these components, the apparent responsibility variable (0.84) has the highest factor load or effect level, and the equity variable has the least effect (0.48) on creating the optimal hidden rural variable. The economic variable has the highest impact (0.92), and the environmental variable has the least impact (0.57) on creating the sustainable variable of rural development. Sustainable rural development has a positive and significant relationship with good rural governance. The correlation and correlation are also 57%.

Conclusion: The research results show a positive and significant relationship between good governance and sustainable rural development, so villages with good governance have better sustainability.

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1. Introduction

Rural development is a multidimensional process and leads to continuous improvement in the quality of life in rural communities. In this way, along with increasing rural incomes, better education, adequate health care, treatment and nutrition, poverty reduction, protected environment, and equality of opportunities are taken into account for the realization of socioeconomic and spatial justice in the rural environment (Consulting Engineers, DHW, 1992). Sustainable development aims to meet human needs and improve the quality of life in living areas. It is a good model for determining how resources are exploited. It creates a balanced relationship among humans, community, and nature while emphasizing the participatory approach that leads to improvement in rural communities and increases their responsibilities and responsiveness to their needs as well as people's participation in the developmental process due to the presence of people in local governance, the tendency toward endogenously, justice and environmental compatibility are considered (Azimi & Amoli, 2012: 1-28). Sustainable development without considering sustainable governance is incorrect (Zahedi, 2014: 93-94). The study of resources, texts, and documents indicates the fact that good governance is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Developing countries with good governance can realize economic-political and social development programs in cities and local areas. Local economic development is the result of the cooperation and full participation of local organizations, private companies, and non-governmental organizations. The result of cooperation and participation of all the elements of local government, private sector, and civil organizations would be local economic growth and the creation of more job opportunities (Matova, 2001: 125). Good governance or "government effectiveness" (per the World Bank) is seen as a critical factor for the wealth of nations insofar as it shapes political and economic institutions and affects overall economic performance (Rindermann, 2015: 98).

Since governance under modern conditions operates through many kinds of decisions and institutions, the development of cognitive capital is critical for its success. Educational policies are important for both the spread of basic skills and the emergence of specialists working in political, economic, and scientific institutions managing processes and developing new technologies. This view of governance is actively promoted by the World Bank and its researchers (Kaufmann, 2003).

We, therefore, assume that cognitive ability positively contributes to the quality of governance. Especially at the level of intellectual classes, which form the social basis for the government and political leaders, cognitive ability is likely to be highly important. This is backed by a study by Simonton (2006) for US presidents showing a positive relationship between intelligence and political success.

Good governance is studied under the term "government effectiveness." As used by World Bank researchers, it is defined as the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies (Kaufmann et al., 2010: 4).

The governance model clashes with a pure concept of liberalism, which tends to view government interventions as a threat to the economy and the well-being of nations (Hoppe, 2001; Mises, 1996/1927).

In contrast, we assume that good governance can produce conditions favorable to economic performance. First, governments can follow a more liberal or less liberal economic policy. Economic freedom is one of the most powerful means to stimulate economic growth (de Haan,

Lundstrom & Sturm (2006), leading to increased wealth and welfare, and is even reflected in human height (Western vs. Eastern Germany, South vs. North Korea; Komlos & Kriwy, 2003; Schwekendiek & Pak, 2009) and psychological well-being (Belasen & Hafer, 2012).

However, good governance can do more than abstain from doing harm. Governments can stimulate the competitiveness of an economy by setting rules (rule of law, low corruption), by supporting research and innovation, and by encouraging the development of human capital. As defined by the World Economic Forum, a country is said to be competitive to the extent that it has institutions, policies, and other factors that contribute to productivity (Schwab, 2013).

With local governance, one can expect that the voices of the poorest and the richest people will be heard and poverty in society will be as low as possible (Brillantes, 2002: 9). The other results of good governance are helping to preserve the environment, sustainable development, and the promotion of bioethics. Good governance emphasizes the conservation of scarce resources and the

sustainability of the environment. The ultimate goal of good governance is sustainable development in urban and rural areas (Hall, 2000: 165). Villages in Birjand do not have a rural development management system. The villagers' dependent mentality on top-level decisions of the government, the weakness in leadership skills, lack of attention, no involvement of rural managers, and lack of awareness and skills to use the resources and available opportunities in rural areas are the weak points of these places. Extreme crises in the region lead to severe instability. The first among these crises is the water scarcity crisis that has disrupted villagers' activities. Regarding this issue, in rural areas of Birjand, the stability of the villages and the state of their rule were analyzed, and the following question was answered. What is the relationship between the indicators of good rural governance and sustainable rural development in the studied region?

2. Literature Review

During the last two decades of the twentieth century and on the eve of the 21st century, new theories and techniques in the field of urban development have emerged. These theories were based on local planning, participatory development, the improvement of the quality of the environment, the spread of justice, and democratic methods (Darabi, 2009: 46). The study of resources shows that empowering villagers to achieve collective strength, compensating for power, and improving the skills and capacities of planning and analyzing the reflection of the locals' abilities is a mechanism that enables the villagers to work as hard as possible. In this study, there are three main elements that have a key role:

Growth and Consciousness with Criticism (i.e., Wise-Conscious- Intellectual persons).

Developing capacities for effective transformation based on reality (Realistic society).

Empowering organizations and organizing people (institutions) (Azimi-Amoli, 2009: 76).

Most thinkers and development theorists believe that participatory approaches to the sustainable development of rural areas in Third World countries are not an option but an absolute necessity. Thus, development theorists have concluded that these are people who determine what development is, what components it has, and what solutions should be made to achieve a specific type of development (Eftekhari, 2010: 76).

Based on capacity development theory, in order to realize a good rural governance approach towards sustainable rural development, the following five principles are necessary:

Understanding the existing capacity of rural areas
B. Pay attention to the human development resources for all actors and rural actors.
C. Balance and adaptation (adaptability) of plans, designs, and management applied to rural areas based on existing available capacities.

D. Participation of local people in solving their problems
E. Evaluating and criticizing local management and development planning policies by Indigenous and local people (various rural groups) (Azimi-Ameli, 2014: 90).

Social capital can be considered as a criterion for assessing social power and the active interaction of the body of the communal society with the two sectors of the state and private. Therefore, social capital can be regarded as a condition for good governance. According to Fukuyama in 1999, the most important steps by governments to strengthen social capital are as follows:

Encouragement and strengthening of civil institutions.

Strengthening and enriching public education.

Securing citizens to be volunteers in social institutions

Avoiding conceding various economic, cultural, and social sections; assigning activities to popular institutions in order to engage them in various activities; and creating and empowering social institutions and networks of trust between different people (Fukuyama, 1999).

The relationship between environmental management theory and good rural governance can be discussed as follows:

Based on the concept of environmental management, it can be inferred that disregarding to environment (living space and human settlements) not only violates people's rights (especially marginalized people) to achieve development but also ignores the right of place, which is the center of human life and activities, as far as it leads to destruction and environmental degradation and this issue contracts with principles and criteria of good governance. Based on a good governance approach, most such problems, especially in rural areas, can be resolved

through inclusive management or good rural governance.

Participation and empowerment, capacity building, and institutionalization are the main elements of sustainable development and environmental development. Without regarding people and their participation, the environmental crisis will not be diminished, and the sustainability of management at the national level will also be seriously damaged. A good rural governor, through rural social networks, tells investors and industry owners that any industrial activity in the village or rural areas requires an environmental transparency certificate by project managers, and in this way, the achievement of sustainable rural development will be facilitated.

Formation and strengthening of spontaneous people's institutions and their participation in protecting their environment (Azimi-Amoli, 2014: 102).

After discussing the important points of view on good governance and sustainable rural development, it was finally concluded that the concept of environmental management was more in line with regional and local management for sustainable rural development and rural governance.

3. Methodology

This study is a documentary and survey research with a developmental and practical nature. This is descriptive and correlative research. A questionnaire was used to collect data, and the two variables of rural governance and sustainable rural development were measured. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for rural governance with 65 items equals 0.986, and for sustainable rural development with 85 items equals 0.996, and these values indicate that the measurement of these variables is reliable. The statistical population consists of family caregivers living in rural areas of Birjand, 41 villages are selected. The sample size of 206 households is calculated based on the Cochran formula. Path analysis and structural equations are used (Amos software) to investigate the relationship between good governance and sustainable development. Some items are mentioned after studying the texts to achieve the process of localization of the indicators of rural governance and sustainable development and to make them measurable. According to Azimi Amoli's (2014) study to exploit the good governance variables in the rural society of Iran based on the operational definition and Javedan's resources (2004), Nejati Hosseini (2001), Misra (1992), Harmont Basel (2001), Musa Kazemi (2001), Azimi Amoli et al. (2012), Eft-

ekhari and et al. (2011), The Islamic Research Center of parliament (2004), Dekker (2004), Davis (2004), 7 items to measure Participation, eight items to assess the regulatory, six items to assess responsiveness, 9 items to assess the accountability, seven items to assess equity, 8 items to assess consensus oriented six items to assess transparency and ten items to assess effectiveness and efficacy are determined by the use of Delphi method. The elements proposed to measure each of the dimensions of good governance in rural areas are general and inadequate to understand the respondents; therefore, to achieve a credible tool including targeted- transparent questions, the questionnaire is revised, and more items are added. Regarding sustainable development, according to Azimi Amoli's (2014) study to exploit the sustainable development variable in the rural community of Iran on the environmental dimension, based on its operational definition and the use and utilization of resources, UNDP (2004), World Bank (2000), OECD (2004), Bakshi and Fiskel (2003), Harmut Bossrl (1999), Turner (1993), Gonzalez and Smith (2000), Redcliffe (1997), Leman and et al. (1991), WHO (2003), Clark and et al. (2007), The United Nations human settlement Program (1996), the Seattle Plan (1996), Seyyed Ali Badri (2001), Seyyed Mehdi Moussa Kazemi (1999), Javdan (2010), Mehdi Qarchlou and Hadi Hosseini (2005), Rural Development Institute of the Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture (2002), Development Documents of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 19 items are selected. In the social dimension, based on its operational definition and according to of cKates (2004), OECD (2004), UNDP (2000), World Bank (2000), Gonzalez and Smith (2000), Sharon and Pepperdine (2000), Roseland (1992), M.Ramesh (2000), Seyyed Ali Badri (2001), Seyyed Mehdi Mosa Kazemi (1999), Darabi (2005), Javdan (2010), Mehdi Qarkhlou and Hadi Hosseini (2005), Development Papers of the Islamic Republic of Iran, United Nations Resettlement Program (1996), Seattle Plan (1996) 39 items are selected. By making some corrections, deleting some unnecessary items, and adding necessary items, a validated and reliable questionnaire was prepared.

4. Findings

Birjand is the capital of south Khorasan and the center of the county Birjand resp. Birjand city, with an area of 31,704 square kilometers, is located in the east of Iran and about 486 kilometers from the provincial capital of Razavi Khorasan, 458-kilometer Sistan and Baluchistan, 586 Kilometer Kerman and 1320 kilometers to Tehran.

According to rural family caregivers, the desirable rural governance situation in rural districts of Birjand, in

terms of rural participation, transparency effectiveness, and efficiency, is less than moderate, and in terms of accountability, is moderate. Desirable rural governance in terms of rule of law, accountability, equity, and consensus-oriented are more than moderate and high. Based on the perceptions of rural family caregivers, the desirable rural governance situation in rural districts is less than average. Sustainable rural development in terms of environmental and economic dimensions is less than average. In general, based on the perceptions of rural family caregivers, the status of sustainable rural development in rural districts of Birjand is less than moderate.

The average sample obtained for rural governance and sustainable rural development in rural areas of Birjand is 2.84 and 2.72, respectively. According to the T-test result, the sample is less than moderate. Table 1 shows the results.

Path analysis and structural equations are used to investigate the relationship between good governance and sustainable development. Table 1 shows the path diagram of the relationship between the variables. The hidden variables in the structural model are good rural governance and sustainable rural development. The rural governance dimensions, as eight obvious variables, measure the hidden variables of rural governance. Also, the dimensions of sustainable development are three explicit and observed variables that measure the hidden variables of sustainable development. Therefore, using confirmatory factor analysis, the ability of the components (good rural governance dimensions and dimensions of

sustainable rural development) investigated in creating these factors (good rural governance and sustainable rural development) shows the factor loads (regression weights) in the implemented model. In this table, since the factor load values are all more than 0.4, and the sig values are less than 0.05, it is concluded that all the obvious variables introduced into the model in measuring the desirable rural governance variables and development Sustainable Rural Are Approved. Among these components, the apparent responsibility variable (0.84) has the highest factor load or effect level, and the equity variable has the least effect (0.48) on creating the optimal hidden rural variable. The economic variable has the highest impact (0.92), and the environmental variable has the least impact (0.57) on creating the sustainable variable of rural development.

In the table below, the values obtained from the goodness of fit index in the research study are presented. Compared with the acceptable values in the above table, it can be concluded that the fitted model for examining research hypotheses at least in one index, in each of the groups of goodness of fit indices has a fitted index.

Table 4 shows the route analysis results. According to the results, since the significance level of the test is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that sustainable rural development has a positive and significant relationship with good rural governance. The correlation and correlation are also 57%.

Table 1. Statistical indicators related to rural governance variables and rural sustainable development

Variables	Statistics			One-Sample Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	C.V	T	df	Sig
participation	2.56	0.72	28.0	-8.57	205	0.000
rule of law	3.23	0.58	0.17	5.78	205	0.000
accountability	2.94	0.73	0.24	-1.003	205	0.317
responsibility	3.15	0.67	0.21	3.29	205	0.001
equity	3.69	0.66	0.17	14.91	205	0.000
consensus oriented	3.27	0.57	0.17	6.75	205	0.000
transparency	2.46	0.90	0.36	-8.44	205	0.000
effectiveness & efficiency	2.41	0.76	0.31	-10.93	205	0.000
rural good governance	2.84	0.56	0.19	-4.05	205	0.000
environmental	2.78	0.62	0.22	-4.903	205	0.000
social	2.96	0.43	0.14	-1.123	205	0.263
economic	2.51	0.45	0.17	-15.109	205	0.000
sustainable rural development	2.72	0.44	0.16	-8.98	205	0.000

Table 2. Regression weights obtained in the implemented model (confirmatory factor analysis)

P	C.R.	Standardized Regression Weights	
0.000	50.70	0.83	participation - - >rural good governance
0.000	79.14	0.79	rule of law- - >rural good governance
0.000	57.96	0.79	accountability - - >rural good governance
0.000	66.85	0.84	responsibility- - >rural good governance
0.000	79.50	0.48	equity - - >rural good governance
0.000	81.13	0.74	consensus oriented - - >rural good governance
0.000	38.92	0.82	transparency - - >rural good governance
0.000	45.54	0.64	effectiveness & efficiency - - >rural good governance
0.000	63.54	0.72	environmental- - >sustainable rural development
0.000	98.99	0.57	social- - >sustainable rural development
0.000	72.49	0.92	economic- - >sustainable rural development



Table 3. Model Fit Summary

RMSEA	PNFI	CFI	TAG	NFI	AGFI	GFI	CMIN/df	Model
0.122	0.565	0.904	0.852	0.867	0.872	0.907	3.06	Default model



Table 4. The resulting coefficients in the implemented model (path analysis)

P	Correlations	Covariances	
0.000	0.57	0.126	sustainable rural development<- - >rural good governance



5. Discussion

The existence of good governance in rural society suggests the realization of such concepts as participation, the rule of law, accountability, equity, consensus-oriented, transparency, and effectiveness and efficiency among villagers and rural authorities. In this approach, the acceptance of the plurality of power resources and social groups existing in the rural areas, the distribution of power at various levels of the rural community and, consequently, the achievement of sustainable development, the creation of mass social networks and rural communities is emphasized to achieve collective action and attention to social capital along with economic-environmental assets and so on. In addition, active participation of all groups and people in rural areas, the poor and marginalized communities, etc., in planning, decision-making, and monitoring of the performance of rural managers and officials, as well as participation in their own resources for realization and the realization of sustainable rural development is essential. Desir-

able governance and sustainable rural development are interconnected. On the one hand, the development and movement toward it will strengthen the principles of good governance in rural development and the quality of life. On the other hand, the creation and strengthening of good rural governance will pave the way for the sustainability of villages in three (ecological, social, and economic) ways. The results of the research in the study area indicate that rural areas in the studied area are not in desirable conditions in terms of good rural governance and sustainable development. It has been shown that there is a positive and significant relationship between good rural governance and sustainable rural development in the studied area. The result has been proved that villages with good governance have better stability.

The path analysis shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between desirable governance and sustainable rural development. The result of this research is aligned with the results of previous studies, including the result of research by Rahmani Fazli. Also, “Rinder-

mann et al. 2015” concluded that good governance or “government effectiveness” had a great impact on productivity and wealth. Therefore, the results of this study are also confirmed by its research results. Also, since “Morita et al. 2007” in their study concluded that good governance is critical to sustainable development, their research results are in the direction of the results of this research.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

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