



# The Role of Rural Managers in the Social, Economic, Physical development of Village: A Case Study in Rezvan village

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this paper is to examine the rural management developments in the country. The rise in urbanization and its problems, such as informal housing, unemployment and pollution propose the living in rural areas as a desirable option. However, sustainable rural development requires institutionalized and efficient rural management with features such as sustainable organizational resources and social participation. Participatory development is an approach that focuses on planners during the planning "by the people and for the people". Self-sufficient village office establishment in the village and rapid expansion of them from early 2001 was the latest development for organizing rural management. However, the persistence of structural problems such as lack of human capital, centralized bureaucracy system and lack of sustainable financial resources are challenges that if to be ignored, they can act as barriers to rural management.*

**Keywords:** *public management, village assistant, Islamic Council of Village, development and participation*

## INTRODUCTION

Modern rural management in Iran has had several developments since its formation. The evolution has started from the official acceptance of "village chief" as the director of the village in the Constitutional period and after gaining the experiences arising from land reform in forty decades of the Islamic Revolution in the late fifties, at present, it has led to the new executive agency known as "village office" responsibility of "village assistant" (Imani Jajaromi, 2009). Public institutions' village assistant is non-governmental which is recently raised for conducting public affairs of villages in the rural management system of country (Akbari, 2003). Management as one of the human social activities has a very long history that may be known as one of the main activities in human social life. Today, by these activities the mission and goals of organizations are accomplished and existing resources and capabilities are utilized and talents of people from potentiality convert to actuality. Management has a very important role in the process of planning and rural development. Without management rural development goals' legitimacy and efficiency will not be achieved therefore, this study considers the role of village assistants as rural managers in socio-economic and physical development.

## Statement of Problem

However, there are many books and studies on the issue of Iran's village, but little attention has been paid to the subject of rural management and historical evaluation of society and rural production system and its compliance and non-compliance with existing theories especially Marx's theory of evolution has attracted the attention of many researchers. Interconnectedness of the production system with other sections of society in village and the predominance of economic issues in terms of agricultural production systems and types of its exploitation are factors that have caused all the books related to the village have paid less attention to the rural management (Azkia and Ghaffari, 2004).

Village with capabilities such as the possibility of providing sustainable living and humanity in small-scale and lack of environmental degradation offers a good idea to reduce the problems. Although, the developing world with immediate acceleration goes towards urbanization (Gugler 1997, 43), urban development should not result in the destruction of villages and the neglect of their ability to provide a quiet life and free from fuss. Now it is important to maintain a rural community in the society along with improving the quality of rural life and reducing their problems. In this regard, rural management plays an important role as pillars of policy making of planning and implementation of rural development programs.

### **Research questions**

Does performance of villages assistant involve in social development of village?

Does performance of villages assistant involve in economic development of village?

Does performance of villages assistant involve in physical development of village?

### **Hypotheses**

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between performance of villages assistant and social development of the village.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a relationship between performance of villages assistant and economic development of the village.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a relationship between performance of villages assistant and physical development of the village.

### **Theoretical framework of study**

In fact, rural management is the process of organizing, leading society and rural environment through the formation of organizations and institutions. These organizations and institutions are means of providing target of rural community. Rural management is a multilateral process which includes three pillars of people, government and public institutions. In this process, rural development programs and projects are developed, implemented and evaluated with the participation of the people and through rural organizations (Rezvani, 2004).

Rural management does not exactly refer to the planned and directional management and customs, habits and traditions have determinant role as well (Taleb, 1997). Rural management as a key component to achieve rural development is influenced by the national macroeconomic strategies and existing approaches in the field of management. Establishment of village office in villages can be considered a turning point in the history of rural management. This new experience will be faced with problems such as the financial resources establishment, the need for specialized training and the mechanisms of participation and rural people partnership in the government of affairs and now rural management is encountered to the following issues:

#### *a. Lack of Rural Management*

Rural management that spends its early days should act based on rural-based management namely village office leadership compared to other organizations. In this regard, legal recreation by providing the necessary legislations and plans and justification of governmental and local officials especially members of the rural Islamic councils and village office are necessary. It is necessary to constitute the local unions of rural management and a public union for effective promotion of rural management requirements and optimal use of resources and capacities and obviously, lack of realization of this issue will repeat problems such as lack of organizational coordination and scattered planning in villages to a large extent parallel to what exists in distributed urban management.

#### *b. Lack of sustainable financial resources*

One of the main challenges facing all local institutions refers to having sufficient and stable financial resources to provide services. Although, the financial resources is predicted for village assistants but it is necessary to identify and define other sustainable income resources such as earnings from tourism by conducting the necessary studies. On the other hand, financial dependence of village offices on central government excludes them from public and non-public nature and gradually transforms them into an institution dependent on government assistance. In this case, there will be little incentive to search innovative

and participatory solutions for providing rural management costs however, state aid due to the large number of villages can only provide part of the cost.

*c. Participation of indigenous people*

Village office and village council are local institutions that their legitimacy and efficacy has a profound relationship with the involvement of local people. Identifying patterns and participation models for small communities and recognition and utilization of cultural experiences and pleasant rural traditions are important steps that should be done for "good rural management" and the distance from the bureaucratic model. These steps need to be studied and researched particularly new discussions such as civic culture and social capital that are neglected (Putnam, 2001).

*d. Training human resources*

Informed and trained manpower is one of the factors that guarantees success of organization. Village assistants are people who play the most important role in the success of village office. Hence, the presence of trained village assistants is one of the basic needs of rural management. Identification of training needs, definition of the curricula and required courses and facilities and training tools are actions that their implementations need to plan and study. Publication of books and magazines with training and informing nature are other measures that can be done.

**Equipment of tools and facilities**

Providing the local primary services such as the provision of hygiene, beautifying the physical environment and safety are necessary for tools and equipment. Small rural settlements make essential the use of certain types of tools for rural management. Also, the issue of the same quality standard of providing after sales services and training the application of practical and managerial programs make essential the appropriate response to the challenges of equipment. Achieving optimal planning is possible when sufficient data and theoretical models to be available for planner to analyze the reality. Given the lack of sufficient research resources for the management of rural affairs and recently establishment of village office, universities and research centers should conduct the necessary actions such as the recognition of international experiences and structural problems and village office performance. The village has an important role in the history of human life in providing the urban food and supplying manpower for urban industries and utilities. Although, with the beginning of modern era the organic connection between town and village has separated to a large extent, the village is always relaxing place for people who are tired of the commotion of the crowded and polluted cities.

**Participatory management**

Participation in the management refers to playing role by commenting, offering suggestion, decision making and accepting responsibility in the field of activities of organization, selection of work type, work development and improvement and distribution of obtained achievement in the management systems in which participation is seen as an essential component of achieving the goals of the organizations and the partnership can be done in different ways (Hosseini, 2002). The purpose of participatory management is to ensure that employees are competent to take effective decisions. Participatory management is an attempt to legitimize the active participation of managers, supervisors and staff in decisions related to their own. Participatory management is a kind of management in which the director in addition to reducing the concentration by involving employees in the mutual decision-making process of the basic motivation of time belonging and patterns to optimize the use of existing facilities (ibid). The best examples of this type of management can be seen in local organizations in which participation is an essential component that its absence will endanger the existence of organization (Rezvani, 2004).

**Methodology**

The field study and documentary methods were used in the study. The questionnaire was used to collect the required data to analyze the activity of village office and its influence on the economic, social and physical

area of village and collected data was analyzed by descriptive methods and statistical analysis in line with hypotheses and research goals. Given the fact that the social, economic and physical status of village is a factor that can affect the performance of the village offices therefore, the characteristics of the studied area are considered briefly in the following.

**Statistical population**

The statistical population is men and women from 35 to 45 year old living in Rezvanvillage and among 1500 village population 46 men and 48 women were selected and among each group 15 males and 15 females were randomly selected and 30 questionnaires were distributed among them. The raw data was analyzed by spss software in two ways of univariate and bivariate and research hypotheses were tested.

**Findings**

This section deals with the descriptive investigation and analysis of the research findings. The first part describes the research findings that at first the dependent variable (rural development) is studied and then the results of the independent variables are described.

In the second part the research findings are analyzed and hypotheses are tested and results are discussed. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of the dependent variables

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of the dependent variables

	Min	Max	Mean	Variance
Performance of village assistant in the field of informing and reporting to the public	1	5	3.39	1.210
Ability of village assistant to attract public participations	3	5	4.21	0.397
Organizing and identifying orphaned family	1	5	3.46	1.962
village assistant's judgment and his attempt to resolve people's problems	1	4	2.57	0.698
Performance of village assistant in preventing the migration of villagers	3	5	4.39	0.396
Full care and effort in installation of cost sheet on goods	2	4	3.25	0.565
Ability of village assistant to provide toll tariffs and duties	1	5	4.07	1.106
Identifying the areas of employment and assistance in providing workforce	2	5	3.68	0.522
Supplying the required land ownership with objectives and tasks of village office	3	5	3.89	0.396
Supervision of construction	3	4	3.36	0.238
Supplying facilities and public facilities of the village	1	5	2.11	1.581

In this section, the hypotheses proposed in the theoretical foundation and in analytical model of study were tested with reliable statistical test. First, hypotheses were tested through bivariate analysis.

**First hypothesis**

There is a direct relationship between the effectiveness of the social role of villages assistant and rural development.

The hypothesis was tested by using analysis of variance (ANOVA). As shown in Table 2, the significance level equals to .007. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a direct relationship between the performance of social role of villages assistant efficiently and rural development.

**Table 2.** ANOVA for the effectiveness of the social role of villages assistant and rural development

Variance		Df		F	Sig.
Between groups	3.363	11	306.	3.900	0.007
Within groups	1.25	16	0.078		
Total	4.617	27			

**The second hypothesis**

There is a direct relationship between the effectiveness of the economic role of villages assistant and rural development.

This hypothesis was tested by analysis of variance (ANOVA). According to the Table 3, the significance level equals to .01. Thus, the second hypothesis was verified.

**Table 3.** The effectiveness of the economic role of village assistant and rural development

Variance		Df	Mittel der Quadrat	F	Sig.
Between groups	2.891	9	0.321	3.348	0.014
Within groups	1.727	18	0.096		
Total	4.617	27			

**The third hypothesis**

There is a direct correlation between the effectiveness of the physical role of village assistant and rural development.

The variance analysis test (ANOVA) was used to examine the third hypothesis. Due to the amount of significance level (sig = 0.1) there is not any correlation between the effectiveness of the physical role of villages assistant and rural development and H<sub>3</sub> is rejected.

**Table 4.**ANOVA for the effectiveness of the physical role of village assistant and rural development

Variance		Df	Mittel der Quadrate	F	Significance level
Between groups	2.300	9	0.256	1.985	0.103
Within groups	2.317	18	0.129		
Total	4.617	27			

### Conclusion

The results indicate that the performance of village assistant influence the economic and social development. Thus, according to the theoretical foundation the success rate of village assistant will be higher with existence of suitable administrative and organizational structures. In other words, providing state aid services and financial and administrative support (at least in the beginning) can guarantee the survival of village offices. The impact of economic factors in the success of village offices can be viewed in different ways. Obviously, if a good economic situation to be provided for inhabitants of a village, they participate more in village affairs. Accordingly, village assistant will deal with appropriate conditions to perform his duties and the more participatory rate of people increase village assistant's success in the social area. Therefore, it seems that one way for rural development is the use of local management and village office establishment is one of the solutions that the presence of a literate and enable village assistant can increase the success more.

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