Analysis of the Factors Affecting the Diversification of Non-Agricultural Economics and its Impact on the Sustainability of Rural Settlements: A Case Study of Sarvelayat Division, Neyshabur County

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Extended Abstract

1- Introduction

Structural weakness of rural areas around the country leads villagers to migrate to urban areas looking for better opportunities; phrases like "having no future", or "lack of opportunity", which is clearly stated in comments of rural migrants, reveal the fact that a new paradigm must be taken into consideration in order to solve the problem of rural-urban migration. Sustainable rural development has a cross-sectoral nature in this paradigm which includes important issues like developing infrastructure, decentralization, strengthening local institutions, diversification of income sources as well as insisting on non-agricultural activities, in addition to agriculture and providing food security; this happens through providing infrastructure and empowering the villagers to have a tendency toward non-agricultural payrolls and removing their challenges, whether through empowering internal factors in villages or through state and external policies to control and reinforce bases and foundations of sustainable rural economy, etc.

2- Theoretical Framework

Sustainable rural economy is an approach to develop in which efficiency, justice, and sustainability are mixed together in a manner that efficiency guarantees optimal use of natural resources, justice guarantees poverty alleviation and removing the gap between the rich and the poor yet the aim of sustainability is sustainable livelihood in keeping with the future livelihood through conserving natural resources. Traditionally, non-agricultural economy of a village is taken into consideration as a descending section with low productivity which rural farmer households consider as a supplementary to their income next to agriculture during the time, however, its role in reducing poverty and economic growth in developing countries has been clearly revealed since 1990s. The role of non-agricultural economy in the potential development of rural areas and recruiting unemployed rural workforce, etc. is highly studied in the previous two decades. Additionally, 1. Corresponding author: nshsabet@yahoo.com
non-agricultural activities in rural areas not only reduce the flow of migration out of villages but also motivate the reverse flow.

3- Methodology
This study uses an analytical method and a survey in the form of 5 underlying components of non-agricultural payrolls (environmental, social, economic, structural, and political) and their effects on sustainability of rural settlements in Sarvelayat section of Neyshabur town. In order to analyze the underlying components of creation and development of non-agricultural payrolls, this study takes advantage of 5 components of environmental, social, economic, structural-infrastructure, and political systems; afterwards, survey techniques, such as targeted interviews and questionnaire, were used to analyze the role of underlying components of non-agricultural payrolls on the sustainability of rural settlements which include questionnaire of rural families' heads and rural questionnaire. Therefore, the single-sample t-test in SPSS software was used to survey the relationship among underlying components of non-agricultural payrolls and, in the next step, measure of Kendall Tau link was used to survey the relation between underlying components of non-agricultural payrolls and sustainability of rural settlements. Finally, the multivariate regression test was used to survey the effects of underlying components of non-agricultural payrolls on sustainability of rural settlements of Sarvelayat section. In the end, direct and indirect effects of underlying components on developing and distributing non-agricultural payrolls were analyzed.

4- Results & Discussion
Generally, findings reveal the unfavorable situation of the underlying components of non-agricultural payrolls in a manner that except the components of the environmental system and structural-infrastructure system which is related to the natural and infrastructural network, the rest of underlying social, economic, and political components show a level lower than average which reveals an apparent contradiction with the sustainable approach in the studied area.

5- Conclusions & Suggestions
Generally, the findings reveal the unfavorable situation of non-agricultural underlying components so that components of social, economic, and political systems, such as state institutions investment and information dispersion forces in both social (empowering villagers in the dimensions of education, awareness of social and economic issues of their own village and …) and economic (investment, distribution of credits and government's financial support in providing bank facilities and loans to villagers and …) dimensions, the amount of agricultural production as well as availability of animal and agricultural products in order to create transformative and supplementary industries in villages, financial and the earning situation of villagers due to agricultural activities as the facilitating agent to create non-agricultural activities, motivation among villagers to create non-agricultural payrolls, effectiveness of young and skilled workforce in villages,
social and economic cooperation of villagers in local organizations, etc. was not enough to pave the way for the creation and dispersion of non-agricultural payrolls. Therefore, it is essential that the following presuppositions and suggestions are more noticed in relation to facilitating indices of social, economic, and political empowerment:

- Improving cognitive and skilled fields of villagers through empowering educational sources and a suitable system of dispersion and information to reach a rural society of aware, wise, creative, entrepreneur, and flexible people.
- Encouraging villagers to participate in group activities in various economic and social fields as well as understanding the economic and social benefits of collective work compared to individual work to lead villagers to create and develop non-agricultural activities, etc.

**Key words:** Economy diversification, Non-agricultural occupation, sustainability of rural settlements, Sarvelayt section of Neyshabur town

**References (in Persian)**


**References (in English)**


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