

Investigating the District Inequality in the Towns of Khuzestan Province

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Extended abstract

1. Introduction

Development means a consciously institutionalized effort, based on planning for the social and economic development of societies. It is dedicated to the twentieth century which first began in 1917 in the former Soviet Union. Today, the argument of development is the main concern of many countries. In principle, development means a fundamental change in the economic, social, and cultural variables of each society and its realization involves the coordination among its various dimensions.

2. Theoretical Framework

The problem of inequality is the major challenge toward development in many countries, particularly for those countries whose governance realm includes wide geographic areas. These inequalities are a serious threat to the achievement of balanced development of regions and make the achievement at national unity and integrity difficult. People who live in the suburb of the countries aren't generally considered in the development plans and policies, resulting in degradation of their social and economic development. Presence of these inequalities leads to increasing the development gap among the developed and non-developed regions and eliminating the concept of social and economic justice. Deprivation of deprived regions will be continued and central regions will concentrate their facilities. This not only has not led to the growth of the country but also made the overall development process more unfair and slower.

3. Methodology

The approach employed in this study is developmental-applied approach and the method used is descriptive-analytical. It tries to determine and analyze the regional development levels of 24 towns of Khuzestan province in 2013. In this study, in order to study the regional development of this province, 104 components related to economic, health, communicational, installation-service, cultural, educational,

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and social – demographic indices derived from statistical yearbook 2013 were used. In order to analyze the data and finally rate the towns, VIKOR, TOPSIS, Electra models and Models of Integration (average of ranks, Borda, and Kaplan) have been used. Also, to make the development situation more evident by using ArcGIS software, towns were classified into five categories as developed, relatively developed, developing, relatively undeveloped, and undeveloped and a map of development level has been drawn for the towns.

4. Results and Discussion

The main objective of this research is to analyze the level of regional development in the towns of Khuzestan province in 2013. To this end, in order to specify the level of development in the towns of Khuzestan province, 104 indicators of development across 24 towns were used by using VIKOR, TOPSIS, Electra models as well as the integration model (average of ratings, the Breda method, and the Caplan model) to measure the development and rank of each province. According to the VICOR model, the two cities of Behbahan and Baghmalek are in the fully developed region and three cities including Shadegan, Bawi, and Andika are in the less-developed region. Based on Topsis model, Haftegal, Hendijan, Behbahan, Lali, and Masjedsoleiman have been in the developing cities and Dasht-e- -Azadegan, Omidieh, Abadan, Baghmalek, Gotvand, Hoveizeh, Ramhormoz, Ramshir, Ahvaz, Andimeshk, Khorramshahr, Mahshahr Port, Shushtar, Indika, Shush, Izeh, Shush, Dezful, Shadegan, and Bavi have been in the relatively undeveloped cities. Based on Electra model, cities including Haftegal, Behbahan, Hendijan, Masjed Soleiman, and Lali are in the developed region and cities including Dezful, Izeh, Hoveizeh, and Shadegan are in the less-developed region, respectively. By combining the final results of these three methods (VIKOR, TOPSIS, Electra) through integration method, the cities of this province are classified into various development levels where the cities of Hafgal, Behbahan, and Hendijan are the developed and the cities of Dezful, Shadegan, and Bavi are the least developed ones in terms of the development indices.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

From Long ago, development has been in all areas of man's life simultaneous with decision and thinking of man for upgrading the level of life quality. To know the level of development of areas, it is necessary to first examine the existing status of each area so that the causes of the difference can be identified in the next step and regional planning is done in order to reduce or eliminate them. The results of this research about the level of development are consistent with those of other researchers (Antonescu, 2012; Ghaedi et al., 2013; Hosseini et al., 2015; Salvati et al., 2016) mentioned in the literature section. All the presented studies confirm this issue that because of the lack of fair distribution of services and facilities as well as lack of accurate planning for the development of regions, inequality of the regions and the lack of integrated development are created, hence it is necessary to rate the regions in terms of development in order to infer the regional inequality and eliminate this inequality. Recognizing the regional inequalities and rating them

in the regional level lead to better management of regions. With regard to the findings, the followings are suggested:

1. Creating the planning areas in the province and city levels. This is because of the fact that it is impossible to implement the province plans due to the extent of areas and departments and they need to be operated at a lower level. Therefore, creating the intermediate areas between the province and the city to reach the optimal level that considers the interests of the region in line with the province plan is necessary.
2. Implementing bottom-top policies and plans. Given that most decisions of Khuzestan province are made in Ahvaz city, these concentrated policies should become less.

Since each province has its own opportunities, limitations, and expertise, what can help reduce the inequality across Khuzestan province is the specialization of each region toward achieving the development ground and creating the regional balances.

Key Words: Development, Inequality, Integration model, Khuzestan province

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