

# Considering the Role of People's Cooperation in Sustainable Agriculture in Rural Areas

(Case Study: upper Ijrood Villages, Ijrood County,  
Zanjan Province)

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## Extended Abstract

### Introduction

Sustainable agriculture can be more objective than fit into the conceptual framework and it is closely associated with rational behavior. The result of such perspective is that sustainable agriculture is an activity based on rationality. The beginning of the formation of stable rationality requires training to create intellectual flexibility for the farmers in order to acquire knowledge and understanding of these issues. In the meantime, partnership is an approach that has an important role in solving this problem and has the ability to create the space for learning to understand the concepts of sustainable agriculture and rational behavior of operators. In fact, participation is a process with mental flexibility and mobility of thought in its heart and by creating a space for dialogue between farmers, agricultural promoters and service organizations, it provides the ground for training and information exchange and it is effective in achieving the objectives and principles of sustainable agriculture.

### Methodology

Generally, the method of this study is such that sustainable agriculture is considered as a knowledge system of operation and partnership approach as a tool for generating knowledge and providing a context for learning and training in agricultural activities. The process has been developed in order to investigate knowledge, commitment, responsibility, and rational decision-making as components of sustainability and to illustrate the connection between sustainability and public participation as a factor, based on a conceptual model of the research. Then the partnership of the components with the component of stability was analyzed and the results were discussed. Eventually, the principles of sustainable agriculture were achieved in the operation and partnership patterns can be effective in various formations of mechanization, agricultural implementations and services, machinery maintenance, marketing and supply markets, conversion industries, packaging industries, construction of warehouses storing agricultural products, production in controlled areas, analytical performance, education or training in the framework and participation in the operation of water and soil conservation.

### Findings

The findings suggest that sustainable thinking has not yet been formed among farmers and the context that needs understanding the principles has not been provided in the region. The average level of participation in settlements is with 2.27 lower than the theoretical median. While the average indicators of participation in the process of thinking

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were not in a good situation and in all cases they were lower than the expected theoretical median, the results of the Spearman correlation test show that there is a direct correlation between participation and sustainable agriculture with the correlation coefficient of 0.557 and significant coefficient level of 0.038. As a result of this relationship, the mechanism shaped in the process of thinking raises from participation. The components of the mechanism are knowledge, commitment, responsibility, and rational decision-making and sustainable farming systems make a connection between them in the production process. Spearman test results indicate that between the elements there is a direct relationship (commitment and responsibility with rational decision making, commitment and responsibility with knowledge) with the correlation coefficients of 0.378 and 0.448. The correlation between rational decision-making and sustainable agriculture is the correlation coefficient of 0.558. Finally, considering the low level of participation in rural areas, the status of agriculture is not good with an average of 1.93.

### **Conclusion**

Today, considering the performance of the partnership approach among extension approaches, paying attention to it is required in order to improve sustainable agriculture in the region. Therefore, changing the attitudes of farmers is the policy to create sustainable thinking in farmers with the help of the authorities in terms of participatory institutions and NGOs to promote the knowledge of farmers. Otherwise, any movement in this field will be associated with high costs and also the result would not be satisfying.

**Keywords:** Collaboration, Knowledge, Commitment, Rational decision- making, Sustainable agriculture, upper Ijrood.

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