

# Promoting Villages to Towns and its Role in Changing Rural – Urban Interactions

*Archives of SID*  
(Case Study: Beyza' Town, Fars Province)

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## Extended Abstract

### Introduction

Promoting villages to towns is among the prominent characteristics of urbanization in few past decades and remains as a major challenge facing managers, policymakers and urban planners, particularly in developing countries. In Iran, one of the growing impacts of rapid urbanization on the spatial structure of country is growing the number of urban centers via transformation villages to small towns. Changes in the criteria for separating villages from cities have led to increasing in number of cities from 520 in late 1991 to 1,167 in 2012. In fact, the main objectives of facilitating the promotion of villages to towns are Improving quality of life, better facilities and services and optimizing the gaps between political systems and eliminating or reduction economic and social inequalities between urban and rural areas, as well as coordinating a balanced development tool for rural and urban

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settlements. Certainly, creating and strengthening of rural-urban interactions require an appropriate and efficient network with organized different hierarchical levels. In the hierarchy of urban settlements, hierarchy, small towns have a significant place, because of their substantial roles in establishing and strengthening the links between rural-urban settlements and their relationships. Therefore one of the effective strategies in this regard is creating, strengthening and developing small towns in rural areas. Fars province in Iran is among the provinces which have experienced this phenomenon in past two decades and include a large number of these small towns. Now, this is a basic question that were promoting of villages to towns and forming small towns in rural areas is effective in rural and regional development, as well as strengthening rural-urban interactions or not.

### Methodology

This research is based on the studies on Beyza district in Sepidan Township, Fars province, for assessing the Promotion of Villages to Town, and its role for enhancement of Rural – Urban Interactions. This article has reviewed and analyzed the type as well as quantity and quality of spatial interactions between Beyza town and its surrounding villages before and after its transformation to a town. The type of research is descriptive-analytic and its data has been gathered through documentary field methods. Beyza district includes 82 villages and Beyza town. Beyza town was formed by merging two villages (Harabal and Poshtbagh) in 1999. In this study, the authors examined following issues, before and after the transition of Beyza to town:

- The flow of administrative, educational, shopping and health dealings between villages and town;
- Rural road the traffic and transportation situation of rural roads, the distances and types of vehicles.

Due to the homogeneity of the study area, 28 rural settlements have been selected

for field studies. In sample villages, 334 rural households (15%) and 86 urban households in Beyza town (15% of all) have been selected as the sample size using cluster sampling. The results have been presented by maps, tables and statistical analysis.

## **Discussion and Results**

The results showed that there has been a gradual and positive increase in functional linkages and spatial relationships between Beyza and its surrounding areas. The findings of this study showed that promoting Harabal and Poshtbagh villages to town acted an important role in development of spatial interactions in this region. The sphere of influence of Beyza has expanded significantly after promotion to town, because of enhancing the quantity and quality of services. Comparing the amount of traveling rural families to Beyza in the mentioned periods revealed a significant difference between the periods with increasing the households from 3.9 to 64.3 percent. Also Wilcoxon test confirmed significant differences in the high-level. Improving the quantity and quality of services delivery in Beyza town has caused about 90 percent of sample households visit this town daily or at least once per week. The majority of rural and urban households believe that the quality and quantity of services in this town has increased after becoming a town. Moreover, 75.6 percent of urban households believe in increasing the levels of services in Beyza by transforming to a town. After that, due to establishing facilities and administrative services and increasing commercial services in town, it is referred as the first urban center for delivering needed services.

## **Conclusion**

In the past two decades, the policy of promoting villages to town has changed the hierarchy of urban and rural settlements as well as the spatial interactions in Iran. This policy has included both positive and negative consequences. In this case study,

it was determined that promotion villages to town has increased spatial relationships and interactions between the town and surrounding villages and hinterland's has expanded compared with before becoming a town. The results of the research have showed that the Beyza town plays a key role in offering services to the surrounding areas, which consequently reduces the dependency of rural areas to the big urban centers. The results also showed that the promotion of villages to towns in rural and regional development has been successful. These findings are consistent with many other studies with optimistic views towards the mentioned issue. Generally, formation of small towns in rural areas with regard to efficiency criteria and standards of scientific experiments includes positive effects on rural-urban interactions. It also improves the spatial structure of rural areas. Therefore, logical and scientific criteria and standards should be developed in consistent with the strategy of developing small towns.

**Keywords:** Promoting, Transformation, Village, Town, Rural-Urban Interactions, Beyza Town, Fars Province.

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