

Role of Small Towns in Improving Quality of Life in Surrounding Villages

Case Study: Roniz District, Estahban County

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Received: 06/06/2013 Accepted: 24/12/2013

Extended Abstract

Introduction

Several strategies have been raised and studied for rural development including the development and fortification of small towns. Researchers believe that small cities as a chain ring between cities and villages, provided their development and fortification, can lead to development in their surrounding rural areas in various aspects. So, the strength and growth of small Towns couldn't be overlooked in the process of rural development planning because these centers provide amenities and services to rural areas and have an effective role in the rural areas' development. Quality of Life development is one of the roles that small towns can play in their surrounding rural areas. So, in this paper we try to answer two questions by studying the role of Roniz City as a city of Fars Province (Estahban County): A) has Roniz as a small towns played any effective role to improve the life quality of surrounding villages? And B) what are the differences among villages, based on the role and function of Roniz City in improving life quality?

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Method

The research method of the present study is the descriptive analytical one that relies on both library and field methods. Hence, we selected 8 villages out of the total 20 neighboring villages regarding criteria such as their population, their distance from the Roniz city and paying attention to spatial distribution of the villages in our study field. These candidates are as follows: Lower Roniz, Dehoyeh, Ali Abad, Gordeh, Mahfarkhan, Banevan, Mohammad Abad and Ghashamghavi. Our statistical population in this research is the native residents of these rural areas. In questionnaire method, using Cochran's formula, we determined 320 households as our randomly sampling content. Domains and indices we have selected include 9 domains and 42 indices. It is worth mentioning that we analyzed our data using SPSS (descriptive and deductive statistics).

Results

Our findings show that the most important effect of Roniz city in improving life quality relates to the aspects of infrastructures' quality, individual welfare, education and culture. We found a significant difference between the sampled villages in all of 8 aspects of life quality and we also found out that Roniz city plays its role in life quality improvement of the villages Ali Abad, Mahfarkhan and Lower Roniz respectively. It plays its least role in that of the villages Mohammad Abad and Ghashamghavi. We also studied satisfaction level in life quality of residents in the country of Roniz before and after being changed into a city that suggests an increase in residents' satisfaction through this transition.

Results

Researchers and planners believe that the fortification of small cities can resolve many existing problems in surrounding rural areas and can lead to their development in various realms. This support and fortification has positive effects on neighboring villages including life quality improvement of these rural areas. So in this study, we

studied the role of Roniz in improving life quality of the residents of the surrounding villages. Our results show that Roniz City has provided an improvement of 7 quality areas in the neighboring under-study villages but has had no success in the quality of recreations and leisure times and also in its employment and income of those neighboring rural areas. We also found that the distance factor from Roniz has an effective role in the life quality of sampled villages such a way that going close to the city brings higher life quality and going away from the city leads to lower life quality.

Keywords: Quality of life, Rural development, Roniz City, Small towns.

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