

Research Paper

Analysis of Structural Characteristics of Social Capital in Society Oriented Rural Management Establishment (Aliabad Hashtsadmetri Village, Rigan District, Kerman Province)

*Mahdi Ghorbani¹, Sareh Rasekhi², Azad Karami³

1. Associate Professor, Department of Reclamation of Arid and Mountainous Regions, Faculty of Natural Resources, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.

2. PhD Graduate, Department of Range Management, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

3. MSc. Student, Department of Reclamation of Arid and Mountainous Regions, Faculty of Natural Resources, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.



Citation: Ghorbani, M., Rasekhi, S., & Karami, A. (2017). [Structural Characteristics Analysis of Social Capital in Community-Based Rural Management Establishment (Rigan District, Kerman Province) (Persian)]. *Journal of Rural Research*, 8(2):228-241. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22059/JRUR.2017.62673>

doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22059/JRUR.2017.62673>

Received: 05 Jul. 2016

Accepted: 11 Dec. 2016

Key words:

Community-based management, Structural characteristics, Social network analysis, Social capital, Ali Abad Hashtsad Metri Village

ABSTRACT

Community-based management of rural communities is of high importance and priority, as it facilitates development transition period of a region. Accordingly, it is incumbent upon all beneficiaries to turn it into a reality. Reinforcement of social capital, especially its structural characteristics, entails more its tangible aspects and enables actors to communicate effectively with one another. Appraisal of structural characteristics of bonding and bridging social capital of rural microfund committees was carried out in the present study in an attempt to establish rural community-based management in Ali Abad Hashtsad Metri village as a part of the project of local communities empowerment. Trust and participation ties were investigated both prior and after project implementation by applying network analysis questionnaire and direct interviews. It was found out that network ties and social capital increased after project implementation. Once a project is accomplished, institutionalization, sustainability, trust and participation transfer within the network are enhanced. Thus, by further reinforcement of social capital through trust building and encouraging users to participate, the way is paved for community-based management.

Extended Abstract**1. Introduction**

Socially-oriented management and sustainable development of rural areas are among priorities of the country that facilitates, accelerates, and decrease the troubles of transitional period of the development. This method of management includes sustainable development tools and capacity building activities in different levels, especially bottom-

up ones. It also includes participatory monitoring and evaluation activities.

Today, many rural development projects are done in different fields, especially on the environment and resources, by local people through their local structures. In this approach, both people and government are providers and decision makers. Under the scheme of local community-based management, multivariate processes are developed and representatives of the groups are actively interacting. These interactions are based on cooperation of the members of the local community. Therefore, all stakeholders should engage in this process. However, participation

*** Corresponding Author:****Mahdi Ghorbani, PhD****Address:** Department of Reclamation of Arid and Mountainous Regions, Faculty of Natural Resources, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.**Tel:** +98 (912) 7695257**E-mail:** mehghorbani@ut.ac.ir

won't be achieved unless the social capital is realized, and social capital won't be realized without the trust and ties among the actors. Social capital is a trust which enables actors to effectively relate with each other and finally group targets. Social capital is a platform for human, economic, and physical resources and its lack will result in decreasing efficiency of other resources. Moreover, without social capital, cultural and economic development will be very difficult. As a result, trust and collaboration are two main dimensions of social capital for gaining socially-oriented management. To put it in a different way, social capital or the economic and human capital can be accounted as the main parts of national wealth suitable for exploitation of human and physical capital and a way to achieve success.

In this research, structural characteristics of social capital are mainly discussed that includes more visible aspects. These aspects will create horizontal and vertical relations and will improve social capital. It is possible to evaluate social capital at two different dimensions (in-group and out-group). In-group social capital only links the same groups and out-group social capital joins different social groups and has a positive impact on social and capital growth.

2. Methodology

In this study, analysis and assessment of social capital characteristics are carried out using in-group and out-group dimensions among members of rural microfunds and toward gaining socially-oriented rural management in Ali Abad Hashtsad Metri Village, Rigan District, Kerman Province and under Rehabilitation of Forest Landscapes and Degraded Land (RFLDL) project. A total of 66 people in 8 rural microfunds were selected. A social network questionnaire was designed and through direct observation and interviews were completed. In this research, all networks for study community with all members were investigated. Finally, the obtained data were fed into UCINET 6.507 and by using social network analysis, all indices were highlighted. With respect to research aims and scopes, social capital is discoverable if mutual relations are addressed and judging it only based on density index is not true. Therefore, social analysis will investigate density, reciprocity, and transitivity of social capital at the same time. In this research, trust and collaboration links are investigated using different indices and at two different time periods (before and after the project).

3. Results

The results from major indices showed that cohesion or closeness of the network during two periods of monitoring, before and after the project, and in two dimensions

had impressive incensement. Therefore, it has affected social capital of actors. The results also revealed that during the implementation of the project, trust and collaboration among stakeholders had improved and sustainability and structural balance increased. Investigation of mean indicator of geodesic distance demonstrated an increment in transition speed of trust and collaboration between stakeholders in the study area.

Finally, the study results show that social capital has increased inside and outside the group of local stakeholders and improves trust and collaboration in the society actors. It also increases the resilience and stability of the society, so that the community-based management had a full positive and successful upswing in the region.

4. Discussion

This to conclude that RFLDL project with creation of an appropriate atmosphere for improvement of collaborative manner and cooperation among actors and increasing of relations among them and improvement of cohesion and efficiency of team working will result in social capital improvement among the stakeholders and this will lead to trust building and tendency of stakeholders to cooperate and finally will end up in the success of socially-oriented management.

5. Conclusion

Once a project is accomplished, institutionalization, sustainability, trust and participation transfer within the network are enhanced. Thus, by further reinforcement of social capital through trust building and encouraging users to participate, the way is paved for community-based management.

Acknowledgments

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.