

Research Paper

Localization of Indicators of Social Capital in Rural Areas of Iran

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ABSTRACT

Given the potential role of social capital in reducing poverty and enhancing sustainable development, there have been many attempts to design assessment tools for it. Social capital is a complex concept with multiple measures. This feature requires a set of indicators to compare its different aspects. In this context, the question is what the localization process indicators of social capital are in rural areas of Iran. The scientific solution to the problem needs an appropriate set of indicators to measure social capital in rural areas of Iran. The present paper used cross-surveys and feedback from experts, and academics. We also used the Delphi method to provide appropriate indicators and criteria which have been localized. For data analysis, statistical methods such as mean and variance were calculated using Excel and SPSS. Based on the findings in the total number of 9 components, 18 indexes and 53 indicators were selected that are compatible with rural areas of Iran. Moreover, by localization of social capital indicators in sustainable rural development, it is possible to select the indicators that are consistent and comply with Iranian villages, operational aspects, and applicable to these components. Also indexes and indicators in sustainable rural development programs will be considered.

Keywords:

Social capital, Rural sustainable development, Localization of indicators, Rural areas, Iran

Extended Abstract**1. Introduction**

The historical experience of developed countries made it clear that rural sustainable development is a necessary foundation for national development and should be a priority in the development agenda.

The concept of sustainable development as development is underway to develop a variety of ways to express concepts as varied as the landscapes, exchanging values and

moral development, social reorganization, transformation process towards a better future, environmental quality environment, empowering the people, creating new capacity, respect for indigenous knowledge, awareness-raising and information, the satisfaction of getting people into their lives and freedom of choice and equality in access to opportunities is taken in to consideration that all of which somehow explains the central idea of sustainable development that "meets the needs of the present generation to consider the needs of future generations". According to literature review, sustainable development became a serious issue in the first decade of the 20th century and in

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the following decades, a movement started to determine its indicators. Initially economic indicators such as GDP and GNP became common as the overall indicators of a nation well-being.

During the 60s and 70s, some researchers protested to the criteria and methods, so that the social indicators were also appeared in the spotlight. In this regard, with the introduction of the collective investment in development, another type of capital was introduced as "social capital." In many studies, including sustainable development, rural development has been mentioned as a fundamental challenge, and scientists and planners were attracted to it more and more. In this regard, the World Bank, which allocated a large part of its activities to investigate and develop studies on the underdeveloped countries, assigned a separate part to the relationship between social capital and development of the countries. With regard to theoretical research, a lot of projects and studies have done on criteria and influence of social capital, including the definition and localization of the social capital, operationalization of the concept in different countries and solutions to development. Since the social capital, like other social phenomena arises in the historical and social context, application of measures of social capital outside of a particular cultures, institutional environment and historical context and power structures is one of the major problems and challenges in the field. In order to solve this problem, various approaches have been proposed by researchers.

Rose (1999) used three theoretical approaches for the analysis of social capital and conceptually divided them into three categories. First and important category is "theoretical position," in which social capital has been defined based on position and tool, i.e., this type of social capital is different from person to person and from one situation to another one. The second category is known as "psychosocial approach" and implies that social capital is a set of beliefs and cultural norms. Finally, the third category, "cultural theory," which considers culture as a source of trust and cooperation. In fact, according to this theory, social capital among individuals belonging to similar culture (society), as well as adapts is homogeneous from situation to another. Thus, it is essential that social capital is identified for a particular culture such as a country or a particular geographical area. So in order to check the current status of rural areas of Iran in terms of social capital and due to its remarkable impact on rural sustainable development, it is essential to define social capital in sustainable rural development and identify its indicators. Scientific and more accurate assessment should be conducted on the status of the social capital of rural areas. So in this paper, the above objectives are pursued by relying

on "localization approach." In this context the question of how to do the localization process indicators of social capital in rural areas of Iran? and what are the most important indicators of social capital?

2. Methodology

To answer this question in a scientific way and create an appropriate set of indicators to measure social capital in rural areas of Iran, the present article by using descriptive-analytical method; survey research; and consulting with experts, academics, and field specialists (including 15 professors, researchers, and managers) through Delphi method has attempted to provide appropriate and localized indicators. Also, for data analysis, statistical indexes such as mean and variance were calculated by Excel and SPSS.

3. Results

Based on the findings, a total number of 9 components, 18 indexes, and 53 indicators were selected that are compatible with the rural areas of Iran. Selected indicators are mental participation, physical participation, formal participation, membership in government networks and departments, membership in private network and groups, insurance services, security services in rural areas, physical security, personal knowledge, using the experiences of others, commitments and agreements, values and attitudes, interpersonal trust, generalized trust, institutional trust, interaction and conflict, relationships within the group and between groups, and out of group relations

4. Discussion

In order to select criteria of social capital, at first, social capital indicators were listed. In the second step, the primary indicators in rural sustainable development were screened and trimmed to the main indicator. Then, these indicators were analyzed based on their frequency in the different sources and the more frequent indicators were extracted. So based on survey studies and opinions of experts, the appropriate and localized social capital indicators in rural development areas were set and identified. In this context, based on the theoretical foundations and according to the results presented in Table 2, we excluded a lot of indicators and parameters which were repetitive or not compatible to the geographic conditions and socio-cultural structure of Iran rural areas. Also some indicators due to their nature were replaced with similar compatible ones with the culture of Iran society and thus a localized measure of social capital for rural areas of Iran were found.

5. Conclusion

Based on literature review, the localization process, which implies intellectual liberation and reevaluation of major Western development paradigms, has raised new forms of development that are based on knowledge and requirements of the third world people and generally is against outside professional views. Such a development essentially is neither against Western methods nor ignores the human experiences, but presents a more realistic view of development, reflecting the certain geographical and historical context. In fact, development opposes efforts to shape the people based on global models, which are kinds of racism and predefined standard, and reminds development authorities to consider the differences and learn from them. Moreover, through localization of social capital indicators in sustainable rural development, it is possible to not only select the indicators that are consistent and comply with the Iranian villages conditions, but also consider the operational aspects and application of these indicators in sustainable rural development programs.