

Research Paper

Analysis of the Impact of the Geographical Labor Market Dichotomy in Rural Regions: A Case Study of Harsin County

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to analysis the impact of geographic labor market dichotomy on rural regions in Harsin County by using a qualitative research method. Content analysis was performed through a descriptive-analytical technique. The data were gathered by semi-structured interviews with 20 key participators that had transferred from a primary labor market to a secondary labor market. It was shown that; physical and psychological problems, reduction of individual freedom, welfare and financial problems, family problems, migration and going away from rural affairs, behavioral and social culture degradation, reduction of social communication, personal and domestic problems, financial problems, lack of saving, and security problems are the main challenges posed by the geographical dichotomy of the labor market in the county of Harsin. However, the geographical dichotomy of the labor market in the study area has positive economic, social, cultural and individual impacts too.

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Labor market crisis and insufficiency of jobs over the past decade has been one of the main concerns in many countries. Studies have showed that labor market problems and regional unbalanced spatial disparities are more tangible in developing countries. In this regard, despite the goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran delineated for the 2021 development horizon to

create equal opportunities and proper distribution of income, the census data on population and housing in Iran reflect the fact that the distribution of regional labor market indicators in urban and rural areas has not been fixed yet. Indeed, as statistics suggest, the level of labor market development is better in urban areas than in rural areas. This has caused discrimination in the level of labor markets against rural areas and, as a result, an increase in the economic dichotomy of labor markets between urban and rural areas. Differences in the primary labor market (in urban areas) and secondary labor market (in rural areas) have led to the creation of a gap in the labor market of

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rural areas. It has also caused such phenomena as full migration, seasonal migration and everyday movement of seasonal job seekers from rural areas to urban areas. This phenomenon has desirable effects on the economic, social and cultural state of affairs in rural areas, but it exerts adverse effects on gender balance in rural areas; the rural community starts getting old. Some other adverse consequences of this phenomenon are the removal of occupational positions from urban job seekers, identity disorders, rapid and ungrounded cultural changes in rural areas, getting away from family, and family problems. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative research was to analyze the impact of the geographical labor market dichotomy on rural regions of *Harsin* County.

2. Methodology

The research was conducted based on a qualitative paradigm as a pathologist approach for analyzing the impact of the geographical labor market dichotomy on rural regions in *Harsin* County. The participants in the study included all the laborers working in factories, service centers and offices outside their area of residence in the county of *Harsin*. They were selected through a purposeful snowball sampling. The data were collected until saturation through interviews with 20 key participants. The interviews were performed in conformity with the participatory rural appraisal methodology and were of such types as individual semi-structural interviews, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Each interview lasted around 50 minutes. The data was analyzed using relational content descriptive analysis and by an open coding method in the grounded theory paradigm. The key notes about the data collection were interaction with the participants under normal circumstances and avoidance of bias in interviewing and interpreting the expressed opinions. The reliability of the results was also tested and validated. For triangulation, the "data pluralism" strategy was used; this strategy emphasizes the gathering of data from different sources.

3. Results

The analysis of the contents of the interviews showed that, from the perspective of the study participants, physical and psychological problems, reduction of individual freedom, welfare and financial problems, family problems, migration and isolation from the rural affairs, behavioral and social culture change, reduction of social communication, lack of saving, and security problems are the main challenges of the geographical dichotomy of the labor market in *Harsin* county. However, this dichotomy in the study area has positive economic, social, cultural

and individual impacts too. Employment in primary markets (urban markets) and reception of fixed monthly salaries have greatly improved the living conditions. In addition, as unemployment is the source of a lot of psychological diseases, the employment of rural people in primary markets has prevented such problems.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicated that the high cost of doing jobs, low income, lack of support, structural problems and social challenges were some of the setbacks of the secondary labor market (i.e. rural market) in the villages of *Harsin* County. In this regard, [Panahi and Merseli \(2006\)](#) believed that the tendency to create job opportunities would be toward urban areas because the rural labor market had far more problems than urban areas. According to the findings of [Launov \(2004\)](#), in the secondary labor market, wages were low and job promotion was slower than that in the urban labor market. The results of various study show that differences between urban and rural labor markets lead to the immigration, abandonment of rural areas, emergence of family problems and degradation of rural culture. According to [Gholami \(2015\)](#), spatial separation of a labor market leads to some phenomena such as collective migration, seasonal migration and everyday spatial movement of job seekers from rural areas to urban areas. It also exerts harmful effects on rural areas, such as disturbance of gender balance, aging of the rural community, identity disorders, rapid and absurd cultural changes in rural areas, distance from family, family problems, and so on. The spatial separation of labor markets has positive effects on rural areas too, including positive social, economic, cultural and individual effects. This finding is consistent with the results of [Fuest and Thum \(2000\)](#).

5. Conclusion

According to the findings of this research as well as the results of other studies, the harms and problems of geographical division of labor markets are more than its benefits. Therefore, it is needed for the government to adopt policies so as to reduce the dichotomy of labor markets. In this regard, it is recommended that the government strive to provide suitable facilities for villagers to set up businesses inside the village and prevent them from migrating to urban areas. The government should also encourage private sector investors to build factories and manufacturing units such as conversion industries near villages in order to attract and recruit unemployed rural youth. The reduction of the geographical dichotomy of the labor mar-

ket has to be pursued seriously around the rural areas of Harsin.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest