



## The Role of cultural Traditions in sustainable Rural Livelihoods; Case study of Ardabil County

Vakil Heidari Sarban<sup>1</sup>, Vahid Khajavi<sup>2</sup>

Received: Dec. 30, 2017; Accepted: Dec. 07, 2019

### Extended Abstract

The method of this research is descriptive-analytic and the data of this research have been collected through a library and field study (questionnaire). The statistical population of the study is the rural population of Ardabil city with a population of 74536 people. To calculate the sample size of this society, Cochran formula was used and the family size criterion was used to determine the sample size of the villages and the sample size was estimated to be 358. The face validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by the professors of Mohaghegh Ardabili University and Tabriz University. Also, using Cronbach's alpha, the reliability of questions in the cultural traditions section was 0.79 and in the sustainable livelihoods section of 0.78, which can be said that the questions presented have an acceptable reliability coefficient. The data were analyzed using SPSS 21 software. Pearson correlation test and regression were used. Results showed that there is a positive and significant correlation with coefficient of 0.63 between cultural traits variable and sustainable livelihoods in rural areas. Also, the beta coefficient showed that 0.63 percent of cultural trends predict the changes in the sustainable livelihoods of villagers.

*Keywords:* development, sustainable development, rural sustainable development, rural Development, social justice, Ardabil county

---

1. Assistant Professor of Geography and Urban Planning, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran (Corresponding Author)

✉ [v\\_heidari@uma.ac.ir](mailto:v_heidari@uma.ac.ir)

2. MA in Geography and Urban Planning, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran

✉ [v-khajavi@uma.ac.ir](mailto:v-khajavi@uma.ac.ir)



## INTRODUCTION

Individuals and communities have their own values, meanings, customs and knowledge systems that affirm identity and diversity and play a key role in sustaining livelihoods. However, such features have been frequently ignored in development planning. Too frequently, development practitioners have perceived cultural norms and traditions as being quite separate from and unaffected by development values, suggesting that cultural diversity has no 'economic importance' (Throsby, 2001). This kind of development has affected the lives of many communities whose hopes and imaginations are inseparable from the production and reproduction of meanings, symbols, customs and knowledge (North and Cameron, 2000; Radcliffe, 2006).

One of the most significant post-modern insights is that tradition or 'pastness' (Appadurai, 1981) is a valuable renewable resource. For many rural researchers, the espousal of social constructionism represents a cultural turn that has deflected rural studies away from its fundamental core of concern for socio-economic change in rural space (Cloke, 2006).

In focusing on culture and development, this paper supports the livelihood perspective as a pragmatic approach under which cultural knowledge and traditions can be explicitly treated as resources in the context of achieving sustainable community development. The paper demonstrates the extent to which these cultural complexities and rural lives are interconnected in terms of both livelihood choices and opportunities and in building up various livelihood assets in the shape of human, social, natural, financial and physical capital. The livelihood perspective facilitates a better understanding of how and where culture becomes central in development interventions and how culture is conceptualized and incorporated into the process of community development. As a result, it is suggested, development interventions can be more effective and beneficial to those people whose lives are being changed, the role of cultural values and attitudes as obstacles to or facilitators of progress has been largely ignored by governments and aid agencies. Integrating values and attitude change into development policies, planning and programming is a promising way to ensure that in the next fifty years, the world does not relive the poverty and injustice that most poorer countries, and underachieving ethnic groups, have been mired in during the past half century (Huntington, 2000, 5).

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of cultural traditions in sustainable rural livelihoods.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research method was analytical -explanative survey type. It can be said that studied population in this study consists of all villagers living in rural areas of Ardabil County in 2019 (N= 74536), among which 358 persons were selected as statistical sample using Cochran formula. Sample size was determined based on the Cochran's formula and the required data were collected through questionnaires. Content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by professors and experts and its reliability was determined based on Cronbach's alpha (0.78-0.79). The data were analyzed using SPSS 21 software. Pearson correlation test and regression were used.

## **RESULT**

Results showed that there is a positive and significant correlation with coefficient of 0.63 between cultural traits variable and sustainable livelihoods in rural areas. Also, the beta coefficient showed that 0.63 percent of cultural trends predict the changes in the sustainable livelihoods of villagers. At the end of the research, according to the results analysis, practical suggestions were made.

## **DISCUSSION**

This paper has sought to demonstrate how traditional culture can play an important role in achieving community sustainability. We do not advocate an over-dependence on the traditional context, but recognizes the value of incorporating cultural factors into SL development processes, so that they are more in harmony with traditional values and local aspirations, while prioritizing local needs and resource capacities. The SL approach is a valuable tool for appreciating both tangible and intangible aspects of community livelihoods, but there is a need for greater understanding and more emphasis on cultural capital that conceptualizes culture as an asset which can significantly strengthen sustainability.

## **CONCLUSION**

The acceptance of traditional culture as a vital part in community sustainability and overall development processes represents a shift from a preoccupation with centralized, technically oriented development solutions of the past that failed to improve livelihoods for many rural communities.

This shift can only be achieved when the significance of traditional culture has been recognized and incorporated into development strategies. Rural livelihoods and communities are sustainable when they can show resilience during stressful conditions, and enhance capabilities and assets, while providing livelihood opportunities for successive generations. Culture and cultural capital are important, but considerably neglected, aspects in ensuring SLs. Through exploring traditional culture in relation to a specific rural-livelihood context, this paper has shown how



Iranian Cultural Research

Abstract

traditional culture can be viewed as an important resource and should be incorporated into discussions of sustainable community development. However, as Agrawal (1995) and Briggs (2008) argue, traditional/ indigenous knowledge is often place specific and is therefore not easily transferable over geographical space. It is also important to recognize that traditional culture can be a distinctive asset of perhaps one or more small communities and it could be both difficult and inappropriate to generalize across a range of rural settings.

#### **NOVELTY**

The practical applications of this research include: contribute for planning of rural development and the social applications of this research includes: contribute for planning of cultural Development.



Iranian Cultural Research

Vol. 12  
No. 4  
Winter 2020

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Abdollahzadeh, Gh., Salehi, Kh., Sharifzade, M.Sh., & Khajehshahkahi, A. (2015). Investigating the Impact of Tourism on Sustainable Rural Livelihoods in Golestan Province. *Journal of Tourism Planning and Development*, 15, 148-165.
- Agrawal, A. (1995). Dismantling the divide between Indigenous and scientific knowledge. *Development and Change*, 26(3), 413-439. doi:10.1111/j.1467-7660.1995.tb00560.x
- Arabion, A., & Abdollahzadeh, Gh. (2012). *Introduction to sustainable agricultural development* (1<sup>st</sup> ed; Vol. 1). Tehran, Iran: Qesār.
- Ashley, C. & Carney, D. (1999). *Sustainable livelihoods: lessons from early experience*. DFID, London.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In: Richardson, J., *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood: 241-58.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In: Richardson, J., *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood: 241-58.
- Briggs, J. (2008), Indigenous knowledge and development, In V. Desai and R. B. Potter, eds, *The Companion to Development Studies*, Hodder Education, London, 27: 107-125.
- Carney, D. (1998). Sustainable rural livelihoods: What contribution can we make? London: DFID,3: 20-50.
- Carney, D., Drinkwater, M., & Rusinow, T., Wanmali, S., Singh, N., & Neefjes, K. (1999). *Livelihoods Approaches compared: A brief comparison of the livelihoods approaches of the UK Department for International Development (DFID), CARE, Oxfam and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*.
- Chambers, R. (2005). Ideas for development, Earth scan publication-London-Sterling VA, p 5. CHF. *Sustainable Livelihoods Approach Guidelines, Partners in Rural Development*, Chapel, Ottawa, Canada.
- Chambers, R., & Conway, G. (1992). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: practical concepts for the 21st century*. IDS Discussion Paper. 296.
- Daskon, C. & Binns, J.. (2009). Culture, tradition and sustainable rural livelihoods: Exploring the culture-development interface in Kandy, Sri Lanka. *Community Development Journal*. 44. doi: 10.1093/cdj/bsp019
- Daskon, C. D. (2010). Cultural resilience—the roles of cultural traditions in sustaining rural livelihoods: A case study from rural Kandyan Villages in central Sri Lanka. *Sustainability*, 2(4), 1080-1100. doi:10.3390/su2041080
- Davies, S., & Hossain, N. (2004). Livelihood adaptation, public action and Civil society: A review of the literature. *IDS working paper*, 57: 290- 325.
- Dearden, P., Roland, R., Allison, G. & Allen, C. (2002). Sustainable Livelihood Approaches:



Iranian Cultural Research

Abstract



- From the Framework to the Field: Supporting livelihoods guidance sheet. Department of International development University of Bradford, 50: 30-55.
- DFID (1999). Sustainable livelihoods guidance sheets. London, UK: DFID. Ellis, F. 2000, Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries Oxford, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Elasha, B.O., Elhassan, N.G., Ahmed, H., & Zakieldin, S. (2004). Sustainable livelihood approach for assessing community's resilience to climate variability and change: A case study from Sudan. Paper presented at the *Second International Conference on Climate Impacts Assessment (SICCA)*, Grainau, Germany.
- Ellis, F. (2000). *Rural livelihoods and diversity in developing countries*. UK: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, F. (2003). A livelihood approach to migration and poverty reduction. papers commissioned by the Development for International Development (DFID), 31, 1-45.
- Ellis, F., & Biggs, S. (2001). Evolving themes in rural development 1950s-2000s. *Development Policy Review*, 19(4), 437-448. doi:10.1111/1467-7679.00143
- Esmaili, F., Khodadad, M., & Nakhaei, M. (2016). Barresi va tahlil-e asarāt-e gardešgari bar ma'īšat-e pāydār-e rustāhā-ye sāheli [Investigation and analysis of tourism Impacts on sustainable livelihoods of coastal villages (Chamkhaleh village of Langrood), *3<sup>rd</sup> National Conference on Sustainable Development in Educational and Psychological Sciences*, Social Studies, Gilan, pp. 12-1.
- Farrington, J., Carney, D., Ashley, C. & Turton, C. (1999). Sustainable livelihoods in practice: Early applications of concepts in rural areas. *Natural Resource Perspective*, 19, 20-53.
- Fouracre, P. (Jun. 19, 2001). *Transport and sustainable rural livelihoods*. Retrieved from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/TRANSPORT-AND-SUSTAINABLE-RURAL-LIVELIHOODS-Fouracre/762fcd27f3281592e3ebe67f91ac7f543f3a98e5>
- Ghadiri Masoum, M., Rezvani, M.R., Jomehpoor, M., & Baghbani, H.R. (2014). Leveling livelihoods in mountainous tourism villages; Case study of upper Taleghan village in Taleghan County. *Journal of Space Economics and Rural Development*, 4(2), 1-18.
- Imanizadeh, A.M. (2014). Nejt-e Azerbāyjān be komak-e turism ba ruykard-e ma'īšat-e pāydār [Saving Azerbaijan with the help of tourism and sustainable livelihoods]. *Etemad Newspaper*, No. 3006, p. 4.
- Jomehpoor, M. (2005). *Barnāmerizi-ye towse'e-ye rustāyi: Didgāh-hā va ravešhā* [An introduction to: rural development planning: approaches and methods] (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Tehran, Iran: Samt.
- Jomehpoor, M., & Ahmadi, Sh. (2011). Ta'sir-e gardešgari bar ma'īšat-e pāydār-e rustāyi; motale'e-ye mowredi-ye rustā-ye Baraghan [The impact of tourism on sustainable rural livelihoods; case study of Barghan village of Savojbolagh county]. *Rural Research*, 2(1), 63-33.

- Jomehpour, M., & Kiomars, N. (2012). Barresi-ye asarāt-e gardešgari bar dārāyihā va fa'āliyathā-ye ma'īšati-ye mardom dar čarčub-e pāydār-e gardešgari [Investigating the impact of tourism on people's properties and livelihood activities in the sustainable Livelihoods Framework; Case study of Ziarat village]. *Journal of Scientific Research and Tourism Management Studies*, 17, 87-119.
- Kassa, K. & Eshetu, Z. (2014). Situation analysis of rural livelihoods and socioeconomic dynamics for sustainable rural development: The Case of Legehida Woreda district. *Journal of Agriculture and Environmental Management*, 3, 201-225.
- Keshavarz, M., & Karami, E. (2012). Stabilization rural livelihoods challenge to agricultural extension system in drought. *Journal of Rural Research*, 8(5), 1-25.
- Kirshenblat-Gimblett, B. (2004). Intangible heritage as meta-cultural production, *Museum International*, 56, 52-65.
- Mbaiwa, J. E., & Stronza, A. L. (2010). The effects of tourism development on rural livelihoods in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 18(5), 635-656. doi:10.1080/09669581003653500
- McDonagh, J. & Bunning, S. (2009), Methodological approach, planning and analysis, field manual for local level land degradation assessment in Drylands, United Nations University (UNU), 12: 100-132.
- Morse, S. & McNamara, N. (2013). Sustainable livelihood approach: a critique of theory and practice, Guilford. University of Surrey.
- Pasteur, K. (2001). *Changing organizations for sustainable livelihoods: A map to guide change*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.
- Sajasi Gheidari, H., Sadeghloo, T., & Shakourifard, I. (2015). Sanješ-e sath-e dārāyihāye ma'īšati dar manāteq-e rustāyi ba ruykard-e ma'īšat-e pāydār; Motāle'e-ye mowredi rustāhā-ye Tāybād [Measuring the level of properties and livelihoods in rural areas with sustainable livelihood approach; Case study of Taybad villages]. *Journal of Rural Research and Planning*, 5(1), 197-215.
- Sajasi Ghidari, H., Sadeghloo, T., & Palouch, M. (2013). Prioritizing the development of rural sustainable subsistence with an integrated SWOT-TOPSIS-Fuzzy Model; Case study of Khodabandeh). *Rural and Development*, 16(2), 90-110.
- Scoones, I. (1998). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: A framework for analysis* (IDS). Institute of Development Studies (IDS), 72: p 35.
- Seneviratne, A. K. (2005). *Central cultural dund and livelihood*. Ministry of Cultural Affairs Sri Lanka: Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- Serrat, O. (2008). The sustainable livelihoods approach. Manila. Available at: <https://www.adb.org>
- Shen, F. (2009). *Tourism and the sustainable livelihoods approach: Application within the Chinese context* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), Lincoln University.



Iranian Cultural Research

Abstract



- Shen, F., Hughey, K. & Simmons, D. (2009). *Connecting livelihoods approach and tourism: A review of the literature toward integrative thinking* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Lincoln university.
- Shen, F., Hughey, k. & Simmons, D. (2009). *Connecting livelihoods approach and tourism: A review of the literature toward integrative thinking* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Lincoln university
- Solesbury, W. (2003). *Sustainable livelihoods: A case Study of the evolution of DFID policy. Working Paper 217*. doi:10.3362/9781780444598.006
- Tao, T. C. H. & Wall, G. (2009). *Tourism as a sustainable livelihood strategy tourism management*, *Tourism Management*, 30(1), 90-98. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2008.03.009
- Tao, T. C. H., Wall, G., & Susan, W. (2010). *Culture and Sustainable Livelihoods*, 29(1), 1-21.
- Tavakoli, M., Ahmadi, Sh., & Fazelnia, Gh. (2014). *Tahlil-e avāmel'e mo'aser bar ma'īshat-e rustāyi: Motāle'e-ye mowredi-ye Sardašt* [Analysis of factors affecting rural livelihoods; Case study of Sardasht county]. *Geography and Planning*, 58, 63-81.
- Timalsina, K.P. (2007). *Rural Urban Migration and Livelihood in the Informal Sector: A Study of Street Vendors of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Nepal*.
- Trisa, M.C. & Jeffrey, T. (2010). *Economics and Culture*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- WCED (1987). *Food2000: Global policies for sustainable agriculture*. London: Zed Books, London.
- Weissi, F., & Moradzadeh, M. (2016). *The impact of tourism on promoting sustainable rural livelihoods; Case Study of Soholan village, Mahabad county*. *Third National Conference on Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resources*, Urmia.
- Yaghoubi, A.,; Chizari, M., Joomla, S., & Medicinerad, Gh. (2010). *Factors affecting risk management among dryland wheat workers in Tafresh*. *Iranian Journal of Agricultural Science and Education Promotion*, 8(1), 91-101.