

An assessment of the effects of industrial estates on quality of life of rural residents (Case Study: Germe County)

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the establishment of rural industries in towns and industrial areas has been on the agenda of authorities and planners. Establishment of industrial estates in rural areas can be effective in reducing the problems and providing employment and income for villagers. The main goal of this research is to explore the effects of establishing industrial estates in Germe on rural employment and the rural residents' quality of life. This study seeks to find what changes employment in the industrial estates had on villagers living?

2. METHODOLOGY

Based on the nature of study, it was carried out in a descriptive-analytical method. To collect data, documentary research and field methods were applied. In addition to field studies and interviews, direct observations, questionnaires filled out by rural residents and managers of industrial units were also used. The study area included the County of Germe, one of 10 towns of Ardabil province which has a population of 84,267 people, two-thirds of which reside in rural areas. The industrial estate included 14 industrial units and the surrounding villages were located within 2 kilometers of Germe. The construction of the industrial estate began in 2005. Ninety-two people were employed in these industrial units, 56 of which were rural residents. The statistical population of the study was chosen from the industrial workers residing in rural towns. For data analysis, we made use of SPSS, McNemar test and Wilcoxon nonparametric tests.

3. DISCUSSION

The study results showed that in this rural industrial estate, more than 90 percent of the workers were between 20 to 40 years old. Their average age was 27.2. Two-thirds of the rural workers employed in the industrial estate were married, and the rest were single. The minimum and maximum of work experience in the industrial estate were 4 and 50 months respectively. The average work experience in the industrial estate was 26.6 months with a standard deviation of 16.75. Of 56 rural workers in the industrial estate

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only one was illiterate. More than half of the rural workers lived within 1 to 5 km, and 82.2 percent lived in the industrial estate namely within 15 kilometers. The average distance of the town from the rural employment location was 15 km. The study results showed that the increase in employment of rural people in the industrial estate has changed their food and durable goods consumption patterns. Furthermore, there has been more job security for the residents and their participation in social activities had also increased. Finally, the construction pattern of the rural housing for the employees of the industrial estate has been changed.

4. CONCLUSION

Labor supply of the industrial estate from the nearby villages was 60%. It shows that the creation of employment opportunities in rural areas has benefited from cheap labor force and expertise. The number of rural workers in the industrial estate before and after its construction proved successful in increasing the quality of life and bringing greater prosperity for rural practitioners. Job security, housing, food and durable goods consumption patterns and participation level of rural residents have also improved. But the insurance and banking facilities were not suitable. The industrial estate has also been effective in sustainability of the rural population.

Keywords: Rural industrialization, industrial estate, rural workers, rural development, Germi County

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