


Research Paper

Barriers to Diversification of Economic Activities in Villages Around Urmia Lake (Case study: South Marhamatābād in Miāndoab County) ❖Tohid Khayri¹ , Majid Yāsouri^{2*} , Somayeh Sādāt Shāhzeidi³ 


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Abstract

Diversity is the basis of the sustainability of any system. Whatever the system varies, its sustainability and dynamism are preserved over time and place. Understanding the barriers to rural diversification is one of the attitudes towards sustainable rural development. This study aimed to study the barriers to the diversification of the rural economy from natural, institutional, economic and social dimensions in South Marhamatābād. The research is applied with a descriptive-analytical method. Library studies and field surveys (observation, interview, and questionnaire) were used to collect information. The spatial scope of this research is the south Marhamatābād village in Miāndoāb County. This sub-district has 19 villages and 3363 rural families. 353 families were selected through the modified Cochran formula as the research sample size. T-test was used to analyze data. The results of the research showed that from the viewpoint of the villagers of the region, in terms of the barriers to the diversification of the rural economy; organizational-institutional factors such as the lack of access of villagers to loans and financial resources, the lack or inappropriateness of financial services, and the lack of public and private sector investment, have had a more prominent influence on the creation of barriers to the diversification of the economic activities of villages in the region.

Keywords: Diversification, Urmia Lake, South Marhamatābād.**Highlight**

- With proper management in order to preserve lakes and water resources, the problem of water shortage is solved and the possibility of developing employment and entrepreneurship is provided.
- One of the most important ways to diversify the economy of coastal areas is the development of tourism. By providing infrastructure and investment from the private sector and facilitating business start-ups by government agencies, it is possible to increase employment and income in these areas.

Extended Abstract**Introduction**

Rural development programs, along with prioritizing the economic needs of local people and the participatory role of rural people on various activities in the rural economy, can lead to economic development and rural development and integrated and comprehensive rural development. The importance of the diversification approach to economic activities is that if the agricultural sector is in recession, the non-agricultural rural economy may be able to repair some of the damage and improve the economic and social resilience of rural settlements. Diversification of rural livelihood plays a prominent role in sustainable development, especially the economic, social and environmental sustainability of rural areas. Economic restructuring is possible by using the livelihood diversification strategy because as a fundamental solution, it creates employment, increases income, stabilizes the population, increases production and accumulation of savings, increases self-awareness, etc. in rural areas. Villages along Lake Urmia in the last decade due to neglect of environmental aspects and uncontrolled water withdrawal, has led to a decrease in water, especially in

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agriculture. In addition, the weakness of infrastructure, lack of water resources, lack of capital, lack of government facilities, lack of specialized personnel, etc. have caused problems in the region. Due to the weakening of economic activities in the region, recognizing the capabilities of the region and creating suitable conditions for various economic activities for the sustainability of rural settlements in the region are among the items that necessitate the need for this research. The purpose of this study is to investigate the barriers to diversification of rural economy from natural, infrastructural, institutional, economic and social dimensions in South Merhamatabad rural area.

Methodology

The present research is of applied type and in terms of descriptive-analytical method. In order to collect information, library studies and field survey (questionnaire and observation) have been used. The study village has 19 villages. According to the population of the region, the sample size was selected based on the Cochran's formula, equivalent to 345 questionnaires. In order to select the sample members from the statistical population, a simple random sampling method was used. Then, the sample size in the formula was calculated and a questionnaire was completed for each household in each village.

Results and discussion

According to exploratory studies in the region conducted by experts and local people and data available in the executive branch, the most important barriers to economic diversification of rural settlements in the region were classified into four categories: social, economic, natural and managerial-institutional. In order to investigate the effect of the variables on the lack of diversity of rural economic activities, multiple regression analyzes were used by stepwise method. The standardized beta coefficients related to institutional-managerial factors were calculated to be 0.582, which has the highest value compared to other independent variables entered in the regression model. Therefore, it can be said that the existing institutional-managerial factors such as; Inadequate roads, lack of production support services, inadequate banking services, lack of cooperatives, low level of investment and lack of conversion industries more than other restrictions affect the lack of diversity of rural economic activities in the region and later , Economic factors, social factors and natural factors have had an effect on the lack of diversity of rural economic activities. It can also be predicted that each unit of increase in the independent variable "institutional-managerial", 0.582 units increase in the lack of diversity of rural economic activities, plays a role. This figure is 0.080 units in the variable "environmental factors (provided that the independent variables of the model are constant), 0.273 units in the variable" economic factors "and 0.257 units in the variable" social factors ". Therefore, it can be said. The most important factor limiting the economic diversification of the villages in the region is the institutional-managerial barriers.

Conclusion

According to the field observations of the researcher, it can be stated that one of the obstacles faced by the inhabitants of the study area for economic development is the lack of possible infrastructure, reduction of the water level of Lake Urmia and as a result the lack of sufficient and necessary investment. Lack of sufficient motivation and skills to establish non-agricultural activities. So that if appropriate facilities are provided by banks and governmental and non-governmental institutions to the villagers of Marhamatabad district, it will increase the motivation for non-agricultural activities and improve the situation of water and soil resources, especially in the agricultural sector. Therefore, the lack of proper investment and income reduced the possibility of creating non-agricultural employment related to agriculture in rural areas. It is necessary to identify new areas of income that are not dependent on land and water, given the region's constraints on economic diversification. In addition, access to low-interest credit, education and skills acquisition, marketing, self-confidence, the establishment of non-agricultural cooperatives, and attention to the capabilities of women and youth should be a priority for the region's economic diversification. According to the obtained results, in order to diversify the rural activities of the region, in the first priority, it is suggested to: expand economic activities such as industrial livestock, poultry breeding, natural and cultural tourism, cold storage, grading warehouses and product segregation and construction Salt refinery on the shores of Lake Urmia.

Keywords: Diversification, Urmia Lake, South Marhamatābād.

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