



The Role of Urban Villages in the Development of Surrounding Villages

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Abstract

From the past to the present time, in all civilizations and countries, urbanization is considered the most striking evolution of human societies. With the advent of the industrial revolution and the rapid expansion of cities, societies were faced with numerous problems. One of the most significant problems is Extreme centralization in one city or more and fragmentation of urban hierarchical system in most countries. Due to overcrowding in large cities and its related problems and exorbitant costs to build new cities in Iran and failure to success completely, as well as strengthening satellite cities, which in the long run leads to centralization and overpressure on the mother cities, one of the best ideas for decentralization and development in all regions of the country and strengthening a regular urban grid is to create urban villages. From this perspective, the general aim of this research is to elucidate the role of urban villages in rural development.

Keywords: Urban villages, Role, Surrounding villages, Development, Rural development

Preliminary research

Statement of the problem

The industrialized countries and the developments after World War II have created the areas regarding improved living conditions, increased life expectancy at birth, increased average lifetime and reduced mortality that resulted in rapid increase of population and more habitation in cities. European countries were the first countries before the rest that faced with population growth and, by creation of new towns, they tried to find a remedy to organize overpopulation. The second wave of this current reached out to other countries with a delay of one to two decades which Asia, North Africa and Latin America are classified into this group. While the shape and formulation of the problem in these countries were sometimes varied with Europe, but also they evoked the same process of discussion and formulation of theories and solutions. In the third group, there are African countries, some Asian countries and Latin America that joined to the previous groups with a delay of several years, although some countries were still in the accelerated pre-urbanization conditions (Amchaki, 2004: 83, 84). Of course, the type and effectiveness of the industrial revolution in northern and southern countries are different, because it ultimately triggered the trend of rural-urban migration and development of urbanization and eventually urbanism, But this event encountered the southern countries with different kind of urbanism that more than anything was subsequent of improper process of industrialism, irrational focus of industrial units and major commercial and economic activities, and eventually the accumulation of environmental facilities in

urban centers. Turning villagers to these centers - in the hope of achieving a better life – has led to urban suburbanization, growing shantytowns, and finally the phenomenon of quasi-urbanization (Saeidi, 2006:124).

Concurrent with this change, another event in rural areas has emerged. As a result of performing land reform and agricultural use of technology, lots of surplus labor in rural society has emerged. This surplus population looking for job opportunities and in pursuit of better life were left for urban areas, while urban areas were not prepared to accept the millions of uninvited guests. Therefore, these areas in developing countries have become a jumble of false professions, social disorders and social gap (Pour Afkari et al., 2007). To fill this gap and develop bilateral relations between urban and rural areas, a number of scholars and experts have advocated the development of rural growth centers. As Johnston supports the development of business performance cities in India, he points out the necessity to create small urban centers to act as ready markets for rural products and closer to the village as well as input distribution centers and centers for the supply and exhibition of commodities (Papoli Yazdi and Sanajerdi, 2003:208). Of course, But before him, Misra, and a few others had come to the conclusion that the social and economic gap between villages and cities is really high and this gap can only be reduced by the advent of Rurban societies that are socially close to the villages, but economically and organizationally are more similar to cities (Papoli Yazdi and Ebrahimi, 2002: 207,208).

Urban village is considered the practice of implementing the accelerated rural development strategy and it is a spatial base for performing this strategy (Jomee Pour, 2006: 106,107), so that, with development of urban villages, the old collision between cities and village would be disappeared (Friedman, 1984:59). In the early '90s, Rurban development has been clearly replaced with a strategy that is concentrated on the growth of small and medium cities and trading centers (Papoli Yazdi and Sanajerdi, 2003: 216). In this regard, following to the increased complexities and problems of urbanism development, the procedure of plans and studies was somewhat changed in favor of middle and small cities and urban villages (Fanni, 2003: 32).

Scientific background of the research

With discussion of rural development center, Johnston (1980) took the first steps towards the performance of small towns in rural areas (Fanni, 2003: 16). The issue of controlling the city size was an accepted principle for the former government of Soviet Union and the governments before that. Following the initial efforts after World War II, in the years 1972-1974, a plan anticipating the settlement system of the Polish population to Horizon 1990, adopted some assumptions for the development and growth of the country that part of which was pointing out to directly eliminate disparities between the levels of development in the area (Amkachi, 2004: 85-93). Thailand in second five-year plan (1967-1971) declared that aims to reduce geographical imbalances and income inequality will be achieved through direct Investment in rural development. Indonesian government in 1974 - 1979 plan has introduced the concept of rural work units, which consists of a group of villages (Friedman, 1984:66).

The background for growth of urbanization was exactly provided from the 1920's, i.e., coincident with the beginning of economic-social capitalism ties. The growth of urbanization that was made exactly from the 1920's, was intensified with the land reforms (Fanni, 2003: 54). To deal with the mentioned problems in this country, particularly after the imposed war, the general policy moved towards Rurban development policy, especially the UFRD strategy (Ziari, 2004: 156).

The necessity and importance of the research

1. According to this idea that Equipping small towns in turn can directly affect the immigration to big cities, this research is required.
2. Perhaps the most important role that can be elucidated for small towns is to transmit and enhance development in rural areas.
3. Economic growth in the agricultural market is another reason to care about small towns (Shokuei, 2006:301).

Theoretical framework of the research

Misra's theory of incubators

Essentially, incubators are industrial centers which produce required goods for country and regional markets. These centers can be based on local or external resources. The third-type activities (banking, administrative and sales) will be made in terms of the needs of the region population. In the domain of each growth hub, there can be an incubator and the number of these incubators will depend on the available resources and the constructive needs in the region. Incubators will assist in monitoring the second activities of growth hubs.

The population of incubators varies from 100,000 to 500,000 (Asayesh, 1995: 172). The notion of incubators does not mean creating new settlements, but its true meaning is reorganization of the rural settlement pattern in favor of such centers that have the greatest potential for the development and transformation into incubators or service centers (Friedman, 1979: 229).

Rurban theory

The term “rurban” has been suggested in recent years to describe many cities in Third World countries. This term has been built by combination of two adjectives of “Rural” and “Urban” into “Rurban” and is the process of combination and merging the urban and rural social structures on the periphery of urban centers (Saeidi, 2006: 125).

Urban villages or agricultural towns are large and densely-populated villages in which urban landscapes along with rural landscapes can be seen (Papoli Yazdi and Rajabi Sanajerdi, 2003:212).

Due to existing weaknesses in theories of growth hub and center-periphery, John Friedman and Mike Douglas proposed the lines of a new theory as “spatial planning policy of Rurban development” that are visualization of creating cities in farm areas; that is, an urban village having some key elements of urbanization in small densely-populated rural areas (Javad and Aslani, 1995: 15).

The idea of caring about small and medium towns

In Rondinelli's theory, creating small cities in functional connection with rural domains has been pivoted to meet economy diversification, industrialization, supply of support services, commercialization of agriculture, and finally organization and development management. Therefore, the debate is not over preventing the growth of large cities, but it is over directing the overflow of this growth to the desired locations that is in functional connection with its sphere of influence and make the national space. Here, in contrast to separation of periphery from center, efforts are made for more connection and spatial integration. “Pervasive and massive impact of government investments in major cities shows that

governments are able to affect the growth in medium cities and also through decentralization or agglomeration and create more balanced distribution of urban population and economic-productive activities”, Rondinelli says “Changes must necessarily be made in strategic distribution of investments” (Sarafi, 1998: 120). He also notices the concept of dependency collisions in his theory and requires this dependency between rural domains and small towns and between small and big cities and finds this spatial, social and economic balance a main base for development (Papoli and Ebrahimi, 2002: 177).

Theory of Urban Functions in Rural Development (UFRD)

In 1980's, “Dennis Rondinelli” inspiring from the basic and positive points of important theories of regional development including Johnston’s theories, offered the UFRD pattern that concentrates on using urban functions for development of rural areas. The approach that Rondinelli offered for adding spatial dimensions to the regional and spatial planning (as a supplement for other types of regional planning and not a replacement for them) is trying to test the relationship between social justice, economic growth and spatial distribution of services, facilities, infrastructures and productive activities in poor areas of the rural and urban settlements (Azizpour, 1998: 40).

Theory of development strategy in small towns

Development strategy for small towns along with the development strategy for medium cities were introduced from the 1970s. In fact, beginning from this decade, due to increased discouragement and frustration towards mechanisms –Trickle-down theory suggested by neo-classical school– in order to improve economic growth, the attention of researchers and planners has drawn to small and medium urban space to create a more equitable pattern of spatial economy (Omojalawrenc, 1987: 336), although there is a major difference between different approaches in their concentration on the role of the urban centers in improvement of rural development. In general, the development of small cities is more considered from the beginning of the 1980s, so that in the international conference held in 1980 in the city of Rome on population and future of urban areas, the need to decentralization and development of small towns was also emphasized (Ja’farzade and Rastin, 1987: 269). These centers will be able to articulate settlement systems in such areas and to help integrate them in the national economy. In fact, small towns and cities could serve as centers for marketing, services, trade and processing of agricultural products, transport, distribution, communication and exchange, and as centers for small-scale industries to promote innovation and to work in social interactions (Rondinell, 1983: 379).

Conclusions

Urban villages and small towns play an important role as a "rural incubator" in the process of rural development and provide services in areas of marketing, providing agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and agricultural machinery, municipal services such as educational facilities, health care and so on for their rural domains. One of the essential role of small towns is development and stimulation of the rural economy and the agricultural sector. If the purpose of developing the country is development of all areas outside the major cities, so that in addition to cities, it encompasses all rural areas, one of the major efforts would be focusing on small towns and somehow determining and evaluating them in the development of the region.

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