International Journal of Agricultural Science, Research and Technology Available online on: www.ijasrt.com

Inhibiting and promoting factors influencing rural immigration: A case from Iran

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The main purpose of this study was to explore factors influencing immigration from rural to urban areas in Varkaneh , a famous village and tourist destination located in western part of Iran- Hamedan. A questionnaire was designed and validated by a panel of experts from Extension Education Dept. of Bu-Ali Sina University and Hamadan Jihad of Agriculture. Its reliability was secured by Cronbach's Alpha that reached 0.72. Through a non- probabilistic sampling approach, seventy-eight Varkaneh residents who admitted to participate in our study were interviewed. Migration promoting factors were labeled as economic, family solidarity and rural infrastructure ; While inhibiting factors were named aesthetic, developmental, supra-structural and social solidarity. **[Azami et al. Inhibiting and promoting factors influencing rural immigration: a case from Iran. International Journal of Agricultural Science, Research and Technology, 2012; 2(1):27-30].**

Key words: Inhibiting; promoting; Immigration; Rural-Urban; Varkane

Received: 19 March 2012, Reviewed: 6 April 2012, Revised: 7 April 2012, Accepted: 15 April 2012

1. Introduction

Immigration transforms population size and structure both in short- and long-terms (Zanjani, 2001). Internal migration in general, and from rural to urban areas in particular, were reported as a positive phenomenon in earlier economic development textbooks published three decades ago (Azkia, 1976). Internal migration provided much needed manpower for newly established industries mostly in urban areas. From Social points of view, migration was treated as a positive event that pushed individuals to move into industrialized areas where capitalization and technological advancement encouraged human resource development (Dusti and Mirdamadi, 2009). Years later, the very same phenomenon, seen mostly in developing countries created so many negative side-effects that was named problematic by Iranian researchers; a phenomenon Induced by poor socio-economic structures of rural areas that forced working population outwards in search of a better lifestyle (TaherKhani, 2001).

In Iran, immigration from rural to urban areas created new sometimes irreversible problems: decreased supply of qualified workforce to agriculture, increased unemployment and marginalized the farmers (Baghayei et al, 2006). As shown in table 1, from 1956 to 2006 rural population comprising 68 percent of total population switched its place by that of urban population reported to be 31.3 percent at the time.

Table 1. Shift of rural-urban population in Iran

Year	Total population	urban percentage	Rural percentage
1956	18955	31.4	68.6
1976	33708	47	53
1991	55837	57	43
2006	72250	68.7	31.3

Source: (Ghasemi Sayani, 2009; p: 148)

A brief summary of previous research on rural migration shown in table 2 demonstrates factors influential on the phenomenon; which formed conceptual framework of the present enquiry.

2. Methods and Materials

In this descriptive survey, out of a target population of almost 900 Varkaneh villagers a sample of 78 people were selected based on Cochran formula (n=78) and Interviewed via a non-probabilistic approach. Researchers were forced to utilize this approach due to lack of enough Information. At the same time, we tried to interview those willing respondents coming from all walks of life making our sample more heterogeneous and representative. A questionnaire was designed and validated by a panel of experts From Bu-Ali Sina

University and Hamadan Jihad of Agriculture. A Cronbach's Alpha reliability test calculated from a pilot study of 30 similar respondents revealed alpha coefficient to be 0.80 securing instrument's reliability. Descriptive and inferential statistics were made possible using SPSS 16 software.

Table 2. A summary of findings of previous research on rural Immigration

Source	Results
Bazrafshan & Bahmaee (2010)	Poor welfare facilities in rural areas forced people to leave their home.
Jalalian & Mohamadiyeganeh (2007)	Natural factors such as climate, water resources and quality of soil were underlying reasons of rural immigration.
Baghayei et.al(2006)	Desire to have a better social status and move to a higher social class encouraged people to migrate to cities.
HosseiniArabi(2001)	Socio-economical, cultural and life disadvantages disabled people in satisfying their basic needs, and forced them to migrate.
Taherkhani(2001)	Poor Infrastructure in rural areas made people migrate. Flawed system of education in rural areas made younger generation move to cities.
Mahdavi(1998)	Shortage of Irrigation and potable water resources pushed people of central plateau of Iran to migrate to cities.
Saeedi(1998)	Urban lifestyle and welfare facilities attracted rural people to settle down in shanty towns.
Lahsayeezadeh(1989)	Neglecting economic development of rural areas reduced settler's income per capita, lowered rural welfare and lifestyle forcing people to migrate.

3. Results and discussion

Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Varkaneh dwellers, located in Hamedan, Iran have been shown in table 3. Rural respondents aged from 20 to 85; 48 years on average. More than 50 percent were illiterate. They earned a living out of working in their farmland and orchards, mostly below 4 hectares in surface.

Table 3. Demographic and socio-economic properties of Varkaneh

Demographics Age groups	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 25	2	2.6
26-45	40	51.3
46-65	22	28.2
More than 66	14	17.9
Level of education		
Illiterate	42	53.8
Elementary	24	30.8
Guidance school	10	12.8
Secondary and higher	2	2.6
Total		100
Socio- economics		
Farmland under cultivation(ha)		
Less than 2	33	42.3
2-4	16	20.5
More than 4	29	37.2
Orchards(ha)		
Less than 2	36	46.2
2-4	16	20.5
More than 4	26	33.3

Table 4 summarizes migration promoting variables ranked by Varkaneh residents. Most promoting variables reported on average to be more than 3 in a Lykert-type scale, and revealed to be rather economical either related to job or income of the families. Migration inhibiting variables prioritized by varkaneh settlers are shown in table 5.While not that big in magnitude, important migration inhibiting factors as perceived by rural participants were somehow less materialistic in nature; namely living in harmony with rural spiritual lifestyle and seeing agriculture as an interesting job.

Later in this research to reduce data and explore underlying factors that either promote or inhibit rural immigration, a factor analysis approach was employed. KMO indicators of inhibiting and promoting variables were 0.732 and 0.874; receptively. Both Bartlet statistics were statistically significant only approving use of factor analysis. After a Varimax rotation with Eigenvalue greater than 1, promoting and inhibiting factors were extracted, labeled by the panel of experts and eventually reported in table 16.

Table 4 .Migration promoting variables ranked by respondents (n=78)

Rank Variable	Mean	SD	CV
1. Better welfare out of village	3.80	0.32	0.08
2. Jobless head of family	4.10	0.67	0.16
3. Low family income	3.9	0.78	0.2
4. Expecting a higher income in the city	4.08	0.82	0.2
5. Losing rural jobs	3.85	0.81	0.21
6. Diverse and better job opportunities in the city	3.98	0.86	0.22
7. Limited sources of income	3.8	0.84	0.22
8. Economic poverty of family	3.9	0.92	0.24
9. Income gap between rural and urban areas	3.8	0.94	0.25
10. Decreasing income of farms and orchids	3.1	0.82	0.26
11. Improper housing facilities	3.10	0.82	0.26
12. Lack of job improvement	4.08	1.06	0.26
13. Communication facilities of the village	3.53	1.08	0.3.1
14. Lack of investing in agricultural development	3.55	1.12	0.32
15. Lark of access to markets	3.37	1.08	0.32
16. Lack of agricultural land for new members of the family	3.37	1.12	0.32
17. Decreasing level of production	2.8	0.97	0.35
18. Friends and families in the city	2.6	0.97	0.37
19. Better opportunities for children	3.4	1.4	0.41
20 Chasing migrated relatives	3.4	1.4	0.41
21. Better rural roads	2.6	1.2	0.46
22. Increasing costs of living in the village	2.22	1.1	0.5
23. Poor sanitation infrastructure	3.4	1. 9	0.56
24. Scarce irrigation water	4.3	2.5	0.58
25. Scare fertile agricultural land	4.3	2.5	0.58

Table 5. Migration inhibiting variables ranked by respondents (n=78)

Rank Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**CV**
1. Agriculture an interesting job	2.54	0.77	0.3
2. adapted with rural way of life	2.47	0.85	0.34
3. Loving rural environment	2.45	0.85	0.35
4. Better rural settlements	2.72	1.04	0.38
5. higher social solidarity	2.19	0.85	0.39
6. learning new skill form relatives	2.22	0.98	0.44
7. village as a tourist destination	2.08	0.96	0.46
8. More self-sufficiency of the village	1.79	0.83	0.46
9. Equality of rural and urban areas	2.22	1.05	0.52
10. Sources of income other than agriculture	2.24	1.11	0.50
11. Better health by living in the village	2.01	1.05	0.52
12. Increasing income from agricultural production	1.82	0.97	0.53
13. Village improvement possibility	1.38	0.76	0.55
14. Putting Varkaneh on the spotlight	1.71	1.02	0.6

Table 6.Explored migration promoting and inhibiting factors

Rank Factor	Eigen values	Variance (%)	Cumulative parenting
Promoting factors			
Economics	5.34	27.170	27.170
Family solidarity	2.25	11.273	38.443
Infrastructural	1.38	9.4	48.87
Inhibiting factors			
Aesthetic	3.87	29.774	29.774
Developmental	2.18	16.776	46.549
Supra-structural	1.21	9.329	55.879
Social solidarity	1.24	6.230	51.606

Economical issues with the highest eigenvalue explained 27 percent of total variance. This first factor was labeled Economics. Three variables i.e. chasing migrated relatives, lack of agricultural land for new members of the family and providing better opportunities for our children were classified as second factor and named family solidarity. Third factor were formed by reducing four variables of scarce water for irrigation, scarce fertile agricultural land, limited agricultural mechanization and vulnerability to natural disasters, later named infrastructural factor. Inhibiting factors were explored by reducing the following variables. Variables namely agriculture as an interesting job, satisfied with rural way of life and loving rural environment were reduced and formed the first inhibiting factor with an eigenvalue of 3.87 explaining almost 30 percent of total variance. It was later named as aesthetics. Second factor was named developmental factor summarizing variables such as hope for increasing income from agricultural production, equality of rural and urban areas and income sources other than agriculture. Variables such as putting Varkaneh on the spotlight and better rural settlements were reduced to form the third factor which was later labeled supra-structural factor and finally forth factor came to existence by integrating three variables of higher social solidarity, learning new skills from relatives, and higher self-sufficiency of the village and labeled as social solidarity.

4. Recommendation

Rural migration is considered a major reason of hindering rural agricultural development. Many researches have been carried around the issue (see table 2) and findings vary depended on the time and space of studies. This research has tried to reduce bulk of influential variables into two groups of promoters and inhibitors of migration using a factor analysis approach. Generally speaking, based on results shown in tables 4 and 5, magnitude of migration promoters are significantly higher than that of inhibitors endorsing the fact that rural people do not want to leave their home; nevertheless they are forced to do so. Factor analysis revealed economical factors as the first and foremost important, and then family solidarity and infrastructural factors to be behind rural people migrating to urban areas that echoes findings by Baliswain (2007) and Tesoriero(2005). Migration inhibitors (table 5) at their best had a medium effect in a Lykert scale on the phenomenon; and later were reduced to four major factors using an exploratory factor analysis. Aesthetic, developmental, supra-structural and social solidarity were the most influential in migrating to urban areas which only endorsed findings by Baliswain (2007), Tesoriero(2003). It can be concluded here that rural people migrate to urban areas due to socio-economic reasons that could be prevented by: (1)considering small and medium size industries in rural areas to introduce alternative sources of income, (2) promoting rural tourism and implementing necessary infra- and supra-structures, (3) protecting rural agricultural production by discriminating rural producers over urban consumers, and (4) providing quality extension education trainings to promote and protect rural Iranian lifestyles against alienation by western modern looking and superficial values leading to inappropriate urbanization.

Acknowledgements,

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to both Bu-Ali Sina University and Varkaneh residents for usage of the digital library and their active participation in the study; respectively. Authors also wish to thank the anonymous reviewer for his/her constructive comments.

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