An Analysis of Opportunities and Challenges in Creating an Urban Village for Achieving Sustainable Rural Settlements (Case Study: Jaqargh Village of Binaloud County)

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Extended Abstract

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, sustainability of rural and urban settlements and their population in developing world is one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. However, today due to development of urbanization, the rural areas have undergone many changes. These changes have been concurrent with the developing process of urbanization and unorganized expansion of cities on the one hand, and the decreasing significance of rural settlements on the other hand. Therefore, considering the importance of an appropriate new model of living and in line with the sustainability of rural settlements, this paper aims to investigate the capabilities of creating an urban village in the villages of Jagharq, in rural district of Torghabeh, Binalood County. Accordingly, the main research questions are: What are the opportunities in creating an urban village in the villages of the study area? What are the weaknesses and threats constituted by villages in creating a model of an urban village?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The experience of many developed and developing countries of the world suggest that the plans for physical development of rural areas are based on territorial planning approach and in the context of sustainable development, and the link between different aspects of sustainability in planning for sustainable development in rural areas is quite important. Nevertheless, physical environment provides suitable conditions for sustainable development, and the adoption of a systematic approach in physical planning with regard to approaches to environmentalism, conservation and society is of critical importance. In this regard, the increasing trend in construction in the suburban areas and in the heart of nature in the form of villas and housing estates especially in rural highlands of the country, shows the necessity of developing a model of settlements which have the required sustainability in development, which is well applicable in all the economic, social, cultural, political and physical-environmental conditions.

On the other hand, to improve the material and spiritual well-being and the quality of life both at present and in future, are the primary objectives of achieving sustainable development. It seems that this attitude could be reproduced in the form of urban villages, which maintains both modern and traditional concepts common in the history of the Iranian neighborhoods. To adopt a model of urban villages which benefit the guidelines and control of new constructions, could be compatible with the characteristics of the rural environment through defining the specific principles and criteria, and it would play an effective role in preserving the natural environment and quality of life in rural settlements, and it would establish peace and order in urban settlements of the country.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is an applied one which has used descriptive-survey method for data collection. The population of the study consisted of rural households living in the village of Jagharq, which is estimated to be 767 rural households based on available statistics. The sample size, according to Cochran logical formula and using random systematic method is 227. In order to analyze the opportunities and challenges in creating an urban village in the village of Jagharq in a descriptive-field research, the opportunities and challenges were categorized in the form of four components (economic, social, environmental and physical), and 32 items. Prior to filling the questionnaires, the experts in this field confirmed its reliability. The main tool for gathering the data and measuring the variables, was the questionnaire designed by the

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researcher. The data were processed and analyzed using SPSS software package, in the form of statistical method of factor analysis.

4. DISCUSSION
In the present study, to assess the opportunities and challenges in creating an urban village in the village of Jagharq, were measured in 35 variables in the form of four components (economic, social, environmental, and physical) using factor analysis model. As the results show, the opportunities and barriers to the creation of urban villages, were categorized separately and in three and four factors respectively. The results showed that opportunities accounted for 70.94 percent of the total variance - among which physical-environmental factor with 42.83 percent of the eigenvalue, is known as the most important opportunity. After that, economic and social aspects, account for respectively 14.26 % and 13.85 % of the variance of eigenvalue of the second and third factors. On the other hand, the variance of all the challenges is equal to 69.03 percent. The physical-environmental challenges with 26.34 % and the variance of eigenvalue, were the most important challenges in the study area. After that, the economic challenge (17.03%), the physical-environmental challenge (14.41%) and social challenges accounting for 11.23% of the variance of the eigenvalue, are in the next ranks. The results of the factor rotation, in Varimax method show that from 35 variables included in factor analysis, only 21 variables that have a factor loading of higher than 0.5% have remained.

Key words: Urban village, sustainable urban development, factor analysis, challenges and opportunities, Jagharq.

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