

The system of rural service rating in Mashhad county (the second metropolis of Iran)

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Abstract

Nowadays concerning the improvement of access of the rural population to basic services, most of the developing countries have included some plans and objectives in their planning systems.

In late 1999s the supreme council of urbanization and architecture in Iran (composed of 8 ministries and the Management and Planning Organization) ratified a law concerning the organization of rural spaces in three levels of System, Collection and Area. Therefore, locating these three centers, based on the basic geographical location, connection networks, political divisions, administrative, strategic or security factors and cultural, social, economical and environmental harmony is the inevitable priority that should be carried out with no postponement. Meanwhile functional and access capability methods have been used together with local research in order to assess social satisfaction.

The present article shows the result of rating the rural service provision in the Mashhad county in 2003. On the whole 7 System centers, 29 Collection centers and 66 Area centers were chosen out of 573 villages and 6 town/city to equip and enforce their operation so that the ground for effective service provision and better access is prepared and finally the complementary relationship or the balance between city and village is obtained.

Keywords: rating, rural service, system, collection, area, satellite villages, Mashhad.

1 Introduction

Before “Mashrote” revolution in Iran (1905), there was not much difference between city and village from the point of view of enjoying different facilities so



the rate of migration from villages to the cities was not considerable. After the revolution along with the emergence of new urban elements and the establishment of parliamentary system—legislative branch—together with executive and judiciary branches, the first phase of bureaucracy, urban development and the concentration of different facilities in cities started. When “Reza Khan and Mohammad Reza” established their powerful government and executed their concentrative policies, the above mentioned process sped up and it entailed the overwhelming migration of villagers to the cities.

In the fourth and fifth development plan of the country in the last years of the 1960s and the first years of the 1970s, there was little attention to the villages concerning providing facilities which were in a low level of functionality and the geographical domain of it was limited only to those villages with more than 250 families. This important error together with the lack of an integrated and multidimensional development plan could not decrease the vast migration of villagers to the cities.

Basically the social atmosphere of the 60s and 70s was dominated by urban development and the encouragement of urbanization at whatever price [1]. Consequently, in 1976 after the research by the Especial Information and Security Office, it became clear that 2.7 million people had been added to the population of Tehran and half a million to the population of Mashhad and the same amount to the population of Isfahan in a period of five years [2].

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, it has been tried to boost the agricultural/rural sector in the Five Year Plan by a comprehensive view of the issue. However, it can be said that firstly, the change in the service and life facilities has been more than strengthening economical and occupational foundations in villages. Secondly, the above mentioned service provision has not been in an approved, comprehensive, harmonious and practical form as a result of which the determination of a systematic and hierarchical service providing centers has not come to reality.

2 The issue

Basically, the relationship between cities and rural areas has been based on four important factors, namely: traditional and old ownership system, financial superiority of cities over villages, overwhelming utilization of work force in cities and the increasing bureaucratic and facility providing role of cities [3]. Therefore the organization of the relationship between cities and villages, between villages themselves and the provision of a hierarchical service provision are very important. The final goal should be directed toward the fulfillment of the development objectives which means the boosting of life standards, structural change and supporting national equilibrium [4]. In fact, the improvement of people's life condition and the creation of an environment for a longer, healthier and more creative life is the basic aim [5]. This is not possible unless we eradicate the problems facing rural development in Iran, especially the lack of strategies, laws and regulations [6].



The present study is an attempt to eliminate these vacuums within the structure of the Third Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2000-2004) and the concept of independent development in the third world countries for the fulfillment of which more investment on local resources, the development of production potentials and the application of effective technology on a small scale are emphasized [7]. Accordingly, two views have been specified. One is the approach of urban functions in rural development and the other is the location-allocation models [8]. Furthermore, based on the ratification of the supreme council of urbanization and architecture in the service providing centers, three levels of Area, Collection and System have been specified.

3 The successful policies of the world

Successful world policies in rural development whose manifestation can be seen in the dimensions of rural - urban migration proves that the basis of their development policies are uniformity and multidimensional in outlook. Accordingly, the ratio of urbanization in spite of the new classification from 1950 to 1990 increased from 52.5% to 75% in developed countries. In India the percentage decreased from 78% to 74% and in China and Cuba, it had no remarkable change [9].

In Britain, the most important policy for the balance before World War II was the establishment of regulating committees for the industrial plans of backward areas concerning their geographical features [10]. Along with this important issue, the policy of central settlements was one of the most important policies for planning and the development of rural areas. For example this policy was used and in the development plans of 50s, 60s and 70s and the structural plans of 70s, and 80s in national scale. According to this policy, housing facilities, employment and services were concentrated in the limited and specific residential areas and the share of other settlements from these facilities was very weak [11].

In China, equipping and employing the jobless work force in rural areas has been the most important policy by giving to the rural economy, the consumption of rural assets in rural industries, the financial support for the price of agricultural products and providing fundamental social services in villages [12].

In Cuba, the reduction of urban priority, the equal investment in provinces and overcoming income differences between city and village were the three basic steps [13]. Also, industrialization of the villages was given the first priority [14].

Consequently, it can be said that the success of development plans are conditioned to comprehensive outlooks especially in the social and economical plans together with the development of social welfare facilities. For this reason in this study, facility provision includes social, economical and welfare dimensions and the services that have an undeniable effect on the development of the other services and the economy of the area. Furthermore, the services that have been established by the state or cooperative contribution and prepare the ground for private investment have been considered important. The most important of these facilities include: road, electricity, rural service centers,



technical training centers, promotion offices, telephone, bank, health centers, administrative and political centers (Table 3).

4 The geographical situation of the county of Mashhad

Mashhad is one of the northern cities of the Khorasan province. To the north of it, there is Turkmenistan; to the south it is bordering Fariman and Torbat Heydariyeh counties. To the west it is bordering the counties of Daregaz, Ghenaran, and Nishabour, to the east it is bordering the counties of Serakhs and Torbat-Jam. The area of it is nearly 12620 sqm which is 5% of the total area of the province in 2002.

The population of the city of Mashhad, which is the center of the province, with 2.3 million had the first rank among 80 cities of the province in 2004. This population in comparison to the second populated city of the province has 11 times more population. In other words, its population is 18% more than the total population of the other 79 cities of the province.

5 Political divisions and population distribution

According to the political divisions of 2002, the city of Mashhad has got six city/town (Mashhad, Kalat, Torghabeh, Shandiz, Razavieh, and Malekabad), five districts (Markazi, Kalat, Torghabeh, Razavieh and Ahmanabad), 15 townships (Tabadkan, Toos, and Kabod gonbad) and 573 villages.

Table 1: Population distribution and density in rural areas in the county of Mashhad (2002).*

District	No. of the township	Population (family)	Area sqm)	Density per person	No. of the villages	More than 10 family villages
Markazi	5	40940	3263.5	63	274	203
Ahmadabad	2	6438	1596	20	68	54
Razavieh	3	12333	3876	16	155	74
Torghabeh	2	6863	600.6	57	69	46
Kakat	3	6525	2883	11	75	50
Total	15	73098	12620	29	573	427

* *Field study and statistical year book of Mashhad(2002).*

Table 2 shows the rural population distribution of the county divided by population class in 2002. It shows that only 1.2% of rural population resides in villages with less than 20 families. The most concentrated population is in the villages with more than 100 families with 86% coefficient while the total percentage of the villages was 34%.



Table 2: Population distribution in villages in the county of Mashhad (2002).

Family Classification	No. of villages	Percentage	Population	Percentage
Less than 10	149	25.5	378	0.5
10-19	40	7	516	0.7
20-49	106	18.5	3390	4.6
50-99	86	15	5925	8.2
100-249	114	20	16931	23.2
250-499	57	10	19119	26.2
500-999	18	3	11941	16.3
More than 1000	6	1	14898	20.4
Total	573	100	73098	100

6 The level of benefiting facilities in rural settlements

The study of the level of benefiting from different services in villages indicates that the highest percentage of enjoying facilities is related to having school, electricity, healthy water, telephone, and asphalt road with 98.4, 98, 95.5, 90, and 73% respectively. The lowest level was related to Techno- vocational educational centers (1%). Social well fare centers (1.3%), veterinary services (1.4%), middle and high school that are residential (2.3% and 1.5%). Geographical distribution of facilities has brought about a great difference between townships and villages. On the whole the necessity of rating and standard site finding for facilities become inevitable.

7 General rating standards

Based on the ratification of the Supreme Council of Architecture and Urbanization of Iran in 1999, to organize rural areas according to their population thresholds and their access to facilities, three levels have been pointed out which will be equipped according to their territory.

7.1 Rural area (low level)

Rural Area includes a number of neighboring villages in one limited geographical area housing two to five thousand people. The range of central administration of each Area is maximum 10 kilometers and its area is less than 300 sqm. Special services are allocated to the center the area and the access roads are provided and constructed to make the communal access to them possible.



7.2 Rural collection (middle level)

Rural Collection includes some rural areas that are, for some reason, related to each other. The population under their domain is mostly 10,000. The center of the Collection has a suitable geographical condition and generally contains a remarkable population.

7.3 Rural system (high level)

The largest space territory for covering service facilities in rural areas is a System that has an urban center, a rural-urban one or a rural one.

In this way each System includes a number of rural Areas or Collections that are located round a higher population center that has between 20,000 to 40,000 inhabitants and cover 50 to 100 villages and their center enjoys a higher level of facilities. The systems will act as coordinators between rural and urban areas and the joining link between urban and rural communities.

In fact, the satellite villages of the Areas, Collections and Systems centers, do not provide services for other villages and obtain their needs from the above mentioned centers. Of course, based on the number of population the common services are established.

Table 3 shows the provision of services for the Area, Collection and System centers based on the standards of service providing.

8 The results of ranking

Seven Systems were identified in the county of Mashhad. The Systems include: The city of Mashhad (the center of the county), Mashhad gholi (the only System whose center is a village), Torghebeh city, Shandiz, Razavieh, Malekabad towns and the city of Kalat.

These cities and towns can cover Collections and Areas because of their present facilities or future facilities (based on the ratification of the Supreme Urbanization and Architecture Council) for example: the city of Mashhad as the center of the System will also provide facilities of Collections and Areas.

On the whole 134 villages by the population of 38269 families (about 200,000 people) are in the domain of Mashhad System. In other words, 31.3% of the villages with 48.8% of the population are related to the city of Mashhad for the improved services and the rest of them are reliant on other 6 Systems.

Based on table 4, we can see 7 Systems, 29 Collections and 66 Areas, together with satellite villages and their populations. On the whole: 428 villages over 10 families with the population of 78474 families (about 400,000 people) are placed under the domain of 7 Systems. Most of the population is residing in the System of Mashhad and the least population is in the System of Shandiz. Among the Areas, most of the population is residing in Akbarabad with 1627 and the least population resides in Dehghibi with 330 families.



Table 3: The basis of development and proper service provision for rural areas [16].

Development area	Population basis	Center Pop.	Proper services
System	20,000-40,000 <i>(per person)</i>	More than 5000 <i>(per person)</i>	Techno-vocational centers*- health centers*- drug store-small hospital*- asphalt road- bus terminal- post & telephone offices*- industrial area- public library- cultural and art centers*-cinema-sports centers- restaurants- cultural heritage offices*- gas station*- rural service offices*- machinery repair shop- Handicraft training and development center*- trade centers- corporation markets-district office*- municipality office*-police force*- census registry office* – education office*- high school*- middle school-primary school and social security center
Collection	5000-10,000 <i>per person</i>	2000-5000 <i>per person</i>	High school*-rural health center and treatment center*-Hygienic slaughter house- social security office- post and telecommunication office*- improvement plan- employee residential complexes- library- open sports center-kid entertainment park- bank*- village cooperative company- gas station and fuel distribution center*- veterinary office-jihad office*-township office*- middle school- primary school and drugstore
Area	Less than 5000 <i>per person</i>	Less than 2000 <i>per person</i>	Pre-school education center- primary school- middle school and high school (in case of availability) health house*- drinking water network- agriculture extension office*- rural road*- electricity*- post box or post agent*- telephone center*- guidance plan- open sports facilities-drugstore – bank* and cooperation company
Satellite villages	-----	-----	Common services including: primary school- health center*- drinking water-access road* – electricity and telephone*
Independent villages	-----	-----	Common services in accordance with the size of population

* Investment is government.

Other; Investment is private or cooperative.

All six urban spots of the county have been selected as the center of the System because of their geographical situation, their suitable accessibility and the population around them. The improvement of whose efficiency together with other central villages will strengthen the social, cultural, economical and



security-political relations with rural areas. Of course, the most important service needs of the triple service centers should be eradicated simultaneously so that they will not lead to negative effects including excessive migration.

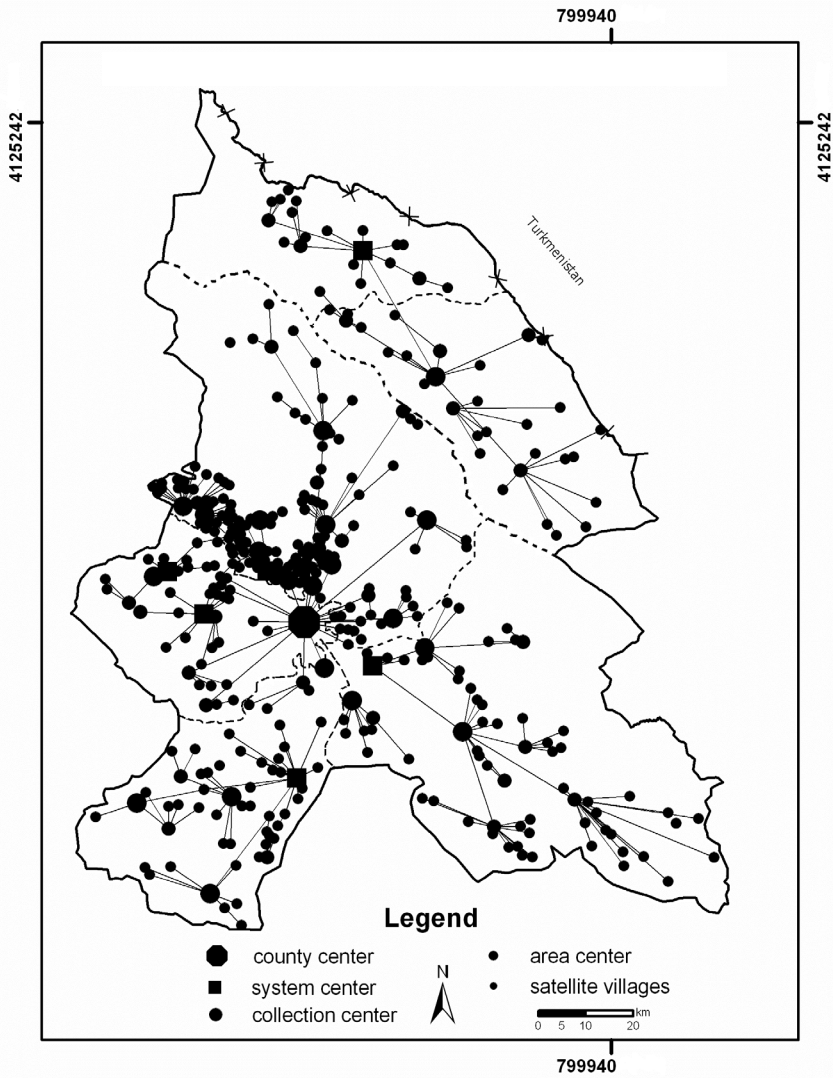


Figure 1: The system of rural services ration in Mashhad county (2002).

Table 4: The centers of Systems, Collections and Areas and the rural population covered by them (2002).

System	No. of collection	No. of area	No. of township	Satellite villages	Covered family
Mashhad***	11	22	6	130	28328
Mashhadgholi	5	9	4	94	14699
Torghabeh**	1	4	1	18	3079
Shandiz*	2	3	1	15	2196
Razavieh*	4	10	4	72	8286
Molkabad*	4	7	2	50	6051
Kalat**	2	11	3	49	6267

***County center **City *Town

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