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A VIEW ON SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD IN RURAL SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATED RESULTS

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ABSTRACT

Livelihood means thinking about access to properties and management to maintain them. Sustainable livelihood is an approach for poverty alleviation in which possessions of the poor are focused. In this regard, knowledge of the poor from their society, accessible resources and their livelihood are studied and considered as wealth of the poor. Comparing previous studies and structure of sustainable livelihood in various organizations, it seems that there are many common factors among used different approaches; however, operational focuses can be different in researches. One important similarity in all approach is five-part structure presented by International Development Department in 1999. This structure emphasizes on a people-oriented approach based on five major features of sustainable livelihood approach which are: properties, policy making and institutions, vulnerability, strategies and consequences. Results of previous studies on mentioned strategies show that regarding livelihood properties by planning and appropriate policies corresponding to social, economic, cultural and environmental structures of rural districts and by using available capacities and abilities of rural districts and considering tourism development can be considered as a supplementary activity to verify livelihood activities in line of achieving rural sustainable livelihood and regarding principles of sustainable development. Although, rural societies for their livelihood should attain various kinds of resources including a part of properties such as what is mooted under title of concepts of human, cultural, social, productive and natural capitals within frame of sustainable livelihood.

Keywords: *Sustainable Livelihood, Rural Economics, Planning, Capital, Occupation*

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural activities are initial bases of economics in rural districts. But in movement process of rural economics in the world, it seems that agriculture is no longer able to make adjustment in economic indices of rural districts and their population, so it is necessary more than past to find new methods of livelihood and non-agricultural activities.

Varying rural economics by non-agricultural activities means not only growth of such rural activities should be studied, but also variety and increase of both agricultural and non-agricultural activities should be considered as supplementary source of income in rural households' strategies.

Founding by Nasimi *et al.*, (2004) explains that; lack of sufficient principal attention to rural districts and consequently to agriculture and also decrease share of villages in economic, industrial development strategies has led to bad situation of livelihood for producing labour forces in rural areas. It has caused such workers to immigrate to cities and suburbs. Increase of such immigrations has made nonofficial markets of selling and renting lands and houses.

On the whole, this process changes land use. Jomepoor *et al.*, (2011) have studied influence of tourism on rural sustainable livelihood in Baraghan village and it showed that tourism has made professions, therefore, new income have been made in relation to tourism which has strengthened a part of rural activities such as gardening and services.

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But this influence is limited and includes only some of households. Also, public interests yielded from tourism have not been fulfilled for whole the local society due to lack of a local institute in charge of tourism affairs.

Shahidi *et al.*, (2008) in a research under title of “study on tourism effects in rural districts planning” have resulted in order to achieve rural sustainable development and sustainable livelihood for villagers; agricultural supplementary activities such as rural tourism can be used to increase income of rural households, job making, stopping immigrations of villagers and encouraging villagers to produce agricultural products and handicrafts.

Keshavarz *et al.*, (2012) in a research about sustainability of rural livelihood show that rural households have tried to decrease uncertainties in agriculture part by diversification of household economy, diversification of agricultural activities, social diversification, changing life standards and also improving the agricultural technical management.

Also, regression analysis implies that; annual income rate structures, governmental facilities level, indemnities received from agricultural products insurance, age of household head, extending communication beyond own society and sensitivity of winter products are the most important factors which explain sustainability of rural livelihood.

Karami *et al.*, (2012) studied diversification of households’ livelihood in their research concerning influence of range management and watershed management on sustainable livelihood of rural households in Zanjan city.

Hence, jobs of 89% of responders were farming and animal husbandry and 95% of responders consider such activities as source of household’ livelihood. Cultivation of farmlands, exploitation of gardens, sheep and goat breeds, cattle breeds have been cited as the most important agriculture activities while other agriculture activities such as beekeeping and poultry breeds had less importance and abundance in households’ livelihood.

Handicrafts and porter activities had less popularity than latter activities. Comparing different rural districts showed that there is no significant difference in farming status of rural areas but they had significant difference regarding gardening and animal husbandry.

Doviea *et al.*, (2006) in a research in South Africa have studied various advantages of animal husbandry for rural households of an area and focused on obtained financial value from mentioned activities in continuity of households’ sustainable livelihood.

Tav *et al.*, (2009) in their studied concerning an area in Taiwan have resulted that rural tourism is a strategy of sustainable livelihood for villagers.

According to studies by Brocklesby *et al.*, (2003); policies, institutes and processes have affected on level of peoples’ access to livelihood properties and strategies and also it affects on vulnerability conditions in which villagers leave.

A research by Hosseini *et al.*, (1998) explains that regional and household differences have significant influence in forming the livelihood insecurity in rural areas.

Bebington (1999) sets forth that rural societies for their livelihood ought to use various kinds of resources including a part of properties such as what is under consideration as concepts of human, cultural, social, productive and natural capitals.

Eliot (2009) presets findings that there are evidences of farming-removing in rural areas of many developing countries in recent decades. For example, it has been evaluated about 20% of manpower of villages have been involved in rural activities different than agriculture during 1980s in developing countries. Rirdan in a detailed research announced in 1990s that about 40% of rural families’ income in Latin America is obtained through non-agriculture activities which include self-employment, piecework and immigration.

Alice *et al.*, (2003) in a research under title of “livelihood and poverty alleviation of rural areas in Tanzania” showed that a huge influence on rural households’ livelihood that leads to rural poverty in all

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dimension has been made due to shortage of land, herbivorous animals and also inability to provide alternative for farming activities.

Serrat (2008) declares following items as some results of sustainable livelihood: Increase of employment rate, education improvement, health improvement, food security improvement, increase of income and wealth, gaining information, decrease of vulnerability, earning human esteem, increase of welfare, decrease of inequality, and sustainability of environment by persistent use of natural resources which improves value of human life.

• Rural Livelihood

Livelihood means thinking to properties and managing their maintenance. Livelihood as life and living implies on abilities, properties and activities which are need for life. (Chamberz, 2005) Livelihood in Dehkhoda Persian dictionary is defined as course of life and living. It has been defined in Moeen Persian dictionary as what people live by it.

Base of human and economic development is livelihood. Livelihood is more than a job. It includes all affairs which people do to handle their life. Livelihood is about tools, activities and rights which people are entitled to reach them for a good life (Noroozi, 2013).

Sustainable livelihood is an approach for poverty alleviation. In this approach, properties of the poor are brought into focus.

This property of the poor which in this regard is considered means their knowledge from the society in which they live and their available sources and generally their livelihood method. In sustainable livelihood approach, it is tried to establish livelihood on available systems. Systems which allow the poor to live regardless of limit access to the sources. This approach has capacity of sustainable guarantee. A livelihood system should have conditions of continuity to be sustainable. That means a system at first should be effective economically, secondly it should base on ecological integrity. Also it has to base on moral principles of social justice and it should be flexible in order to correspond with environmental stressful conditions (Helmor *et al.*, 2001).

Along with importance of balance among major components of social, natural and economic environment, principles and methods which can lead to such balance or vice versa, those which disrupt the balance of forming components of society should be studied. Principle of variety and its role in system suitability is a reliable principle which is considered in social and economic areas too. According to principle of variety; more diverse systems have more ability to be adaptable to face with various conditions and such systems are regarded more sustainable and this feature is generalized to all social, economic, physical and environmental systems.

Sustainable livelihood approach has been established on this assumption that recognition of peoples' property status is basic for recognition of choices and opportunities, their expected results and vulnerable bed in which they act (Jomepoor, 2012). A livelihood is sustainable when it can be adaptable with pressures and shocks so it can be improved against changes and can strengthen or keep its abilities and properties and it can provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for future ages. Also it may provide pure interests for livelihood of others in local or national level in short-term or long-term (Jomepoor *et al.*, 2012).

According to study by Motie *et al.*, (2011); the sustainable livelihood approach which is a way of thinking based on poverty and life vulnerability and can contribute to development activities should have following features:

1. People-oriented (focus on priorities of the poor)
2. Responsive and contributive (listening and responding to recognized livelihood priorities proposed by the poor)
3. Multilevel (working in different levels for poverty alleviation)
4. Directed and guided (By help from governmental and private sections)
5. Dynamicity (flexible response to people in various conditions)
6. Sustainability (economic, institutional balance and social, environmental persistence)

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| 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|------|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|------|
| | | Dominating patterns and options | | | |
| | Renovation and dual economy | | | | |
| | | Output increase in small effective farms | | | |
| | | Process, contribution and empowerment | | | |
| | | | | Sustainable livelihood approach | |
| | | Some successive emphases in rural development | | | |
| | Social development | | | | |
| | | Small farms growth | | | |
| | | Rural integrated development | | | |
| | | | Market Liberalization | | |
| | | | | Contribution | |
| | | | | Poverty alleviation strategy | |
| | | | | | |

Figure 1: Appropriate patterns in rural development during recent decades; Alice et al., 2001

Framework of Sustainable Livelihood

Comparing researches and framework of sustainable livelihood in different organizations, it seems that there are many common points among different approaches which have been used; however, it may have different operational emphases. Among all approaches, five-part framework is an important one which has been presented by international development department in 1999. Many believe that this framework has covered major concepts of sustainable livelihood approach (Shen, 2009). Mentioned approach emphasizes on a people-oriented approach based on five major features of sustainable livelihood approach which are explained as follows:

• **Properties**

Sustainable livelihood approach regarding comprehensiveness and principle of sustainability combines properties and sources to provide mechanisms for non-destructive secure employment and income and it directs local societies to optimal exploitation from natural resources by abandoning eliminative and limiting methods. The livelihood is sustainable when it can resist against unexpected pressures and damages and can rebuild itself and promotes its capitals for present and future times without damages on natural resources (Tavakoli, 2009). Livelihood properties points to basic sources of local people. These properties in a five-side model include following elements:

Human Capitals: This kind of capital includes working forces, knowledge, skill and healthy of workers.

Natural Capitals: This kind of capital includes materials such as water sources, soil, access to land, wildlife, jungles and vegetation.

Social Capitals: This kind of capital includes a group of social norms and beliefs and networks by which people solve their problems. This element is an intermediate between kinship networks and group membership.

Physical Capitals: This group of capitals includes items such as housing, infrastructures (road, irrigation networks and electricity) and productive commodities and equipment such as machineries and vehicles.

Financial Capitals: Financial or economic capitals includes savings and cash money, valuated things, credits and insurances and access to continuous income (Fao & Ilo, 2009).

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Other items can be added to these five major types of capitals (human, social, natural, physical and financial) such as political capital which is defined as power and capacity of influence on decision making (Timal, 2007).

• **Policy Making and Institutions**

In this regard structures are defined as hardware which includes public and private sections. Processes are formed from policies, rules, culture and institutes and they are more similar to system software. Changer processes and structures have an important role in forming livelihood properties and results within sustainable livelihood system (Jomepoor *et al.*, 2011).

Policies, institutes and processes include following concepts:

Social relations: Relations in which sex, ethnicity, culture, religion and kinship are linked and influence the livelihood of different groups of society.

Political social organization: Decision making processes, civil institutes, social rules, norms, democracy, leadership, power authority.

Sovereignty: It includes shape and quality of governmental systems such as structure, power, efficiency and output, rights and representative.

• **Services**

Efficiency and responding by organizations of governmental and private sections which are active concerning services such as education, hygiene, water and sewage. Services include institutes which have access to the sources and also those social norms, customs, traditions and behaviors which provide access to sources for people.

• **Politics and Political Processes**

Processes which have been determined and executed by politics and law and they influence the livelihood of people (Noroozi, 2013).

• **Vulnerability**

Vulnerability is about insecurity of welfare of people, families and society in facing with environmental changes. Framework of vulnerability concept in livelihood includes following items:

Seasonality (fluctuation of prices and productions, occupational opportunities)

Sudden events and shocks (revolts, war, diseases, flood, storm, drought, pest, earthquake, fire, robbery)

Predictable critical trends: seasonal shortage, population growth, decline of soil fertility, air pollution (Motie *et al.*, 2011).

• **Strategies**

Livelihood strategies are combination of activities which are chosen by people in order to get their goals which actually is subsistence.

Livelihood activities or strategies consider activities and choices which people use to fulfill their wishes in frame of property, vulnerability and the system in which they live. (CHF, 2005)

These strategies may be using natural resources for activity and immigration, off-farm activities, pension and allowance. Therefore, choice is a dynamic activity (Serrat, 2008).

Tenquan *et al.*, (2012) states that diversity of livelihood and immigration is livelihood methods which are used to provide sustenance of villagers.

Agriculture intensification points to increasing agriculture activities such as animal breeds, aquaculture, jungle etc. through intensification activities like more output with same input quantity through investment for new methods. On the other hand, livelihood variety including diversity in a wide range of off-farm incomes is a profitable activity and it is a move to far points or temporary-permanent immigration to provide livelihood (Noroozi, 2013).

Also, Skanz (1998) points to other livelihood strategies such as job making, receiving credits, handicrafts, rural tourism.

• **Consequences**

Livelihood consequences are goals and successes for livelihood strategies through their combination with livelihood properties. Results are always ways to evaluate livelihood sustainability (Jomepoor *et al.*, 2011).

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Haidar (2009) considers livelihood consequences as achievements and output of livelihood actions which can assist to motivate and determine appropriate activities.

Livelihood consequences can include more income, increase of welfare, decrease of vulnerability, improvement of food security, environment sustainability through persistent use of natural resources which improves human value and dignity (Motie *et al.*, 2011)

Sustainable livelihood pattern regards people in a vulnerable bed while they have options in such bed in order to use special properties which may help them to alleviate poverty.

There are structures and processes which affect on local people livelihood and change them, so the people should engage them to transform properties in a significant form.

Motie *et al.*, (2011) Methods which are used by people to affect and access such structures and processes form their livelihood strategies which help them to achieve appropriate livelihood results.

Generally, sustainable livelihood framework presets a base to recognize complexity of rural livelihood. Described approached leads to study rural development in a systematic manner and not by focusing one or two aspects of problem of rural poverty alleviation. In other words, the approach directs us from a fragmented multipart thinking to a comprehensive outlook about rural livelihood and development. Five main factors of mentioned framework are not independent from each other but they have interaction. Also this framework and approach is effective in linking trends in macro levels with realities in micro level of peoples' life.

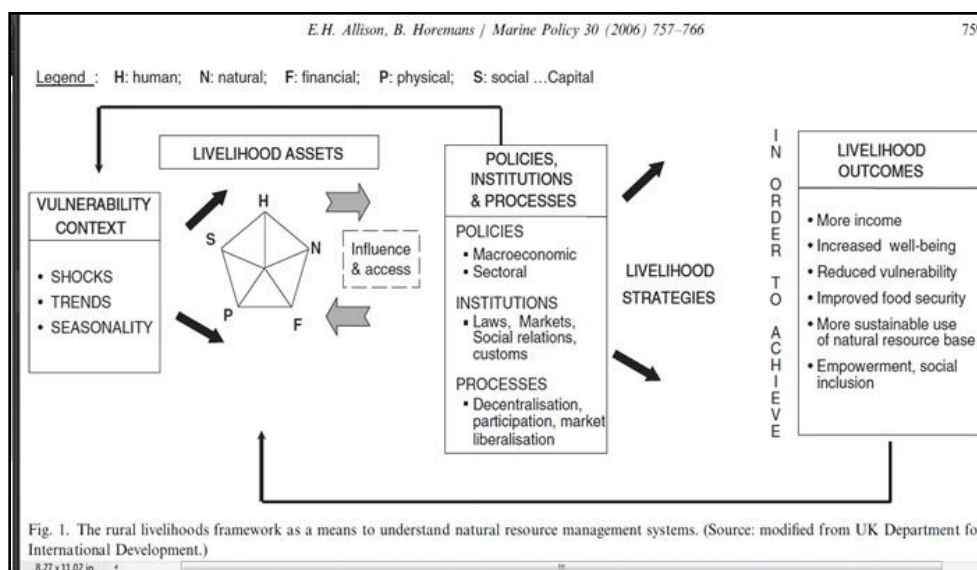


Figure 2: Framework of Sustainable Livelihood, Shen (2009)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Population growth and inadequacy of job making activities in rural areas have led to vulnerability of rural households and the main reason of villagers' immigration to urban areas is lack of job and income for livelihood of households. In such situation, many young peoples in villages consider temporary immigration as a strategy to resist the unemployment phenomenon and they would return to rural districts after passing a period in order to acquire skills and sufficient capital. Results show that temporary immigration of rural young workers is the most used strategy to handle the life. So, there would be a significant difference in human, financial, physical, social and natural capitals of returned workers after they acquire skills. The most important consequences of such kind of immigration is more income, welfare increase, vulnerability decrease, food security improvement and increase of human dignity for returned immigrants to the villages. Considering livelihood properties of people, planning and appropriate execution of policies which are corresponding to social, economic, cultural and environmental structures and by using available capacities and abilities in village in order to develop tourism particularly capitals;

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tourism development can be a supplementary activity in diversification of livelihood activities in line of achieving rural sustainable livelihood regarding principles of sustainable development. Also, excessive dependency won't be a concern considering other activities of village particularly agriculture and animal husbandry will be continued and their status can be improved. Lack of sufficient principal attention to rural districts and consequently to agriculture and also decrease share of villages in economic, industrial development strategies has led to bad situation of livelihood for producing labour forces in rural areas. It has caused such workers to immigrate to cities and suburbs. Increase of such immigrations has made nonofficial markets of selling and renting lands and houses. On the whole, this process changes land use. Study on present status of rural residences show that population growth rate of village is negative and immigration and evacuation trend of village have been increased in spite of execution of wide programs concerning improvement of welfare and services indices in village and decrease of difference between cities and villages regarding welfare, social, economic indices. This trend shows that despite of relative success, rural development programs even have not been able to keep available status of rural districts. In other words, rural residents have not been able to present appropriate pattern and livability from settlements for present generation and as they have such position, they can't be proposed as a qualitative model of settlement for future generations.

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