Rural Development Strategy in Iran  
An analysis of viewpoints  

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1. INTRODUCTION  
During the first half of the last century, the measures implemented for rural development in Iran have encountered many ups and downs, though they have led to valuable experiences. Paying due attention to such experiences and their thorough review could be of great benefits for devising and formulating a systematic strategy for rural development and its proper localization in development plans.  
The present study attempts to investigate the viewpoints of experts, researchers and professionals about rural development. Given the conditions of rural areas and agriculture in Iran, the authors believe that continuous inconsiderate to issues of rural development would bring about catastrophic consequences for national development through aggravating crises resulted from increase in unemployment, slum areas, environmental crises, land use changes, destruction of scenery, etc. The present study does not intend to grade, set priorities, evaluate strategies and policies, nor does it intend to determine and present specific strategies. It is clear that this study, like any other studies has its own limitations and challenges, particularly the ideas and viewpoints concerning practical social and economic problems are dependent on time, violent or scattered incidents in human societies. However, it is hoped that this study makes way for more collaboration of professionals, experts, specialists and authorities in the process of planning for rural development in Iran.  

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK  
The existing literature and experiences of different countries in rural development planning since 1950 suggest that there are different approaches and strategies in this field, and different classifications have been presented according to different approaches. Naturally, thematic categories of rural issues might change based on different ideas and views or even experts and officials of different organizations. In order to resolve the ambiguities, the discussion of rural development and particularly strategies and approaches presented for rural development in Iran, we used the research literature of this

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study for content analysis of ideas and views of experts about rural development strategies proposed for the future or past.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a content analysis method; this method evaluates and quantifies the subject through systematic and comparative analysis of available documents and texts in certain fields. The population of this study is comprised of a set of reports, accessible documents, published articles in accredited national conferences, experts' interviews and scientific-research articles available in the realm of rural development during 1990 to 2010.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of content analysis of experts' and professionals' views about the strategies formulated for rural development in Iran suggest that these scholars have 613 times addressed this subject. Of five approaches specified in this study, the management-institutional approach to rural development strategy has been addressed for 212 times, and in general, it comprises 34.6% of the experts' emphases on amending a strategy of rural development in Iran. Second to that, is economic approach (EC) which comprises 28.5% of reviews?

With regard to macro-strategies for rural development in Iran, in general 18 topics are presented in which, every topic or issue had an average frequency of 34. The highest frequency was related to "capacity building for the promotion of rural economy" (EC2) which has been dealt with 68 times. Regard to finding, in general of 18 strategies, 8 strategies have been listed in order of importance as strategies which have been welcomed more than the average rate.

The strategic concepts have been dealt with in the subset of macro-strategies in the form of 76 viewpoints, in a way that every concept had an average frequency of 8. Regard to finding, the viewpoints emphasized more than average (9 or more) include 25 topics which are listed in order of importance. According to this table, the most agreed-upon concept among experts with a frequency count of 25 is "the elimination of poverty and deprivation and changing the pattern of wealth distribution" (EC24).

5. CONCLUSION

An in-depth review of the results of the analysis and different tables particularly the table of results (Research finding) in which the most important strategic concepts of rural development have been identified, brings to our minds very comprehensive, significant and diverse interpretations and conclusions. The authors evade any prejudiced or biased analysis and hope this can attract the attentions of those who are interested in rural issues of Iran, irrespective of their conflicting views, specializations or responsibilities.

Keyword: strategies for rural development, experts and professionals, content
References (in Persian)


References (in English)
