An Investigation into the Goals of Building a Second House in Rural Areas and Determining its Impacts on the Relations between the City and Village (Case Study: Central Region of Gorgan County)

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Extended Abstract

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, the rural areas of Gorgan have witnessed an increasing trend of constructing second homes in the picturesque and exotic tourist villages of Gorgan to the extent that these areas have ceased to have their past economic, social and environmental function, thereby experiencing a plethora of significant changes in urban-rural relations including reduced crop production, increased direct and reverse migration, destruction of natural landscape of the countryside and so on. The above side effects have deteriorated the chain of relations between urban and rural areas, leading to the elimination of agricultural lands in rural areas, reduced productivity and increased rural migration to the city and reverse migration of urban settlers to villages. This has imposed a host of harmful effects on both rural and urban areas. As such, this study aims to analyze the objectives of constructing second homes in rural areas and to explain its economic, social and environmental impacts on urban-rural relations in the central part of Gorgan County.

2. THEATRICAL FRAMEWORK

Today, the construction of second homes has turned into an increasingly common land use in rural areas with a number of potential benefits such as renovation and reconstruction of old housing, temporary employment, job diversity and increased facilities for rural communities. The development of second homes, however, acts as a double-edged sword, so that the irregular and unsystematic expansion of second homes will give rise to a surfeit of problems that may offset its benefits in the future. Further, it can produces serious economic, social, cultural, physical and environmental problems for rural communities. At the end, such effects can significantly influence the relations between villages and their surrounding towns. In this paper, the positive and negative effects of this issue have been discussed in details.

3. METHODOLOGY

This is an applied research which is underpinned with a descriptive – analytical method. A self-administered questionnaire coupled with the library method and document analyses were used for data gathering. A sample size of 238 subjects was selected using Cochran sampling method, out of which 123 rural residents and 115 owners of second homes were chosen. The sample population was selected using simple random and systematic sampling method. Further, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed to measure the reliability of the study (0.89). Accordingly, it can be stated that the research questionnaire had an acceptable reliability. Finally, the collected data were analyzed using SPSS software and statistical tests.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that greatest economic effect of the second home construction on the city-village relations with a mean score of 4.15 belonged to recession of agricultural activities. Among social factors, the greatest impact of second home construction with an average score of 4.55 was related to the increased cultural conflicts of the rural settlers with the owners of second homes. Finally, with respect to the environmental and physical factors, the highest impact of second home construction with an average score of 4.95 belonged to the changing land use of agricultural...
areas. Moreover, the respondents referred to some of the positive effects of second home development on urban-rural relations including increased employment (economic dimension), reverse migration to rural areas and raised awareness of local people (social dimension) and exposure to the pleasant climate and fascinating landscape as well as the use of durable materials (environmental-physical dimension). Also, as stated by the respondents (local residents and second-home owners) in the study area, the development of second homes had seven negative effects on city-village relations, out of which three belonged to the economic dimension, two to social aspect and one to the physical dimension.

5. CONCLUSION
The results of this study are consistent with the study of Anabestani (2012) in Shiring Dare Country in Ghochan, Firouznia (2011) in Tar Roud Country in Damavand and Khosh Far (2012) in the villages of Tonekabon regarding the effects of second-home development in rural areas. Accordingly, in the view of participants, the construction of second homes had a number of positive effects including the creation of employment opportunity, increased reverse migration to the countryside, raised awareness of local people, exposure to the pleasant climate and beautiful landscape and the use of durable materials in construction. On the other hand, this phenomenon had a couple of negative effects such as increased land prices, recession of agricultural activities, reduced supply of rural products to the city, increased consumerism in the village, cultural conflicts of local residents and urban migrants and the effect of land use change on rural-urban relations.

Practical strategies follows:
- Designing an efficient system with the assistance of relevant authorities and local residents for the development of second home tourism in these areas.
- The appropriate planning of authorities to incorporate the intellectual-financial capital of urban migrants into villages to foster the rural development and rural-urban relations.
- Preparing the ground for the increased interaction and dialogue of local people and migrants with the aim of strengthening the communication and the social status of the rural settlers.
- Mitigating the effect of cultural invasion in the areas under study by encouraging villagers to maintain their cultural beliefs against the culture of urban migrants.
- Monitoring and passing special rules (reduced issuance of construction permits) by the relevant organization to supervise and control the activities of profit-seeker dealers who are engaged in mass construction of apartments owners with the aim of maintaining the pristine nature and beautiful landscape of the rural areas.

Key word: City & village relations, second homes central part of Gorgan County.

Reference


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