An Investigation of the Factors Affecting Land Use Changing of Agricultural Lands
(Case Study: Rural Areas of Rasht Town- Iran)

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Extended Abstract

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, uncontrolled land use changing is one of the major challenges of the agricultural section of Iran. Hence, a big part of agricultural lands turned out of production cycle, annually. Rasht town as one of the agricultural areas of Iran is not an exception. The main objective of this investigation, was to recognize the factors affecting land use changing in that area and to propose some proper solutions.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Political economy perspective space is the most influential view on agricultural economy. This vision studies the effective reasons of economy theories in 1950-1960 on developing countries which have been transmitted from Traditional production method to Capitalism and they changed structure of the agricultural sector and the result was a massive change in agricultural lands.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research method applied in this study was descriptive-analytical and which analyzed economic, social, and natural variables as effective factors on land use changing. In this study, 50 villages out of 294 ones in Rasht town, which were located in both highlands and lowlands and experienced the largest land use changing during the last decade, were chosen on the basis of cluster sampling. From every village some families were selected randomly on the basis of Morgan table from which 150 families were selected as the total population. SPSS software was employed to analyze the data extracted from the questionnaires. In addition to investigating the abovementioned variables, Satellite Land sat TM data from 2003 to 2013 was used to comparatively verify the extent of alterations of the agricultural land use changes. Finally, the ‘ENVI’ software and supervised classification method of maximum likelihood were used to provide the classification map (GIS) for each usage.

4. DISCUSSION

Based on the satellite data by LADD SAT7, almost 35042 hectares of agricultural lands and also 4832 hectares of forest lands and meadows have been changed during 2003 to 2013. The findings indicated that, economic factors specially, expensive agricultural inputs, cheap market price for crop production, high demands for residential, commercial, tourism, and industrial lands, and also import of similar products with lower price are the most important factors influencing the changing of agricultural lands of Rasht town.

Findings have revealed that, the process of land use changing of Rasht town has begun in recent years, especially from 1990. According to the satellite data, from 2003 to 2013, 35042 hectares of agricultural lands, which were of the most prepared agricultural lands, and also 4832 hectares of forests and pastures have been changed. Effective factors on land use changing analyzed were: expensive agricultural inputs, low market price of agricultural productions, shortage of irrigation water, the black market of rice, nonguaranteed purchase of products, the lack of supports for internal crop products, and the glut of imported crop products in the market, high price of urban lands, development of industrial towns, etc. (from economic perspective), illiterate and semi-illiterate farmers, lack of expertise, age of the farmer, farming systems, inheritance laws, etc. (from social perspective) and topography, physical and biological degradation of soil, etc. (from natural perspective). According to the results, the land use changing problem in this town is mostly affected by economic factors rather than the other factors; therefore, we have attempted to propose suitable solutions by recognizing these factors.

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5– CONCLUSION
The results obtained from the satellite pictures during this decade (2003-2013) indicated that, the town land area has changed rapidly and decreased from 97283/27 hectares in 2003 to 88506/07 hectares in 2013. Also, during this decade’s forest areas lost 4321/05 hectares, while the surface area of construction increased 10024/93 hectares. Important strategies for getting out of this crisis include: 1- Agricultural input subsidies, 2- Government support for products that have a comparative advantage, 3- Regulations imposed tariff on rice imports to support Iranian rice farmers, 4- Preventative legislation and amending existing laws and decisive clash with offenders, 5- Integration projects and leveling of agricultural lands.

Key words: Land use, agriculture, village, Rasht County.

References


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