



Analysis of Socio-Cultural Challenges Facing Local Managers in the Process of Rural Development (Case Study: Central District of Rasht County)

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Abstract

Design/Methodology/Approach- This is an applied research in which a descriptive-analytical method has been adopted for data collection and analysis. The study data was obtained through documentary analysis and field studies. The statistical population of this study includes 63 villages in the central district of Rasht County. All Dehyars and members of the Islamic Council of these villages (n=284) were interviewed and filled out the questionnaire. Data analysis was performed using statistical methods (t-test and weighted mean). The social challenges facing local managers with 18 items and cultural challenges with 8 items were subjected to analysis at three levels.

Findings- The results suggested that local managers of villages in the central district of Rasht County confront serious social and cultural challenges in the process of rural development. Poor collaboration of villagers with local village managers in rural development plans and projects with a mean of 4.42, reverse migration and social problems caused by the construction of second houses with a mean of 4.41 and migration of youths from villages to the city and non-participation in Council elections with a mean of 4.40 were the major social and ethnic challenges. Also, tribal differences in the villages with a mean of 4.35, lack of solidarity between local managers and people in tackling rural problems with a mean of 4.34 and poor work culture with a mean of 4.13 were also the most important cultural challenges facing local managers in the villages at the central district of Rasht County.

Research Limitations/Implications- The disagreements between local managers, reluctance to provide information on research topic and the difficulty of reaching managers in the villages were the main limitations of the present study. Appointing a member of the village management body as a spokesperson and setting the criterion of permanent residence in the village as a precondition for the nomination of the executive director were among executive strategies offered in the present study.

Practical Implications- Changing the management style from person-centered to participatory management in the administration of rural affairs, monitoring the inflow of non-indigenous people into the village in order to safeguard its social and cultural structure, building a suitable infrastructure to keep young and active forces in rural areas and encouraging them to study in the fields pertained to planning and rural development, participating in the decision-making structure of local management, fostering interaction between local managers and villagers through a management system based on law obedience and transparency and ultimately stimulating villagers to engage in teamwork and its effective results in the process of achieving comprehensive rural development.

Originality/value- Recognizing the main challenges facing local managers in a district of Guilan province can play a prominent role in improving their efficiency in the process of achieving rural development. The results of this research can be useful for district and county managers.

Keywords- Rural management, Rural development, Social challenges, Cultural challenges, Central district, Rasht County.

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1. Introduction

A key element in the survival, stability and vitality of a society, management is the main driver behind transition from the status quo to a favorable and desirable situation (Mohammadzadeh & Khosravipour, 2018). The realization of rural development requires applying various strategies and techniques. One of the controversial issues in this regard, which can be seen as a basis for directing the scene of local management and development in rural areas, is the issue of housing in both physical and non-physical dimensions. As mentioned, local management plays a fundamental role in rural development in general and in socio-economic development in particular (Molaei Hashjin et al., 2017). Rural management is a multifaceted process composed of three pillars of people, government and public institutions (Kabiri & Valaei, 2019). Given the importance of rural management in attaining rural goals, rural management in Iran needs to draw on core knowledge and provide the necessary momentum for the realization of this goal in the rural areas (Heidari Mokarrar & Nazari, 2011).

Iranian villages have been struggling with a raft of problems from the past to the present, including the lack of attention to sustainable management in the villages, which give rise to countless problems and challenges such as rural-city migration, weak public participation in administrative activities, imposed planning, lack of competent local management (Dehyar), and youth unemployment, among other things (Mousavi & Badri, 2012: 79). The new concept of rural management underscores the role of local institutions and the participation of villagers as one of the fundamental requirements of sustainable rural development. At present, the rural management structure of the country comprises of two parts: The Islamic Council of the village as a decision-making body and Dehyari as an executive branch with legal and financial independence (Moradi & Agahi, 2014). Islamic councils and Dehyars, as the most inclusive chain of the civil society, aims to respond to a social need, which used to be realized in traditional ways in the past, but has currently emerged as a fertile ground for popular participation. Accordingly, in the sixth and seventh principles of The Islamic Republic of

Iran, Councils and Dehyars are regarded as pillars of decision-making and administration of the country. In fact, they play a crucial role in various decision-making, supervisory and managerial sectors by relying on public votes collected through elections or referendums (Talib, 2010: 127).

At present, the rural councils, along with Dehyari, which can be seen as the executive branch of the Councils, are in charge of rural affairs. The villages are expected to tap into underdeveloped potentials through a local democratic organization. The expansion of councils can contribute to the development of non-governmental organizations, increase people's participation in local affairs, and bring to account the rural management institution. However, evidence suggests that rural Islamic councils confront several issues and challenges that, if ignored, can beget numerous problems for the villages across the country. Social challenges are one of the main challenges of councils that are directly and indirectly involved in creation of other challenges. Handling affairs and coordinating a specific program or framework that identifies rural problems and adopts the best possible solution seems necessary (Riahi & Masoumi, 2020). In the new approach system, the decentralized approach to national development has led to the inception of a new rural management, i.e. the establishment of Dehyari in rural areas, which was a formal and legal institution in charge of rural affairs and local rural management in rural areas. Currently, it is deeply involved in the villages, addresses a growing body of rural problems and plays a pivotal role in rural development (Estelaji et al., 2011). However, despite all the efforts made by local managers, a variety of factors such as financial variables, people's attitudes, etc., have mounted a number of challenges in social and cultural domains.

The central district of Rasht County, with 75 inhabited rural settlements, 63 of which have Dehyar and Islamic Council, faces multiple challenges in performing its duties and functions, especially in economic, social and cultural domains. More than two decades of experience in modern rural management has not yet translated into effective rural development. This study aims to investigate and analyze the social and cultural

challenges facing local managers in the villages at the central district of Rasht County, and to answer this question, "What are the most important social and cultural challenges facing local managers in the villages at the central district of Rasht County in the process of rural development?"

2. Research Theoretical Literature

In the theories on the role of people and government in rural development, the formation of local organizations by local communities has been underscored so that local organizations can play an active role in the development and management of local affairs. Rural society is a kind of social organization built upon the relationship between people and local institutions. Rural management is seen as the technique, organization and order of forging this relationship. As one of the major components of rural development, it is influenced by national macro strategies and approaches in the sphere of management. Management approaches can be classified into traditional approaches, human resources approaches, systemic and contingency approaches. Given that development is a multidimensional concept, it seems that the best approach to rural development management is a systemic, participatory and contingent one, which is described in some references as "the new management" (Estelaji, 2012). Informed by the requirements of the present era, the new strategy and modernity of rural management has been tilted towards partnership with the people, for the people (Pahuja, 2015). Today, local planning and management theorists have proposed the theory of partnership. Local community-based management is akin to the group or participatory approach that chiefly focuses on local communities. In contrast, participatory management approaches stresses partnerships between local rural communities, the public sector, and other stakeholders on a larger scale, without focusing on the local community. In the theory of partnership, as stated by Turner, government or the people rather than acting as the supplier or the decision-maker, take care of affairs together. In this mutual cooperation, the government provides resources that cannot be offered by people and the local people - within the framework of the organization of local communities (Rezvani, 2011: 230).

Pahuja stresses the importance of cooperation, trust and friendship to cultivate harmony and peace between people and local management

(Murarka et al., 2021). This approach, covering a variety of areas, including participation, local community, community-based collaboration, decentralization, and partnership, is associated with approaches that concentrate on local community in the process of sustainable development. Therefore, one of the main factors in the analysis of rural issues is the management structure of these communities. In the past, a traditional management system governed the rural areas of Iran and a survey of rural management in Iran in the post-Revolution era suggests major changes in this period compared to the previous times, but the absence of a precise and goal-oriented approach to policies and macro-plans in rural management is still felt (Ghadiri Masoum & Riahi, 2004). The local organizations are built on the principle of sovereignty of peoples, and participation is a key element underpinning these institutions. Apart from participation, decentralized management, regulated decision-making, systemic thinking, and the model of mission execution are other characteristics of modern rural management (Mahdavi & Najafi Kani, 2005).

At the lower levels of the ruling system, the local management of rural development in Iran is entrusted to the district governor and Dehyar. Dehyari, as a public non-governmental organization that administers local affairs under the supervision of villagers through the Islamic councils, is in charge of public affairs and public services. With the establishment of Dehyaris, for the first time, a formal and legal institution was set up to consolidate public affairs in the villages (Akbari, 2003). For many years, the rural management system in Iran, due to socio-economic structures, developments and lack of efficient management in villages, have undergone complicated changes. In all periods, especially in recent decades, it has given rise to a host of problems for the villagers (Nasiri et al., 2021). The new structure of the rural management in Iran has two main components: The Islamic Council of the village as a decision making body and Dehyari as an executive branch with legal and financial independence. In addition to access to national budgets, this institution has power to impose and collect local tolls for public services. Dehyars are the link that connect and reinforce governance and supervision bodies at the bottom of the hierarchical structure. These two non-

governmental institutions constitute the pillars of rural management which, if supported by the government, can fill a historical gap in rural management (Naderi Mehdi, 2015).

An official executive body with legal legitimacy that operates under the supervision of the Islamic Council of the village to provide public services is a new concept in Iran (Ghadiri Masoum & Riahi, 2004). Part of the problems of Dehyaris could be attributed to their fledgling operation as well as deep-rooted management problems in the country. In the absence of no definite measures and yardsticks for credits and resources allocated to districts and regions, the small communities that are out of reach of the decision-makers, i.e. the villages, would suffer the most serious repercussions. The nascent and inexperienced institution of Dehyari, which closely interacts with the defective institution of the Islamic Council of the village, should advance the development of the village (Office of Program and Budget Studies, 2006). Laws and regulations, even those regarding the interaction between the council and Dehyari, are largely flawed and often lead to overlapping in implementation of duties (Estelaji, 2012). Many of the rural problems, including the lack of coordination and overlapping duties of organizations in charge of villages, the budget constraints of Dehyaris and urban orientation and modeling of most managers of relevant organizations, are levied from outside the village. Other obstacles to modern rural management are the distinctive status of Dehyari management in the management structure, limited

experience and lack of expertise of Dehyars (Rezvani, 2011: 260), severe budget constraints of Dehyaris, fragile rural economic the absence of rural management infrastructure in the country, and the abundance of development and service projects undertaken by this institution (Deputy for Dehyari Affairs, 2004:6-5). Other problems such as lack of unified management in the village (Darban Astaneh et al., 2010), poor financial resources, non- participation of residents, negative experiences of villagers, overlapping duties of Dehyaris and other organizations (Ghadiri Masoum et al., 2018), lack of staff specialized in rural affairs (Rezvani, 2011: 260), high prices of equipment and machinery, constrained rural income sources, exorbitant costs of carrying out civil and technical projects for rural areas, social barriers and attitudes of rural tribes to issues (Estelaji, 2012) as well as improper distribution of rural funds (Taghdisi et al., 2011) are some of the challenges to modern rural management. In addition to social challenges, there are a number of parameters and criteria related to the peasant subculture in the rural culture. These social and cultural criteria, which have impeded the development of Iranian villages, include poor mutual trust in personal relationships, lack of innovation, low aspirations, inability to sacrifice immediate resources for future gains, underestimation of the time factor, tribalism and nepotism, over-reliance on government, localism, lack of empathy, lack of motivation for progress and improved standard of living (Azkia, 2005).

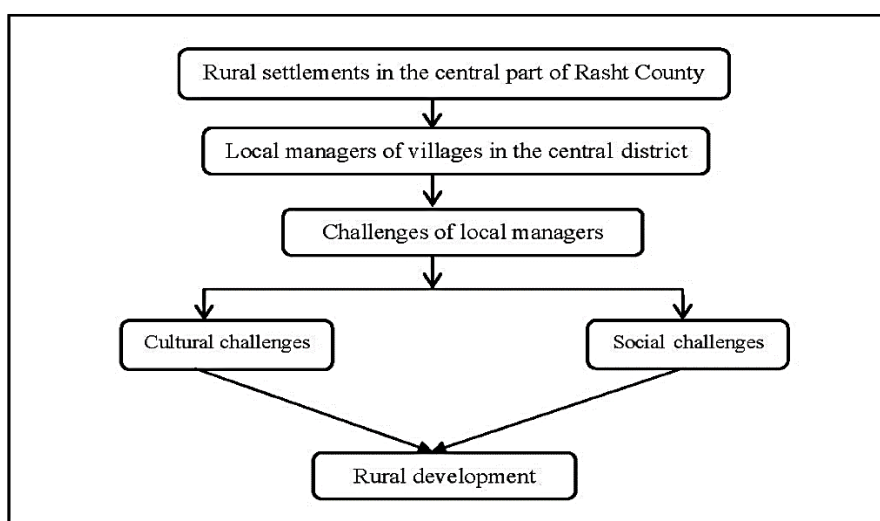


Figure 1. Conceptual model of research

With regard to the challenges of local managers in the rural development process, several studies

have been conducted, some of which are listed in Table (1).

Table 1. Some research on the challenges facing local managers

Researcher / Year	Research title	Summary of results
Ghadiri Masoum & Riahi (2004)	Analysis of rural management challenges in Iran	Local managers have faced challenges in the areas of sustainable financial resources, participation of local people, human resource training, equipment, tools and facilities.
Mahdavi & Najafi Kani (2005)	Dehyaris, another experience in rural management of Iran. Case study: West Azerbaijan province	Today, Dehyaris and local organizations can play an important role in rural development, especially in improving physical condition. In this regard, the higher-level supervision of the governorates and allocation of more budget, along with holding training courses related to job descriptions and creating a culture for public participation have been emphasized.
Badri & Nemati (2007)	Evaluating the functional role of the new rural management system in Golestan province	Structural, social and economic determinants of success in Golestan villages.
Imani Jajarmi & Karimi (2009)	Social challenges of rural councils in local management	The major social challenges facing Islamic councils are the small share of women in rural management though they constitute a substantial segment of rural population, low human capital of council members and villagers, migration of the council's members and the young population to the cities, as well as the declining social capital of councils and villagers.
Badri (2011)	Challenges of rural management in Iran and presentation of strategic policies	This study investigates different periods of rural management in Iran while discussing the major challenges of local managers and proposing solutions for current challenges.
Rokn al-Din Eftekhari et al. (2018)	Identifying the problems and obstacles to the success of rural areas in Selseleh city in Lorestan province	The main obstacles to the effective functioning of rural areas are administrative barriers and supports followed by financial and social problems as well as specific issues related to Dehyars and legal obstacles.
Ghadiri Masoum et al. (2018)	Investigating the problems facing rural councils in East Azerbaijan province	In this study, a number of obstacles such as uncertainty and unawareness of Dehyars about their duties, inefficient execution some tasks due to a lack of experience, ethnic bias, lack of support from officials, council and people and limited cooperation of institutions with Dehyar.
Moradi & Aghei (2014)	Analysis of rural management challenges based on a qualitative approach to the Basic theory	Challenges such unfamiliarity of people and local organizations with the duties of Dehyar, a negative stance on Dehyar, the lack of cooperation and support of local and government organizations from Dehyar, the development of top-down plans by executive organizations, the weak spirit of cooperation and voluntary participation of the people, the shaky legal status of Dehyar and finally, the absence of equipment and financial resources
Kabiri & Valaei (2019)	Analysis of Challenges of New Rural Management (Case Study: Villages of Miandoab County)	The most important challenges facing villagers are unemployment, lack of motivation and personal skills, organizational inefficiency, regulatory problems and law gaps, and inadequate funding of Dehyaris with a total variance of 62.97. Job insecurity, poor financing, lack of motivation and income negative attitudes of the people and prejudices of the councils are other main factors.

Researcher / Year	Research title	Summary of results
Riahi & Masoumi (2020)	Challenges facing rural management and its role in the underdevelopment of Peripheral villages (Case: Shiraz)	Socio-cultural challenge has been a key challenge to the development of rural management in the villages of Peripheral in Shiraz. Based on statistical analysis, in the studied villages, a significant difference was observed between rural management challenges in different dimensions. The results also revealed that as the distance from the city increases, the effect of rural management challenges on the underdevelopment of villages in the outskirts of the city declines. In fact, villages closer to the city were more severely affected by city laws and regulations.

Based on the points presented in Table (1), the bulk of studies on challenges facing local managers of rural settlements were on economic challenges and few studies have explored social and cultural challenges, which represent key areas of rural development.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Geographical Scope of the research

The geographical area of the present study is the central district of Rasht County. As one largest district of Rasht County, it covers an area of 522 square kilometers and shares border with Khomam and Bandar Anzali on the north, Sangar

and Rudbar county on the south, Kouchesfahan district on the east and Tulamat district, Someh Sara county, Fuman and Shaft on the west. The central district of Rasht county, according to the latest General Population and Housing Census in 2016, consists of 4 villages of Pasikhan, Pirbazar, Hume and Lakan with 78 villages (75 inhabited villages and 3 uninhabited villages). In 2016, this area was home to 246,759 households and 740,985 people, of which 78.24% settled in urban areas and 21.76% in rural areas (Management and Planning Organization of Guilan, 2017).

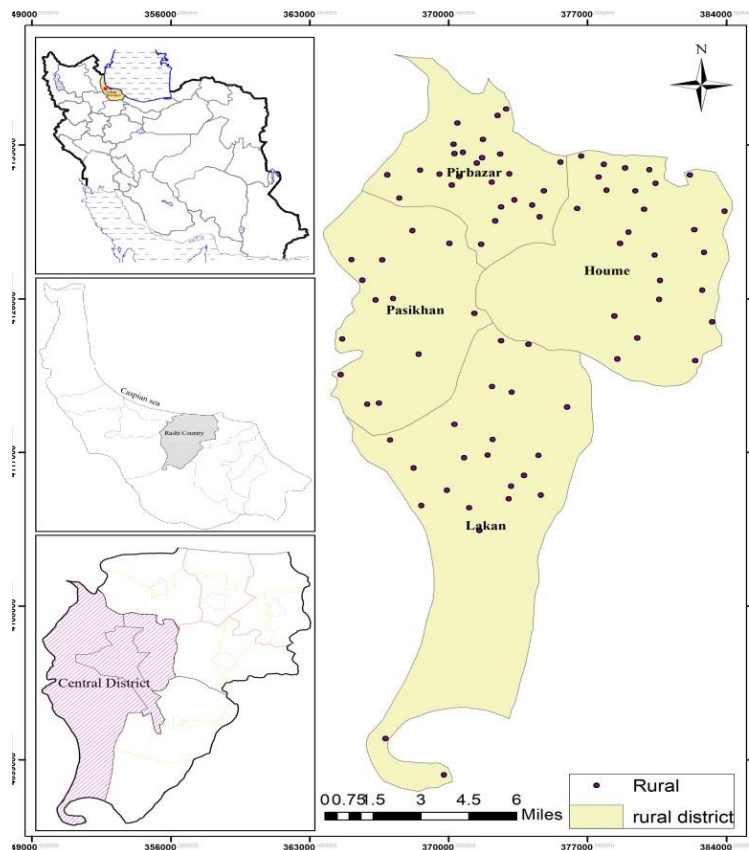


Figure 2. Geographical location of the study area

3. 2. Methodology

This is an applied research in which a descriptive-analytical method has been adopted for data collection and analysis. The research information was obtained using two methods of document analysis and field studies. Information related to the background and subject of research, theoretical framework and scope of research were obtained from document analysis and the major social and cultural challenges facing local managers (Dehyars and Islamic councils) were identified through field studies using observations, interviews and questionnaires. The validity of the questionnaire was assessed based on experts' opinion and its reliability was estimated at 0.975 based on Cronbach's alpha test.

The statistical population of this study consisted of local managers including members of Islamic councils and Dehyars in the central district of Rasht County. This district has 75 inhabited villages, of which 63 villages have Dehyari and Islamic Council. In this study, 284 local managers (Dehyars and the Islamic Council) of these villages were selected using Total population sampling. The t-test and weighted Mean were utilized for data analysis. Data processing was conducted using SPSS²² software. The tables were drawn in Excel software, and maps were designed by Arc GIS software. The independent variable of research, i.e. challenges facing local managers, was measured by social and cultural indicators, and the dependent variable is rural development.

Table 2. Indicators and components of research

Indicators	Components	reliability
Social challenges	Low participation of villagers with local village managers, Decrease in social capital (empathy, trust, participation), Migration of rural youth to the city and non-participation in council elections, Existence of deficiencies in the rules and regulations of village administration, The villagers do not value the actions of local managers, Low youth employment (active labor unemployment) in the village, Low executive power required of local managers in solving village problems, Lack of presence and permanent residence of local managers in the village, Multiplicity of government agencies and institutions and parallel work in rural areas, Low level of people's trust in local village managers, Lack of a clear pattern of rural development, Low professional and scientific attitude in local managers, High level of expectations of villagers and limited ability of local managers, Low level of literacy and awareness of villagers about village rules and regulations, Low participation of women in the local management structure, Low human capital of local managers and villagers (general and professional literacy level), Low familiarity of local managers with the problems and difficulties of the village and providing appropriate solutions to solve it	0.987
Cultural challenges	The politicization of local village managers, Physical and verbal conflicts between the local community and non-natives through the construction of second homes in the village, The small share of women in rural management, Individualism of villagers and low interest in collective work, Low public acceptance of new management practices, Low coordination between managers and people to solve the problems of the village	0.964

4. Research Findings

4. 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The analysis of respondents' profile suggests that 91% of respondents were male and 9% were female. In terms of age, 30.6 of respondents were in the age group of 20 to 30 years, 64.5% were between 30-40 years old and 4.9% were between 40 to 50 years old. The local managers' level of education will play a significant role in managing

rural affairs and mitigating village issues and problems. With regard to education, local managers in the study area could be divided into 5 groups: Below school, diploma, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's and doctoral degree. Of the total local managers in the central district of Rasht County, 97.5% had a university education, with their vast majority (73.9%) having a bachelor's and master's degree (Table 3).

Table 3. Personal and general characteristics of the respondents

	description	Frequency	percent
Gender	Male	261	91
	Female	23	9
Age	20-30	87	6/30
	30-40	183	5/64
	40-50	14	9/4
	50-60	-	-
	60 years and older	-	-
Level of education	Below Diploma	-	-
	Diploma	7	5/2
	Associate Degree	67	6/23
	Bachelor Degree	162	0/57
	Master degree & Doctoral	48	9/16

4.2. Social challenges of local managers

The social challenges facing local managers in the villages at the central district of Rasht with 18 items were analyzed using t-test and weighted mean, as shown in Table (4). Accordingly, the social challenges of local managers in the study could be classified into three levels in terms of importance: first-level social challenges with an weighted mean of above 4 (very important), second-level social challenges with an weighted mean of 3.5-4 (important) and third-level social challenges with an weighted mean of less than 3.5 (average).

First-level social challenges: In this category of challenges facing local managers of villages in the central district of Rasht, there are 6 challenges with a weighted mean of 4.10 to 4.42 (i.e. very important). The participation of villagers in various plans and projects is a key way to achieve rural development. Low participation of local people in rural plans and projects due to their inefficiency was the main challenge facing local managers at the studied villages, which was recognized as the biggest social challenge by local managers with a mean of 4.42. Improving access to services in the villages of the central district of Rasht County, especially gas supply to the villages, paving roads, and giving loans for the renovation of houses have fueled the reverse trend of migration to the villages of this district. Reverse migration and the social problems ensuing the construction of second houses represent one of the problems confronted by local

village managers. This item, with a mean of 4.41, was the second important social challenges facing local managers in the studied villages after the low participation of villagers. These problems are especially evident in Pastak and Alman villages, where a large share of lands has been acquired by the people of Tehran to build their second houses. The long-term presence of candidates in the council without any contestant (in some cases, due to the special situation of the villages and the financial benefits attached to council, and in other cases, due to the unwillingness of other villagers and the absence of a quorum to hold council elections), members and local people are not sufficiently motivated.

For this reason, in most of the studies prior to the rural elections, one of the biggest problems facing Islamic councils and Dehyaris was the small number of candidates and the continued appointment of elderly and unmotivated people as the members of the Islamic councils and Dehyaris, which has overshadowed the presence of youths. The tendency of villagers and the young and active rural population to migrate to the city and therefore their absence in the management system with a mean of 4.40 underlines its importance as one of the major social challenges facing local managers in the study area. Villages such as Selki Sar, Lakan, Khajan Chahar Dang have been among the villages that have experienced this important challenge in recent years.

Surveys have shown that many local managers, especially Dehyars, have no permanent residence in villages and dwell in the cities. This has disturbed the ongoing interaction of villagers with the local managers. As a result, some rural issues and problems village still remain unresolved. On the other hand, in some cases the absence or temporary residence of local managers, especially Dehyars in the village has an adverse impact on their activity, decreasing their efficiency in advancing and implementing rural development programs. The absence and temporary residence of local managers in rural areas, with a mean of 4.25, was also confirmed by local managers in the villages under study. Despite the fact that villages in the central district of Rasht County are dense and positioned in the plains in the vicinity of city, most local managers stated that if local managers lived in the village, they would pay more attention to rural issues as they would feel the shortcomings. Islamic councils and Dehyaris at the central district of Rasht County struggle with the inadequacy of laws and regulations in village administration. Such inadequacies, with a mean of 4.21, was proposed as the fifth social challenges facing local managers in the area. Research suggests that in the villages of Saghalaksar,

Alman and Pastak, this issue was more prominent than other villages in the central district of Rasht County. Local organizations and managers, as institutions that safeguard the rights of exploiters and the local people in the rural and agricultural sectors, are a powerful means of exerting pressure on government agencies in this sector to force them into respecting the rights of citizens, meet the unfulfilled demands and expectations of various stakeholders, improve transparency, reduce corruption, cut red tape and ultimately promote efficiency of government management in rural development. Given the large raft of problems in the villages, most of the villagers attribute rural problems to the Dehyars and hence have trouble trusting Dehyars. For example, in Islamabad village, the local people held Dehyar responsible for power outage. Also, the extent of demands and expectations of the people vary in villages. Therefore, when some expectations are not met, villagers may lose their trust in Dehyar. As such, the little trust of people for local village managers with an average of 4.10 was proposed as the sixth social challenge facing local managers in the villages of the central district of Rasht County (Figure 3).

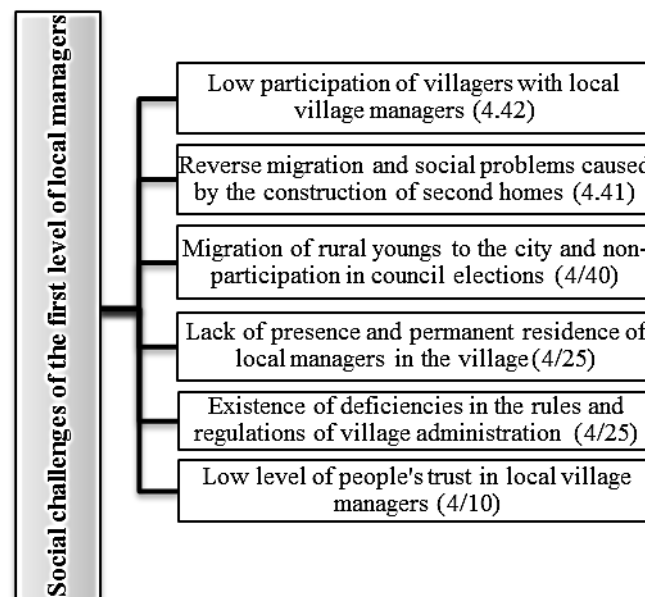


Figure 3. Social challenges of the first level of local managers

Second-level social challenges: Second-level social challenges facing local managers of villages in the central district of Rasht County, with an weighted mean of 3.5 to 4, included 10

"important" challenges, as shown in Figure (4). Social capital in rural areas was measured in terms of empathy, trust and participation, and human capital was assessed through literacy,

education, and so on. Development process in villages of the central district of Rasht County has not been executed effectively, which has dwindled the level of trust and participation of villagers in local managers. Most of Dehyars are well-educated, but since their managerial and professional knowledge is fairly low, their drawbacks begin to stand out. The reduced social capital and low human capital in the villages of the central district of Rasht County with a mean of 3.94 is one of the main challenges facing local managers in the process of rural development. According to studies, villagers tend to visit different government organizations in person to tackle problems and they are not satisfied with Dehyars performance and the village council. This reflects the little trust of local people for Dehyar and members of Islamic council.

Unemployment is a key issue in today's societies and in developing societies, youth unemployment may turn into a serious issue with huge deleterious socio-economic, cultural and cultural effects. Thus, it can be argued that one of the primary goals of the government in the economic domain is to generate full-time employment and fight unemployment. The responsibilities in this regard, particularly in lower subdivisions, are shouldered by governorates. Full employment also describes an economic situation in which all job seekers in the society have access to a decent job and unemployment is scarce. Today, creating jobs for the youth in rural areas is one of the social problems of local managers, which was noted as one of the main challenges facing local managers in villages at the central district of Rasht County with a mean of 3.90. Different countries and regions of the world have adopted varied rural development approaches, and strategies relative to their specific conditions and priorities. Certainly, it is not possible to make sustainable achievement in this area without drawing on the global experiences or only focusing on job creation in rural areas and without considering the rural development strategy. Cooperation at the local management level offers several benefits, including increased local decision-making capacity, protection of local identity, expanded access to external resources, cost reduction, greater productivity and efficiency, conservation of economic resources, and growth of political influence by empowerment of individuals. Accordingly, the lack of a vivid

development pattern is one of the challenges confronting local managers of the studied villages in the rural development process, which was proposed as a major social challenge facing local managers with a mean of 3.67. Islamic councils and Dehyars play a crucial role in the development of villages and the recruitment of efficient and indigenous people. If cognizant of the laws, regulations and duties of councils and Dehyaris, they can further improve this role. The expansion of the agricultural sector is one of the main pillars of the country's economic planning and the development of villages aimed at preventing the rural-urban migration and their growing activities in the agricultural sector and conversion industries is of utmost importance. Due to the multiplicity of their problems, the villagers underestimate the measures taken by village managers and fails to appreciate the efforts of Dehyars and Islamic councils to deal with rural problems. In this regard, most of Dehyars stated that what they have done for the village was not appreciated by the villagers and they solely cared about tackling their own problems. With a mean of 3.60, this challenge was one the social challenges facing local managers in the villages of the central district of Rasht County. For example, in the village of Shalkuh, some of the local people's lands were in the course of the water canal and they were ready to do anything to deal with this problem irrespective of its consequences for the future of the village.

One of the persistent problems in rural communities is the poor coordination between the relevant executive bodies, parallel work, waste of capital and disregard for the real needs of the villages. To optimally allocate scant government funding, it is necessary to focus on rural planning and develop comprehensive and integrated programs. Undoubtedly, there is an interplay between improved social conditions, the change of the cultural system and the productive and economic situation of the society. That is, economic, social, and cultural goals are interdependent. In rural societies, production, distribution, consumption, administration, education and promotion are foundations of rural communities that are closely interrelated. Together, these factors forge the network of social and economic system of rural society. Therefore, the ultimate goal of rural planning is to improve these relationships so that material and human

resources could be optimally exploited to increase the level of production and improve the level of consumption.

Increased production levels are directly linked to better education, public health and social welfare. Since one of the goals of rural development is to improve the living conditions of the villagers, it is essential to provide conditions for villagers to gain access to quality health, education and enhanced social welfare. This largely depends on the sound performance of the relevant bodies, but in the current situation of villages, the multiplicity of executive bodies in charge of planning with a mean of 3.61 was proposed as a challenge, for the abundance of government agencies leads to parallel work and reduces their efficiency. The educational needs of Islamic councils and Dehyars include specialized knowledge in agricultural sciences, natural resources and activities related to these sectors, as well as familiarity with public services. Regarding educational methods, based on the results, it seems that Islamic councils and Dehyars have concluded that in-person education at classes is more effective than other methods. As for the specialized knowledge of council members and Dehyars, it should be stated that most important materials such as familiarity with legal and judicial affairs, administrative and organizational affairs, as well as social and cultural affairs are provided at high school and universities. Hence, to improve the efficiency of councils. Dehyars need to first upgrade their general trainings and then provide specialized training accordingly. The results of the studies revealed that the low knowledge and awareness of the villagers about the rules and regulations of Dehyari with a mean of 3.57 was one of the social challenges facing local managers.

Lack of familiarity with the rules and regulations of the rural guide plans as well as constructions within the river path, which is a usual cause of conflict in the villages, is a clear example of villagers' lack of knowledge and awareness of rules and regulations of Dehyari. Research shows that local people have high and unrealistic expectations of councils and Dehyari, holding the council accountable for solving many of the village's problems. People are under the assumption that all issues or deficiencies in the village must be handled by the Islamic councils and the Dehyar. However, when they learn that

the councils and Dehyari are devoid of the executive power to tackle these problems, they are disillusioned with the local managers. In the long term, this negative attitude undermines the status of Council and Dehyar in village management and leadership and debilitates their acceptance by local people.

The results of studies on the low executive power of local managers in tackling village problems with a mean of 3.56 was one of the social challenges in the rural development process. More than 70% of local managers in the study area admitted they lacked the executive power to handle the problems of the villages. For example, in the village of Pastak, due to the limited power of Dehyar, the rural guide plan was not revised, and therefore many villagers kept struggling with issues related to the land use change and construction of residential settlements for themselves or their children.

The high level of local people's expectations and the limited capacity of local village managers suggest that public attitude of the Islamic councils of Dehyars is a function of their expectations from this institution. These expectations are largely affected by the type of activity and literacy of the villagers. The results concerning the high level of villagers' expectations and limited capacity of local managers indicate that this factor, with a mean of 3.55, was mentioned by about 63% of local managers. Local administrators in the villages surveyed announced that people expect all their problems to be resolved quickly in the shortest time possible, while Dehyaris are unable to do so. For example, people want issues related to the land use change process be settled in the shortest time possible, while it is not possible due to the surfeit of land use change cases and the relatively long red tape (e.g. villages of Pastak, ALman, Bala koy-e Yakh, Kafteh rud, kamakol, and flooded streets in Pibazar).

Despite global studies and experiences, modern rural management in Iran has fallen short of formulating a suitable and efficient model of rural management. Perhaps one of the social challenges of village managers is lack of expertise and knowledge of issues related to management. It is because many local managers are appointed by the people without any background and expertise in rural development planning. That is, they have not received any special training in the field of rural studies during their tenure. Hence, the lack

of professional training and expertise of local managers in the villages at the central district of Rasht County with a mean of 3.51 was also proposed as a challenge. Accordingly, they asserted that local managers have little expert knowledge and it is vital to improve knowledge

and awareness by holding specialized courses. The general literacy of council members and Dehyars is mostly limited to the compulsory education they have received at the primary school (Figure 4).

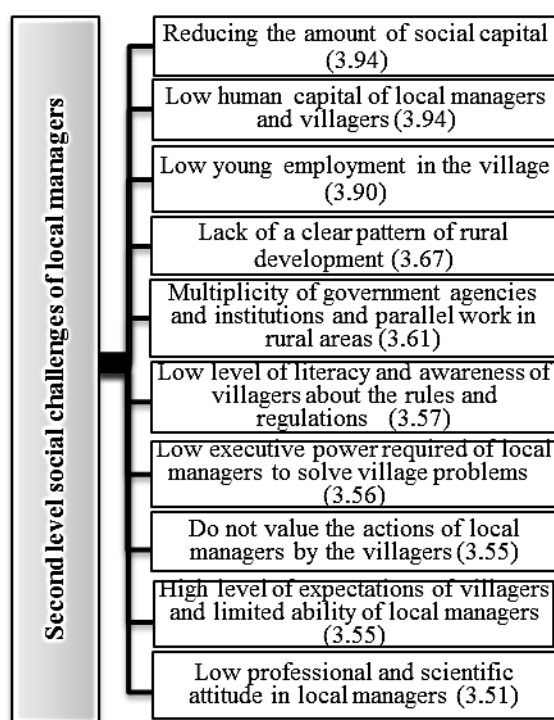


Figure 4. Second level social challenges of local managers

Third-level social challenges: This category of social challenges facing local managers in the studied villages were of "medium" level of importance with a weighted mean of less than 3.5. They include two factors of a lack of local managers' familiarity with the problems of the village with an mean of 3.24 as well as the low participation of women in the local management structure with a mean of 3.07. Although the extent of training provided to councils and Dehyars has taken an upturn in each period, these trainings are still far from the actual needs of village councils and Dehyars, not to mention that the council members and Dehyars are bereft of specialized knowledge in many domains. The educational needs of council members and Dehyars can be categorized into several groups based on research findings including familiarity with administrative and organizational affairs, legal and judicial

affairs, social and political affairs, cultural affairs and finally rural development. The results of the studies on the extent of local managers' awareness of the problems at the villages suggest that most of the village managers in the central district of Rasht County (54.6% with a mean of 3.24) are against this issue, believing that Islamic councils and villagers are largely cognizant of the rural problems. The low participation of women with a mean of 3.07 was also a social challenge in rural management set forth by local village managers in the area. Studies suggest that in the villages of the central district of Rasht County, women have a limited participation in various village affairs and even Dehyars are indisposed to use their help in matters related to rural women. However, considering the improved literacy of rural women, their participation can aid achieve sustainable rural development management (Figure 5).

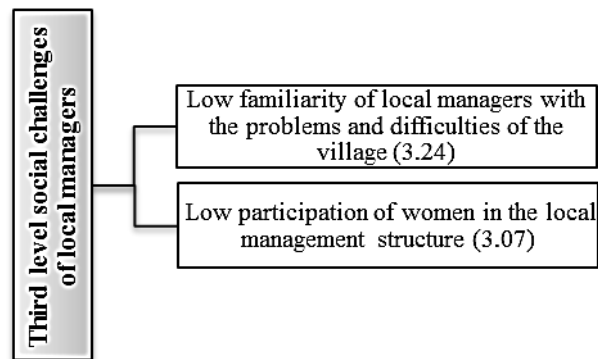


Figure 5. Social challenges of the third level of local managers

Table 4. Statistical test- t and weighted average of social challenge components

Component	Test Statistics-t	Weighted mean	standard deviation	sig	95% confidence level		Rank
					lower bound	upper bound	
Low participation of villagers with local village managers	35.46	4.42	0.66	0.000	1.32	1.49	1
Reverse migration and social problems caused by the construction of second homes	28.27	4.41	0.84	0.000	1.31	1.50	2
Decrease in social capital (empathy, trust, participation)	13.93	3.94	1.14	0.000	0.81	1.08	7
Migration of rural youth to the city and non-participation in council elections	28.26	4.40	0.84	0.000	1.31	1.50	3
Existence of deficiencies in the rules and regulations of village administration	15.68	4.21	1.30	0.000	1.06	1.36	5
Do not value the actions of local managers by the villagers	13.95	3.55	0.67	0.000	0.47	0.63	13
Low youth employment (active labor unemployment) in the village	17.56	3.90	0.86	0.000	0.79	0.99	8
Low executive power required of local managers to solve village problems	8.70	3.56	1.19	0.000	0.43	0.69	12
Lack of presence and permanent residence of local managers in the village	20.15	4.25	1.04	0.000	1.12	1.37	4
Multiplicity of government agencies and institutions and parallel work in rural areas	16.65	3.61	0.62	0.000	0.54	0.68	10
Low level of people's trust in local village managers	28.79	4.10	0.69	0.000	1.02	1.18	6
Lack of a clear pattern of rural development	10.52	3.67	1.07	0.000	0.54	0.79	9
Low professional and scientific attitude in local managers	7.49	3.51	1.13	0.000	0.37	0.63	14
High level of expectations of villagers and limited ability of local managers	8.87	3.55	1.05	0.000	0.43	0.67	13
Low level of literacy and awareness of villagers about the rules and regulations	7.37	3.57	1.29	0.000	0.42	0.72	11

Component	Test Statistics-t	Weighted mean	standard deviation	sig	95% confidence level		Rank
					lower bound	upper bound	
Low participation of women in the local management structure	1.19	3.07	0.99	0.000	-0.05	0.19	16
Low human capital of local managers and villagers	13.93	3.94	1.14	0.000	0.81	1.08	7
Low familiarity of local managers with the problems and difficulties of the village	3.95	3.24	1.02	0.000	0.12	0.36	15

4. 3. Cultural challenges of local managers

The role of cultural planning in the sustainable development of rural social capital should be geared toward strengthening the foundations of rural participation as an empowerment process to consolidate the values of public participation, power and authority of their community, allowing people to take control of their own destiny and granting opportunities for progress to the lower classes of rural society. The cultural challenges of local managers in the villages at the central district of Rasht County were evaluated and analyzed using eight components at three levels of “very important”, “important” and “medium”. The details of each challenge are shown in Figures (6), (7) and Table (5).

First-level cultural challenges: In the first level of cultural challenges facing local managers at villages in the central district of Rasht County, there are 3 factors with a weighted mean of above 4 that are classified as "very important". Differences abound in villages, especially those with multi-ethnic population. In some cases, ethnic conflicts in rural areas lead to physical skirmishes. Therefore, ethnic-tribal differences and poor solidarity of villagers are considered as a major challenge in rural management. In this regard, more than 89% of local managers with a mean of 4.35 acknowledged that ethnic-tribal differences have given rise to a host of problems in the studied villages. The weak coordination between the villagers and the people thwarts may efforts at villages. This has compounded the problems of the village and prolonged their processing, which was expressed as the second cultural challenges by Dehyars ag the central district of Rasht County with a mean of 4.34. For example, in villages where the electricity and

lighting are not desirable and Dehyar go to great lengths to solve the problem, but his efforts are foiled by the non-cooperation of the electricity department, an issue documented in at least 20% of villages. Focusing on resources available in rural areas, meeting public needs and providing public facilities and welfare services, optimal use of available resources and increased rural income can help build up national capabilities.

One of the main goals of development in any country is to foster public capacity and promote participation, but this goal will not be realized in rural communities in the absence of development programs. People in the community tend to participate in economic and social issues when they possess the skills and ability required for participation. The low level of education and small income deter individuals from taking part in social and economic matters. On the other hand, a prerequisite for the optimal exploitation of resources in rural areas is the availability of potentials that must be cultivated in the rural population. The ability to use machines, new production methods, and improve operation procedures, etc., depends on the existence of capabilities in rural communities. The weak culture of collective work is one of the cultural challenges facing village managers in this area with a mean of 4.13 (Figure 6).

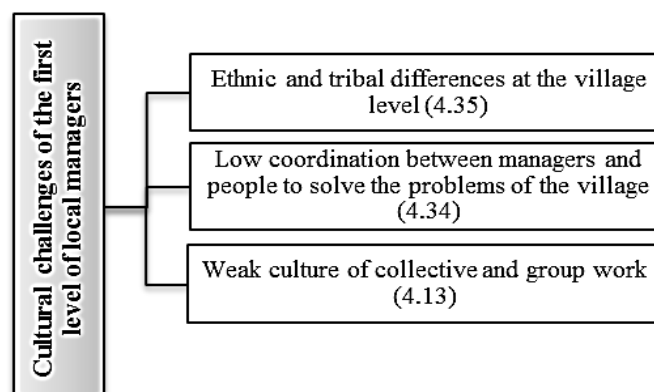


Figure 6. Cultural challenges of the first level of local managers

Second-level cultural challenges: The second level of cultural challenges facing local managers at the studied villages included 4 components with a weighted mean of 3.5 to 4, which were classified as "important". In recent years, villagers in the study area have witnessed the inflow of non-indigenous people through the acquisition of agricultural land and the construction of second houses in these villages.

The highlighted presence of these wealthy people has induced tensions between the local community and non-natives in the studied villages. Verbal abuse and quarrels between villagers and non-natives due to cultural differences represented one of the main cultural challenges facing local managers in villages in the central district of Rasht County with a mean of 3.81. In most cases, these challenges arose in the community under their management. This was especially the case in Alman, Saghalaksar and Pestak villages where several land buyers from Tehran negotiated with the Islamic Council and Dehyar about building constructions.

Low support of villagers for collective work is another challenge to rural management. Individualism of rural people and their disinclination to engage in collective projects was also recognized as an important cultural challenge facing rural managers with a mean of 3.63. One of the most prominent challenges confronting local management in the villages at the central district of Rasht County was the politicization of Islamic councils and Dehyaris. Far beyond the job description of local managers, this has interfered with the process of tackling rural problems. The debate over the politicization of Islamic councils

and Dehyaris is controversial, but it is one of the realities of today's rural society.

In some villages, Islamic councils usually get involved in politics to accomplish their goals. The component of politicization of Islamic councils and Dehyaris with a mean of 3.61 is a major cause of schism and conflicts among the villagers. Rural women have their own special needs and desires in terms of education, health, culture, etc., many of which are overlooked by male managers. Therefore, it is essential to promote the participation of women in village councils and Dehyaris; however, under the current situation, it is highly unlikely that the problems related to their presence in councils and Dehyaris are solved any time soon. Extensive research has investigated the reasons for the low participation of women in rural activities and organizations. In most rural areas, patriarchy is the rule, with men recognizing women management only in household chores, as they believe women's engagement in out-of-house work is their duty rather than a form of participation. Accordingly, the research manifests that a major barrier to women's participation in rural affairs is the socio-economic situation and cultural discrimination in rural society. Studies show that the small share of women in rural management (with a mean of 3.57) is seen as an issue of medium to high importance, so that among 63 villages in the central district of Rasht County, 14 (22.2%) villages had a female Dehyar (Figure 7).

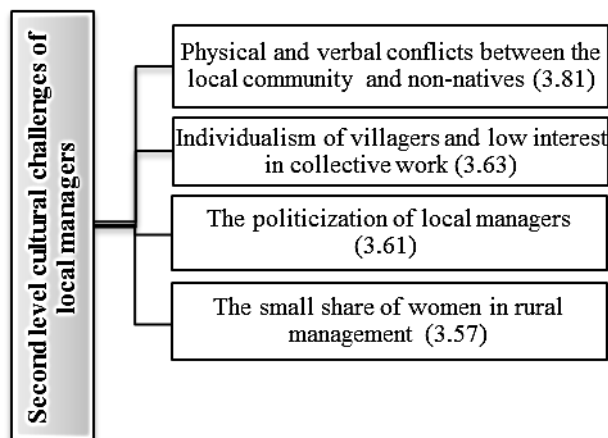


Figure 7. Second level cultural challenges of local managers

Third-level cultural challenges: This level of cultural challenges facing local managers at villages in the central district of Rasht County with a weighted mean of less than 3 was classified as "medium" importance. Rural areas struggle with a myriad of problems and challenges for development, and recognizing these issues guides authorities toward the selection of the appropriate strategy for development of the villages. Challenges in rural areas include inadequate access to capital and facilities, difficulty in providing goods and services, concentration on a particular industry or business, strong tendency

for migrate, and increasing trend for agricultural land use change, among other things. Rural development programs should address issues such as job creation in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, curbing migration to cities, improving welfare, stressing the development of new technologies, education and training of skilled manpower, and so forth. The weak adoption of modern management techniques has also mounted challenges to rural management, but its share with a mean of 2.04 is below average, suggesting that the villagers welcome new management methods.

Table 5. Statistical test t and weighted average of cultural challenge components

Component	Test Statistic - t	Weighted mean	standard deviation	sig	95% confidence level		Rank
					lower bound	upper bound	
Weak culture of collective and group work	19.18	4.13	0.99	0.000	1.02	1.25	3
Ethnic and tribal differences at the village level homes	18.97	4.35	1.19	0.000	1.20	1.48	1
The politicization of local managers	11.48	3.61	0.89	0.000	0.50	0.71	6
Physical and verbal conflicts between the local community and non-natives through the construction of second homes in the village	9.02	3.81	1.52	0.000	0.64	0.99	4
The small share of women in rural management	6.71	3.57	1.43	0.000	0.40	0.74	7
Individualism of villagers and low interest in collective work	13.54	3.63	0.78	0.000	0.54	0.72	5

Component	Test Statistic	Weighted mean	standard deviation	sig	95% confidence level		Rank
					lower bound	upper bound	
Low public acceptance of new management practices	-14.27	2.04	1.14	0.000	-1.09	-0.83	8
Low coordination between managers and people to solve the problems of the village	21.54	4.34	1.05	0.000	1.46	1.22	2

5. Discussion and conclusion

In the new management system of the country, the management of villages has been entrusted to councils and Dehyaris. Rural management is in fact the process of organizing and directing rural community by setting up organizations and institutions. Rural development management is also a multifaceted process involving people, government and public institutions. In this process, with the public participation and contribution of rural organizations, rural development plans and projects are developed, implemented and evaluated. More than two decades have passed since the adoption of the modern rural management, but it seems that the Islamic Council and Dehyars still struggle with countless challenges in the management of their organizations, which have stalled the process of rural development.

The analysis of problems facing Islamic councils and Dehyars suggests there are important challenges that, if overlooked, can significantly obstruct the functioning of these organizations. In this study, social and cultural challenges of local managers in villages in the central district of Rasht County were investigated using 26 factors including 18 social challenges and 8 cultural challenges in three categories of "very important, important and medium" factors. Accordingly, among social challenges, 6 challenges with an aggregate share of 33.3% were assigned to the first category, 10 challenges with a share of 55.6% to the second category and 2 challenges with a share of 11.1% to the third category. Also, among cultural challenges, 3 factors with a share of 37.5% were assigned to the first category, 4 factors with a share of 50% to the second category level and one factor with a share of 12.5% to the third category. The results revealed that among the social challenges facing local managers in the study area, the factors of low cooperation of

villagers with local village managers with a mean of 4.42, reverse migration and social problems caused by the construction and expansion of second houses with a mean of 4.41 and the migration of rural youths to the city and non-participation in council elections with a mean of 4.40 were the most important social challenges, respectively. Similarly, among cultural challenges facing local managers in villages at the central district of Rasht County, the factors of ethnic and tribal differences in the villages with a mean of 4.35, poor solidarity between local managers and villagers to solve rural problems with a mean of 4.34 and the weak collective and group work culture with a mean of 4.13 were the most important cultural challenges confronting local managers at the studied villages, respectively.

The findings of the present study are aligned with those reported by [Ghadiri Masoum and Riyahi \(2004\)](#) about the low participation of people and human capital of local managers; [Imani Jajarmi & Karimi \(2009\)](#) about the small share of women in rural management despite their significant share of population in the rural population, low human capital of council members and Dehyars, migration of council members and youths to cities and also the diminishing social capital between councils and villagers, and [Badri \(2011\)](#) about the variety of economic, social and cultural challenges facing rural management in Iran in different periods.

Moreover, the results are in agreement with those reported by [Roknauddin Eftekhari et al. \(2018\)](#) on administrative, and social barriers, as well as specific problems of Dehyar and legal barriers together with their impact on the performance of local managers; [Ghadiri Masoum et al. \(2018\)](#) on obstacles such as unawareness of their duties, inefficiency in performing duties due to lack of experience and ethnic tendencies; [Moradi & Aghei \(2014\)](#) on challenges such as people and

local organizations' lack of knowledge about the duties of Dehyar, negative stance towards Dehyar, lack of cooperation and support of local and government organizations with Dehyar, weak spirit of cooperation and involuntary participation; Kabiri & Valaei (2019) on challenges such as lack of personal skills, organizational inefficacy, regulatory problems facing the villagers, and finally Riahi and Masoumi (2020) on socio-cultural challenges as the main challenges confronting rural management in the villages of Peripheral Shiraz. In light of the above, in order to mitigate the socio-cultural challenges of local managers of villages in the central district of Rasht County in the process of rural development, the following suggestions are raised:

- Organizing regular monthly meetings between local managers and the villagers to discuss issues and problems with an emphasis on participatory management in village affairs.
- Changing the local management system from person-centered management (Dehyar) to participatory management in the studied villages in order to mitigate social challenges and accelerate the process of rural development.
- Providing a development model and training local managers of the studied villages to advance sustainable rural development;
- Encouraging young, active and educated local forces in the studied villages to participate in the elections of Islamic councils and then engage in the process of making decisions on rural issues,
- Holding regular training courses to improve the efficiency and skills of local managers at the studied villages in rural administration;
- Considering that a significant portion of the social and cultural challenges at the studied villages is rooted in the individualism and lack of coordination of local managers with the villagers,

it is suggested that local managers communicate their executive plans to villagers through regular monthly meetings and draw on the views of the people, elites and informants of the villages.

- Cultivating a culture that favor women's participation in the management structure of the studied villages, especially as a Dehyar and executive director;
- Reforming the structure and duties of rural areas and increasing the share of people in the management of rural affairs based on participatory management model;
- Adapting the new model of management to the strategy of authority delegation and the theory of pluralism. This means that not only rural management needs to possess strong decision-making authority, but also paves the way for people's participation and respects their right to determine their own destiny. In this regard, it would be beneficial to recruit educated managers with master's and doctoral degree in the management system of the studied villages.
- Encouraging local managers and villagers in the study area to engage in collective work and avoid individualism in handling village affairs.
- Discouraging local managers, especially Dehyars in the study area from involving in political issues instead of focusing on handling important issues and problems of the village.
- Encouraging local managers of villages in the study area to study in fields related to rural planning and development in order to adopt scientific and practical methods to tackle or mitigate various challenges in the villages.

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تحلیل چالش‌های اجتماعی - فرهنگی مدیران محلی در فرآیند توسعه روستایی (مطالعه موردی: بخش مرکزی شهرستان رشت)

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چکیده مبسوط

۱. مقدمه

ساختار مدیریت روستایی ایران از دو بخش شورای اسلامی روستا به عنوان نهاد تصمیم گیرنده و دهیاری به عنوان نهاد اجرایی تشکیل شده و انتظار آن است که روستاها با برخورداری از سازمان دموکراتیک محلی، توسعه نیافتگی موجود را تا اندازه زیادی به سمت توسعه یافتگی هدایت کنند. توسعه شوراهای می‌تواند موجبات گسترش نهادهای غیردولتی، افزایش مشارکت مردم در اداره امور خود و پاسخگو نمودن نهاد مدیریت روستایی شود. با این وجود شواهد حکایت از آن دارد که شوراهای اسلامی روستایی با مسائل و چالش‌هایی مواجه هستند که بی توجهی به آن‌ها می‌تواند مشکلات بیشتری را برای روستاهای کشور ایجاد کند. چالش‌های اجتماعی یکی از مهم‌ترین چالش‌های شوراهاست که در بروز سایر چالش‌ها به صورت مستقیم و غیرمستقیم اثرگذار است. برقراری امور و سازماندهی برنامه یا چارچوب مشخص که به بررسی و شناسایی مشکلات روستا و اتخاذ بهترین راه حل ممکن برای رفع آن‌ها می‌پردازد ضروری به نظر می‌رسد. بخش مرکزی شهرستان رشت با ۷۵ روستای دارای سکنه که ۶۳ روستای آن دارای شوراهای اسلامی و دهیار می‌باشند، در انجام وظایف و کارکردهای خود با چالش‌هایی مواجه می‌باشند. این پژوهش با هدف تعیین چالش‌های اجتماعی و فرهنگی مدیران محلی روستاهای بخش مرکزی شهرستان رشت، در صدد پاسخگویی به این سوال اصلی است که مهمترین چالش‌های اجتماعی و فرهنگی مدیران محلی این محدوده در فرآیند توسعه روستایی کدامند؟

۲. مبانی نظری تحقیق

مدیریت محلی توسعه روستایی در ایران، در سطوح پایین هرم حاکمیت به بخشدار و دهیار ختم می‌شود. با شکل‌گیری دهیاری‌ها، برای نخستین بار نهادی رسمی و قانونی برای تثبیت امور عمومی در روستاها تجلی یافت. شورای اسلامی روستا و دهیاری دو بال مدیریت روستایی را تشکیل می‌دهند که در صورت هماهنگی و همراهی دولت می‌توانند نقطه پایانی بر خلا تاریخی مدیریت روستاها باشند. بخشی از مشکلات دهیاری‌ها ناشی از نوپا بودن آن‌ها و مشکلات کلان مدیریتی کشور است. وقتی در میزان اعتبارات و توزیع بخشی و منطقه‌ای آن معیار و شاخص درستی وجود نداشته باشد، بیشترین تأثیر سوء را بر جوامع کم ادعا و دور از دسترس تصمیم گیران، یعنی روستاها خواهد گذاشت. نهاد نوپا و کم تجربه دهیاری که در تعامل تنگاتنگ با نهاد شورای اسلامی روستا قرار دارد، می‌بایست امور توسعه روستا را پیش ببرد. قوانین و مقررات حتی در خصوص نحوه تعامل بین شورا و دهیاری نیز دچار نقص و کاستی هستند و منجر به تداخل وظایف و دوباره کاری می‌شوند. بسیاری از مشکلات روستا از قبیل ناهماهنگی و تداخل وظایف سازمان‌های مرتبط با روستا؛ محدودیت شدید سرنه اعتباری دهیاری‌ها؛ جهت‌گیری و الگوگیری شهری در نگاه اغلب مدیران سازمان‌های ذی ربط، که از خارج روستا به آن تحمیل می‌شوند؛ تفاوت جایگاه دهیاری در ساختار مدیریت؛ تجربه و تخصص اندک دهیاران؛ فقدان مدیریت واحد در روستا؛ مشارکت نداشتن روستاییان؛ تداخل وظایف دهیاری‌ها با دیگر سازمان‌ها؛ محدودیت منابع درآمدی دهیاری؛ بالا بودن هزینه‌های اقدامات عمرانی و فنی مطلوب، موانع اجتماعی و نگرش طایفه‌ای روستاییان به مسائل و توزیع نامناسب اعتبارات دهیاری‌ها، از چالش‌های مدیریت نوین روستایی به شمار می‌آیند.

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۳. روش تحقیق

پژوهش حاضر از نظر هدف کاربردی و ماهیت روش انجام آن توصیفی-تحلیلی است. اطلاعات مور نیاز از طریق منابع اسنادی و مطالعات میدانی، روایی ابزار پرسش نامه با استفاده از نظر متخصصین و پایایی آن از طریق آزمون آلفای کرونباخ به مقدار ۰/۹۷۵ بدست آمده است. جامعه آماری این پژوهش مدیران محلی روستاهای بخش مرکزی شهرستان رشت می باشند. بخش مرکزی شهرستان رشت با ۷۵ روستای دارای سکنه، ۶۳ روستای آن دارای دهیاری و شورای اسلامی است که بر این اساس از ۲۸۴ مدیر محلی (دهیاران و شورای اسلامی) اقدام به جمع آوری اطلاعات از طریق مصاحبه و پرسش نامه شده و برای تجزیه و تحلیل اطلاعات از آزمون t و میانگین وزنی استفاده شده است.

۴. یافته‌های تحقیق

چالش‌های اجتماعی مدیران محلی روستاهای بخش مرکزی شهرستان رشت با ۱۸ گویه و با استفاده از آزمون t و میانگین وزنی و بر اساس اهمیت در سه سطح چالش‌های سطح اول با میانگین وزنی بالای ۴ (خیلی مهم)، سطح دوم با میانگین وزنی ۳/۵-۴ (مهم) و سطح سوم با میانگین وزنی کمتر از ۳/۵ (با اهمیت متوسط) مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفته است. بر این اساس ۶ چالش در سطح اول مهمترین چالش‌های اجتماعی، ۱۰ چالش در سطح دوم اهمیت و ۲ چالش در سطح سوم با اهمیت متوسط قرار گرفته‌اند. در بین چالش‌های اجتماعی مشارکت پایین روستاییان با مدیران محلی روستا در طرح‌ها و پروژه‌های توسعه روستایی با میانگین ۴/۴۲، مهاجرت معکوس و مشکلات اجتماعی ناشی از احداث خانه‌های دوم با میانگین ۴/۴۱ و مهاجرت جوانان روستا به شهر و عدم شرکت در انتخابات شورا با میانگین ۴/۴۰ مهمترین چالش‌های اجتماعی مشخص شده‌اند. همچنین چالش‌های فرهنگی نیز در سه سطح دسته بندی که از مجموع آن‌ها ۳ چالش در سطح اول مهمترین چالش‌های فرهنگی، ۴ مورد در سطح دوم اهمیت و یک چالش در سطح متوسط اهمیت قرار گرفته‌اند. از بین ۸ مولفه سنجش چالش‌های فرهنگی اختلافات قومی و طایفه‌ای در سطح روستاها با میانگین ۴/۳۵، پایین بودن هماهنگی بین مدیران محلی و مردم در جهت رفع مشکلات روستا با میانگین ۴/۳۴ و ضعف

فرهنگ کار جمعی و گروهی با میانگین ۴/۱۳ به عنوان مهمترین چالش‌های فرهنگی مدیران روستاهای بخش مرکزی شهرستان رشت بوده است.

۵. بحث و نتیجه‌گیری

در این پژوهش چالش‌های اجتماعی و فرهنگی مدیران محلی روستاهای بخش مرکزی شهرستان رشت با بهره‌گیری از ۲۶ مولفه شامل ۱۸ مولفه چالش‌های اجتماعی و ۸ مولفه چالش‌های فرهنگی و در سه سطح خیلی مهم، مهم و با درجه اهمیت متوسط مورد بررسی قرار گرفته است. بر این اساس از مجموع چالش‌های اجتماعی ۶ چالش با سهم ۳۳/۳ درصد در سطح اول، ۱۰ چالش با ۵۵/۶ درصد در سطح دوم و ۲ چالش با ۱۱/۱ درصد در سطح سوم اهمیت قرار گرفته‌اند. همچنین از مجموع چالش‌های فرهنگی ۳ چالش با ۳۷/۵ درصد در سطح اول، ۴ چالش با سهم ۵۰ درصدی در سطح دوم و یک چالش با ۱۲/۵ درصد در سطح سوم اهمیت می‌باشند. تشکیل جلسات منظم ماهانه مدیران محلی با روستاییان به منظور آگاهی بیشتر از دیدگاه مردم، نخبگان و مطلعین روستا، تغییر شیوه مدیریت محلی از مدیریت فردی نگر به مدیریت مشارکتی، برگزاری دوره‌های منظم آموزشی در جهت بهبود کارایی و اثر بخشی مدیران محلی در اداره روستاها، فرهنگ سازی افزایش مشارکت زنان در ساختار مدیریت روستاها، تشویق مدیران محلی و روستاییان به انجام کار جمعی و عدم پیگیری امور روستا به صورت فردی، جلوگیری از ورود مدیران محلی به ویژه دهیاران در مسائل سیاسی و اختصاص زمان لازم برای پیگیری امور روستا، برخی از مهم‌ترین راهکارهای پیشنهادی به منظور کاهش چالش‌های اجتماعی و فرهنگی مدیران محلی روستاهای مورد مطالعه در فرایند توسعه روستایی است.

کلیدواژه‌ها: مدیریت روستایی، توسعه روستایی، چالش‌های اجتماعی، چالش‌های فرهنگی، بخش مرکزی، شهرستان رشت.

تشکر و قدرانی

پژوهش حاضر حامی مالی نداشته و حاصل فعالیت علمی نویسندگان است.

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