



Investigating the Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Achieving Sustainable Rural Development (Case Study: Golestan Province)

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Abstract

Purpose- The importance of non-governmental organizations in underdeveloped or developing countries such as Iran is more than anything due to the ability of such organizations in advancing culture in the most basic sectors of society. The purpose of this research is to analyze the role of non-governmental organizations in Golestan province in achieving sustainable rural development.

Design/methodology/approach- This research is descriptive-correlative. The experts of consulting firms of Golestan province constituted the statistical population (n=706) of whom 249 were selected as the sample using stratified random sampling method. The validity of the research instrument was evaluated by faculty members and experts. The pre-test and questionnaire validation were conducted by giving the questionnaires to 30 subjects other than the statistical sample. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.88 was calculated for the reliability coefficient.

Finding- According to the results, collective performance of tasks, the use of information and communication technology in providing services, the promotion of skills in producers and beneficiaries of the agricultural sector, improvement of agricultural knowledge in producers and beneficiaries, agricultural technical-vocational training, teaching of management skills and administration of entrepreneurial business along with group dynamics were the major roles of non-governmental organizations in achieving sustainable rural development. The results showed that the communicative and economic knowledge factor and economy with a specific value of 6.86 had the highest power in explaining variables, followed by the educational-promotional factor with a specific value of 6.38 and the social-facilitating factor with a specific value of 5.97. In total, about 65.2% of the total variance was explained.

Practical implications- In order to achieve sustainable rural development, it is suggested that non-governmental organizations play their roles in raising income and improving the living standards of farmers, accessing resources and facilities for providing services, diversifying agricultural and agricultural activities, reducing costs and establishing contact with farmers. It also promotes the level of knowledge and skills of producers and beneficiaries in the agricultural sector.

Keywords: Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Sustainable rural development, Experts of consulting firms, Golestan Province.

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1. Introduction

Today, the process of development represents one of the major areas of research worldwide, especially in developing countries. The progress and development of the countries requires the exploitation of the potentials and the active participation of people in the stages of development. In this context, development and participation are perceived as closely intertwined, and the process of development would lead to stability and success provided that it is accompanied by the participation of people (Moghanizadeh, 2002). Programs undertaken by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can contribute to sustainable development process at a certain level. (Azizul & Ahmed, 2013). NGOs and other groups in developing countries are called partners in the sense that they receive aids and donations and assume the responsibility of implementing projects for the target population. Accordingly, international organizations such as UN agencies, the World Bank, CIS countries, as well as regional organizations such as the European Union and the African Union will provide the necessary funds for programs and activities of NGOs. These funds are managed by civil society organizations with the aim of promoting, developing and improving the provision of services for the people (Lekorwe & Mpabanga, 2007). NGOs take a variety of forms around the world. In its most general sense, an NGO refers to an organization that is not directly part of the state administrative structure, but plays a major intermediary role between the individuals, ruling system and even community itself. Sustainable development is a type of development that can meet the current human needs without compromising the environmental and biological capabilities of future generations in satisfying their needs. The main goal of sustainable development is to address basic needs, improve the standard of living for all people, maintain and conserve ecosystems and promise a safer and more prosperous future, which is also a function of modern management in rural areas. In general, sustainable development is a strategy for promoting productivity, social and economic, which is aimed at comprehensive development of environmental function for the continuous improvement of human quality of life (APO, 2005). Sustainable rural development is the process of aiding rural people by prioritizing their needs,

investing in building infrastructure and providing social services, establishing justice and equity in accordance with local capacities, taking measures to compensate for all previous inequities and ensuring their health and safety, especially women (Van Der Ploeg et al., 2000). Following the UNCED conference in Rio 1992, the concept of sustainable development has turned into a new model of social development, which has been incorporated into a number of international programs and agreements. Consulting firms such as NGOs play an integral role in sustainable rural development. In Iran, these firms operate all across the country, and there are 117 active consulting firms in Golestan province. This research seeks to identify factors that enhance the role of consulting firms in achieving sustainable rural development.

2. Research Theoretical Literature

There is no clear and agreed-upon definition of NGOs, and due to the diversity of their roles and characteristics, various definitions of NGOs have been proposed. In fact, these organizations are accompanied with the phrase non-governmental. Streeten (1997) points out that NGOs often define themselves as institutions that stand opposite the government, which is often censured for being too huge, inflexible, bureaucratic, hierarchical and ineffective in dealing with the problems of the disadvantaged. If these organizations are defined as institutions that operate beyond the authority of the state, they will embrace a wide range of entities. The prefix "non-profit" is also often used with these organizations for greater precision. In fact, the nonprofit sector refers to organizations that work on a voluntary basis to mobilize and coordinate forces with the aim of alleviating the suffering and fostering human development (Streeten, 1997). The importance of NGOs in underdeveloped or developing countries such as Iran is more than anything due to the ability of such organizations in building culture in the most basic sectors of society. The historical experience of the development process in developed and developing countries has made it clear that rural development is vital to national development and should be prioritized in development plans (Shakori, 2001). If the Third World countries are supposed to develop and obtain sustainable development, they need to commence development from rural areas, in particular from the agricultural sector. The fundamental issues such as widespread poverty, growing inequality, rapid population growth

and rising unemployment are all rooted in stagnation and deteriorating economy of rural life. In the absence of rural development as an integral part of macro development programs in any country, industrial development will also fail, or if succeeds, will give rise to severe internal imbalances that will provoke massive poverty, inequality and unemployment. In general, the following features should be considered in the definition of NGOs (Saeidi, 2002).

2.1. Non-profit

These organizations are not motivated with financial incentives and are established to contribute to the benefits of specific individuals or groups. Although NGOs can enter into business and generate profits and capital, their earnings must be utilized solely for the purpose of implementing the mission of the organization or investment in the organization.

2.2. No state affiliation

NGOs are founded by people and governments usually do not have much part to play in their establishment and management. They encompass associations, assemblies, professional groups, religious organizations and charities, among other things.

2.3. Voluntary

NGOs are established by people on a voluntary basis. On the one hand, these organizations are required to comply with existing laws and regulations, and on the other hand, no state organization is allowed to interfere with their creation, management and dissolution under normal conditions. People's membership in NGOs is voluntary.

2.4. Possession of a legal status

In order to expand the activities of NGOs, certain laws have been introduced and within the framework of these laws, these organizations are registered and granted a legal status. Such a legal status not only helps build people's trust in NGOs but they can also enter into contract with government agencies and use various facilities such as bank facilities.

2.5. Democratic and participatory management

Since NGOs are run by people, the administration process often takes a bottom-up approach and is participatory in nature. This feature allows members to constantly monitor the performance of managers, and managers are held accountable for their performance vis-à-vis the members. Overall, it nurtures dynamism in the organization.

2.6. Self-regulation

NGOs are financially self-governing. Although they receive aids from the government, charities, international organizations, etc., these donations should not make them dependent on donors in a way that NGOs lose sight of their social obligations and missions.

2.7. Non-political

These organizations have a social commitment. Their main goal is to serve the community, the deprived and vulnerable groups and to deal with gender-racial discrimination, environmental problems, etc. The mechanisms for establishing NGOs are also different from political organizations (parties), and they usually pledge an oath at the time of the establishment to refrain from entering political areas. However, this feature should not be construed as a pretext for passivity in organizing campaigns and movements aimed at censuring the governmental and international plans. They can criticize government and international organizations, expose their agenda and coordinate peaceful marches.

Lee (2015) reports that the Asia-Pacific UN has ascertained over the past five decades that, by focusing on politics, a link between natural resource scarcity, security and sustainable development can be established to boost economic growth, and that fear of insufficient physical power can undermine prosperity and economic prosperity. Fowler (2004) argues that the days of individual and solitary activities with the cooperation of other organizations are numbered. With the increasing demands of citizens from governments, it is no longer possible for the government to provide all the goods and services. For this reason, in recent years, the support and interest for NGOs have been on rise due to the failure of governments to provide adequate and appropriate services. Accordingly, in most developed and developing countries, such civil institutions are set up to supplement the development and service efforts of governments. Ritvo (2014) states that NGOs, to increase their probability of success in providing their intended programs and services, make optimum use of their financial resources and limited staff.

Stein, Ernstson, and Barran (2011), in their study on the relationships between NGOs and private enterprises and other associations founded by people that are active in agriculture, livestock farming, water and soil resources management and forest and environmental protection, concluded that NGOs have a vital role in

determining conservation measures in Tanzania. In this regard, the results of network analysis showed that NGOs play a pivotal role in establishing knowledge networks to protect resources compared to other actors. Stefania (2013) states that NGOs are organizations that are neither part of a government nor a normal for-profit business, and are usually founded by ordinary citizens. NGOs may be funded by governments, foundations, businesses, or individuals. They are primarily governed by volunteers, without utilizing any official budget. NGOs encompass a diverse group of organizations involved in a wide range of activities and fields in diverse parts of the world.

Calado et al. (2012) highlight the key role of NGOs in protecting the environment and management. Nomsa, Marietta and Barnabas (2011) set out to identify rural development sustainability factors based on agricultural development projects implemented by NGOs and concluded that optimal human resource development requires the participation in the project and ownership and leadership of the members in the project in order to foster stability in the projects. Therefore, participation contributes to achieving food security, alleviating poverty and reducing the cost of maintaining the environment.

Rouknedin Eftekhari, Sojasi Qeidari and Sadeghloo (2013) set out to introduce the possibility and the manner of utilizing NGOs at the moment, suggesting the type of new NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) that can be founded. To achieve this goal, authors undertook extensive research on social and economic issues in the society with the results suggesting the capability and willingness of NGOs and CBOs to participate in planning.

Varmezyari and Hosseini (2009) concluded that, contrary to their expectation, rural people were especially willing to participate, despite the fact that they were mostly indignant. However, in spite of the strong inclination of the rural population for participation, there are no favorable infrastructures for continuing voluntary cooperation in agriculture and other fields. The main causes of this problem are empowerment of local organizations, including local NGOs and CBOs besides NGOs and the Center for Agricultural Extension and Services. To improve rural livelihoods and access to rural and agricultural development, they proposed that local institutions, especially the Agricultural Development and Service Center, be established and supported. Maurel et al. (2007) describes partnership as the process of engagement in volunteer-groups of NGOs, CBOs and

local people to plan or make decisions for affairs that affect their livelihoods or environment, and they need to aid each other to achieve collective goals by assuming responsibility.

Research objectives as follows:

General Objectives:

Examining the role of NGOs in Golestan province in achieving sustainable rural development

Specific Goals:

- Investigating the promotional, social, communicative knowledge and facilitating role of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development
- Identifying the role of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development
- Identifying barriers to NGOs in obtaining sustainable rural development
- Identifying solutions to improving the status of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development.

3. Research Methodology

The research method used in this study, given the above mentioned categorization, is applied in terms of its objective. Also, with respect to its extent and degree of control, it is a field study that utilizes a descriptive and non-experimental research method. Here, a descriptive and correlational research method has been employed to achieve the goals. The applied nature of this research is driven by the fact that its results can be used for appropriate planning and policy making in this field. Further, it is classified as a field study in terms of its extent and degree of control as it examines all variables under normal conditions. The population of this research consisted of all experts working in consulting companies in Golestan province. The stratified random sampling method was used for selecting subjects. The cities of Golestan province constituted the strata of our statistical population. The total number of experts working in consulting services companies was 706. According to Krejcie and Morgan's table, 249 experts were selected as the statistical sample (Table 1). To determine the content and facial validity of the instrument, several versions of the questionnaire were given to the professors and experts of agriculture in Golestan and Mazandaran provinces. After receiving the comments and feedbacks of experts, the revisions were made and the final questionnaire was prepared to determine the reliability. To determine the validity of the research tool, a preliminary test was conducted. In this test, a questionnaire was distributed among 30 experts of consulting

companies in Mazandaran province. After data extraction, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each

variable was computed by SPSS software. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all variables was $\alpha=0.88$.

Table 1. Situation of population and sample Separated County

(Source: Research findings, 2017)

County	Number of consulting companies	Number of experts	Number of sample
Gorgan	36	167	59
Gonbad	25	169	60
Aliabad	11	55	19
Agh ghala	9	64	23
Minodashat	7	46	16
Galish	2	12	4
Moraveh tapeh	2	14	5
Kordkoy	6	39	14
Kalaleh	5	37	13
Azadshahr	3	17	6
Gomishan	2	14	5
Bandar torkaman	3	31	11
Ramian	2	18	6
Banadr gaz	4	23	8
Total	117	706	249

4. Research findings

4.1. Roles of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development

The roles of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development were measured with 43 items that were scored on a 6-point Likert scale (none= 0, very low = 1, low = 2, average = 3, high = 4, very high = 5). Table 2 shows the mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation and rank of each item associated with the role of NGOs in obtaining

sustainable rural development. Based on the results, the performance of tasks in groups, the use of information and communication technology in the provision of services, the promotion of the skills of producers and users of the agricultural sector, raising the knowledge of producers and beneficiaries of the agricultural sector, technical-vocational agricultural training, training management skills and fostering entrepreneurial businesses and group dynamics had the highest rankings (Table 2).

Table 2. Prioritization of items related to the roles of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development

(Source: Research findings, 2017)

Items	Mean	SD	Coefficient of variation (%)	Rank
Performance of tasks in groups	3.41	0.77	22.43	1
Use of information and communication technology in the provision of services	3.31	0.75	22.74	2
Promotion of the skills of producers and users of the agricultural sector	3.55	0.82	22.95	3
Raising the knowledge of producers and beneficiaries of the agricultural sector	3.43	0.80	23.41	4
Technical-vocational agricultural training	3.45	0.83	24.15	5
Training management skills and fostering entrepreneurial businesses	3.23	0.79	24.59	6
Group dynamics	3.65	0.90	24.69	7
Need assessment	3.27	0.83	25.38	8
Contact with agricultural researchers	3.38	0.86	25.56	9
Increasing self-esteem among villagers	3.29	0.85	25.72	10
Contact with farmers	3.65	0.96	26.14	11
Quality improvement of production efficiency in utilization units	3.38	0.89	26.17	12
Quantity improvement of production efficiency in utilization units	3.38	0.89	26.34	13
Creating and employing a part of the graduates of the agricultural sector in the field of production	3.24	0.85	26.36	14
Planning	3.17	0.85	26.86	15

Table 2.

Items	Mean	SD	Coefficient of variation (%)	Rank
Participation in the work	3.39	0.93	27.48	16
Attention and use of indigenous knowledge	3.58	1.01	28.11	17
Reduction of costs	3.24	0.92	28.45	18
Use the experiences of other companies	3.11	0.89	28.63	19
Improve the attitude and insight of producers	3.22	0.93	28.76	20
Understanding the situation of the villagers	3.51	1.02	29.14	21
Creating motivation among villagers	3.35	0.98	29.39	22
Perseverance and earnestness in activities	3.37	0.99	29.72	23
Diversification of agricultural and alternative agricultural practices	3.19	0.95	29.82	24
Accelerating the transfer of scientific and research findings to the agricultural sector	3.15	0.94	29.90	25
Income growth and improved livelihoods of farmers	3.22	0.98	30.42	26
Communication and coalitions with other organizations and offices	2.90	0.89	30.64	27
Training on the setting up of entrepreneurial businesses	3.24	0.99	30.69	28
Evaluation	3.20	1.01	31.45	29
Development of local management and leadership	3.26	1.03	31.50	30
Short-term training programs for different groups of farmers	3.10	0.99	32.08	31
Training standards for the production and supply of products and services	3.14	1.02	32.30	32
Training concepts marketing products	2.92	0.94	32.36	33
Efficient use of loans and credits	2.81	0.91	32.52	34
Familiarize with Facilitating Techniques	3.23	1.06	32.93	35
Access to resources and facilities to provide services	3.12	1.05	33.71	36
Importance of knowledge and information of the villagers	3.26	1.10	33.76	37
Getting cheap government facilities	2.51	0.87	34.51	38
To consider of poor villagers	3.27	1.17	35.72	39
Teaching legal issues for companies	3.14	1.14	36.27	40
Conducting a Seminar	2.92	1.09	37.38	41
Developing and strengthening entrepreneurial skills	2.59	0.98	37.85	42
How to use bank facilities	3.08	1.18	38.26	43

6-point Likert scale (none= 0, very low = 1, low = 2, average = 3, high = 4, very high = 5)

4.2. Barriers facing NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development

Obstacles facing NGOs in obtaining sustainable rural development were measured by 13 items that were scored on a 6-point Likert scale (none = 0, very low = 1, low = 2, average = 3, high = 4, very high = 5). Table 3 shows the mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation and rank of barriers facing

NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development from the perspective of experts. Based on the results, farmers' financial incapacity in paying for services, failure to delegate many business activities, the shortage of experienced staff and subsistence agriculture were among the most important barriers facing NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development (Table 3).

Table 3. Prioritization of obstacles of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development
(Source: Research findings, 2017)

Obstacles	Mean	SD	Coefficient of variation (%)	Rank
Farmers' financial incapacity in paying for services	4.00	0.77	19.29	1
Failure to delegate many business activities	3.91	0.88	22.58	2
Shortage of experienced staff	3.54	0.83	23.50	3
Subsistence agriculture	3.94	0.94	23.86	4
Lack of financial support of government agencies for NGOs	4.02	1.00	24.79	5
Low level of education of villagers	3.74	0.93	24.96	6
Inadequate educational facilities, transportation and infrastructure	3.96	1.00	25.30	7
Lack of investment capability	3.90	1.10	28.16	8

Table 3.

Obstacles	Mean	SD	Coefficient of variation (%)	Rank
Lack of familiarity with the role and functions of NGOs	3.59	1.10	30.71	9
Low culture of participation and teamwork among villagers	3.24	1.03	31.68	10
Parallel to the work of executive agencies	3.69	1.19	32.37	11
Lack of a comprehensive program	3.53	1.19	33.77	12
Farmers' Dependence on public extension	3.43	1.21	35.34	13

6-point Likert scale (none= 0, very low = 1, low = 2, average = 3, high = 4, very high = 5)

4.3. Factor analysis of the role of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development

A factor analysis is used for data reduction. That is, the research variables are turned into factors and then the extent to which a factor explains variance is demonstrated. The first step in factor analysis is to show whether or not the data is suitable for factor analysis. For this purpose, we use KMO and Bartlett tests. According to the calculations listed in Table 3, data had desirable internal consistency for the

application of factor analysis (KMO = 744.44), and the Bartlett statistic was significant at the level of 1%, which confirms factor analysis (Table 4).

It is worth noting that after varimax rotation and due to low factor load (<0.4) some variables were removed due to weak association with other variables. Finally, from a total of 43 variables, n=42 were investigated. It should be noted that based on theoretical model of research, social, economic, educational-promotional, communicative knowledge and facilitating roles were considered.

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's Test

(Source: Research findings, 2017)

Bartlett's Test	KMO	Factor analysis
5741.8	0.744	Role of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development
0.000		Sig

In order to determine the number of factors, it was first examined whether the extracted variables of each factor had desirable fitness. As such, based on the specific values, the variables with a specific value of more than one, given the consideration of

the fitness of the variables of each factor, were divided manually into three factors (communicative and economic knowledge, educational-promotional and social and facilitating roles). Overall, 65.20% of the total variance was explained by these three factors (Table 5).

Table 5. Extracted factors with specific value, percentage of variance and cumulative percentage of variance after rotation

(Source: Research findings, 2017)

Factors	Name of factors	Specific value	Percentage of variance	Cumulative percentage of variance
1	Knowledge-communicative and economic	6.86	22.95	22.95
2	Educational-promotional	6.38	21.83	44.78
3	Social and facilitating	5.97	20.42	65.20

The extracted factors along with the specific value of the percentage of variance and the cumulative percent of variance after rotation are described in Table 5. According to the results of the table, the communicate and economic knowledge factors with a specific value of 6.86 had the highest share in explaining variables, followed by the educational-promotional factor with a specific value of 6.38 and the social and facilitating factor with a specific value of 5.97, which together explained about 65.20% of the total variance. Therefore, a high percent of variance is explained by these factors.

Based on the results of Table 6, the first factor explaining the roles of NGOs in achieving sustainable development in rural areas is communicative and economic knowledge factor. The most important variables of this factor are income growth and improved livelihoods of farmers, access to resources and facilities for providing services, diversification of agricultural and alternative agricultural practices, reduction of costs and contact with farmers.

The second factor explaining the roles of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development was the

educational-promotional factor. The major variables of this factor included short-term training programs for different groups of farmers, training laws and standards of production and supply of goods and services, teaching legal issues for companies and businesses, developing and strengthening entrepreneurial skills, and teaching how to set up entrepreneurship startups.

The third factor explaining the role of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development was social and facilitating factor. The major variables of third factor consisted of group dynamics, planning, familiarization with facilitating techniques, participation in activities and evaluation (Table 6).

Table 6. Variables related to each factors and the amount of coefficients obtained
(Source: Research findings, 2017)

Factors	Variables	Coefficients
Knowledge-communicative and economic	income growth and improved livelihoods of farmers	0.776
	access to resources and facilities for providing services	0.758
	diversification of agricultural and alternative agricultural practices	0.710
	reduction of costs	0.709
	contact with farmers	0.707
	Use of information and communication technology in the provision of services	0.590
	Getting cheap government facilities	0.590
	Promotion of the skills of producers and users of the agricultural sector	0.587
	Raising the knowledge of producers and beneficiaries of the agricultural sector	0.556
	Quantity improvement of production efficiency in utilization units	0.523
	Communication and coalitions with other organizations and offices	0.518
	Quality improvement of production efficiency in utilization units	0.495
	Contact with agricultural researchers	0.465
Accelerating the transfer of scientific and research findings to the agricultural sector	0.436	
Educational-promotional	Short-term training programs for different groups of farmers	0.750
	Training standards for the production and supply of products and services	0.692
	Teaching legal issues for companies	0.676
	Developing and strengthening entrepreneurial skills	0.581
	Training on the setting up of entrepreneurial businesses	0.572
	Technical-vocational agricultural training	0.563
	Training management skills and fostering entrepreneurial businesses	0.531
	Conducting a Seminar	0.508
	How to use bank facilities	0.501
	Training concepts marketing products	0.418
Social and facilitating	Group dynamics	0.789
	Planning	0.776
	Familiarize with Facilitating Techniques	0.775
	Participation in the work	0.743
	Evaluation	0.734
	Efficient use of loans and credits	0.727
	Importance of knowledge and information of the villagers	0.700
	Perseverance and earnestness in activities	0.665
	Attention and use of indigenous knowledge	0.651
	To consider of poor villagers	0.641
	Use the experiences of other companies	0.590
	Need assessment	0.583
	Development of local management and leadership	0.557
	Understanding the situation of the villagers	0.540
	Increasing self-esteem among villagers	0.496
	Improve the attitude and insight of producers	0.462
	Performance of tasks in groups	0.461
Creating motivation among villagers	0.443	

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the results found, the first factor explaining the role of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development was communicative and economic knowledge. The main variables of this factor include income increase and improvement of livelihood (0.776), access to resources and facilities for providing services (0.758), diversification of agricultural activities (0.710), and finally, reduction of costs and contact with farmers (0.709). The results are consistent with those reported by Rouknedin Eftekhari et al. (2013), Nomsa et al. (2011), Ritvo (2014), and Stein et al. (2011).

The second factor explaining the role of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development was educational-promotional factor, the most important variables of which included short-term training programs for different groups of farmers (0.750), teaching the laws and standards for the production and supply of products and services (0.692), teaching legal issues for companies and enterprises (0.676), developing and strengthening entrepreneurial skills, and teaching how to set up entrepreneurial businesses (0.881). The results are consistent with those reported by Maurel et al. (2007), Varmezari and Hosseini (2009), Ritvo (2014) and Stein et al. (2011).

The third factor explaining the role of NGOs in achieving sustainable rural development was social and facilitating factor. The most important variables of this factor were group dynamics (0.789), planning (0.776), familiarity with facilitating techniques (0.775), participation in activities (0.742) and evaluation (0.724). The results of this study were in agreement with those reported by

Maurel et al. (2007), Varmezari and Hosseini (2009), Rouknedin Eftekhari et al. (2013), Nomsa et al. (2011), Calado et al. (2012), Ritvo (2014) and Stein et al. (2011).

In order to achieve sustainable rural development, it is suggested that NGOs play their roles in increasing income and improving the livelihoods of farmers, access to resources and facilities for providing services, diversification of agricultural activities and alternative agricultural techniques and reducing costs and contact with farmers. It also increases the level of knowledge and skills of producers and beneficiaries in the agricultural sector.

In order to achieve sustainable rural development, it is recommended that NGOs play their roles in organizing short-term training programs for different groups of farmers, teaching laws and standards for the production and supply of products and services, teaching the legal issues of companies and enterprises, developing and strengthening entrepreneurial skills and training how to set up entrepreneurial businesses.

Furthermore, to achieve sustainable rural development, it is suggested that NGOs enhance their roles in group dynamics, planning, familiarization with facilitating techniques, participation in activities and evaluation, along with strengthening the perseverance and diligence of farmers and paying greater attention to indignant farmers and native knowledge of beneficiaries.

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واکاو نقش سازمان‌های غیر دولتی جهت دستیابی به توسعه پایدار روستایی

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چکیده مبسوط

۱. مقدمه

امروزه توسعه به عنوان یک فرآیند، مهم‌ترین بحث کشورها، بویژه کشورهای در حال توسعه است. تحقق پیشرفت و توسعه کشورها نیز مستلزم بهره‌گیری از استعداد و توان و حضور فعالانه مردم و مشارکت آنها در مراحل توسعه است؛ به طوری که توسعه و مشارکت را امری در هم تنیده دانسته اند، و فرآیند توسعه وقتی با ثبات و موفقیت همراه می‌داند که با افزایش مشارکت مردم توأم باشد. برنامه‌های انجام شده توسط سازمان‌های غیر دولتی قادر به داشتن سهم مثبت در فرآیند توسعه پایدار در یک سطح معینی می‌باشد. توسعه پایدار روستایی عبارت است از فرآیند کمک به مردم روستایی از طریق اولویت‌بندی نیازهایشان، فعال نمودن آن و سرمایه گذاری در زمینه ایجاد زیرساخت‌ها و ارائه خدمات اجتماعی، برقراری عدالت و برابری با توجه به ظرفیت‌های محلی، و رفتارهایی به خلاف همه بی‌عدالتی‌های گذشته و تضمین سلامتی و امنیت آنها. شرکت‌های خدمات مشاوره‌ای به عنوان سازمان‌های غیردولتی نقش بسیار مهمی در توسعه پایدار روستایی دارند. این شرکت‌ها در گستره مکانی از کشور فعالیت می‌کنند و در استان گلستان ۱۱۷ شرکت خدمات مشاوره‌ای وجود دارد. این تحقیق به دنبال شناسایی عواملی است که نقش شرکت‌های خدمات مشاوره‌ای را در دستیابی به توسعه پایدار روستایی پررنگ تر نماید.

۲. مبانی نظری تحقیق

اهمیت سازمان‌های غیر دولتی در کشورهای عقب‌مانده و یا کشورهای رو به توسعه‌ای مانند ایران، بیش از هر چیز شاید به توانایی سازمان‌هایی از این دست برای فرهنگ‌سازی در بنیادین‌ترین بخش‌های جامعه مربوط

باشد. تجربه تاریخی فرآیند توسعه در کشورهای توسعه یافته و پیشرفته، این امر را روشن ساخته که توسعه روستایی یک ضرورت بنیادی برای توسعه ملی است و می‌بایست در اولویت برنامه‌های توسعه‌ای قرار گیرد. اگر قرار است توسعه در کشورهای جهان سوم نیز انجام گیرد و خود پایدار باشد باید به طور اعم از مناطق روستایی و به طور اخص از بخش کشاورزی آغاز شود، مسائل اساسی فقر گسترده، نابرابری در حال رشد، رشد سریع جمعیت و بیکاری فزاینده تماماً ریشه در رکود و اغلب سیر قهقرازی زندگی اقتصادی مناطق روستایی دارد و بدون توسعه روستایی که به عنوان بخش مهمی از برنامه‌های توسعه کلان در هر کشوری است، توسعه صنعتی یا موفق نخواهد شد و یا اگر موفق شود چنان عدم تعادل‌های شدید داخلی ایجاد خواهد کرد که مشکلات فقر گسترده، نابرابری و بیکاری بیشتر خواهد شد. به طور کلی می‌توان ویژگی‌های زیر را در تعریف سازمان‌های غیردولتی در نظر گرفت: غیرانتفاعی، نداشتن وابستگی سازمان به دولت، دواطلبانه بودن، برخورداری از شخصیت حقوقی، مدیریت دموکراتیک و مشارکتی، خودگردانی و غیرسیاسی.

۳. روش تحقیق

روش تحقیق مورد استفاده در این مطالعه بر اساس تقسیم‌بندی‌های فوق‌الذکر، از لحاظ هدف، کاربردی و از لحاظ میزان و درجه کنترل، میدانی و از لحاظ نحوه جمع‌آوری اطلاعات نیز از نوع تحقیقات توصیفی و غیر تجربی (غیر آزمایشی) می‌باشد. جامعه آماری این پژوهش شامل کلیه کارشناسان شرکت‌های خدمات مشاوره‌ای استان گلستان می‌باشد. در این تحقیق از روش نمونه‌گیری تصادفی طبقه‌ای استفاده شده است.

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۵. بحث و نتیجه‌گیری

بر اساس نتایج، اولین عامل تبیین‌کننده نقش‌های سازمان‌های غیر دولتی در دست‌یابی به توسعه پایدار روستایی تحت عنوان دانشی-ارتباطی و اقتصادی نام‌گذاری شد که مهمترین متغیرهای این عامل به ترتیب شامل افزایش درآمد و بهبود سطح زندگی کشاورزان (۰/۷۷۶)، دسترسی به منابع وام‌کانات برای ارائه خدمات (۰/۷۵۸)، متنوع‌سازی فعالیت‌های کشاورزی و کشاورزی جایگزین (۰/۷۱۰)، کاهش هزینه‌ها و تماس با کشاورزان (۰/۷۰۹) می‌باشند. دومین عامل تبیین‌کننده نقش‌های سازمان‌های غیر دولتی در دست‌یابی به توسعه پایدار روستایی تحت عنوان عامل آموزشی-ترویجی نام‌گذاری شد که مهم‌ترین متغیرهای این عامل به ترتیب شامل برنامه‌های کوتاه مدت آموزش برای گروه‌های مختلف کشاورزان (۰/۷۵۰)، آموزش قوانین و استانداردهای تولید و عرضه محصولات و خدمات (۰/۶۹۲)، آموزش مسائل حقوقی شرکت‌ها و بنگاه‌های اقتصادی (۰/۶۷۶)، توسعه و تقویت خصوصیات و مهارت‌های کارآفرینانه و آموزش راه‌اندازی کسب و کارهای کارآفرینانه (۰/۵۸۱) می‌باشند. سومین عامل تبیین‌کننده نقش‌های سازمان‌های غیر دولتی در دست‌یابی به توسعه پایدار روستایی تحت عنوان عامل اجتماعی و تسهیل‌گری نام‌گذاری شد که مهم‌ترین متغیرهای این عامل به ترتیب شامل پویایی گروهی (۰/۷۸۹)، برنامه ریزی (۰/۷۷۶)، آشنایی با تکنیک‌های تسهیل‌گری (۰/۷۷۵)، مشارکت در کارها (۰/۷۴۲) و ارزشیابی (۰/۷۲۴) می‌باشند.

کلمات کلیدی: سازمان‌های غیر دولتی، توسعه پایدار روستایی، کارشناسان شرکت‌های خدمات مشاوره‌ای، استان گلستان.

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در این تحقیق، شهرستان‌های استان گلستان طبقات جامعه آماری ما را تشکیل می‌دهند. تعداد کل کارشناسان شرکت‌های خدمات مشاوره‌ای ۷۰۶ نفر می‌باشند. بر اساس جدول کرجسی و مورگان ۲۴۹ کارشناس به عنوان نمونه آماری انتخاب گردید. پس از دریافت نظرات و اصلاحات لازم، اصلاحات و نظرات نهایی اعمال کرده و پرسشنامه مزبور جهت تعیین پایایی آماده شد. برای تعیین اعتبار ابزار تحقیق، اقدام به آزمون مقدماتی کردیم. در این آزمون، پرسشنامه مذکور به ۳۰ کارشناس شرکت‌های خدمات مشاوره‌ای در استان گلستان، داده شد. پس از استخراج داده‌ها ضریب کرونباخ آلفا برای هر یک از متغیرها توسط نرم افزار SPSS گرفته شد. ضریب کرونباخ آلفا برای تمام متغیرها ۰/۸۸ محاسبه شد.

۴. یافته‌های تحقیق

بر اساس یافته‌ها، اجرای کارها به صورت گروهی، بهره‌برداری از فناوری اطلاعات و ارتباطات در ارائه خدمات، ارتقاء سطح مهارت تولیدکنندگان و بهره‌برداران بخش کشاورزی، ارتقاء سطح دانش تولیدکنندگان و بهره‌برداران بخش کشاورزی، آموزش فنی - حرفه‌ای کشاورزی، آموزش مهارت‌های مدیریت و اداره کسب و کارهای کارآفرینانه و پویایی گروهی بالاترین نقش‌های سازمان‌های غیر دولتی در دست‌یابی به توسعه پایدار روستایی را به خود اختصاص دادند. بر اساس یافته‌ها، ضعف مالی کشاورزان جهت پرداخت هزینه خدمات، عدم واگذاری بسیاری از فعالیت‌های تخصصی، کمبود پرسنل مجرب و کشاورزی معیشتی و خرده مالکی از مهمترین موانع دست‌یابی سازمان‌های غیردولتی به توسعه پایدار روستایی می‌باشند. یافته‌ها نشان داد که عامل دانشی-ارتباطی و اقتصادی با مقدار ویژه ۶/۸۶ بیشترین سهم را در تبیین متغیرها دارد، پس از آن عامل آموزشی-ترویجی با مقدار ویژه ۶/۳۸ و عامل اجتماعی و تسهیل‌گری با مقدار ویژه ۵/۹۷ قرار دارند که در مجموع حدود ۶۵/۲۰ درصد از کل واریانس را تبیین می‌نمایند که نشان از درصد بالای واریانس تبیین شده توسط این عوامل می‌باشد.

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