



Studying the Effects of Women empowerment on the Evolution of Human Settlements (Case Study: RFLDL Project Settlements in Sarayan County)

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Abstract

Purpose- How to move toward community empowerment is one of the most crucial challenges in local and regional development programs. This is essential for the role of women in measures and programs for sustainable development that is founded on environmental activities. One of the South Khorasan province's local development measures is the RFLDL project in Sarayan county, and one of its selected techniques for achieving the project's main objectives is the local women empowerment. This study aims to evaluate the geographical and spatial aspects of the effects of women empowerment in the implementation area of the RFLDL project in Sarayan county .

Design/methodology/approach- The current research is practical in terms of purpose and descriptive-analytical in terms of nature and method. Among the households whose women participated in the RFLDL project, 273 women was determined using Cochran's formula.

Findings- The findings demonstrated that local women empowerment has increased greatly over the past ten years as a result of implementing the RFLDL project in the studied area. Women empowerment has resulted in improving the economic environment of human settlements and increasing the income of residents through the creation of small and home-based employment. In addition, self-confidence has improved, self-esteem has developed, and group participation has been promoted. The settlements are changing more and more in terms of ecology. Additionally, the development of human settlement ties and the strengthening of spatial links have benefited greatly from women empowerment.

Research limitations/implications- The spread of the Coronavirus complicated efforts to collect data in the studied villages and significantly decelerated the article's production. Accordingly, surveys and interviews were conducted online to lessen the negative effects of this constraint .

Practical implications- The development of human settlements and their transformations are significantly accelerated by women empowerment through spatial dynamism .

Originality / value- The findings of the research are mentioned in this article, and according to the guidelines, the sources used, such as theses, articles and books all are cited. The use of traditional statistical indicators and the investigated villages within the RFLDL project's purview in Sarayan county provide the value and originality of this research.

Keywords- Sustainable development, Empowerment, Women, Spatial developments, RFLDL international project.

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1. Introduction

Humans are the most crucial component of development, and women represent half of all human resources in any society. Therefore, fundamental planning for them should be the pillars of any society, especially considering this population, whether as a service provider or even a consumer, which plays an essential role in the development balance. Future generations are nurtured and created by women. They are valuable perspective human resources for national socioeconomic and cultural growth, thereby it is crucial to pay close attention to how their skills are developing (Taleghani et al., 2009; Nejati Aji Bisheh & Jamali, 2007). A common belief is that women give birth and are causes of fertility, and they are mothers of humans and the earth. The form and structure of the plates from the earliest agricultural period demonstrate the center and main character of a woman, which is a reflection of her real and potential talents in gathering, cultivating, guarding, feeding, and giving life. These works serve as an analogy for the nature, social standing, and skills of women (Lahiji & Kar, 2011). In 1980s and 1990s, hunger increased as a result of the expansion of economic gaps between developed industrial nations and developing and underdeveloped ones, as well as the widening of class divisions within the mentioned societies. At this time, attention was focused for the first time on women's labor and their potential to generate income. The inclusion of gender issues in the development process has prompted consideration of some principles, including welfare, equality, eradication of poverty, efficiency, and women empowerment. Role distinctions, social expectations for men and women, and gender structures have also been considered. As a result, as strong evidence can be observed throughout the world, it is essential to elevate women and increase their participation in the development, planning, and implementation of fundamental measures (Alwani & Zarghami Fard, 2010).

Women make up a large part of the population in smaller communities, especially rural villages. As a result, this aspect of human resources is always crucial for reaching development objectives. Although women play an important role in development, their degree of access to facilities is at the minimum level. It is claimed that economic, social, cultural, and ecological conditions have a greater impact on local and rural women than they do

on male society. When the effect of their roles is considered on a global scale, a trend toward encouraging local women to participate in development can be observed since 1970s. To encourage women to participate in the development, it is necessary to find effective ways to enhance their sense of self-esteem (Bouzarjemehri and Naibzadeh, 2018). Women should play a large role in local and rural communities, not only in the home economy, which is planned primarily within its framework, but also in the economic, cultural, social, and political spheres. Undoubtedly, without the participation of rural women, it is often difficult for various economic and productive activities to continue in the village, or at the very least, it would face some significant problems. Therefore, women's roles in development should receive special attention so that they recognize their importance and effectiveness, their various educational demands and technical gaps, and the need to make an effort to improve and empower themselves. As stipulated in World Conference on "Agrarian Reforms and Rural Development" (1979), rural women should equally participate in the rural development process. The conference's formal stances were focused on issues like equality in the legal system, access to rural resources and services, equality of opportunity in school and work, obtaining data on rural women, and supporting organizations. The fundamental objective of this measure was to assist rural women in their role as "producers" and to give them optimal access to resources for production, particularly technology that can minimize their suffering, and workloads that women must burden while also increasing their productivity. While some philosophers relate empowerment to more participation, others see it as one of its enabling aspects. People should evolve to the point where they are capable of making decisions based on their preferences as part of the empowerment process (Shadi Talab, 2011).

The adoption of participatory approaches is one of the most effective ways to promote the empowerment of local and rural women. The international project called "The Rehabilitation of Forest Landscapes and Degraded Land (RFLDL)" in Sarayan county is a significant and worthwhile experience in the nation because of the indispensable role that women play in the development process and the need to strengthen their participation in resolving spatial (settlement) issues of development in various economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. It aims to

combine empowerment strategies with the utilization of women's power to make the areas desert greening, save natural resources, and support family economies under the supervision of national and international organizations. As argued by the systemic thinking that every change and transformation in one area of the social space causes changes in other areas of the system, a fundamental question rises here as how women empowerment (as a part of human society) affects the settlement scale (macro system)? The answer to the above question can aid in providing a more logical explanation of the effects and results of women empowerment in the local society. Moreover, it increases knowledge of the factors affecting the system of changes and transformations in human settlements. For this purpose, this study aims to investigate the knowledge and analysis of the spatial aspects of the effects of empowering rural women in the implementation area of RFLDL project in Sarayan County (containing the Sehqaleh city and Zanagu, Doust Abad, and Bostaq villages).

2. Research Theoretical Literature

To address current development concerns such as poverty, unequal resource distribution, and environmental deterioration, regional and local development studies and the integration of micro-level research in particular locations with macro-projects in the economy and society are required. That is, understanding these demands is important since many planning issues are the result of improper usage of the notion of space. Integrating and focusing on space and place with established standards necessitates meeting these needs. Space and the body are traditionally viewed as unacceptably different from other facets of life and growth. In other words, the relationship between space and social, political, and economic power is not considered, and spatial structure is provided without considering social relations. Such a viewpoint serves to reflect and mold certain notions about how the world is or ought to be. According to this perspective, the regions are appropriate for case studies that focus on the social development process. Communities and societies are defined as areas of land where social identity is linked to land continuity. According to this paradigm, a new area of study known as "location studies" has emerged in the fields of geography and its surrounding disciplines in recent years as a result of the growing interest in the role of space and place in development (Eftekhari et al., 2011). Regarding the development of villages, it should be mentioned that

planning needs to give a multidimensional image of the studied area in sustainable development approach. To plan for the sustainable development of rural areas, it is crucial to connect the dimensions of sustainability, particularly in social, institutional, economic, and environmental areas. In essence, the body of rural settlements is considered the foundation for these areas' economic and social performances. Therefore, the first stage in enhancing settlement performance is physical organization and transformation (Rezvani, 2014). Planning for physical growth is a reflection of social life's progress and is considered an endeavor to give direction to the evolution of the environment of human life. The physical structure of rural regions has a major impact on how settlements develop physically. Then, it relates to subjects and elements like land usage, communication and transportation, infrastructural facilities and equipment, housing, employment, recreation, tourism, and general welfare that the villages cannot supply independently. In physical development, social processes are attempted to be guided by the physical program. As a result, social campaigns may be directed by making better use of natural world and space for human existence. Therefore, both the components of space and society are tied to physical development. Planning physical development in rural areas is thus an effort to find the most advantageous level of compatibility between space and society for society's benefit (Pourtaheri et al., 2010).

One of the transformational actions at the core of society is "empowerment and expansion of power" among the core components of society (men and women). The process through which people, communities, and organizations take charge of the difficulties and problems they encounter is known as empowerment. It is intended to do these things to assist weak people to strive to overcome their weaknesses, enhance the positive aspects of their lives, and develop their skills and abilities for smart control over life (McWhirter, 1994). Briefly, empowerment refers to a person's capacity to manage and control their own life. They must organize themselves for this shift. The ability to self-organize is a sign of competence. People identify their difficulties and problems, set objectives for themselves, develop a plan of action, gather resources, and begin to take action. The consequences of this action are reflected in this activity (Rappaport, 1985). By enhancing women's self-confidence, empowerment enables them to freely defend their

rights and exercise control over resources. Women learn to recognize their inner desires and needs during this process, and they develop the skills needed to carry out their desires (Shakuri, et al, 2007; Mardani, 2009; Sivayojanathan, 2003). The process of women empowerment involves empowering them to change the systems and beliefs that have put them in a position of inferiority (dependence). Women feel more independent, self-assured, and in command of their lives thanks to this procedure, which also helps them obtain more resources and control over their life. It also enhances their self-esteem and self-image (Ugbomeh, 2001). Government must provide grounds for Women empowerment to support knowledge-based economic development and progress.

The ideas describing how women contribute to development has been the feminist approach, particularly the discoveries of scholars like Boserup. Reportedly, lack of attention to the topic of gender and the growth of gender inequality (gap), which is also a result of the presence of gender discrimination in society, has been one of the primary causes of failure of development programs and even their opposite results (Lange, 1993). It is easy to comprehend the three opposing ideas of "integration," "marginalization," and "exploitation" from the perspective of feminists like Tiano who attempts to explain the consequences of economic and social progress on women's living conditions. According to proponents of the "integration" hypothesis, development is defined as a growth in women's participation in socioeconomic issues, which leads to their liberation and a narrowing of the gender gap. According to the "marginalization" theory, a capitalist approach to development prohibits women from working in the production and economy and confines them to the household, which places them in financial dependence and restricts their access to material resources. In addition, according to the "exploitation" hypothesis, the modernization of society makes women involved into cheap labor since they are treated as inferior to males in industrial production units, which exposes them to exploitation (Abbott & Wallace, 2011). Buvinic claims that the aforementioned tactics have not yet had a positive impact on women's affairs while criticizing the development strategy and the methods used to implement it. The distribution of resources and advantages from the development process for women

will also expand as a result of taking into account a portion of women in employment and the labor market to address this challenge. In this situation, socioeconomic development will be accompanied by the emergence of equality (Moser, 1993). The women participation in the phases and measurements of development, as well as its outcomes and advantages, should be well considered to actualize development, especially the ones that are acceptable to both groups. The physical development of human settlements with a sustainable approach necessitates planning attention in the two dimensions of space and society, as can be seen from the presented theoretical perspectives (Figure 1). The central position of society and people as the primary participants in spatial arenas suggests a twofold focus on the core components of society, i.e. women and men. If they have enough strength and power, they can start changes and spatial transformations. As a result, every change in the social impact of society has the potential to specifically affect spatial and residential development. One of the key elements in the reconstruction and transformation of rural (and even urban) communities' sustainable development aspects is women empowerment.

The position of women and the type of their participation is one of the significant criterion for measuring development in any country, and women empowerment is considered as a development objective. Few studies have been conducted to fully grasp the spatial implications of the "Women empowerment method" in human settlements. Also, the majority of the limited studies have focused on the examination and justification of how participation, local empowerment, and rural Women empowerment contribute to the advancement of plans and measures, some of which are briefly listed below. Therefore, the analysis of the results and spatial impacts of empowering women in the development of their settlements distinguishes the current research from earlier studies (Table 1).

Table 1. Literature review

Researchers	Year	Results summary
Fallsolleyman et al	2011	The carbon sequestration project has been effective in enhancing rural women's cultural, social, and economic emancipation, and the level of women's awareness, income, variety of job activities, financial independence, greater participation in decisions, and change of their attitude to the project activity, has been more satisfied with an ascending trend.
Chermchian Langroudi and Ali Beigi	2013	Group techniques, such as holding educational workshops on the processing of agricultural commodities, were the most effective way to offer extension-educational services to rural women in Sari County. Lack of trust among women was the biggest barrier to the psychological empowerment of rural women in Sari County, and providing loans and credit to these women was the most crucial remedy.
Ghanbari and Ansari	2015	The findings indicated that participation in economic activities, as well as individual and social variables, are the most significant elements influencing rural women empowerment. Additionally, obstacles to empowerment are positively and significantly correlated with the features such as a lack of career prospects, poor level of education, the presence of familial biases, and lack of legal assistance and communication networks.
Khairdoust Langroudi et al	2019	The assumptions of equality, fairness in consequences or opportunities, equality of education, the assumption that women work, and that men are the primary providers of income, and the equality of employment between men and women in the definition of this index have been identified and examined in this article. The women empowerment index is based on Amartya Kumar Sen's theory of capacities and agency as well as feminist economics, which is one of the study's most significant findings.
Taklou et al	2021	According to the findings of Friedman's test, economic considerations such as lack of employment, income, available land, enough assurance for purchasing goods, and insurance issues were ranked first with an average score of 2.3, followed by cultural and social variables such as those that attract people to the county, youth issues with family and the rural environment, the presence of relatives in the county, marriage, and the rapid increase of the village population with an average rating of 2.08. Finally, service and infrastructure factors with an average rating of 1.63, such as the lack of educational, medical, recreational, and construction facilities, have been effective in the third stage of generating the issue of human resources in rural regions.
Jahantigh et al	2021	The findings demonstrated that in the development of a creative village, the criteria of promotion and education have the most effectiveness, while risk-taking has the greatest impressionability. Considering the results of the geographical study of the influence of creative village indicators, six villages have a good condition, eleven villages have an average condition, and three villages have a low status.
Parveen & Leonhauser	2004	Six indicators—contribution to family income, possession of assets, access to resources, participation in family decision-making, perception of gender awareness, and tolerance for family issues—have been used to examine the empowerment of rural women. According to the findings, compared to other features, rural women are less capable of participating in the economy and property ownership.
Sanayang & chi Hang	2008	They discovered that to empower and promote rural women, there should be some supports for the women's groups in the villages, and one of the most effective methods for doing this is through the establishment of these groups' organizations and the use of microcredits. In this regard, the Social and Economic Commission of the United Nations (ESCAP) has noted that by offering microcredits, it is possible to achieve significant objectives like creating employment, self-employment, increasing self-reliance, earning income, reducing poverty, socioeconomic development, promoting self-esteem, and improving the health and nutritional status as well as the level of literacy of underprivileged people, women, and children.
Sathiabama	2010	The signs of rural women empowerment include increased empowerment in income and economic issues, living standards, high self-confidence, increased awareness, a sense of success, increased social interaction, participation in political activities, an increase in participation level, an improvement in leadership quality, participation in problem-solving related to women and society, and an increase in a decision-making capacity in the family and society.
Lima-Constantino, P.A., et. al	2012	Enhancing local capacity will increase local engagement, promote literacy and awareness, improve people's income and standard of living, and market the goods made in the target villages.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Geographical Scope of the Research

The settlements where the RFLDL project was performed, including one city (Sehqaleh city) and three villages, (Zanagu, Doust Abad, and Bostaq villages) were part of the study area in Sarayan county (Figure 1). In their capacity as representatives of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Global Environment Facilities (GEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the National Forests, Ranges and Watershed Organization (FRWO) are collaborating on the international project for the restoration of forest and degraded lands with a focus on lands sensitive to wind erosion and saline soils (RFLDL). In addition, it supports the national measures to create and implement sustainable development methods in the arid and semi-arid regions through the

execution of long-term, inclusive watershed management plans. This project was supposed to last for 5 years (2011-16) and help restore land in arid and semi-arid areas and so help people live in a sustainable way, have food security, keep biodiversity, and prevent desertification. It has been implemented since December 2010 in two pilot projects, Sarayan and Regan, in the provinces of South Khorasan and Kerman, respectively, with a total area of 462,068 hectares. Due to its success over the previous five years, the project has been extended for an additional four years to the end of June 2020. With a total size of 163,568 hectares, the Sarayan watershed was divided into two phases, the first of which was 51,229 hectares under the Sehqaleh (Hembo) watershed (General Administration of Natural Resources of South Khorasan Province, 2019).

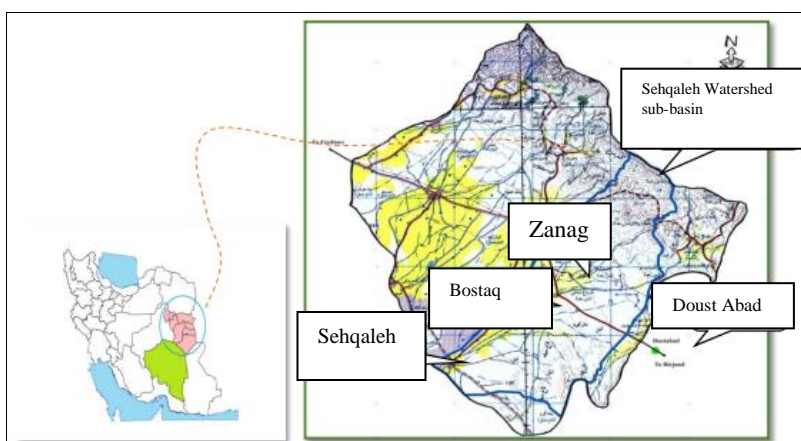


Figure 1. Location of the study area

3.2. Methodology

The current research was practical in terms of purpose and descriptive-analytical in terms of nature and method. The data was collected through the use of surveys and library studies (document reviews), and a researcher-made questionnaire was the instrument utilized to explore the survey in the studied area. Experts in rural geography and sociology from Birjand University evaluated and verified the questionnaire's validity, and a pre-test (the completion of 30 questionnaires) and Cronbach's alpha (with a value over 70%) were used to determine the questionnaire's reliability. The housewives (15–64 years old) who participated in the global RFLDL experiment made up the research

population. The city of "Sehqaleh" and the villages of "Doust Abad," "Zanagu," and "Bostaq" with 1959 households (as of the 2015 census) make up the examined settlements. The most recent statistics show that 939 households have participated in the project. Random-stratified probabilistic sampling has been used to determine the size of the study sample among the households. A sample size of 273 women was acquired at the level of each household following the pretest and the application of Cochran's method to estimate the variance of the community feature. Table 2 displays the spatial distribution of the sample size.

$$n = \frac{N(t-s)^2}{Nd^2 + (t-s)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{939(1/96 \times 0/5)^2}{939 \times (0/05)^2 + (1/96 \times 0/5)^2} = 273$$

$n = \text{sample size}$

$N = \text{statistical population}$

$t^2 = \text{Confidence level of sample estimation at 1.96}$

$D = \text{Probable accuracy}$

$S = \text{variance}$

Table 2. Spatial distribution of the sample size based on the households that participated in the project

Studied settlement	Total household consensus (2015)	Total households participated in the project	Sample size
Doust Abad	494	236	69
Bostaq	263	126	37
Zanagu	182	87	25
Sehqaleh	1020	490	142
Total	1959	939	273

A database was first made in the SPSS software and used to evaluate the data collected from the analyzed samples. Subsequently, a summary of the data status has been presented using descriptive statistics. Then, the normality of the data distribution was checked by performing the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, as a result of which it was determined that the binomial non-parametric test should be used to infer the effects of women empowerment measures in the three dimensions of rural spaces (social, economic and biological environment) be used.

4. Research Findings

Examining any subject in the area of social studies requires considering the unique traits of the respondents. To better understand the investigated women, four key factors were examined, including marital status, education level, employment status, and primary household occupation. The results of the study indicate that 81.7% of the subjects were married, and 18.3% were single (Table 3).

Table 3. Frequency distribution of the studied subjects in terms of their marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	51	18.3
Married	227	81.7
Total	278	100

Women's education levels were examined, and 4.3% of them were illiterate, 16.6% had completed elementary school, 18.1% had a middle

school diploma, 39.4% had a diploma, and 21.7% had an associate degree or higher (Table 4).

Table 4. Frequency distribution of the studied people in terms of their level of education

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	12	4.3
Elementary school	46	16.5
Middle school diploma	50	18
Diploma	109	39.2
Associate degree or higher	60	21.6
Not answered	1	0.4
Total	278	100

Considering the frequency distribution of the studied women in Sarayan county based on their

employment status, 69.9% were employed and 30.1% were unemployed (Table 5).

Table 5. Frequency distribution of the studied people in terms of their employment status

Employment status	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	188	67.6
Unemployed	81	29.1
Total	269	96.8
Not answered	9	3.2
Total	278	100

The findings revealed that 19.8% of the women were household heads, 14.8% worked in agriculture, 4.9% were involved in horticulture, 15.2% worked as

workers, 13.6% were employees, and 31.7% worked in other occupations (Table 6).

Table 6. Frequency distribution of the studied people in terms of the type of main household occupation

Type of job	Frequency	Percentage
Animal husbandry	48	17.3
Agriculture	36	12.9
Gardening	12	4.3
Worker man	37	13.3
Employee	33	11.9
Others	77	27.7
Not answered	35	12.6
Total	278	100

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine the normality of data distribution. The assumption of normality of data distribution was rejected based on

test findings (Table 7). Therefore, a non-parametric test was used in the inferential analysis of the data.

Table 7. The Kolmogorov-Smirnoff test to examine the assumption of normality of the research variables

Data Domain	Test statistics value	p-value
Economic impacts of empowering measures	0.151	0.000
Social impacts of empowering measures	0.148	0.000
Environmental impacts of empowering measures	0.158	0.000
Impacts of empowering measures on spatial links	0.174	0.000

The study variables' data (Table 7) do not follow a normal distribution, hence the binomial test was used for the inferential analysis of these variables. The following are the H_0 and H_1 hypotheses for this test:

$$H_0: P = 0.5$$

$$H_1: P \neq 0.5$$

The data were divided into two groups: answers with no impact and answers with low impact were classified in the first group, and answers with moderate impact, high impact, and very high impact were classified in the second group. Considering the null hypothesis in this test, the ratio of responses from the two groups was equal. This hypothesis was rejected and the alternative

hypothesis was accepted if the test's sig value was less than 0.05.

The findings of the binomial non-parametric test on the economic impacts of women empowerment measures in the studied settlements revealed that except for the cases of "Purchasing power of luxury goods", "Purchasing power of housing", "Purchasing power of vehicles", "Purchasing power of agricultural and garden land and water" where the ratio of answers is equal in both groups, the sig value of the test in the other cases is less than 0.05. Therefore, the ratio of the observed responses in the two groups is not equal. The survey respondents believed that empowering measures had significant economic benefits in

both situations since there were fewer responses in the first group than in the second group, as proved by the number of responses in the two categories.

According to the last line of Table (8), the null hypothesis is often rejected when the magnitude of the economic consequences of empowering measures is considered since the sig value of the

test is less than 0.05. Because the ratio of responses in the two groups is not equal and the number of responses in the two groups indicates that the first group's number of responses was lower than the second group's, empowering measures have generally had significant economic benefits.

Table 8. The results of the binomial test in examining the economic impact of empowering measures

Economic indicators	Group	Number of observed responses	Rate of observed responses	Test ratio	Significance level	sig
Level of monthly income	First group	27	251	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.10	0.90			
Level of monthly savings	First group	39	238	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.14	0.86			
Household appliances purchasing power	First group	98	179	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.35	0.65			
Agricultural and garden land and water purchasing power	First group	132	145	0.5	0.05	0.471
	Second group	0.48	0.52			
Housing purchasing power	First group	140	138	0.5	0.05	0.952
	Second group	0.50	0.50			
Financial potential to perform major housing repairs	First group	108	169	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.39	0.61			
Entrepreneurship generating power	First group	33	244	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.12	0.88			
Possibility of processing agricultural products	First group	39	237	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.14	0.86			
Ability to calculate profit and cost of economic activities	First group	44	233	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.16	0.84			
Consumer goods purchasing power	First group	41	237	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.15	0.85			
Vehicle purchasing power	First group	130	148	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.47	0.53			
Luxurious goods purchasing power	First group	124	154	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.45	0.55			
Increasing investment power	First group	52	226	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.19	0.81			
Level of activity in the handicraft sector	First group	28	250	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.10	0.90			
Level of activity in home jobs	First group	28	249	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.10	0.90			
Job opportunities for family members	First group	24	254	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.09	0.91			
Reducing the economic poverty of the family in the village	First group	26	252	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.09	0.91			
Self-reliance and financial independence	First group	23	255	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.08	0.92			
Economic effects of empowering measures	First group	25	253	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	0.09	0.91			

The results of the binomial non-parametric test on the social effects of empowering measures in the

investigated human settlements indicated that in all cases, since the test's sig value is less than

0.05, the ratio of responses in the two groups is unequal, and based on the number of responses in the two groups, the first group had fewer answers than the second. Therefore, the survey respondents believed that in these situations, empowering actions had significant social consequences.

According to the last line of the table, the null hypothesis is generally rejected when the number of social effects of empowering actions is

considered since the sig value of the test is less than 0.05. As a result, the ratio of responses observed in the two groups is not equal, and based on the number of responses observed in the two groups, the first group's number of responses was lower than the second group's, indicating that empowering measures have high social effects (Table 9).

Table 9. The results of the binomial test in examining the social impact of empowering measures

Social indicators	Group	Number of observed responses	Rate of observed responses	Test ratio	Significance level	sig
Independence	First group	19	0.07	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	259	0.93			
Spirit of self-confidence and self-belief	First group	19	0.07	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	259	0.93			
Spirit of innovation	First group	19	0.07	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	258	0.93			
Decision-making and planning power	First group	15	0.05	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	262	0.95			
Creativity and innovation	First group	21	0.08	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	257	0.92			
Acquiring legal personality	First group	31	0.11	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	243	0.89			
Willingness to educate and participate in the community	First group	23	0.08	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	254	0.92			
Self-control over abilities	First group	22	0.08	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	256	0.92			
Having more time and opportunity	First group	25	0.09	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	253	0.91			
Easiness in children's upbringing	First group	35	0.13	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	243	0.87			
Improve living conditions	First group	20	0.07	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	258	0.93			
Improving welfare	First group	29	0.10	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	248	0.90			
Reduced emigration	First group	29	0.10	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	249	0.90			
Creating the ground for collective activity	First group	13	0.05	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	263	0.95			
Social trust	First group	16	0.06	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	262	0.94			
social solidarity	First group	26	0.09	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	251	0.91			
Participating in activities	First group	18	0.07	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	258	0.93			
Increasing profit	First group	24	0.09	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	254	0.91			
Creating an exchange of ideas and cooperation to solve existing problems	First group	18	0.07	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	258	0.93			

Social indicators	Group	Number of observed responses	Rate of observed responses	Test ratio	Significance level	sig
Accessing to credits, market and decision-making authorities	First group	24	0.09	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	254	0.91			
Decreasing family biases and opposition of husbands to fathers with the presence of women in social and economic activities	First group	38	0.14	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	240	0.86			
Reducing the negative attitude toward women's ability	First group	33	0.12	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	254	0.88			
Reducing gender discriminations	First group	34	0.12	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	244	0.88			
Eliminating patriarchy and not allowing women to participate in group activities	First group	37	0.13	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	241	0.87			
Increasing scientific and practical information, knowledge, and awareness	First group	17	0.06	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	261	0.94			
Interest in training rural and artistic industries through the project	First group	17	0.06	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	261	0.94			
Interest in teaching agriculture, horticulture, and animal husbandry through the project	First group	26	0.09	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	252	0.91			
Interest in teaching transformation and processing of agricultural and livestock products	First group	37	0.13	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	241	0.87			
Interest in teaching housekeeping, health, and family planning	First group	56	0.20	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	222	0.80			
Individual and social effects of empowering actions	First group	10	0.04	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	268	0.96			

The analysis of the environmental impacts of women's empowering measures in the research region demonstrated that in all the cases examined in this table, it is decided that the ratio of the answers in the two groups is not equal since the sig value of the test is less than 0.05. The first group had fewer responses than the second one based on the number of answers in the two groups. Therefore, the survey respondents believed that in these situations, empowering measures had a great impact on the environment.

Considering the last line of the table, since the sig value of the test is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is generally rejected when the extent of the environmental impacts of empowering measures is considered. Given the number of responses in the two groups, the first group had fewer responses than the second one since the ratio of responses observed in the two groups is not equal. Therefore, empowering actions generally have strong environmental consequences (Table 10).

Table 10. The results of the binomial test in examining the environmental impact of empowering measures

Environmental impacts	Group	Number of observed responses	Rate of observed responses	Test ratio	Significance level	sig
Increasing awareness and acquiring environmental skills	First group	22	0.08	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	256	0.92			
Changing the traditional views to scientific and technical ones in environmental issues	First group	21	0.08	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	257	0.92			

Environmental impacts	Group	Number of observed responses	Rate of observed responses	Test ratio	Significance level	sig
Usefulness and efficiency of environmental training	First group	21	0.08	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	257	0.92			
Attention to preserving animal and wild species of the environment	First group	31	0.11	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	247	0.89			
Attention to the values of herbaceous species in the environment	First group	24	0.09	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	254	0.91			
Using clean energy for heating and baking	First group	20	0.07	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	258	0.92			
Generating the capabilities needed to perform environmental activities	First group	22	0.08	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	256	0.92			
Reducing pulling out of bushes to meet various consumptions	First group	24	0.09	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	254	0.91			
Transferring new environmental knowledge and experiences to family members	First group	28	0.10	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	250	0.90			
Cooperating with and participating with other rural women in performing environmental activities	First group	21	0.08	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	257	0.92			
Supplying the local species' seeds for the project seedling	First group	34	0.12	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	244	0.88			
Principle of becoming aware of pastures protection and maintenance	First group	25	0.09	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	253	0.91			
Performing activities in the project for pruning and irrigating the seedling	First group	28	0.10	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	250	0.90			
Collecting and separating garbage at the rural level	First group	33	0.12	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	245	0.88			
Getting the potential required to continue pasture restoration-related activities at the time of project termination	First group	25	0.09	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	253	0.91			
Getting the potential required to train environmental issues to others	First group	28	0.10	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	250	0.90			
Reducing the number of livestock for preserving pasture given the project training	First group	28	0.10	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	250	0.90			
Increasing the potential needed to plant pharmaceutical plants	First group	21	0.08	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	257	0.92			
Purchasing the facilities and tools required for alternative firewood fuels (gaseous oven, gas stove, etc.)	First group	26	0.09	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	252	0.91			
Increasing afforestation and making a flower bed around the settlement	First group	21	0.08	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	257	0.92			
Environmental impacts of empowering measures	First group	9	0.03	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	269				

Since the test's sig value is less than 0.05, all the cases examined in this table demonstrate the influence of women empowerment measures on spatial connections. According to the response rate in the two groups, the first group had fewer responses than the second one based on the

assumption that the ratio of responses observed in the two groups is not equal. Therefore, the survey respondents believed that in these situations, empowering measures had a significant impact on spatial connections.

According to the last line of the table, the null hypothesis is often rejected when the effect of empowering measures on spatial connections is considered since the sig value of the test is less than 0.05. As a result, the ratio of responses in the

two groups is not equal, and based on the number of responses in the two groups, the first group's response rate was lower than that of the second group. As a result, empowering measures have a high influence on spatial connections (Table 11).

Table 11. The results of the binomial test in examining the impact of empowering measures on spatial connections

Spatial connections indicators	Group	Number of observed responses	Rate of observed responses	Test ratio	Significance level	sig
Level of project effectiveness on population relations with the center of the village	First group	32	0.12	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	246	0.88			
Level of project effectiveness on population relations with the district center	First group	29	0.10	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	249	0.90			
Level of project effectiveness on population relations with the pre-province center	First group	31	0.11	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	247	0.89			
Level of project effectiveness on population relations with the province center	First group	91	0.22	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	217	0.78			
Level of project effectiveness on population relations with the national center	First group	81	0.29	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	197	0.71			
The impact of the project on the marketing of village products in other settlements	First group	19	0.07	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	259	0.93			
The impact of the project on better supply of raw materials from other settlements	First group	31	0.11	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	247	0.89			
The impact of the project on the reputation of the village at the district level	First group	15	0.05	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	263	0.95			
The impact of the project on migration from the village	First group	22	0.08	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	256	0.92			
The impact of the project on emigration from the village	First group	28	0.10	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	250	0.90			
The impact of the project on the presence of non-native teachers and facilitators	First group	21	0.08	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	257	0.92			
The impact of the project on the establishment of skill workshops by non-native people	First group	23	0.08	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	255	0.92			
Impressionability on the supply of manpower outside the village	First group	29	0.10	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	249	0.90			
The impact of the project on the investment of household financial resources in the banking system in the rural center	First group	38	0.14	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	240	0.86			
The impact of the project on the investment of household financial resources in the banking system in the district center	First group	37	0.13	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	241	0.87			
The impact of the project on the	First group	39	0.14	0.5	0.05	0.000

Spatial connections indicators	Group	Number of observed responses	Rate of observed responses	Test ratio	Significance level	sig
investment of household financial resources in the banking system in the pre-province center	Second group	239	0.86			
The impact of the project on the investment of household financial resources in the banking system in the province center	First group	42	0.15	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	236	0.85			
The impact of the project on group meetings in the market outside the village	First group	35	0.13	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	243	0.87			
The impact of the project on the financial and credit cooperation of the market outside the village	First group	35	0.13	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	243	0.87			
The impact of empowering measures on spatial connections	First group	11	0.04	0.5	0.05	0.000
	Second group	267	0.96			

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Social spaces change and evolve through spatial feedback. In addition to having an impact on human settlements and physical space, the empowerment of "women" as a fundamental transformation in a significant area of human civilization can also have such effects. In other words, empowerment is a multifaceted phenomenon that necessitates understanding and exposing all of its impacts, particularly in the context of the local women's community considering its close connection to development. As a result, an analysis of the role of women empowerment in the development of human settlements was made within the context of the RFLDL international people-oriented project in the Sarayan district. One of the project's fundamental strategies is the empowerment of local women, and some significant steps have been taken in this direction. Investigations revealed that local women have been empowered in the socioeconomic and environmental fields because of their interests and participation in group activities, their authenticity in social and economic activities, and the elimination and reduction of gender discrimination and negative attitudes toward women's abilities. One of the key factors in the success of the empowerment measures may be attributed to the relatively high literacy rate of the local women's community in the studied region. These results are consistent with those of [Fallsoleyman et al. \(2013\)](#) since innovation and self-reliance are more accepted in societies where levels of literacy are greater, and people are also more empowered and confident. Human settlements have undergone major changes in socioeconomic and

environmental dimensions as well as geographical connections as a result of the shift in the empowerment of local women within the context of the RFLDL project's implementation in the Sarayan district. These findings are consistent with those of [Lima-Constantino et al. \(2010\)](#) and [Satyabama \(2012\)](#). Generally, the women empowerment and the effects of this phenomenon on people and households (such as income growth, etc.) have been able to change the behavior of housewives. Some families have been given the chance to take unusual or unexpected measures (either updating tools or buying newly produced tools in the usual part of the household or daily life consumables). The range of social, economic, and geographical connections has grown as a result of the shift in how people and households consume. In the area of the environment, empowered women have played a major role in promoting and supporting the environment, which has affected how other settlers interact with nature and increased everyone's concern for preserving the natural environment. The development of human settlements and their transformations are significantly accelerated by women empowerment through spatial dynamism. Moreover, the following is a list of possible policy suggestions:

- Inviting experienced consultants and trainers to provide women training;
- Incorporating participated and empowered women in the planning and decision-making processes for the settlement, including the guiding plan and the creation of the employment development document;

- Granting selected elite women genuine participation in Sarayan County's administrative council, employment working group, and planning committee;
- A commitment from organizations in charge of rural development (such as the governorate, district administration, department of agriculture, housing foundation, cooperative administration, and relief committee) to regularly meet with women involved in social and economic activities to hear their needs and

potential solutions, remove any barriers in their way, and obtain their approval before action.

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Authors' contributions

The authors equally contributed to the preparation of this article.

Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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اثرات توانمندسازی زنان بر تحولات سکونتگاه‌های انسانی (مطالعه‌ی سکونتگاه‌های پروژه RFLDL در شهرستان سرایان)

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چکیده مبسوط

۱- مقدمه

خواسته‌های درونی خود آگاه می‌شوند و از توانایی لازم برای عملی ساختن خواسته‌های خود برخوردار می‌شوند. توانمندسازی زنان فرآیندی پویاست که توانایی زنان برای تغییر ساختارها و ایدئولوژی‌هایی که آنها را در موقعیت فرودستی (وابستگی) نگه داشته است، در بر می‌گیرد. این فرآیند که به زنان برای دستیابی بیشتر به منابع و کنترل بر زندگی کمک می‌کند، موجب احساس استقلال و اعتماد به نفس بیشتر آنها می‌شود و عزت نفس آنها را افزایش می‌دهد، یعنی موجب بهبود تصویری می‌شود که زنان از خودشان دارند. دولت موظف است با فراهم سازی زمینه‌های توانمندسازی زنان به رشد و توسعه اقتصادی مبتنی بر دانش کمک نماید.

۲- روش تحقیق

تحقیق حاضر از حیث هدف، کاربردی است و به لحاظ ماهیت و روش، توصیفی - تحلیلی است. داده‌ها و اطلاعات با انجام مطالعات کتابخانه‌ای (بررسی اسناد) و پیمایشی گردآوری شده است. ابزار مورد استفاده برای بررسی پیمایشی در جامعه مورد مطالعه، پرسشنامه محقق ساخته بوده است. روایی پرسشنامه با نظرخواهی از اساتید متخصص در جغرافیای پیش‌آزمون (تکمیل ۳۰ پرسشنامه) به کمک محاسبه آلفای کرونباخ (با مقدار بالای ۷۰ درصد) مورد ارزیابی و تایید واقع شده است. جامعه تحقیق شامل زنان (۱۵-۶۴ سال) خانوارهایی که در پروژه بین المللی RFLDL مشارکت داشته، بوده است. سکونتگاه‌های مورد مطالعه مشتمل بر شهر "سه قلعه" و روستاهای "دوست آباد"، "زنگویی" و "بسطاق" با ۱۹۵۹ خانوار (طبق سرشماری سال ۱۳۹۵) در شهرستان سرایان

از مهمترین مسائل در پروژه‌های توسعه محلی و منطقه‌ای این است که چگونه می‌توان در جهت توانمندسازی جامعه گام برداشت. این مهم بالاخص در مورد جایگاه زنان در برنامه‌های توسعه پایدار و پروژه‌هایی که بر مبنای فعالیت‌های زیست محیطی آغاز می‌شود، اهمیت ویژه‌ای دارد. پروژه RFLDL در شهرستان سرایان از پروژه‌های توسعه محلی استان خراسان جنوبی است که یکی از راهبردهای اتخاذی آن در جهت نائل آمدن به اهداف کلان پروژه، توانمندسازی زنان محلی بوده است. این تحقیق به دنبال واکاوی و تحلیل ابعاد مکانی و فضایی اثرات توانمندسازی زنان در ناحیه‌ی اجرای پروژه RFLDL در شهرستان سرایان بوده است.

۲- مبانی نظری

در بطن جامعه، از اقدامات دگرگون‌ساز «توانمندسازی و رشد قدرت» در بین عناصر بنیادین جامعه (مردان و زنان) است. توانمندسازی به عنوان فرآیندی تعریف می‌شود که در آن افراد، گروه‌ها و سازمان‌ها بر مسائل و مشکلاتی که با آن مواجه هستند، کنترل پیدا کنند. بنابراین، هدف توانمندسازی کمک به افراد ضعیف است تا تلاش نمایند بر ضعف‌های‌شان غلبه، جنبه‌های مثبت زندگی‌شان را بهبود بخشیده، مهارت‌ها و توانایی‌های‌شان را برای کنترل عاقلانه بر زندگی افزایش داده و آن را در عمل پیاده نمایند.

توانمندسازی زنان فراگردی است که با ارتقاء اعتماد به نفس زنان این امکان را فراهم می‌سازد تا ضمن دفاع مستقل از حقوق خود، کنترل بر منابع داشته باشند، در طی این فراگرد زنان از نیازها و

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توجه به تعداد پاسخ ها در دو گروه نتیجه می گیریم که تعداد پاسخ های مشاهده شده در گروه اول کمتر از گروه دوم بوده است، بنابراین از نظر افراد مورد بررسی تاثیرات اجتماعی اقدامات توانمند سازانه در این موارد زیاد بوده است. تاثیر اقدامات توانمند سازانه زنان در جامعه مورد مطالعه بر پیوند های مکانی نشان داد که نسبت پاسخ های مشاهده شده در دو گروه برابر نیست و با توجه به تعداد پاسخ ها در دو گروه نتیجه می گیریم که تعداد پاسخ های مشاهده شده در گروه اول کمتر از گروه دوم بوده است، بنابراین از نظر افراد مورد بررسی تاثیر اقدامات توانمند سازانه بر پیوند های مکانی در این موارد زیاد بوده است.

۵- بحث و نتیجه گیری

بررسی ها نشان داد که تاکنون علاقه زنان محلی به فعالیت های گروهی و مشارکت آنان و همچنین باورپذیری زنان در فعالیت های اجتماعی، اقتصادی و حذف و کاهش تبعیض های جنسیتی و نگرش منفی نسبت به توانایی زنان باعث توانمندسازی زنان در عرصه های اقتصادی، اجتماعی و زیست محیطی شده است. در تبیین آن، وضع سواد نسبتاً بالای جامعه زنان محلی در محدوده مورد مطالعه یکی از عناصر اصلی موفقیت برنامه های توانمندسازی بوده است. توانمندسازی زنان منجر به بهبود فضای اقتصادی سکونتگاه های انسانی شده و افزایش درآمد اهالی از طریق ایجاد مشاغل خانگی و خرد را به دنبال داشته است. بهبود روحیه اعتماد به نفس، رشد خودباوری و ارتقا مشارکت گروهی از دیگر پیامدهای به دست آمده بوده است. در بعد زیست محیطی، سکونتگاه ها دارای تحول رو به رشد شده است. همچنین توانمندسازی زنان اثر معناداری در تقویت پیوندهای مکانی و رشد مناسبات سکونتگاه های انسانی داشته است. **کلیدواژه ها:** توسعه پایدار، توانمندسازی، زنان، تحولات مکانی -

فضایی، پروژه بین المللی RFLDL.


تشکر و قدردانی

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

بوده است. از کل جمعیت ساکن در سکونتگاه های مورد بررسی طبق آخرین آمار ۹۳۹ خانوار در پروژه مذکور فعالیت داشته اند. نمونه گیری به روش احتمالی از نوع تصادفی - طبقه ای انتخاب شده است. محدوده مورد مطالعه در شهرستان سرایان شامل سکونتگاه های محل اجرای پروژه RFLDL اعم از یک شهر (شهر سه قلعه) و سه روستا (دوست آباد، بسطاق و زنگویی) بوده است. در خصوص پروژه بین المللی احیای اراضی جنگلی و تخریب یافته با تاکید ویژه بر اراضی حساس به فرسایش بادی و خاک های شور (RFLDL) اقدامی مشترک بین سازمان جنگلها، مراتع و آبخیزداری کشور (FRWO) به عنوان نماینده دولت جمهوری اسلامی ایران، تسهیلات جهانی محیط زیست (GEF) و سازمان خوارو بار و کشاورزی ملل متحد (FAO) می باشد که از کوشش های دولت جمهوری اسلامی ایران در توسعه و اجرای رویکردهای توسعه پایدار در مناطق خشک و نیمه خشک کشور از طریق اجرای طرح های مدیریت پایدار، جامع و مشارکتی حوزه های آبخیز حمایت می کند.

۴- یافته های تحقیق

تاثیرات اقتصادی اقدامات توانمندسازانه زنان در سکونتگاه های مورد مطالعه نشان داد که به غیر از موارد " قدرت خرید وسایل تجملی "، " قدرت خرید مسکن "، " قدرت خریدوسایل نقلیه "، " قدرت خرید زمین و آب زراعی و باغی " که نسبت پاسخ ها در دو گروه برابر است در بقیه موارد مورد بررسی در این جدول از آنجایی که مقدار sig آزمون کمتر از ۰/۰۵ می باشد نتیجه می شود که نسبت پاسخ های مشاهده شده در دو گروه برابر نیست و با توجه به تعداد پاسخ ها در دو گروه نتیجه می گیریم که تعداد پاسخ های مشاهده شده در گروه اول کمتر از گروه دوم بوده است، بنابراین از نظر افراد مورد بررسی تاثیرات اقتصادی اقدامات توانمند سازانه در این موارد زیاد بوده است. بررسی تاثیرات اجتماعی اقدامات توانمند سازانه در سکونتگاه های انسانی مورد مطالعه نشان داد که در همه موارد مورد بررسی نسبت پاسخ های مشاهده شده در دو گروه برابر نیست و با

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