

Original Research Article

# The Impact of Place-Oriented Industrial Development on the Migration Rate

## (Case Study: Kuhdasht Villages in Lorestan Province)\*

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### ABSTRACT

Rural areas that are vital parts of the economic and social structure of communities have faced new challenges and issues over recent decades. The inefficient agriculture sector is one of the critical challenges that causes the spillover of rural migrants towards cities. This continuous trend has led to labor force imbalances in rural communities and new challenges for the economic and social economic of these areas. In this regard, the migration rate in villages of Kuhdasht County located in Lorestan province has become a serious and multifaceted issue for development because this case has led to the migration of rural young people to cities, and failure in job and income opportunities in rural areas. This study aims to find a solution for alleviating or slowing down the rate and velocity of individuals' exit from an area, that causes a social problem. This study was conducted based on the descriptive-analytical method using documentary data and field visits in villages in Kuhdasht County to assess the migration statistics of individuals and find the relationship between these migrations and the infrastructure available in the area. This study attempts to address the impact of the industrial development plan on the spatial capacity of villages and respond to these migrations. Research findings imply that industrialization of a village based on the available potentials of the place can be used as a tool for diversifying of village's economy and attracting effective investments in rural areas to create stable job opportunities, increase the economic competition power of rural areas, and bring balance to development between rural and urban areas. Therefore, industrial development strategies based on the place specifications can effectively slow down the migration process and keep human resources as significant pillars of the place and rural sustainable development.

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## Introduction

As a vital part of the economic and social structure of communities, rural areas have faced new challenges and issues in recent decades, especially in the fields of employment and economic development, that have considerably affected the crucial sectors of these areas. One of the critical challenges is the appropriate employment of surplus workers and those who have been fired from the agriculture sector due to the inability to attract the labor force or provide sufficient income. The inefficiency of the agriculture sector has led to the spillover of rural migrants towards cities, which these migrations imply the failure to create job and income opportunities in the socioeconomic outlook of rural areas. Therefore, the continuous migration process and cities-to-villages density ratio would widen the gap between city and village (Akkoynlu, 2015). The decline in the rural population ratio to the total population of Iran from 66% to 26% in recent decades (World Bank, 2018) led to many worries about rural development as an underlying base for national development (Heidari Sarban & Khajavi, 2020). This failure eliminates the human capital of the rural area, which is a pillar of place, and leads to inflation of the urban workforce and a decline in valuable human resources in the rural areas (Ekperiware et al. 2017).

Considering the relevant challenges and issues in this case, various measures and strategies have been addressed for economic development and job creation in rural areas. One proposed solution is the industrialization of the village as a powerful strategy for diversifying the economy of the village and attracting investment which affects rural areas. Therefore, the main issue is the increasing migration from villages to cities and their negative effects on the development and labor-amenities balance in rural communities. It is necessary to implement efficient strategies and plans for migration regulation and industrial development of villages to overcome the mentioned challenges and facilitate the realization of rural place-oriented development's goals. For this purpose, this study deeply examines the challenges and strategies of industrial development regarding the place potential in rural areas of Kuhdasht County to find its impact on the migration phenomenon.

## Research Background

Thakur and Shrinivas share their ideas about rural development, emphasizing that the creation of job opportunities in the villages and their surrounding environment highly depends on the strategy for village

industrialization. Also, they explain that industrial decentralization strategies that aim to send the message of modernization to villages are effective in economic and social planning (Thakur, 1985). In this regard, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has considered industry establishment in rural areas explaining that rural industrialization and poverty reduction can complement each other. This organization believes that industry establishment in the village would improve employment and income for individuals by promoting small-scale investments, producing consumption products, and increasing local demand (UNIDO, 1984). Rogers et al. examined the rural industrialization model in Iowa State and concluded that this process provides many benefits for communities, including increased integrity of households, increased income per capita, and a balanced distribution of rural incomes. Moreover, other researchers have shared their experiences on this topic. In this regard, Abraham has studied the village industrialization model in India and concluded that the decentralization of industries allows the creation of connectivity between urban and rural lives (Abraham, 2004). Goudray studied the effects of industry in Parish Louisiana and found the higher average income in rural areas as one of these effects. This author emphasizes that after industry deployment in these areas, migration to them exceeded migration from them. Also, an analysis by Liedholm indicates that the oscillation in the monthly income of rural households doing industrial activities in Thailand is lower than the variability in the total income of rural households that do agricultural activities (Liedholm, 1989).

On the other hand, it is necessary to study rural-urban migration. It is worth noting that various theories and views exist about this topic due to its multidisciplinary nature (Behera et al., 2021). Some of these theories and views are mentioned herein. These theories include economic approaches, dual sector model by Arthur Lewis pays attention to the mechanism of transferring labor from the village to the city and expresses migration within the economic development process. Liu introduces the structuralism theory of migration based on labor and considers migration a livelihood strategy for families (Liu, 2022). The functionalist migration theory addresses the reasons and implications of migration, which is a mandatory element for social balance (Rabani et al., 2011). In his famous paper "The Laws of Migration," Ravenstein states that despite various factors affecting the migration phenomenon, economic factors prevail over social, climatic, and

other factors (Rajabi Sanajerdi & Papoli Yazdi, 2013). The theoretical foundation of most economic studies about migration in developing countries is based on the Harris-Todaro model of migration from village to city. This model is formulated based on the weighted wage with the probability of finding a job at the destination. This model considers the difference between expected wages in rural and urban sectors (Papoli Yazdi & Ebrahimi, 2015). Jamshidi et al. (2019) conducted a study and concluded that weakened economic and social structures make villagers migrate to urban areas. Partridge et al. (2010) found that low levels of life in rural areas, and economic, social, and environmental problems lead to the migration of villagers outside of the village. Aghayari Hir et al. (2018) carried out a study on the behavioral geography realm in Zaraghan County and introduced a personal perception of environmental quality with the highest effect on the person who performs as an active decision-maker agent for migration from the village. Movahedi and Samiyan (2018) evaluated the factors affecting villagers' migration in Sardasht County and divided factors affecting rural-urban migration into ten factors, including economic and supportive factors, imbalance between amenities existing in village and city, communicational and information factors, cultural factors, geographical factors, income factors, infrastructural factors, climate factors, social factors, and individual factors. Fotohabadi and Zamani (2019) examined the factors affecting the tendency of farmers in the Zaraghan area to migrate during drought conditions and concluded that attitude towards migration is the determinant of migration tendency. Sharifi and Zare Shahabadi (2018) introduced some factors, such as disappointment with the village, economic repulsion of the village, and age as the most important factors affecting the tendency towards urban migration. The present study examined the migration phenomenon and its causes in Kuhdasht County to find the effectiveness of a place-oriented industrial development plan in controlling this phenomenon.

### Research Question

To what extent the industrial development plan can cope with the migration phenomenon if the spatial capacity of the villages in Kuhdasht County is taken into account?

### Research Method

This study aims to investigate the effects of industrial development on the villagers' migration in Kuhdasht

County, Lorestan Province. This research was conducted based on library studies and surveys in the case study using content analysis and survey techniques. This is applied research in terms of objectives and is implemented based on the descriptive-analytical nature. The required documents and data are collected through authenticated information sources, including the Statistical Center of Iran and Naghsh Click International Company. In the next step, this study examines the relationship between place-oriented industrial development and migration among villagers in Kuhdasht County through data analysis and an investigation of migration status in Lorestan Province. The results of this analysis indicate the harmonious and integrated effects of this planning on the migration of villagers in Kuhdasht County. Therefore, these findings are used as a valuable basis for taking political and economic measures for optimal management of migration and improvement of the quality of life of villagers.

### Review of Literature?

#### • Migration

Migration is a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses both economic and social-cultural dimensions. This phenomenon is highly influenced by various factors, including policies, economy, population graphs, and social conditions. The effects of migration on the origin and destination areas are considerably complicated, so they require a holistic assessment (Raei et al., 2015).

#### - Classification of studies conducted on migration

In terms of data, studies are classified into two groups: micro and macro data. Two main approaches in this field include the analysis of individual behavior and the effect of places as destination and origin units of migration. Studies conducted on migration can be divided into two categories in terms of data type: micro-level data (individual) and macro-level data (collective). The first approach emphasizes individual behavior and the macro approach concentrates on places, such as countries and cities. The micro theory-based models analyze the individual behavior and factors affecting the migration decisions made by individuals. Accordingly, every potential migrant evaluates the risks, costs, and benefits of migration depending on their characteristics. Costs may include psychological or financial expenses, like staying away from family and temporary unemployment. Possible benefits of migration include higher income, more welfare facilities, and familiarity with new environments (Bauer & Zimmerman, 1999,

15). In the macro theory-based models, individuals are replaced with places; it means that differences between areas provide the field for migration mechanisms. There are many theories proposed in this framework among which, the gravity model is one of the most important.

#### - Theoretical foundations

Various theories have been proposed for migration cases, including the gravity model, Todaro's theory, and Arthur Lewis's model. These theories justify the migration and development of villages based on economic and social factors to control migration. In the gravity model, two groups of factors are considered; factors that push individuals away from their residence place and factors that attract them to the destination area (Etzo, 2008). The difference between the real incomes of areas can be one of the factors considered in this migration theory. This income imbalance would lead to labor migration until an equilibrium is created in the labor market. On the other hand, an individual or a population would migrate if they could achieve their valuable goals inside their social organization or when they felt that essential resources for getting out of deprivation were available outside their social organizations (Haj Hosseini, 2006). In Arthur Lewis's model (1954), the economy has two sectors: the traditional sector (available rural sector) which is specified with very low productivity and a labor surplus, and the industrial sector (in the city), which has high productivity and gradually attracts the labor. This model focuses on the labor transfer process and employment growth in the industrial (modern) sector resulting from production expansion and growth in it. According to Todaro's theory, migration is defined as a selective and optional flow with economic incentives, relative cost, and benefit based on rational considerations. This theory reveals the failure to balance economic opportunities in various areas of developing countries (Todaro, 2010).

According to the migration concept defined above, this phenomenon must be investigated in villages in Iran. The 2013 report about demographic policies admits this claim and indicates that among 185 countries, around 80% of governments have made some policies to reduce rural-urban migration. The reason is rooted in a higher emphasis on the development of villages and the reduction of their failures and problems. Migration issues and balanced economic opportunities between different areas are more considered due to the increased urban population exceeding the rural population. In this case, the process of youth migration from the village to the city has been accelerated over time (Kulcsár László & Curtis, 2012). According to census statistics for Iran,

the rural population rate has declined from 68.5% in 1956 to 25.9% in 2016. Of this population decline, more than 50% of migrants are in the young age range of 15-29 (Rostamalizadeh & Ghasemi Ardahae, 2017). Following are the reasons for rural youth migration: deterioration of house and residence place, social position and reputation in the city, limited access to agriculture and livestock services, achieving personal dreams in the cities, security, and stability of urban life, lack of required motivation among rural youth to continue living in the village, educated youth and their tendency towards fast migration to cities and access to collective information and media (Norouzzadeh, 2022). On the other hand, the report published by the Statistical Center of Iran from 1996 to 2013 indicates that an almost 40% migration increase has been recorded (UNIDO, 1984). According to statistics from 1996-2016 in Iran, around 7000 villages have become depopulated (Etezad et al., 2021). However, agriculture has provided jobs for many members of society in Iran, like in many other developing countries, so agriculture acts as a key to food security and sustainable economic growth and development (Ekwere & Edem, 2014). Despite the mentioned statistics, the current assessments in rural areas indicate declining incomes of rural people, especially farmers, and an increasing unemployment rate in these areas (Lunnan et al., 2006). Therefore, migration has become a multifaceted challenge in Iran, which requires smart solutions and strategies to manage and control this issue. In this case, the place-oriented development policies in the village and increasing employment in these areas may serve as a strategy for controlling migration from the village to the city.

#### • Place-oriented industrial development

Industrial development in villages is a multi-sided strategy for the diversification of the rural economy which has received great attention from researchers and policymakers. This concept of rural industries, including industries with some features such as indigenous nature, simple manufacturing processes, low investment, and simple and complementary technology for agriculture and livestock plays a vital role in the development process of the rural economy (Asayesh, 1994). This is a multi-sided process that emphasizes the active participation of industry in the rural development process, which benefits from various activities as profitable industries (Motiei Langroudi, 2012). This active participation of industry in the development of villages not only contributes to the economic improvement of areas but also plays a significant role in developing other social and cultural dimensions.

In general, the industrialization notion improves the production process and quality of products based on the spatial capacities of the areas and also improves the quality of life of the rural population (Huq, 1994). In other words, the rural industrialization process accelerates sustainable employment and solves the poverty problem in rural. By providing sustainable development, rural industrialization makes the economic composition of rural areas balanced and stable contributing to a balanced development among rural and urban families. This balance would decrease unemployment, worst unemployment, and regional imbalance (Choi, 2001). On the other hand, rural industries not only provide the field for employment of rural women and children who are significant and sustainable dimensions of social development but also contribute to the improvement of living conditions and livelihood levels of people living in rural areas by increasing the income of rural households. Moreover, industrial development in villages deals with some challenges, such as poor educational programs, a lack of skilled labor, and poor cooperation between villagers in assigning lands to rural industrial units (Planning and Budget Organization of Ardabil Province, 1999). The mentioned challenges require accurate planning in the field of education, the development of skills, and increasing collaboration between different walks of rural communities.

Overall, theoretical studies on development show that the industrialization of the villages through small-scale units can pave the way for future strategies and the rural development triangle's paradigm in Iran. Moreover, the development and expansion of rural industries is not only an effective strategy for controlling the migration of villagers to the cities socially and economically but also is a proper platform for the actualization of place-oriented and balanced development goals in rural areas.

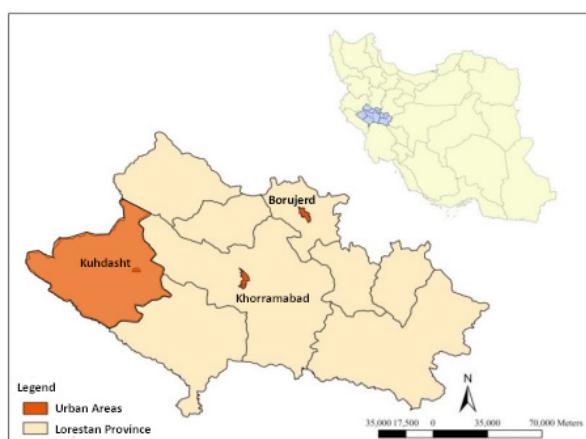


Fig 1. Spatial location of Lorestan province and its urban areas.  
Source: Fanni et al., 2015.

Also, the experiences of many countries show that the development of rural industries must be taken into account as a separate and complementary part of other development plans and policies. Therefore, strategies and measures for rural industries development must be taken based on the specific regional features and certain development policies (Vice President of Planning and Economic Studies Office, 1990). These strategies and measures that aim to solve the industrial challenges in the villages and improve the socioeconomic conditions of people can take an effective step towards the place-based development of villages. These steps not only improve the economic conditions of rural areas but also improve the quality of life of people socially and environmentally.

### Case Study

The spatial context of Kuhdasht is located in Lorestan Province; the studied area is located in the Zagros Mountains and is mainly composed of highlands and mountainous plains. Kuhdasht is located in the southwest of Iran and west of Khorramabad. Kuhdasht, with an area of 1685 km<sup>2</sup>, covers a central area and three rural districts (northern Kuhdasht, southern Kuhdasht, and Gol Gol), one city (Kuhdasht), and 136 villages (Fig. 1). The population of this area equals 121775 people (25364 households) who do agriculture activities in terms of economic structure and activity (Saedi et al., 2012). The total area of agricultural lands in the county equals 191.572 ha, covering 25% of the agricultural lands of the province, of which 19297 ha are irrigated, 172275 ha are rainfed, and 154145 ha are under crop cultivation annually. The production amount of 309205 tons equals 16.7% of the crops produced in the province. Moreover, this province consists of 2394 ha of fruitful orchards with an annual production of 28000 tons, which equals 12.5% of the orchards' production in the province. Also, there are 650.000 livestock units with 25000 tons of livestock products. Moreover, more than 90% of pomegranate orchards in Lorestan Province are located in Kuhdasht County, which mainly exists in the Tarhan and Kuhenani areas (Mehr News Agency, 2014).

According to the mentioned points, the migration phenomenon was investigated. The critical problem in Kuhdasht is the high rate of migration to megacities. For this reason, the high migration rate from Kuhdasht County has become a serious challenge in this province. According to the 2016 census, Lorestan has the second highest rank of emigration to Tehran (Fig. 2). According to official statistics in the second half of the 2000s, 7500 people migrated and left Lorestan annually. According

to officials, Lorestan's emigration not only has not reduced in the first half of the 2010s but also increased and reached almost 12000 people (Irna News Agency, 2018).

The sequential migration flows over the recent half-century are one of the reasons for the recession that occurred in Kuhdasht located in Lorestan Province. Lorestan has had several migration flows, the first one occurring after land reforms through which villagers' migration to the city was increased particularly in the 1960s. The second flow of migration in Lorestan occurred after the victory of the Islamic Revolution when villagers entered the political and governmental organizations. The third migration flow occurred after the Iran-Iraq war when villagers highly migrated to cities due to the peace that appeared after the war. The fourth wave is now in progress due to economic issues and problems, employment and unemployment, cultural problems, and lifestyle. This rate of migration in a community like Lorestan, especially Kuhdasht is a serious social issue due to its growth rate, so this

problem requires a profound investigation of its various aspects (Fig. 3).

This study has conducted a comprehensive and academic analysis of the emigration phenomenon in the study area. One of the significant factors affecting this phenomenon is the adaptation of growth and development pole policies in some cities and provinces over recent years. These policies have led to population attraction in some cities making them megacities. The field study indicates that lack of sufficient job opportunities and failure to provide other public services and facilities are the main reasons causing emigration in this area. In this lieu, the elite class of society would migrate and leave their living place due to cultural defects, undeveloped culture, and lack of meritocracy that ignores their knowledge and skills. In the economic sector, also, the expansion of small-scale ownership has also led to divided lands that are not cost-effective for farmers. This case would result in the unemployment of villagers. Therefore, unemployed individuals look for a way out of such circumstances due to economic

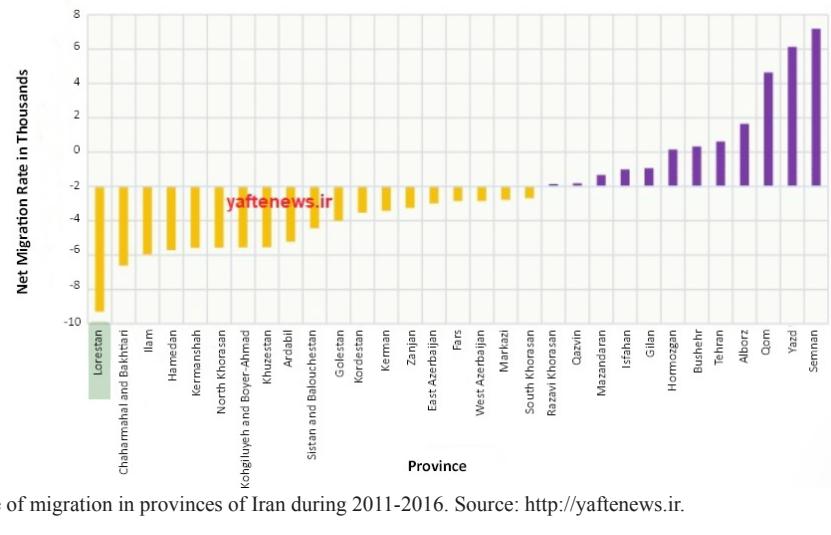


Fig. 2. The net rate of migration in provinces of Iran during 2011-2016. Source: <http://yaftenews.ir>.

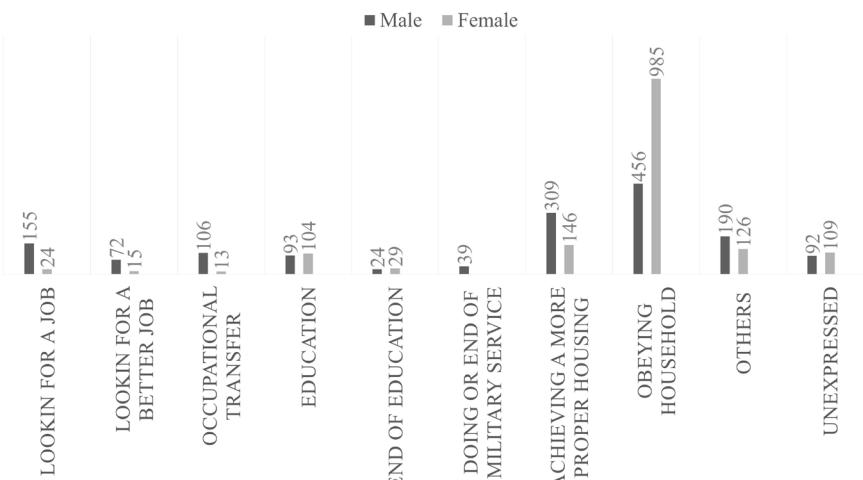


Fig. 3. The Causes of migration rate in villages of Kuhdasht, 2011. Source: Naghsh Click International Company.

and livelihood problems, Individual perception of the quality of the environment and people's attitude towards migration also play a significant role in this phenomenon. These perceptions serve as factors affecting emigration and are highly important in the analysis of this phenomenon. Furthermore, these small communities are under pressure due to high social control over them, so they want to get out of this pressure. The considerable point of this study is that the studied area is still facing many infrastructural problems, including incomplete and weak industry. This industry cannot keep up with the population and its success is related to its connection with the supply chain. Therefore, the inability to absorb foreign investment and realize development within privatization cases has led to economic decline and subsequent emigration. On the other hand, educated and elite individuals with financial power leave the province due to such economic inequality. Moreover, it is worth noting that many eligible managers from Lorestan are in Iran but no strong management is seen in this area because the human capital of this area has been exported to megacities.

## Conclusion

Rural areas cope with main challenges and issues such as the inability to attract labor, provide sufficient income, and overcome the inefficiency of the agriculture sector. These problems lead to the spillover of rural migrants to the cities and failure to create job and income opportunities in the rural areas, which results in village youth exit who are a significant part of place-oriented development. Accordingly, migration from Kuhdasht County located in Lorestan province is a crucial and multi-sided problem that is evaluated in terms of various social, economic, cultural, and political aspects. However, the most important causes for migration to megacities include obeying households, economic impacts due to lack of job opportunities and public services in the province, higher attraction of cities for life and jobs, and imbalanced urban-rural development. This migration process has caused much damage to the population and economy, such as the migration of experts, elites, and labor that resulted in lower development potential in Lorestan Province. A proposed strategy for overcoming this challenge is the industrialization of villages based on the spatial capacities, which acts as a tool for diversification of the village's economy attracting effective investments, and facilitating the administrative process. Industry participation in place-oriented rural development would create a turning point for achieving sustainable

job opportunities, increasing the economic competition power of rural areas, and providing a balance of development in rural and urban areas. This, in turn, contributes to lower migration, labor balance, and higher living facilities in these areas. This strategy can be used as a sociological and economic response to challenges occurring in migration and sustainable development of villages. On the other hand, the industrialization of villages has faced some challenges, such as skill labor shortage, poor collaboration between villagers in assigning land to industrial rural units, and environmental issues. Therefore, planners should regulate migration in their strategies to prevent an imbalance between labor and facilities provided in rural communities. These results indicate the importance of paying attention to specific features of each area and implementing the appropriate strategies and measures for the development of rural industries. However, the development of the rural area may be more complicated in practice because the initial attempts to improve rural areas may provide finance for migration instead of encouraging people not to leave the village. However, technology development in the agriculture sector and accurate promotions for enhancing creativity power, and innovation are the most effective strategies for alleviating migration in rural areas.

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