PLANNING STRATEGIES TO REDUCE RURAL-URBAN DISPARITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO IRAN

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ABSTRACT

The thesis contends that rural-urban disparities and inequalities contribute to over-urbanisation and rural backwardness in developing countries. It also acknowledges that developed countries have minimised rural-urban disparities and inequalities through the provision and the expansion of various urban services and facilities in rural areas.

This study recognises that, as a developing country, Iran needs to evolve an efficient as well as appropriate system of providing basic services and facilities such as: health care and medical services, education, water supply, electricity, communication and transportation facilities in rural areas. This would decrease the present socio-economic gap between rural and urban areas and facilitate sustainable rural-urban development. Furthermore, rural resources (human, natural and capital) can be better utilised and the rural sector thus may become more productive in supporting the urban areas and more attractive to urban skills and expertise. As a result, when rural people find their communities more congenial and livable, they may prefer to remain in their villages rather than migrate to the cities.

The effect of service provision programs on equitable rural-urban growth and development is examined through a longitudinal study and the related action research project which was undertaken by the writer in Iran over two decades. In Australia the writer has observed and reported on the impacts of rural services provision and the activities of a number of institutions and organisations which support rural areas. The Yorke Peninsula in South Australia was the location of this work.
The research addresses the question: *How may equitable growth and balanced development in the rural areas of developing countries be promoted?* In seeking to contribute to the answering of this question the hypothesis is examined that:

*The provision of basic service facilities, such as health care, education, water supply, electricity, transportation and communications in rural areas may significantly contribute to reducing rural-urban disparities and inequalities.*