

**ASSESSMENT OF THE DEGREE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITIES OF GILAN PROVINCE, IRAN
(ECONOMIC APPROACH)**

Hamidreza Alipour^a and Leila Gholamipour^b

^aDepartment of Management & Economic, Rasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Rasht, Iran
Corresponding, Email: Alipour@iaurasht.ac.ir

^bDepartment of Economics, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran

ABSTRACT

Intense population focus and imbalance are characteristic of third world countries, resulting from polarized growth policies. So, a limited number of areas have key roles and the other areas act as marginal. The first step to solve this problem is to understand disparities in economical, social, and cultural aspects. This paper seeks to measure the degree of development of the cities of Gilan province, Iran according to some development indexes in order to obtain the rates and causes of regional inequalities along with a way to reduce the underdevelopment of the region. Therefore, economic indexes have been used. After the analysis of the model, the results indicated that there is a fundamental difference among the cities with respect to development indexes; they are ranked based on developmental degrees as follow: Rasht, Bandar Anzali, Astaneh Ashrafieh, Lahijan, Roudbar, Masal, Rudsar, Amlash, Siahkal, Some'esara, Langrood, shaft, Astara, Rezvanshahr, Fuman, and Talesh

KEYWORDS: City development, Facilities distribution, Gilan province cities, Morris coefficient of development, Urbanization.

INTRODUCTION

Today, problems such as unemployment, poverty, food shortages, migration, and urbanization threaten rural areas in developing countries seriously, and our country is no exception to this (Azkia, 2002). Implemented policies and programs could not have been useful to eliminate these defects because they have been designed regardless of environmental features and capabilities (Gylfason, 2001). In fact, the necessary policy in the adjustments of problems should be based on the available capabilities and potentials to create a logical connection between them so that the country walks on a comprehensive and sustainable development (Paply, 2002). In fact, it is necessary to provide the required conditions, using human and material resources available, to develop the agriculture and rural development objectives of growth and improvement of social and economic life (Asadi, 2001). The first step is to know the developed and underdeveloped cities of Gilan, or to put it more correctly, understanding the rate of development of the cities because without knowing deprivation and underdevelopment, the effort to eliminate or reduce it, would not be possible. In the present study, after explaining the economic development indicators, the mentioned indicators were calculated for 16 cities of Gilan, thereby enabling to assess the degree of development.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The first and most important goal of all governments is development. Surely one of the most important factors of development is economic development, but this is not the only parameter since development is not merely an economic phenomenon. Therefore, the principal aim should be to create a desired pattern of public revenue growth which will cover all segments of society (Todaro, 1999). Development not only includes improving productivity and earnings, but also includes variations in the political, institutional, social, and administrative structures and their reform as well as the public opinion (Omydany, 2008). Therefore, some of the following can be noted as the objectives of development in its new concept: securing people confidence, reducing poverty and unemployment, adjusting income and wealth, increased social welfare, provision of public participation, providing more freedom, formation and development of democracy, reconstruction of human independent nature (Rezvani, 2002). Uneven distribution of resources and activities and uncoordinated inter-provinces and the intra-provinces developments have been the concerns of social and economical organizations and institutions (Hall, 1992; Neumayer, 2001). The studies of international institutions and researchers in the fields of industrial, agricultural, service, etc. capacities and capabilities confirm the unequal distribution of services and facilities in different fields (Sabbagh Kirmani, 2001). The general objectives of regional planning and economic development are social justice, welfare, and wealth distribution among the population. To achieve the aforementioned goals in each society, it is needed to prepare, formulate and implement various programs, because one of the most

important characteristics of dynamic and healthy economy is fair and equitable distribution of resources and development scores among the majority population in each district, region, or country (Ziadi *et al.*, 2010). Hence the planners are trying to eradicate poverty through the provision of programs to reduce the gaps and inequalities (Fukuyama, 2005).

DEVELOPMENT INDEXES

Economists were the first who set to provide indicators on the economy and economic planning and used parameters such as per capita income, gross national product (GNP) for the purposes of economic planning and policy making (Hetneh, 2002). In the late 1950s and early 1960s providing social indicators were of interest to planners and professional associations, and these indicators were used for decision making, policy making, and planning (Beugelsdijk, Schaik, 2005). New development indicators are defined in four groups by the United Nations (Alipur, 2009):

- Social indicators (such as education, employment, health, housing, welfare and social justice, cultural heritage, poverty and income distribution, crime, population, social and ethical values, the role of women, access to land and other natural resources, and social structure)
- Economic indicators (such as economic dependence or independence, energy, production and consumption patterns, waste management, transportation, mining, economic and development infrastructure, trade, and productivity)
- Environmental indicators (such as groundwater, freshwater, agriculture and food security, urbanization, coastal areas, protecting coral reefs and marine environment, marine, species diversity and biotechnology, sustainable forest management, air pollution and ozone depletion, global climate change and sea level rise, sustainable use of natural resources, sustainable tourism and land use changes)
- Institutional factors (such as integrated decision making, capacity building, science and technology, public awareness, cooperation and international agreements, government and the role of civil society, institutional and legal framework, disaster preparedness and public participation).

Development evaluation and determining the degree of development due to problems such as the impossibility of measuring factors such as Gross National Income, Gross Income per capita, economic prosperity and ... made the economists and experts of the United Nations to use the economic - social development indicators for the first time (Vlkak and Narayan, 2005). The first thing that was done in this area was a report in 1954 by the United Nations as an international measure of living standards published by a group of experts. It divided living standards into 12 indices: health, food and nutrition, education, literacy and training, working conditions, employment status, total consumption and savings, transportation, housing including home loans, clothing, recreation and leisure, social security, and human freedom.

This report is the basis for many subsequent works in this area. Years later, the United Nations (1991), in a report, examined the degree of countries' development using three indicators of life expectancy, literacy rate, and per capita income. Many African countries, Central and South America, and Asia were low in terms of human development, and they stated that economic growth is essential for the development of those countries (Mansouri, 1996).

Ziadi *et al.* (2000) studied the degree of development of villages in Yazd province in 70 development indexes in five different sections, using numerical taxonomy and classified them according to development indicators. Rezvani (2002) in his study entitled "Measurement of the degree of development of the country's provinces using taxonomic analysis" addressed the provinces using 24 indicators in the fields of education, construction, healthcare and communications. The results show that there are many differences between regions in terms of development. The provinces of Gilan, Tehran, Semnan and Yazd, had the highest and the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, West Azerbaijan, and Ardebil had the lowest level of development. Mousavi (2003) evaluated regions of Iran in terms of development based on 31 indices, and ranked various regions on the basis of various indicators of development (economic, social, cultural, etc.). Their findings suggest that the conclusion that regional inequalities are associated with the geographical inequalities. In general, there are significant differences along the North to the South, West to East, North West to South East, and

Center to the surrounding areas in terms of enjoying economic, social, and cultural development facilities. Monfaredyan (2007) in a study entitled "Ranking Shiraz urban areas in terms of development" assessed the inequities of the city by ranking them. In this study, four general indicators were considered in the fields of education, health, and public urban services and examined during the years 2004-1994. Techniques of numerical taxonomy and the Kuznets inverse are the main methods applied in the research. Final ranking of the results shows that in the case of non-equality of the indicators studied, the reduction of inequalities are generally in Shiraz. Ziadi *et al.* (2010) in an article entitled "Measuring the degree of development of Azerbaijan province by HDI method" examined the cities' degrees of development in order to measure regional disparities' rates and causes. In this study, seven socio-economic, demographics, housing facilities, health, employment, natural infrastructure, economic, and agricultural factors, and the combination of seven factors in three periods of 1986, 1996, and 2006 have been used.

The results show that there is a substantial difference among the cities of the province regarding the development indicators. These cities are ranked in three groups of deprived, semi-deprived, and developed that over time the rate has increased.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is an applied, descriptive, and analytical research. The population includes 16 cities of Gilan province. In this research, 71 indicators related to presumed economic growth potential. To explain the development of the cities of the province, Morris coefficient of development and the Standard score are used. Morris technique is the latest and most practical method of regional planning which is easier to work with and enjoys many efficient performances of Askalvgram and taxonomy models as well. In this method, using a variety of economic, social, and physical variables, we can grade and classify settlements, identify central places, and determine the role of development of each unit among other units (Alipur *et al.*, 2009). Also, for comparing the scores of units or various groups with each other, the standard scoring method is used. In this method, the standardization of various parameters is done to be compared with each other. This is done by transforming the data into standard scores thus, called the "standard deviation of the mean indices." To determine the level of unequal distribution of a particular factor in the province, the coefficient of variation is used. Data processing and analysis and graph drawing is done in Excel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To study the development of the cities of Gilan province, the latest data released by the Statistical Center of Iran (Iran Statistical Center, 2009, and the organizations' and agencies' data) have been used. Some indicators are extracted from the raw data. After processing, the coefficients or ratios are obtained and then used. Seven indicators used include: labor, local market size, location, higher cultural and educational services, and specialized health services. The results are given in table 1.

Table 1: The degree of development of the cities of Gilan

Mean	Specialized health services	Higher cultural and educational services	Infrastructure networks	location	Local market size	Human capital	Labor	Cities
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Source: Research findings

After reviewing the various indicators mentioned in the previous sections and considering the average coefficient of development and mean of each group, the average of the coefficients of each indicator group was calculated; the table above has been obtained. According to this table, Rasht has the highest level of development with regard to the listed indexes, and Bandar Anzali and Lahijan are placed the next in the category. The lowest level of development in the province is Talesh located at the bottom of the table. In Table 2, the cities are ranked based on the degree of development:

Table 2: Prioritizing cities in terms of the degree of development

The degree of development	City	Priority
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Source: Research findings

To study the development of the cities of Gilan province, the latest data released by the Statistical Center of Iran (Iran Statistical Center, 2009, and the organizations' and agencies' data) have been used.

Some indicators are extracted from the raw data and after processing; their coefficient or ratio was obtained, and then used. 71 indicators used are included in the following seven groups: labor, human capital, local market size, location, infrastructure networks, higher education and cultural services, specialized medical services. In terms of labor index, the highest rate of development belonged to Amlash followed by Astaneh Ashrafieh and Rasht. At the end of the list is Some'esara. In terms of human capital index, Roudbar has the highest rank followed by Bandar Anzali and Langeroud. At the end of the list is Talesh. In terms of the size of the local market, Roudbar has the highest rate of development with respect to the investigated sub-indicators, and Siahkal and Masal fall in the subsequent ranks. The city is the least developed. In terms of location, Rasht has the highest rate of development and Talesh and Lahijan are located next. Masal is the lowest. In terms of infrastructure networks, Shaft has the highest rank, and then Some'esara and Lahijan. Astara is the least developed. Assuming higher educational and cultural services, Astara, Rasht, and Bandar Anzali are top rated and they enjoy favorable conditions. Shaft is ranked the last. In terms of specialized health services, Roudbar ranks first; Rasht and Lahijan are the next with quite a higher standard. Rezvanshahr with a lower rating is the last category.

After reviewing the various indexes mentioned in the previous sections and calculating each city's coefficient of development and the mean value of the seven groups, the average of the coefficients of each indicator was calculated. Priorities of the cities of Gilan province are: Rasht, Bandar Anzali, Lahijan, Roudbar, Astaneh Ashrafieh, Shaft, Roudsar, Some'esara, Langrood, Fuman, Masal, Amlash, Astara, Rezvanshahr, Siahkal, and Talesh.

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