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fabiomoria@gmail.com  
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# INCREASING THE QUALITY OF RURAL ENVIRONMENT WITH EMPHASIS ON GOOD GOVERNANCE FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF RESIDENTS OF VILLAGES OF THE CENTRAL PART IN ARDABIL, IRAN

**RAHMATI, MANSOUR; IMANI, BAHRAM**

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## INCREASING THE QUALITY OF RURAL ENVIRONMENT WITH EMPHASIS ON GOOD GOVERNANCE FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF RESIDENTS OF VILLAGES OF THE CENTRAL PART IN ARDABIL, IRAN

AMPLIANDO A QUALIDADE DO AMBIENTE RURAL COM ÊNFASE NA BOA GOVERNANÇA DO PONTO DE VISTA DOS MORADORES DAS ALDEIAS DA PARTE CENTRAL DE ARDABIL, IRÃ

AMPLIANDO LA CALIDAD DEL MEDIO RURAL CON ÉNFAIS EN EL BUEN GOBIERNO DESDE EL PUNTO DE VISTA DE LOS RESIDENTES DE LAS ALDEAS DE LA PARTE CENTRAL EN ARDABIL, IRÁN

MANSOUR RAHMATI

*University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Irán*

rahmati1358@gmail.com

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4413-5789>


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BAHRAM IMANI

*University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Irán*

bahram\_imani60@yahoo.com

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6158-5925>

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### ABSTRACT:

Good governance is an adaptive approach in territorial planning and resource management for achieving sustainable development that can be reached through the regular behavior and institutionalization of accountability, public participation, transparency, accountability, consensus and etc. Rural governance is the process of influencing all the rural involved organizations on rural management with all mechanisms with which we can move towards the excellence and progress of the village and the rural residents. In Iran, the rural governance structure was formed on the basis of two principles of the Rural Islamic Council as a decision-making body and village management as an executive body. It enjoys legal and financial independence and in addition to using national tolls, has the ability to set up and collect local tolls for providing public services. The present study has been conducted in 2016 aimed to investigate the enhancement of rural environmental quality with an emphasis on good governance from the viewpoint of rural residents. This study is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-analytic based on nature. The study population composed of 41 villages in the central part of Ardabil which were divided into 8 classes based on the number of households. From each class, one high populated and one low populated village was selected and finally 21 villages were selected. The sample size was estimated  $n = 370$  according to Cochran formula. The library and field methods (questionnaire) were used to collect the required information. The data were analyzed using Kolmogorov-Smirnov, sample  $t$  and Friedman tests. The results indicate that good governance in the field of environment is not in a desired situation. Also, a significant difference was found in the effect of good governance dimensions on the environment, with the highest effect related to the participation index and the least effect related to equity and justice.

**KEYWORDS:** Environment, Sustainable development, Rural development, Good governance, Ardabil.

### RESUMO:

A boa governança é uma abordagem adaptativa no planejamento territorial e na gestão de recursos para alcançar o desenvolvimento sustentável que pode ser alcançado através do comportamento regular e institucionalização da prestação de contas, participação do público, transparência, prestação de contas, consenso e etc. A governança rural é o processo de influenciar todos os setores rurais. Organizações envolvidas na gestão rural com todos os mecanismos com os quais podemos avançar em direção à excelência e ao progresso da vila e dos residentes rurais. No Irã, a estrutura de governança rural foi formada com base em dois princípios do Conselho Islâmico Rural como órgão de tomada de decisão e na administração das aldeias como órgão executivo. Goza de independência jurídica e financeira e, além de usar pedágios nacionais, tem a capacidade de criar e cobrar pedágios locais para prestar serviços públicos. O presente estudo foi realizado em 2016, com o objetivo de investigar a melhoria da qualidade ambiental

rural, com ênfase na boa governança do ponto de vista dos residentes rurais. Este estudo é aplicado em termos de finalidade e analítico-descritivo com base na natureza. A população do estudo foi composta por 41 aldeias na parte central de Ardabil, que foram divididas em 8 classes, com base no número de famílias. De cada classe, uma vila de alta densidade populacional e outra de baixa densidade populacional foram selecionadas e, finalmente, 21 aldeias. O tamanho da amostra foi estimado em  $n = 370$  de acordo com a fórmula de Cochran. O referencial teórico e os métodos de campo (questionário) foram utilizados para coletar as informações necessárias. Os dados foram analisados através dos testes Kolmogorov-Smirnov, amostra te Friedman. Os resultados indicam que a boa governança no campo do ambiente não está na situação desejada. Além disso, foi encontrada uma diferença significativa no efeito das dimensões da boa governança no meio ambiente, com o maior efeito relacionado ao índice de participação e o menor efeito relacionado à equidade e justiça.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Meio ambiente, Desenvolvimento sustentável, Desenvolvimento rural, Boa governança, Ardabil.

## RESUMEN:

La buena gobernanza es un enfoque adaptativo en la planificación territorial y la gestión de recursos para lograr un desarrollo sostenible que se puede alcanzar a través del comportamiento regular y la institucionalización de la rendición de cuentas, la participación pública, la transparencia, la rendición de cuentas, el consenso, etc. La gobernanza rural es el proceso de influir en todas las zonas rurales. Organizaciones involucradas en la gestión rural con todos los mecanismos con los cuales podemos avanzar hacia la excelencia y el progreso de la aldea y los residentes rurales. En Irán, la estructura de gobernanza rural se formó sobre la base de dos principios del Consejo Islámico Rural como órgano de toma de decisiones y la gestión de la aldea como órgano ejecutivo. Goza de independencia legal y financiera y, además de usar peajes nacionales, tiene la capacidad de establecer y cobrar peajes locales para proporcionar servicios públicos. El presente estudio se realizó en 2016 con el objetivo de investigar la mejora de la calidad ambiental rural con énfasis en la buena gobernanza desde el punto de vista de los residentes rurales. Este estudio se aplica en términos de propósito y descriptivo-analítico basado en la naturaleza. La población de estudio estaba compuesta por 41 aldeas en la parte central de Ardabil que se dividieron en 8 clases según el número de hogares. De cada clase, se seleccionó una aldea de alta población y una de baja población, y finalmente se seleccionaron 21 aldeas. El tamaño de la muestra se estimó  $n = 370$  según la fórmula de Cochran. La biblioteca y los métodos de campo (cuestionario) se utilizaron para recopilar la información requerida. Los datos se analizaron utilizando Kolmogorov-Smirnov, muestra  $t$  y pruebas de Friedman. Los resultados indican que la buena gobernanza en el campo del medio ambiente no se encuentra en una situación deseada. Además, se encontró una diferencia significativa en el efecto de las dimensiones de buena gobernanza en el medio ambiente, con el mayor efecto relacionado con el índice de participación y el menor efecto relacionado con la equidad y la justicia.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Ambiente, Desarrollo sostenible, Desarrollo Rural, Buen gobierno, Ardabil.

## INTRODUCTION

Rural governance is the process of influencing all rural involved organizations on rural management with all mechanisms with which we can move towards the excellence and progress of the village and the rural residents (ROKN ALDIN EFTEKHARI et al, 2011, p. 2). Hence, in recent years, the topic of rural governance has been the focus of researchers and policymakers, and is more concerned with the decision-making process and the framework of relationships among different actors in the process (BARAK POOR; BASIRAT, 2011, p. 88). So, failure to implement top-down and suboptimal development plans that had a one-sided view of citizens and the future, as well as the gap between people, decision-makers and managers, which gave rise to the idea of good governance with components such as participation, legitimation, transparency and accountability, and etc. (MAHARATI et al, 2012, p. 3). Thus, what determines the locality of governance is the effective participation of rural residents in determining local goals and desires, and joint efforts to achieve the goals and desires of the rural community (DEKKER; EMPEN, 2004, p. 43). According to the report of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the best indication of governance is the degree to which the human rights, including citizenship, can be promoted. Resolution 64 of the Human Rights Commission in 2000 has clearly linked governance to an environment capable of promoting human growth and sustainable development (UNDP, 1997). On the other hand, in today's world, it is accepted that sustainable development can be achieved if the goals of democracy, equality in service and environmental protection are achieved through the formation of a unified management and in accordance with the

principles of modern science, equitable sharing of resources and income simultaneously (MESHKINI; MOAZEN, 2014, p. 100). Hence, the topic of environmental protection and its optimal quality is one of the important aspects of sustainable development that directly and indirectly affects other aspects of development. Because the environment is a ground for planning, and one of the characteristics of governance to respect environmental systems and use resources in principled and rational way.

In Iran, also the structure of rural governance was based on the two principles of the Rural Islamic Council as the decision-making body and rural management as the executive body. It has legal and financial independence and in addition to using national tolls, has the ability to set up and collect local tolls for providing public services (DARBAN ASTANE; REZVANI, 2011, p. 180). In this regard, the main objective of the present study is to enhance the quality of rural environment with an emphasis on good governance from the viewpoint of residents of the central part villages in Ardabil. Therefore, based on rural governance indicators, we attempted to study the role and function of local governance on environmental quality and by examining the obstacles and difficulties appropriate solutions are presented and effective decisions are made. Therefore, this study is designed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the status of governance indicators in the rural environment of the central part villages of Ardabil?
2. Which of the indicators of good governance have the greatest effect on enhancing the quality of the rural environment?

The following hypotheses were designed to answer the following questions:

1. The governance indicators in the rural environment of the central part villages of Ardabil are not under good conditions.
2. The indicators of participation, regulation, efficiency and effectiveness have the greatest effect on enhancing the quality of the rural environment.

## Research theoretical principles

During the past decades, governance has become one of the main words of the social sciences, especially in the field of policy and human geography, and is the manner and system of administration in which the boundaries between organizations and the public and private sectors are faded away based on the interactions between and within government and non-governmental organizations (BARAKPOOR; ASADI, 2009, p. 188); and a new approach to public administration that is widely used in various international, national and local territories (UN-HABITAT, 2009). Scoot considered the criteria of good governance as accountability, general regulation of leaders, transparency, responsibility, and the existence of institutional and legal structures to protect the public against powerful actions (SCOOT, 2001, p. 205). Madanipour believed that good governance means that all parties, groups and organizations involved and local people come together and that everyone is involved in planning and management in some way (TAGHVAI; TAJDAR, 2009, p. 49). The united nations development plan (UNDP) provides a relatively comprehensive definition of governance that exerts the political, economic and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels, including mechanisms, processes and institutions through its citizens and groups of interests, exercise their legal rights, fulfill their obligations, and moderate their differences (RAHMANI FAZLI et al, 2014, p. 46). According to Downer, governance should have characteristics that explain its utility. Governance is a prerequisite for sustainable development, and in countries with similar natural resources and social structure, with differences in management and enforcement practices it has been shown that improvements in welfare and living have also been increased or reduced differently (DOWNER, 2000, p. 5). According to others, good governance is a fundamental concept aimed to improve administrative skills, transparency, and increasing accountability of officials and is a solution achieved through negotiation and using multiple methods and engaging people in the formal and public sector. It is obtained informally (KADAGO et al, 2010, p. 1). The

World Bank also recognizes it as the traditions and institutions of power consistent with the general interest of the community, process of selecting, monitoring and replacing power holders, capacity and ability of government to efficiently manage resources, enforce proper policies, respect citizens and govern institutions that manage the social and economic interactions between them (DARBAN ASTANE et al, 2010, p. 101). Thus, on the one hand, the concept of government conformity with the external environment, and on the other hand, the conceptual or theoretical model of social systems cooperation and the role of government are seen in the process (YAP KIO, 2014, p. 18). In the formation of rural governance in recent decades, the administrative structure of local government has evolved, and rural government has changed from patriarchy at the beginning of the twentieth century to a new era of rural governance in the 21st century, reflecting part of the rural and mandatory reconstruction to organize communities, economies, rural environments, the distribution of power in the countryside and in general the formulation and implementation of rural policy (WOODS, 2005, p. 160). Hence, rural governance is the process of influencing all the principles of rural involvement in rural management with all mechanisms that can move towards the excellence and progress of the village and its residents (ROKN AL-DIN EFTEKHARI et al, 2011, p. 6). In other words, rural governance should be according to the community desire, transparent, accountable, responsible and responsive to its actions, with an effective and efficient function in the administration of rural affairs, at all levels of planning, implementation and monitoring uses the participation of the villagers and provide an appropriate ground for the development of civil institutions (DARBAN ASTANE et al, 2010, p. 75). Therefore, good governance is a desired administrative system that is essential for all aspects of development in countries, and that desired and ideal system is a fundamental condition for achieving the inner trust of sustainable development and efficient social justice (SOKSRENG, 2007, p. 56). Levidow also believed that governance and sustainable development are two keywords in political development discourses because these two have a particular excellence as the new postmodern scientific thought challenging the philosophy of modernity (LEVIDOW, 2005, p. 98). Hence, governance, in addition to government, includes groups and organizations that are informally effective on the management of villages, and is considered as the process of exercising economic, social, executive, and environmental authority to govern the country at all levels (HESAM et al, 2014, p. 105). In general, from the standpoint of the theories put forward, good governance should have eight major characteristics. Accordingly, good governance is participatory, socialist, responsive, transparent, efficient and effective, inclusive and law-abiding (SHAMAI et al, 2011, p. 5).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been conducted on rural governance in Iran and abroad using different methods, including: Badri et al. (2011) in a study on Iranian and Chinese rural management with governance approach concluded that first the rural management in the two countries is the same and based on the traditional principles of the two communities, but after the Second Revolution in China and at the same time as the victory of the Iranian Revolution, the two countries achievements in the field of rural management and local governance are significant. Taleb and Bakhshizadeh (2012) also in their study by examining the relationship between rural governance and cooperatives in Iran found that the government has effectively utilized rural cooperative capacities and their role in realizing rural governance has been neglected. In another study by Rokn al-Din Eftekhari et al. (2012) in order to provide a good model of good rural governance in Iran, it was concluded that good rural governance in most of the villages studied was not under good conditions and the rural structural system had no balance between actors emphasizing a mechanical approach rather than a humanistic one. Rahmani Fazli et al. (2014) by studying the theoretical principles of good governance in the new rural management process found that this approach with the principles, criteria and indicators mentioned above can be a desired approach in the new structure of rural management and play a compelling role in the political, economic, social, physical, and spatial sustainable development process



and rural development management. Connelly et al. (2006) in a study entitled “New Rural Advisory and Governance” found that if responsibility, participation, and transparency are accepted principles for rural governance, a relationship between the network, government process and local community population is required. Popovych (2008) in his study on Good Governance and Poverty Reduction Policy in Ukraine found that three major governance indicators i.e. participation, accountability and transparency with regard to the Millennium Development Goals were effective on reducing rural poverty in Ukraine and using the indicators of good governance is much better than the current state of poverty reduction. Elmenofi et al. (2014) also in a study on rural governance and development in Egypt found that many of the organizations studied in the region lack coordination, funding and community participation, and there is great confusion in rural development in the region; as the review suggests, researchers have examined governance in different dimensions and levels in their studies. Therefore, the present study, inspired by the studies, attempts to investigate the quality of rural environment with good governance approach in the central part of Ardabil.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The present study is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-analytical in terms of method. The method of data collection is in the form of library and field using questionnaires. The statistical population and sample size are described in the section of sampling and sample size determination. In analyzing the research data, in addition to relying on documents, the collected data were evaluated using five-point Likert scale. The data have been analyzed using single sample t, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Friedman tests.

### Sampling method and sample size determination

According to the available statistics, the number of villages in the central part of Ardabil is 41 villages. Therefore, according to the objectives and hypotheses of the study, the stratified (multi-stage) method was used. In this method, the number of households is used to determine the sample size of the villages. According to this criterion, the villages were selected as shown in Table 1; after determining the number of households, the villages in the area based on the number of households in 2016 were divided into 8 categories. Then, in order to determine the selected villages from each population category, one high populated and one low populated village was selected. Then, in order to determine the sample villages, the size of the households was studied, so the sample size of households was determined based on Cochran formula, which equaled 370 households. In the following, household questionnaires were distributed among the studied villages in terms of population and number of households as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - Distribution of household questionnaires in sample villages

| No.   | Village             | Population | Household | The number of questionnaires | Frequency (%) |
|-------|---------------------|------------|-----------|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1     | Pileh Sahran        | 37         | 8         | 1                            | 0.27          |
| 2     | Hamidabad           | 63         | 13        | 1                            | 0.27          |
| 3     | Ardi                | 225        | 56        | 3                            | 0.81          |
| 4     | Mirni               | 133        | 38        | 2                            | 0.54          |
| 5     | Zardalo             | 152        | 41        | 2                            | 0.54          |
| 6     | Almas               | 151        | 42        | 2                            | 0.54          |
| 7     | Banafsheh darq      | 371        | 79        | 4                            | 1.08          |
| 8     | Pir al-Pir          | 373        | 94        | 5                            | 1.35          |
| 9     | Chanzanq            | 690        | 167       | 9                            | 2.43          |
| 10    | Hasan Baroq         | 775        | 200       | 10                           | 2.70          |
| 11    | Qarelor             | 726        | 158       | 8                            | 2.16          |
| 12    | Garjan              | 935        | 262       | 14                           | 3.78          |
| 13    | Aqilaj Aqajan Khan  | 1720       | 431       | 23                           | 6.21          |
| 14    | Aqabaqer            | 1374       | 353       | 18                           | 4.86          |
| 15    | Somea               | 1414       | 337       | 18                           | 4.86          |
| 16    | Omidcheh            | 1908       | 422       | 22                           | 5.94          |
| 17    | Baroq               | 1028       | 264       | 14                           | 3.78          |
| 18    | Dijovijen           | 1216       | 283       | 15                           | 4.05          |
| 19    | Mola Yosef          | 4750       | 1221      | 64                           | 17.29         |
| 20    | Aqilaq Rostam Khani | 2091       | 542       | 28                           | 7.56          |
| 21    | Golmoqan            | 8767       | 2054      | 107                          | 28.91         |
| Total |                     | 28899      | 7065      | 370                          | 100           |

Reference: The researcher calculations (2016).

## INTRODUCING THE STUDIED AREA

Ardabil is located in 38° 2 min to 38° 8 min latitude and 48° 5 min to 48° 20 min longitude (Figure 1). The city has an area of about 5172.3 km<sup>3</sup>, with 3 districts of center, Sarein and Hir. The central part consists of 11 rural districts and 41 villages. The city is located in two plain and mountainous areas, surrounded by the surrounding mountains and is located in the middle of a plain with an area of 45 km.

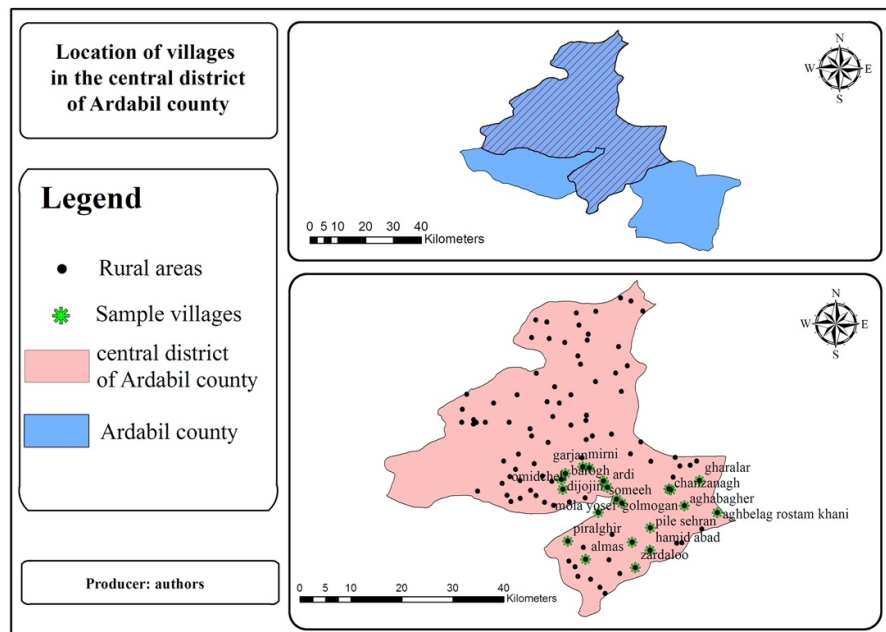


Figure 1 - Location of villages in the central part of Ardabil

## THE STUDY DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

In the present study, among 370 rural respondents who responded to the questionnaires of 5 age groups, the highest frequency was in the age group of 30-39 years with 139 respondents, comprising 37.6% of total respondents. The lowest frequency was for 8 respondents with less than 20 years, which was 2.2% of respondents. In terms of education, among 5 educational levels, the highest frequency was observed among 178 respondents and 48.1% of the respondents were below the diploma level. Also, the lowest frequency was for postgraduate education with 10 respondents (2.7%) (Table 2).

Table 2 - Frequency Distribution of Respondents according to Age and Education Distribution

| Age            | Frequency | %    | Education        | Frequency | %    |
|----------------|-----------|------|------------------|-----------|------|
| Less than 20 y | 8         | 2.2  | Below Diploma    | 178       | 48.1 |
| 20-29          | 120       | 32.4 | Diploma          | 137       | 37.0 |
| 30-39          | 139       | 37.6 | Associate degree | 17        | 4.6  |
| 40-49          | 65        | 17.6 | B.A.             | 28        | 7.6  |
| 50 y and above | 38        | 10.3 | M.A.             | 10        | 2.7  |
| Total          | 370       | 100  | Total            | 370       | 100  |

Reference: The study results (2016).

According to the results of Table 3, the mean participation was 2.78, accountability 2.45, effectiveness and efficiency 2.37, transparency 2.43, accountability 2.70, regulation 2.49, justice and equality 2.16, and good governance 2.48. The highest mean belonged to the index of participation and the lowest mean was for the index of justice and equality.



Table 3 - Central Indicators and Distribution of Good Governance and its aspects

| Statistics | Participation  | Accountability | Effectiveness and efficiency | Transparency    |
|------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| M          | 2.78           | 2.45           | 2.37                         | 2.43            |
| SD         | 0.86           | 1.16           | 1.01                         | 0.92            |
| Statistics | Responsibility | Regulation     | Justice and equality         | Good Governance |
| M          | 2.70           | 2.49           | 2.16                         | 2.48            |
| SD         | 0.91           | 1.08           | 1.03                         | 0.79            |

Reference: The study results (2016).

## INFERENTIAL RESULTS

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to analyze the data to determine whether the data distribution was normal or abnormal. According to the results of Table 4 and given that the significance level of the test error for the confidence level of 95% is greater than 0.05. So, it can be said that the distribution of the research variables is normal and to analyze the hypotheses parametric tests can be used.

Table 4 - Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results to determine the normality of the distribution of research variables

| Statistics                      | Participation  | Accountability | Effectiveness and efficiency | Transparency    |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov test z value | 1.19           | 0.78           | 0.92                         | 1.08            |
| Significance level              | 0.08           | 0.35           | 0.21                         | 0.10            |
| Statistics                      | Responsibility | Regulation     | Justice and equality         | Good Governance |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov test z value | 1.19           | 0.69           | 1.27                         | 0.93            |
| Significance level              | 0.08           | 0.42           | 0.06                         | 0.20            |

Reference: The study results (2016).

In this section of the study, single-sample t-test was used to investigate good governance in rural environment in the central part of Ardabil (first hypothesis). For this purpose, each of the indicators of good governance were evaluated and finally all of them were evaluated. According to the results of Table 5 and given that the significance level of test error for confidence level of 99% is less than 0.01, it can be said that a significant difference is found between the mean of good governance aspects in the field of rural environment of Ardabil central part villages and the mean population (comparison criterion = 3) and the mean of good governance in the rural environment in Ardabil central part villages is lower than the statistical population. Therefore, it can be said that the first hypothesis is rejected and the good governance aspects of rural environment in the villages of the central part of Ardabil are not under desired conditions.

Table 5 - Single-sample T-test results

| Variable                     | M    | SD   | Comparison criterion = 3 |                |                    |                 |
|------------------------------|------|------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|                              |      |      | t                        | Freedom degree | Significance level | Mean difference |
| Participation                | 2.78 | 0.86 | 4.80                     | 369            | 0.000              | -0.21           |
| Accountability               | 2.45 | 1.16 | 8.94                     | 369            | 0.000              | -0.54           |
| Effectiveness and efficiency | 2.37 | 1.01 | 11.79                    | 369            | 0.000              | -0.62           |
| Transparency                 | 2.43 | 0.92 | 11.72                    | 369            | 0.000              | -0.56           |
| Responsibility               | 2.70 | 1.09 | 5.13                     | 369            | 0.000              | -0.29           |
| Regulation                   | 2.49 | 1.08 | 8.99                     | 369            | 0.000              | -0.50           |
| Justice and equality         | 2.16 | 1.03 | 15.45                    | 369            | 0.000              | -0.83           |

Reference: The study results (2016).

According to the results of the mean of 7 governance indicators in the study area (Table 6) given that the significance level of test error for confidence level of 99% is less than 0.01, it can be said that a significant difference is found between the mean good governance in rural environment in Ardabil central part villages (2.48) and the mean population (comparison criterion = 3) and the mean of good governance in the rural environment in Ardabil central part villages is lower than the statistical population. Therefore, it can be said that the main hypothesis is rejected and good governance aspects in the field of rural environment in the villages of the central part of Ardabil are not under desired conditions.

Table 6 - Single-sample T-test results

| M    | SD   | Comparison criterion = 3 |                |                    |                 |
|------|------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|      |      | t                        | Freedom degree | Significance level | Mean difference |
| 2.48 | 0.79 | 12.35                    | 369            | 0.000              | -0.51           |

Then, the second hypothesis was investigated after determining the good governance status in the studied villages, therefore, to achieve the desired results, Friedman test was used to rank the research variables. According to the results of Table 7 and given that the significance level of Friedman test is less than 0.05, it can be said that a significant difference is found in the effect of good governance dimensions in the field of rural environment on environmental quality enhancement of the villages. The ranking shows that the highest effect is related to participation and the lowest effect is related to justice and equality. The second hypothesis is confirmed with respect to the participation index, but is rejected with respect to the indicators of regulation, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Table 7 - Friedman test results for prioritizing variables

| Satisfaction components      | Mean rank      | Rank               |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Participation                | 4.86           | 1                  |
| Accountability               | 3.94           | 4                  |
| Effectiveness and efficiency | 3.63           | 6                  |
| Transparency                 | 3.90           | 5                  |
| Responsibility               | 4.41           | 2                  |
| Regulation                   | 4.06           | 3                  |
| Justice and equality         | 3.21           | 7                  |
| Coefficient                  | Freedom degree | Significance level |
| 144.27                       | 6              | 001/0              |

Reference: The study results (2016).

## CONCLUSION

A good governance approach is achieved with indicators of participation, accountability, effectiveness, transparency, responsibility, regulation, justice and equity. This approach emphasizes the acceptance of the various sources of power, the existing social groups at the village and local level, the distribution of power at different levels and thus the achievement of sustainable development along with environmental indicators. In addition, the participation of all villagers and people in the operation and administration of the village and their own resources is essential to the realization of desired governance. Hence, good governance has been identified as the most effective and sustainable method of village management, which empowers villagers in different fields and is a desired approach to sustainable environmental development. Regarding this, the present study has been conducted aimed to enhance the quality of rural environment with emphasis on good governance from the viewpoint of rural residents of Ardabil central part villages. The study results showed that all aspects of good governance in rural environment are below the mean (3). This indicates that the villagers are not satisfied with the good governance indicators, while the satisfaction with the participation is higher than the other indicators, given the high tendency of the people to participate in environmental projects and plans so we should use this capacity. This can be done by using the existing centers in the villages such as the village Islamic Council, health houses, and existing cultural and religious spaces (mosques, schools, and etc.) to improve the rural environment. It should be noted, however, that these types of spaces can serve as objective representations of good governance indicators in the field of rural environment that can be examined. In other words, in addition to the existing and studied indicators in the present study, other objective indicators can be derived from good governance such as equity in the distribution of wealth across different classes, and the performance of officials in protecting the environment according to the quantitative data and works conducted, and setting up efficient systems of accountability to the public by authorities and etc. Also one of the main and important ways to implement the principles of good governance in the villages is to use social and popular capacities in the field of environment. Rural environment is important not only for rural residents, but also for rural managers and officials, so that life can be brought to them by linking rural-environment and good governance principles. According to the results of Friedman test in ranking the influence of good governance indicators, justice and equality index has the last rank and the lowest mean and shows that justice is faded in different factors of rural environment such as dealing with violators and degraders of rural environment, insufficient funds to solve the environmental problems of the village, and etc.

## SUGGESTIONS

- Increasing the public participation in planning and decision-making for performing various plans, including environmental plans in the village.
- Strengthening nonprofits and public organizations to engage with the public in decision-making
- Accurate and clear information on the implementation of various environmental plans in the village
- Regular and serious dealing with the polluting and damaging factors of the rural environment
- Allocate sufficient funds to address rural environmental problems
- Increasing authorities' monitoring of the proper implementation of environmental projects in the village to increase their performance and efficiency in improving the quality of rural life
- Increasing the implementation of environmental projects in the villages to improve the quality of life
- Providing necessary training to residents in preserving and revitalizing the rural environment.

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