



## Providing Sustainable Development Strategies for Peri-Urban Villages (Case Study: Khodaghohli Village, Bojnord Township)

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### Abstract

**Background and Objective:** Rural settlements as a context for human life and activities are a multidimensional issue. The issue of rural settlements is part of a broader issue that is manifested under the title of sustainable development at the national and regional levels. Therefore, it is considered by rural, urban and regional planners. Since the peri-urban spaces and villages of Iran, especially in North Khorasan Province, are at a critical juncture in their rural-urban transformation and development process, they must have precise planning in line with unbridled growth. In this regard, this research intends to envision a sustainable role for the village by designing a 5-year plan for Khodaghohli village.

**Methodology:** The method of this research is descriptive-analytical in nature. Library and field methods (questionnaire, interview and observation) were used to collect information. Also, focus groups and qualitative methods were used to analyze the information. The geographical territory of Khodaghohli village is one of the villages within the Bojnord city limits.

**Results and Findings:** The research findings show that the location of Khodaghohli village within the Bojnord city limits has increased the rate of migration to this village and has caused many problems. According to the SWOT results, the strengths and opportunities of this village are more than the weaknesses and threats. Therefore, its most important development strategy is aggressive. According to the QSPM results, creating the necessary infrastructure for tourism and accommodation, developing the services, infrastructure and facilities required by the village, completing the rural guide plan, developing small, home and modern jobs, developing the industrial-workshop sector of the village and completing the value chain of village products are the most important strategies for sustainable development of the village.

**Keywords:** Strategic Plan, Peri-urban Villages, Khodaghohli, Bojnord Township.

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# EXTENDED ABSTRACT

## Introduction

Nowadays, the development of urban peripheral areas and villages has gained significant importance. This issue has attracted the attention not only of rural planners but also of urban and regional planners. The development of urban peripheral areas in various dimensions helps reduce urban problems, decreases the spatial concentration of population and resources in cities, and ultimately promotes spatial justice. Therefore, special attention should be given to urban peripheral villages to prevent them from becoming dormitory or stagnant settlements by fostering their development and strengthening them.

Urban peripheral villages in Iran, particularly in North Khorasan Province, are at a critical stage in their rural-urban transformation process. Hence, planning must accompany their rapid growth; otherwise, population and physical expansion will outpace planning, leading to numerous economic, social, and structural challenges.

In this regard, this research, titled “Development of Urban Peripheral Villages: Opportunities and Challenges”, aims to highlight and clarify the role of strategic plans in institutionalizing the planning system in local management. It seeks to:

- Empower local communities and strengthen their role in the village development process
- Engage residents in decision-making within local management
- Prevent unplanned actions and organize village administration activities
- Identify issues, challenges, capacities, and potentials of the village
- Prioritize appropriate actions for the village administration
- Enhance community participation and improve interactions between the council, village administration, and residents
- Emphasize adherence to higher-level documents and optimal use of the village budget to prevent resource wastage

The significance of this issue in Bojnord County stems from the fact that, following the political divisions of 2004, the city of Bojnord was selected as the capital of North Khorasan Province. Since then, urbanization in Bojnord has increased uncontrollably. A large population from nearby and distant cities and villages migrated to Bojnord, and several villages, such as Bagharkhan and Maleksh, were integrated into the city. This phenomenon has led to numerous problems in Bojnord and its urban periphery, including:

- Spatial imbalance
- Loss of agricultural land and reduced rural production
- Intensified marginalization and informal settlements
- Environmental issues
- Land speculation and rising housing prices
- Lack of facilities and services

## Methodology

This research is applied in nature, as its findings, presented in the form of strategies, plans, and projects, are intended for use by the village administration, governmental organizations, and public institutions to contribute to comprehensive village development.

In terms of methodology, this study is descriptive-analytical. Information was first collected and described using various methods, and then analyzed considering the current situation.

**Data collection methods included:**

- Documentary and library research
- Interviews and questionnaires
- Focus groups
- Direct observation and field surveys

Qualitative methods were employed for data analysis, while strategic planning methods such as **SWOT** and **QSPM** were used for presenting visions and strategies.

The target population consisted of all village residents. Additionally, given the necessity of involving stakeholders, a diverse range of groups—including knowledgeable villagers, experts, the village administration, and the village council—were included as the study's focus group.

## **Results and Findings**

Considering overarching documents, survey studies, and input from local experts, the vision statement for Khodaqoli Village is:

"In the horizon of the plan, Khodaqoli Village will be a tourist-friendly village with high commercial potential and mechanized agriculture."

Field research and interviews with residents, elites, and local trustees indicate that the village's opportunities and strengths outweigh its threats and weaknesses. Therefore, an aggressive development strategy should be adopted.

Based on SWOT and QSPM analyses, the key development strategies for Khodaqoli Village, in order of priority, are:

1. Establishing the necessary tourism and accommodation infrastructure
2. Developing essential services, infrastructure, and village facilities
3. Completing the rural Hadi Plan
4. Expanding small-scale, home-based, and modern businesses
5. Developing the village's industrial and workshop sector
6. Completing the value chain of village products
7. Improving sales and market conditions for villagers' products
8. Optimizing water resource management.

## **Conclusion**

Urban peripheral villages are often influenced by the central city and frequently experience uncontrolled growth. Rapid expansion leads to shortages in per capita land use, infrastructure, facilities, and services.

Special attention must be given to urban peripheral villages to foster their development and strengthen them, preventing them from becoming dormitory or stagnant settlements.

The analyses in this research indicate that urban peripheral villages in Bojnord County face several major challenges, the most significant being uncontrolled population growth, insufficient per capita land, service shortages, and employment issues. Khodaqoli Village, located near Bojnord, is no exception and is experiencing rapid population growth (5.6%), resulting in numerous deficiencies. Therefore, it requires a strategic plan aligned with its development.

Overall, planning and developing urban peripheral villages is a win-win strategy: it ensures structured village development while addressing the needs of the central city by accommodating overflow population in a pre-planned manner

## Declarations

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### Authors' Contribution

Authors contributed equally to the conceptualization and writing of the article. All of the authors approved the content of the manuscript and agreed on all aspects of the work declaration of competing interest none.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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