

**LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT IN RURAL IRAN: A
CASE STUDY IN THE SUBDISTRICT OF DOWLAT
ABAD IN THE COUNTY OF MARAND**

by

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IN THE NAME OF GOD

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

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Mir Sattar Sadr Mousavi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
ABSTRACT	ix
ABBREVIATIONS	x
GLOSSARY	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF MAPS	xiv
LIST OF PLATES	xv
LIST OF TABLES	xvi
CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Significance of the problem	1
Diversification of rural employment	11
1.3 Specific objectives of the study	15
1.4 The organisation of the Thesis	16
CHAPTER TWO - SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES IN RURAL IRAN — AN OVERVIEW	19
2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 Population growth and labour supply	20
Labour force participation	24
2.3 Agricultural sector performance	32
Land reform	39
New agricultural enterprises	46

2.4	Growth of rural non-agricultural activities	52
2.5	Conclusion	57
CHAPTER THREE - SURVEY METHODOLOGY		59
3.1	Introduction	59
3.2	Sources of information	60
3.3	The process of selection of the sample villages	61
3.4	Survey design	64
	Selection of sample households	65
3.5	Conducting the survey	66
	Household interview schedules	70
	Enterprise survey	71
3.6	Problems encountered	73
3.7	Conclusion	75
CHAPTER FOUR - INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AREA		76
4.1	Introduction	76
4.2	Study area in administrative divisions	76
4.3	An introduction to the county of Marand	77
4.4	Location of the selected villages	81
4.5	Major demographic characteristics	81
	Trends in population growth	84
	Household size	86
	Sex structure of the population	88
	Age structure of the population	90
	Educational attainment	95
4.6	Migration	97
4.7	Infrastructure	106
4.8	Provision of services	108
	Education	108
	Health care services	110

4.9	Conclusion	111
CHAPTER FIVE - LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION		112
5.1	Introduction	112
5.2	Dependency burden	112
5.3	Labour force participation	115
5.4	Participation of women in the labour force	122
5.5	Unemployment among the labour force	130
5.6	Conclusion	136
CHAPTER SIX - WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS		138
6.1	Introduction	138
6.2	Sectoral composition of the workforce	139
	Changes in the sectoral composition of the workforce	149
6.3	Age structure of the workforce	156
	Changes in the age structure of the workforce	162
6.4	Skill and educational attainment	163
	Changes in literacy levels among the workforce	169
6.5	Employment status of the workforce	171
	Status in employment in major industry sectors	174
	Changes in employment status	180
6.6	Conclusion	184
CHAPTER SEVEN - EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL OF AGRICULTURE		186
7.1	Introduction	186
7.2	Agricultural ecology	187
7.3	Agricultural land	188
	Land accumulation	191
	Land fragmentation	198
	Irrigation problems	199
7.4	Farming systems	200

Cropping systems	200
Sale or self-consumption	203
Use of farm machinery	205
7.5 Agricultural calendar and demand for labour	208
7.6 Animal husbandry	213
7.7 Conclusion	218
CHAPTER EIGHT - LABOUR ABSORPTION BY NON-FARM SECTOR	219
8.1 Introduction	219
8.2 Types of non-farm activities	220
Carpet weaving industry	227
Wick weaving industry	231
8.3 Major features of the non-farm enterprises	235
Major characteristics of the workforce	236
Family versus wage labour	240
Work stability	242
Sources of income	243
Occupational background of enterprise workers	247
8.4 Conclusion	250
CHAPTER NINE - SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	251
9.1 Introduction	251
9.2 Summary of the findings	251
9.3 Some policy implications	256
9.4 Limitations of the study and some suggestions for further research	258
9.5 Summary	260
APPENDIXES	261
BIBLIOGRAPHY	292

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ABSTRACT

Due to the increase in labour supply resulting from population growth on the one hand, and the limited labour absorption capacity of agriculture on the other, the gap between supply of, and demand for, agricultural labour in rural areas in Iran is growing. Migration to urban centres is neither a solution for the rural unemployed or for the nation, since urban areas themselves are already suffering from surplus labour and unemployment problems. The rural non-farm sector offers some employment opportunities and the growth of this sector is evident from rural employment data. However, the growth of the non-farm sector in rural areas of the country does not necessarily mean improvement and better utilisation of rural labour.

In order to contribute to understanding of these complex issues, this thesis aims to explore the characteristics and composition of the labour force, its changes over time, and the availability of employment opportunities for the labour force in a sample region of rural Iran.

To achieve the aims of this study, a sample of villages in the Northwest of the country was selected for case study. Part One of the thesis sets the context for, and describes the aims of, the study. Within this, general issues pertinent to the rural labour force in developing countries and the aims and objectives of the study are presented in Chapter One. Chapter Two explores factors affecting labour and employment in rural Iran and the research methodology for the study is described in Chapter Three.

Part Two examines the current situation pertaining to the supply of labour in the study area. The two major factors affecting the supply of labour, demographic changes and labour force participation, are discussed in Chapters Four and Five, and Chapter Six documents the workforce characteristics. Chapters Seven and Eight explore the demand for labour by examining the employment potential of the farm and non-farm sectors. A summary of the findings of the study is provided in Chapter Nine, suggesting that while the growth of some non-farm activities indicates a positive diversification, the growing numbers of the workforce in some others is mostly a response to the limited employment opportunities in the farm sector.

ABBREVIATIONS

CW	Carpet Weaving
FAH	Households Farm, Animal husbandry and Handicraft
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HYVs	High Yielding Varieties
ICLS	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
ILO	International Labour Organisation
OI	Other Industry-related
OS	Other Service-related
SCI	Statistical Centre of Iran
SMCLD	Seven-Member Committees of Land Devolution
WW	Wick Weaving

Glossary

<i>abi</i>	Irrigated crop land.
<i>arbab</i>	Landlord
<i>arbab</i>	Private ownership of land by landlord.
<i>boneh</i>	Traditional co-operative unit of crop production.
<i>dang</i>	One sixth of a share of land or water. <i>Shish-dang</i> , six shares, make a full sum.
<i>daymi</i>	Dry land.
<i>khaleseh</i>	State-owned land.
<i>khordeh malek</i>	Small independent proprietor.
<i>khoshneshinan</i>	Villagers without rights to cultivation on the land.
<i>mubashir</i>	A landlord's agent, or bailiff.
<i>mosha</i>	Collective ownership of land
<i>nasaq</i>	A cultivation right.
<i>omdeh malek</i>	A large landowner usually holding substantial properties in one village or more.
<i>qanat</i>	An artificial underground water channel.
<i>saltanati</i>	Crown land.
<i>vaqf</i>	Fixed property endowed for religious or charitable purposes. Usually land, water or buildings.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Population Pyramid for Iran (Urban and Rural Areas), 1991	26
Figure 2.2	Population Pyramid for Rural Areas, 1991	26
Figure 2.3	Changes in Proportions of Rural Population, Rural Population Aged 10 and More, and Rural Labour Force of Total from 1956 to 1991	27
Figure 2.4	Age Specific Rural Labour Force Participation Rates in 1976, 1986, and 1991	29
Figure 2.5	Age Structure of the Rural and Urban Labour Force in 1991	29
Figure 2.6a	Changes in the Sectoral Composition of the Workforce from 1966 to 1991, Total Country (per cent)	38
Figure 2.6b	Changes in the Sectoral Composition of the Workforce from 1966 to 1991, Total Country (number)	38
Figure 2.6c	Changes in the Sectoral Composition of the Workforce from 1966 to 1991, Rural Areas (per cent)	38
Figure 2.6d	Changes in the Sectoral Composition of the Workforce from 1966 to 1991, Rural Areas (number)	38
Figure 4.1	Population Pyramid for the Study Area, 1991	91
Figure 4.2	Population Pyramid for the Sample Villages, 1991	92
Figure 5.1	Fertility Rates and Youth Dependency Ratios in the Sample Villages	114
Figure 5.2	Activity Rates among Population of the Sample Villages, 1991	116
Figure 5.3	Age-Specific Rates of Participation in the Sample Villages, 1991	117

Figure 5.4	Percentage of the Households Involved in Carpet Weaving and the Share of Students in Population Aged 10 and Over in 1991	119
Figure 5.5	Activity Status of Population Aged 10 and Over in the Study Villages, 1991	120
Figure 5.6	Participation Rates among Population of the Sample Villages, County of Marand and the Country, 1991	122
Figure 5.7	Participation of the Household Members in Households' Farm, Animal Husbandry and Carpet Weaving Activities	128
Figure 6.1	Overall Contribution of the Major Industry Sectors to Total Employment in the Study Area in 1994	146
Figure 6.2	Age Structure of Workforce of the Sample Villages in 1994	157
Figure 6.3	Age Structure of the Workforce by Major Industry Sectors	161
Figure 7.1	Sample Households by Size of the Agricultural Land They Own	194
Figure 7.2	Distribution of Sample Households by Ownership and Operation of Agricultural Land and by Size Categories	195
Figure 7.3	Schedule of Farm Operations in the Study Area	209

LIST OF MAPS

Map 1.1	Islamic Republic of Iran: Administrative Divisions	16
Map 2.1	Annual Precipitation in Iran	33
Map 2.2	Distribution of Cultivated Areas in Iran	34
Map 3.1	Topographic Map of the Subdistrict of Dowlat Abad	63
Map 4.1	Study Area in Administrative Divisions	78
Map 4.2	Topographic Map of the Study Area	80
Map 7.1	Slope Map of the Study Area	189

LIST OF PLATES

Plate 4.1	The main square of the village of Dowlat Abad	82
Plate 4.2	Village of Kohnab	82
Plate 4.3	Village of Hodjaghan	83
Plate 4.4	Village of Abarghan	83
Plate 7.1	Milking sheep and goats in Abarghan	216
Plate 7.2	Contribution of children to household economy	216
Plate 8.1	A carpet weaving workshop in Dowlat Abad	228
Plate 8.2	A wick weaving workshop in Hodjaghan	233
Plate 8.3	A spinning workshop in Hodjaghan	233

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Average Annual Growth Rates of Urban and Rural Population from 1966 to 1991	22
Table 2.2	Changes in the Number and Proportions of Urban and Rural Population from 1956 to 1991	24
Table 2.3	Rural and Urban Population by Major Age Groups in 1991	27
Table 2.4	Dependency Ratios and Participation Rates in Rural Iran in 1976, 1986, and 1991	28
Table 2.5	Changes in the Male and Female Labour Force in Rural Iran from 1976 to 1991	30
Table 2.6	Changes in the Sectoral Composition of the Workforce from 1966 to 1991	37
Table 2.7	Changes in the Sectoral Composition of the Rural Workforce from 1966 to 1991	37
Table 2.8	Estimates of the Distribution of Land Ownership before the Implementation of Land Reform	40
Table 2.9	Number and Areas of Holdings by Type of Tenure in 1960	41
Table 2.10	Decile Distribution of Land by Holding Class 1960-1974	45
Table 2.11	Number of Plots Per Holding, by Size of Holding	45
Table 2.12	Number and Area of Agricultural Holdings by Size Groups (1988)	53
Table 2.13	Sectoral Composition of the Rural Workforce, 1966-91	55
Table 2.14	Changes in the Sectoral Composition of the Workforce, 1966-1991	56

Table 3.1	Number and Percentage of Households Covered by the Survey	66
Table 4.1	Trends of Growth among Urban and Rural Population of the County of Marand	79
Table 4.2	Changes in Population of Sample Villages from 1966 to 1991	85
Table 4.3	Household Size in Sample Villages in 1966, 1976, 1986 and 1994	87
Table 4.4	Gender Ratios among the Population of the Study Area, County of Marand and the Country in 1991	89
Table 4.5	Age and Sex Structure of the Population of the Sample Villages in 1991	91
Table 4.6	Changes in Number and Share of the Population Aged Less Than 5 Years from 1986 to 1991	93
Table 4.7	Changes in Share of Children Aged Less Than One Year in Total Population from 1986 to 1991	94
Table 4.8	Literacy Level among Sampled Population Aged 10 and More by Gender	95
Table 4.9	Emigrants from Sample Households by Sex and Marital Status	102
Table 4.10	Basic Characteristics of Emigrants from Surveyed Households within Past Ten Years before Survey	103
Table 4.11	Net Flow of Population from Sample Villages within Two Years	105
Table 4.12	Origin of Staff in Formal Educational Institutions in the Sample Villages	109
Table 5.1	Dependency Ratios among the Population of the Sample Villages in 1991	113

Table 5.2	Participation Rates among the Population of the Sample Villages, Country, and the County of Marand in 1991	121
Table 5.3	Current and Usually Active Population and Population Engaged in FAH in the Sample Villages by Sex	125
Table 5.4	Employment and Unemployment in the Sample Villages in 1986 and 1991	132
Table 5.5	Number of Households, Work Force, and Female Homemakers Aged 10 and More in the Sample Villages in 1986	135
Table 5.6	Rural Unemployment in the Country, Province of Eastern Azarbaijan, County of Marand and the Sample Villages in 1986	136
Table 6.1	Employed Population of the Sample Villages by Major Industry Sectors in 1994	141
Table 6.2	Sectoral Composition of the Workforce in 1994	142
Table 6.3	Contribution of the Major Industry Sectors to Secondary Employment in the Sample Villages	144
Table 6.4	Overall Involvement of the Workforce in Major industry Sectors	147
Table 6.5	Principal Job Location of the Workforce	148
Table 6.6	Percentage Changes in the Contribution by Industry Sectors to Total Employment from 1986 to 1994	150
Table 6.7	Age Structure of the Workforce of the Sample Villages	157
Table 6.8	Employed Population Aged 10 to 14 in the Sample Villages by Industry Sectors (1994)	158
Table 6.9	Share of the Workforce and Population Aged 65 and More of Total	159

Table 6.10	Main Job of the Workforce Aged 65 and More	160
Table 6.11	Percentage Changes in the Age Structure of the Workforce from 1986 to 1994	162
Table 6.12	Literacy Level among Workforce of the Sample Villages in 1994	165
Table 6.13	Educational Attainment of the Literate Workforce of the Sample Villages in 1994	166
Table 6.14	Literacy among the Workforce by Major Industry Sectors in the Sample Villages in 1994	168
Table 6.15	Percentage of Literate Workforce by Major Industry Sectors in the Sample Villages in 1986 and 1994	170
Table 6.16	Employment Status of the Workforce in the Sample Villages in 1994	173
Table 6.17	Employment Status of the Workforce of the Study Area by Major Industry Sectors in 1994	176
Table 6.17a	Employment Status of the Workforce of Sample Villages	179
Table 6.18	Percentage Changes in the Employment Status of the Workforce from 1986 to 1994	181
Table 6.19	Percentage Changes in the Employment Status of the Workforce by Major Industry Sectors from 1986 to 1994	182
Table 7.1	Average Climatic Data for the Study Area	187
Table 7.2	Agricultural Land Area of the Sample Villages	190
Table 7.3	Total and Per Capita Agricultural Land Area in the Sample Villages	191
Table 7.4	Sample Households by Size of the Agricultural Land They Own	193

Table 7.5	Number of Households Possessing Land and Their Land Area by Size Categories	194
Table 7.6	Distribution of Agricultural Land among Sample Households by Ownership and Operation	195
Table 7.7	Sample Households by Size of the Agricultural Land They Operate	196
Table 7.8	Land Area Under Tenant Operation	197
Table 7.9	Holdings by Number of Plots	198
Table 7.10	Types of Crops Produced by Farm Households in the Sample Villages	201
Table 7.11	Number of Crops Produced by Farm Households	203
Table 7.12	Proportion of Crop to Be Sold by Farm Households	204
Table 7.13	Classification of the Holdings in Terms of Machinery Use	206
Table 7.14	Main and Second Job of the Heads of the Farm Households	211
Table 7.15	Labour Requirement by Holdings	212
Table 7.16	Raising Sheep and Goats by Surveyed Households According to Holding Size Categories	215
Table 7.17	Raising Cattle by Surveyed Households According to Holding Size Categories	217
Table 8.1	Public and Private Non-Farm Enterprises Active in the Study Area	223
Table 8.2	Enterprises Categories by Number of Workers	235
Table 8.3	Age and Gender of Labour Working in the Enterprises	237
Table 8.4	Literacy among the Labour Force Working in the Enterprises	238

Table 8.5	Levels of Educational Attainments among Literate Workforce of the Enterprises	240
Table 8.6	Proportions of Family and Wage Labour Working in the Enterprises	241
Table 8.7	Seasonality and Mode of Work in the Enterprises	243
Table 8.8	Enterprises by Main and Second Job of the Enterprise Owners	245
Table 8.9	Enterprises by Agricultural Land Area of the Owners	246
Table 8.10	Previous Job of the Full-Time Workers of the Enterprises	249