

## Study of Influencing Factors on People's Participation in Regional Initiative Desertification (Case Study: Mohammad Shahkaram area in ZahakTown)

### Abstract

Deserts are among the most important ecosystems of Iran which cover a significant area of Iran and affect other ecosystems too. The government has implemented some plans by following strategic policies for maximum participation of people in restoration, preservation and sustainability of natural resources. Therefore, individual, socio-cultural and economic structures have an effective role in increased participation of villagers in desert greening projects. To this end, this applied study was conducted aimed at investigating the effective factors in the participation of the villagers in Mohammad Shah Karam Region in Zahak. The region includes 6 villages and desert greening projects such as the biological operation of tree-planting (wind-breaker) and distribution of floodwater in the northern region were selected. This region has been affected by drought during the recent years. The first step in developing and applying appropriate strategies and solutions to deal with this phenomenon and its devastating effects is having exact knowledge and understanding from drought and its impacts in rural areas due to their greater vulnerability. The population of the region is 5134 including 1187 families. The required sample of the study were calculated as 358 based on Cochran's Formula. The data were collected through a questionnaire. The content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by some experts in the field of economics, social sciences and natural resources. In order to estimate the reliability of the questionnaire, 30 questionnaires were used for the pre-test. The Cronbach's Alpha indices for economic indices, socio-cultural index, and participation were 0.7, 0.7 and 0.8 respectively. The data analysis was done using descriptive statistics (frequency, standard deviation, mean, etc.) and inferential statistics (comparing the difference of means, regression analysis, etc.) in EXCEL and SPSS Software Packages. The results of this study showed that the number of wells, job history, likelihood of project success, willingness to migrate from villages, economic and socio-cultural factors, among other variables, have a positive significant relationship with the dependent variable, i.e., the participation of villagers in desert greening projects. Finally, the results of stepwise regression analysis showed that the variables inserted to the equation (the number of wells, job history, likelihood of project success, willingness to migrate from villages, economic and socio-cultural factors) can predict 57 percent of the changes in the dependent variable of the study, i.e., the participation of villagers in desert greening projects.

**Key words:** Desertification, Participation, Drought, Zahak



**University of Zabol  
Graduate School  
Faculty of water and soil  
Department of range and watershed management**

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**Supervisor**

**Dr. B. Sahebzadeh**

**Advisor**

**M.S.c. A. khaksafidi**

**By**

**Z. Nosratpanah**

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