

Investigating people's views on the reasons for the underdevelopment of Sarmast city

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<p>Article type: Research Article</p> <p>Article history: Received: 31 - 8 - 2024 Received in revised form: 16 - 10 - 2024 Accepted: 28 - 7 - 2025 Published online: 28 - 8 - 2025</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Development, Sarmast, Small Town, Geographical Distance, Ethnic and Religious Homogeneity.</i></p>	<p>Objective: Considering the importance of small cities in economic development and decentralization and preventing people from moving to big cities, and the subsequent challenges, Sarmast city as one of the small cities of Iran has been investigated to analyze the reasons for its lack of development from the people's point of view. The city of Sarmast was formed as one of the small cities in Kermanshah province in 1954, and it was the only communication route between the cities of Gilan-gharb, Islamabad-gharb and Kermanshah, and since 2000, it has become a city from a village. This city is the center of Govar district of Gilan-gharb city in Kermanshah province. Guwar district has a population of 16333 people and 64 villages. The city of Sarmast had a population of 2913 in the 2015 census. Due to the geographical location, communication of Sarmast city and also the population overflow route of 64 villages of Govar sector, it has not been developed quantitatively and qualitatively. This city is one of the routes of the pilgrims of the holy shrines and has quality rainfed agricultural products. Now, the main question of this research is what factors have caused this city to not enjoy the development of urbanization and a proportional urban population? The purpose of this study was to investigate the geographical, political, social, cultural and economic factors affecting the underdevelopment of Sarmast city from the people's point of view.</p> <p>Method: This study is among qualitative studies in terms of method. The target community was the people of Sarmast city who had experience of living in Sarmast city. In the interviews section, in-depth interviews were conducted with 12 people according to the theoretical sampling method. The average age of the studied subjects was 37 years (27 to 60 years old). Due to the importance of people's lived experience, it has been tried to select people who are different in terms of age, education and occupation in collecting information. The information obtained was analyzed by thematic analysis method using Max Kyuda software. In order to validate the findings of the research, after the initial coding, the interview text and codes were shown to the interviewees, and after confirming the interview text, the process of coding and categorization was reviewed and approved by the referees who were the supervisors and advisers of the thesis.</p>



Results: According to the people, the reasons for the non-development of Sarmast city in the economic field include the categories of weak economic infrastructure, economic weakness of the people, traditional agriculture and the absence of processing industries, and the high cost of land had a significant impact on the non-development of Sarmast city. There are no economic companies at the micro level that process agricultural products in Gowar sector. The city of Sarmast economically lacks facilities that can attract people to it and has only one local market, and most people go to the city of Islamabad-Gharb to meet their daily needs due to economic efficiency and low prices of goods, which is the focus. It reduces the economy of the drunken city. The population that first settled in Sarmast did not come from the diverse ethnic and religious composition of Gowar region, but mostly a certain tribe settled there, and the population of other regions did not migrate to Sarmast due to religious and ethnic differences, and this factor played a role in reducing the number of immigrants in Sarmast. The people of Heydarieh areas of Gowar district are people of Haq and they prefer to live in their areas and not live in Shia areas, for this reason they do not migrate from their villages or if they migrate, they migrate to Kermanshah city. According to the people, the political reasons for the non-development of Sarmast include the lack of efficient officials and the lack of implementation of laws and political support. Sarmast became a city very late and has not yet become a city, and according to people, such political reasons play an important role in attracting resources and developing the city. Geographical and physical reasons for the non-development of Sarmast city, from the point of view of the people, include lack of water, limitations of urban development, geographical distance, lack of use of natural potential, and changing the route of visitors to Karbala. Dehydration and successive droughts have caused the destruction of underground water tables and this problem has plagued the city.

Conclusion: From the people's point of view, each of the geographical, economic and infrastructural, social, political and managerial factors have played a role in the non-development of Sarmast city, and regarding the main factors of the non-development of small towns, according to the theoretical foundations and empirical backgrounds of the research, usually economic, political and managerial factors have played a more important role, but for the city of Sarmast, in addition to the above, it seems that the geographical factor and the lack of ethnic and religious diversity in the city of Sarmast are also important. Some financial and economic, political, etc. resources are deprived and the result of the construction of such a reality in the political atmosphere of the people as well as the government is the demand of the residents of large villages to turn their area into a city, which after several decades is not only dominated by the social spirit of the city.



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