

**The role of agricultural policies in rural development/ comparative study
between Iran and Japan**

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Abstract

Japan's area is a quarter of Iran's and it has twice the population. The country has used agricultural and rural economic policies based on productive and patriotic culture and has prioritized national interest over individual interest to be able to produce most of its required agricultural products itself. Japan has used success in agriculture as a theme for its industrialization. On the other hand, Iran, despite its opulent natural resources, has been unsuccessful to do so. The country has relied on oil export income and has embarked upon extreme imports of agricultural products. It is not self-sufficient in food products and is dependent on industrial sector. The present research has studied agricultural and rural policies in Iran and Japan and has considered the cultural roots of these decisions.

Keywords: Agricultural policies in Iran and Japan, Rural policies in Iran and Japan, Cultural roots of Japan's success in agricultural development, Oil Government in Iran, Comparative Study.

Receiving date: 20/2/2018

Acceptance date: 25/6/2018

Introduction

Japan has an area of almost 378,000 km², nearly a quarter of Iran's area. The population is nearly 120 million, which is twice the population of Iran. Seventy percent of the land is forest and only about 14.2% is farmland. It means that about 52 million hectares of the country's land are used for agricultural purposes. In Iran, the number, considering all the conflicting estimations, is argued to be around 14 million hectares. While Japan has twice the population of Iran, it is self-sufficient in agricultural products and if some products are imported, it is because they could not be harvested in the country (7).

This is while Iran's soil and water resources suffice for a balanced utilization in order to provide food and raw material for even a population of 100 million people. However, the rate of production of agricultural products in the country does not meet the nutritional needs of the current population and basic

products, such as wheat, rice, and oil.

It seems that the role of noneconomic factors – beliefs, motives, ideas, behaviors, and cultural structure – is very important. Beliefs of a nation and its ruling government in cultural and educational sectors and, consequently, economic ideas, strategies, policies, and their respective institutions decide the fate of nations and regimes.

Economy, as a social-human factor, is an issue that plays a critical role in the value system, ideas, and behaviors of a human being. It could be argued that, before material and physical conditions, such as vast land and oil and gas resources sufficient for one or more continents, it is the cultural-behavioral background and ultimately the ideas that bring together those theories decide the fate of a nation.

Therefore, in order to study the economic development or decline of a nation, it is not enough to only

analyze the results of development or reasons for underdevelopment, rather, it is critical to study the ideological-cultural conditions that have caused those outcomes (development or underdevelopment).

Main questions of this research are as follows: What principles are followed by Iran and Japan rural and agricultural development policies and why? On which pillars has Iran based its rural and agricultural development policies? What is the origin of these differences? Do the natural and geographical prerequisites play a role while Japan has authored its policies based on economic, social, and cultural requirements although it has numerous natural and economic obstacles?

Methods

In the present study, in order to analyze the agricultural and rural policies in Iran and Japan, library and archival sources were used. In addition, one of the authors provided the research team with

valuable information about the agricultural and rural status of Japan and the Japanese behaviors and morals due to years of living in the country.

Results

Rural or Agricultural Development in Iran

During the Safaris period, Iran's economy was self-sufficient and agricultural, industrial, and service sectors were in complete harmony and adaptive with social needs. Since early 19th century, colonizing governments of Russia and Great Britain began encroaching on Iranian lands and intervening in Iranian socioeconomic affairs. Supplying cheap raw materials for developing industries in Europe and selling the surplus products of these industries encouraged these governments to open the closed economic market of Iran for their purposes by destroying the country's industry (5).

Since mid-Qajar period, agricultural sector, unlike the past, turned into a production machine

for global markets and industries of colonizing countries, instead of producing based on domestic needs. Due to the unbalanced growth in farming products with population growth and national income, the inefficiency in the country's agricultural products gradually surfaced and importing food products and necessary raw materials for domestic industries expanded. The emergence of dependent capitalist relations in rural areas, promotion of monetary relations in the economic life of the rural population, and promotion of unpaid or low-paid labor in rural areas after land reforms exaggerated the role of the rural economy in production for the market. This approach expanded the shortage of food products due to the government's policy is keeping the price of wheat, barley, and some other basic agricultural products at a low level by importing these products with oil income that led to an exaggerated importing of agricultural products.

The transition of self-colonization culture, which generally manifests in micro importing consumer pattern, into rural areas in time of shortage of facilities and extreme poverty turned immigration from these regions into a normal phenomenon (5).

Since Iran's first development plan in 1948 until the third one after the Islamic Revolution. The share of rural development was never more than 8 percent and share of the agricultural sector was never more than 2 percent of the budget. This was rooted in the ultimate objectives of Truman's Point Four Program. Most of the evolutions in the programs' objectives are rooted in the perspectives of modernization or dependency (they are not much different). These two perspectives are in line with Iranian industrialization. However, industrialization here means the industrialization of montage industry. Therefore, they largely ignored agriculture and rural areas and believed that, if the rural

population immigrates to the cities for welfare and public services, the government has to expend fewer costs than when it is obligated to provide services in rural areas (6).

There is no indication or sign of rural development in the first until fifth development plans. Categorization of the concept of rural development under agricultural development, especially in the first, second, and third plans led to considering rural development and growth in the country's development plans to be the same as development in the agricultural sector. All Location of less budget and credit for the agricultural sector, on the one hand, and spending the budget in a way that mostly favored the urban society, on the other, halted the development and growth of rural society (6).

Two sets of factors must be considered regarding agricultural development, which must have been attended by the planners; one is the effects of the land reforms

policies or a series of actions called "White Revolution" and the other is the government policies, especially after the sudden increased in oil prices in 1974 (6).

With the execution of the land reforms, it became clear that the government had decided to abandon family and small, 2- or 3-hectare, units and attend to larger exploitation units in form of agricultural joint stock companies, production co-ops, agro-industries, and agricultural hubs like Jiroft. Studying the government's behavior and its supportive policies regarding small units lead us to understand that this issue is still in a very basic stage and there is practically no attention to these units (7).

The government buys agricultural products in Iran and it is the sole buyer in some cases. The government buys wheat, sugar beet, tobacco, cotton, etc. and it does not favor an increase in the price of agricultural products because it has considered

supporting the consumers due to political and economic reasons (6).

Table 1. Share of the agricultural sector from the country's (spent) development credits in development plans

Development Plans	The Whole Development Credits (Million Rials)	Share of the Agricultural Sector (Percent)	Share of the Rural Development (Percent)	Percentage of the Rural Population
First Plan	21,000	25	-	75
Second Plan	70,000	31.1	1.55	70
Third Plan	230,000	23.1	2.14	64
Fourth Plan	568,000	8.58	1.77	60
Fifth Plan	2,118,570	6.2	2.1	57
Total	3,986,570	-	2.07	-

Source: Azkia, Mostafa, Gholamreza Ghaffary, Eric Hooglund. An Analysis of Rural Studies in Iran (2)

In general, before the Revolution, development was considered economically and it was designed based on the concept of “growth”. In the planning for this design, rural society must abandon all its traditional characteristics and “modernize” itself. After the Revolution, development acquired a “transforming” and political

perspective. In this perspective, actions for self-sufficiency and efforts to amend decades of deprivation in rural societies accelerated without any plans and the inefficiency of this perspective provided an opportunity for “growth” design to come back to the scene.

The set of pre-Revolution plans were not only unsuccessful in increasing agricultural products as planned, but also they did not have the power to impact the hidden unemployment rate in rural areas, low efficiency of production sectors, and low income of rural families. After the Islamic Revolution, until 1992, the objective was to increase agricultural products to the extent that the country could have become self-sufficient. Ministry of Agriculture was blamed because of its failure to do so while this objective had been one of the aims of all development plans even before the Islamic Revolution. The establishment of Construction

Jihad in order to design and execute projects of rural development was a first initiative in resolving this issue while providing housing, medical care, clean water, electricity, roads, education, and in general infrastructural institutions for improving the lives of rural population was the responsibility of other governmental institutions.

Abandoning the transforming perspective due to the failure of rural development plans before the Revolution (the sartorial planning method) caused the continuous use of this method after the Revolution while it suffered more serious deficiencies. Contributions to deprived rural population took many forms in this era of excitement and no plans. Distribution of modern machines and technologies led to harvesting the forests and cutting the trees in the name of land reclamation and destroying the forests, which had begun before the Revolution, was accelerated. Efforts for keeping the

rural population in their areas and even the slogan for their return to their homes was impossible to materialize with an increased emergence of machines and the replacement of human workers with these tools (8).

Transforming perspective and the era of no plans in rural societies could not completely respond to the issues and even failed in producing agricultural products and providing food for the public use. After the accelerated population growth and accepting millions of Iraqi and Afghan immigrants, importing of food products increased. The relative failure of this era led to discussions to reintroduce already failed large exploitation units, agro-industries, and agricultural joint stock companies of the first development plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The extreme growth rate of value added in the agriculture sector in the early years after the Revolution increased the rate of

expense to income in rural areas in compared to urban ones.

The distribution worked in an inverse way again and income distribution moved toward inequality because of inflation impacts, preparation of resources for war, pricing policies that damaged the production sector and strategic agricultural products, production stagnation, and reduction in foreign exchange income.

Yearly and monthly policies in the agricultural sector have always encountered traditional issues. Shortage of inputs and spare parts and the black market for these inputs halted the growth of this sector. The distribution network of agricultural products was another issue. Therefore, political perspective of development was successful in materializing its message in the early years after the Islamic Revolution. However, later on, the inequality trend moved in the opposite way and the rich

became richer and the poor became poorer (4).

A Review of Historical Trends of Agricultural Sector in Japan

When we talk about Japan and development of this country, we could not ignore Meiji's period (1868) and 260 years of complete isolation before that. During this period that, due to absolute isolation, "culture of local production" emerged and food, clothing, and agricultural investments, especially in irrigation were provided independently of foreign contribution and investment. Political-commercial isolation led to the growth of the independent peasant class and development of agriculture through traditional technologies.

Since the beginning, the powerful government guarantees development and rejects foreign loans due to cultural, political, and economic reasons, used exporting agricultural goods, such as tea and silk as a tool to acquire foreign

exchange and used the foreign exchange to import capitalist goods from the West. Despite opulent coal resources, the government did not export raw materials and used them to produce energy for its domestic production activities (1).

After the end of Tokugawa period and the beginning of the Meiji era, more than 80 percent of the Japanese people worked in the agricultural sector and, in addition to that, most of the rural population also engaged in non-agricultural activities. These production evolutions, especially increase in agricultural products and the efficiency of the workforce, are considered as the first signs of industrialization in Japan (4).

During the Tokugawa period, the idea was to create wealth in rural and agricultural areas. At the time, they believed that increase in social wealth is related to increase in farmers and decrease in urban population and consumers. They also believed that execution of any moral and welfare policy begins

with a respectful policy toward agriculture and preventing trades in this sector (4).

Comparing the Policies Adopted by Iran and Japan

A review of the policies adopted by Iran and Japan indicates that Japan has correctly learned from its bitter experiences in achieving more and more success by properly identifying, stopping, and abandoning the policies that had destroyed or weakened its agricultural sector. The country has rerouted its policies in correct situations and has severely prevented the further weakening of its agricultural sector.

There is an ancient idea in Japan, called Nohon-Shogi. The idea means that agriculture is a basis and principle in the country, an ideological school (6). The Japanese believe in this idea in their hearts that they cannot be a developed country if they seek assistance from other countries. In Iran, however, the orientation of agriculture is merely a slogan and,

before the Islamic Revolution, industry always dominated agriculture by focusing on oil income. In addition to this, unfortunately, there have been no learning's from the unsuccessful experiences of the past and sometimes there has been insistence over false initiatives that have led to an agricultural sacrifice in the name of the industry, dependent industry indeed.

The early efforts in Japan for agricultural development was importing large agricultural machines and tools directly from Great Britain and the US. Although importing modern industrial machines led to the development of new industries, the imports of agricultural machines did not have the same impact.

Meiji's government quickly identified the failure of efforts in establishing a mechanized agriculture based on British-American pattern and changed its agricultural development policies toward seeking a new technology

in accordance with Japan's economic factors. The country's agricultural teachings were reviewed and revised. The government not only employed the alumni but also the elderly farmers in order to combine the best farming experiences with modern knowledge of inexperienced alumni. Meiji's reforms abandoned the feudal limitations of the previous eras. Farmers were free to choose their farming style and methods. Communications in the country were established by new postal services and railroad connections. The cost of publishing information of new technologies reduced. Reforms in land taxes that changed it into a specific rent increased the farmers' motives for innovation. Farmers voluntarily established agricultural associations and seed exchange associations in order to find methods that are more productive.

"Therefore, if in other countries in the world, machines served agriculture and replaced workers,

in Iran, workers served machines that were ultimately without any spare parts or repair shops, dispatched to our farms, not in a model or two or three. It continued to the extent that our agricultural farms turned into graveyards for different systems and machines that no one knows where the hell they have been built. Looking into and studying the broken pump engines in the South or tractors built in different countries that came into the farm with exciting roars, but turned into headaches for their owners after a few months, clearly shows the wretched situation of industrial service to agriculture in our country" (11).

In addition to this, agriculture in Iran is not based on native research and education and does not take its research leads from domestic fields. It is completely under the umbrella of Western knowledge. Agriculture students in Iran do not know the problems of rural population and cannot find a solution for them because they

have not learned about those problems in their classes. In Japan, before the introduction of machines, it was the science and knowledge of agriculture that found its way into the farms. In Iran, the machines were introduced, but the agricultural engineers still do not know the rural language and agricultural methods of work (6).

Ignoring native knowledge and having a static perspective believing in evolution and development through outside forces and modern society is still identified in the minds of Iranian planners and leads to up to down strategies.

If importing agricultural products in Japan reduced agricultural income and led to a decline in farmers' motives in Japan, on the other hand, the government invested in research and infrastructural tools to save domestic agriculture (11).

In Iran, however, importing agricultural products happens

abruptly, relying upon oil income which It costs highly for the government. If these costs were spent in order to develop agriculture and encourage Iranian farmers to work on their lands, we could have both prevented huge immigrations to large cities and their negative impacts and saved foreign exchange.

In addition, sometimes importing agricultural products takes place exactly at the time of harvest. This worsens rural population situation and completely destroys their motives for remaining and working in rural areas. If the country's water and land resources are used in a proper way, there is no need for importing agricultural products from other countries.

Azimiargues, "If we are careful in our estimation and say that more than half of the country's water and land is not used in agriculture, we are not wrong. This means that, in the current situation and by the current traditional, common methods and application of these

two main resources, the rate of production must be twice what it is now. In other words, it is possible to not require any imports of food products through doubling the cultivation by completely ruining the country's water and soil" (11).

Japan, however, has come to terms with its natural, continental limitations and has adopted the best policies in accordance with its available facilities so that it does not need foreign aid to supply its food and also does not kill its farmers' motives.

Although enfranchisement of trade and business has quickly developed in Japan, the development has not been quacked enough to satisfy the demands of agricultural products exporting countries in response to the extremely rapid development of exports in Japanese industrial products. The period between 1955 and 1965 was an era of extreme industrial growth in Japan. If the balancing of industries related to quick transmission of the relative

supremacy of agriculture to industry was appointed to the market mechanism, the income gap between rural and urban population and immigration of workforce would have increased to the extent that would be socially and politically unbearable. Therefore, it seems that we must accept the hypothesis that Japan paid the cost of supporting the agriculture to balance the relationship between industries (11).

However, in Iran, despite the un-socialist policies and having a private agriculture, the buyer of agricultural products is the government and wheat, barley, sugar beet, sugarcane, tobacco, cotton, and oilseeds are solely bought by the government and because of this, it can set the price itself and it always take sides with the consumers in doing so.

This is in a situation where the farmer pays the price of an agricultural machine and other related institutions according to its industrial price. In Japan, the price

of agricultural products is high to the extent that it is not comparable with other industrial countries because it has a philosophy for producing food for its population that it pays a high price for it. Still, in Japan, the government buys rice at a high price and sells it cheap. In order to prevent a surplus production of rice, the government pays the farmer to not plant rice and pays it again to plant what the country needs, for example, crops keeping the price of basic agricultural products at a low level that is in fact one of the reasons for the decline of agriculture in Iran. It is not clear why wheat is bought in dollars by the government but it does not consider buying the same product from Iranian farmers at a reasonable price (6). Pricing policies of agricultural products at the time of harvest is one the reasons for the underdevelopment of agriculture in Iran because unrealistic prices are imposed on the farmer at the time of harvest.

As explained, Japan paid the price for balancing its industries by supporting agricultural sector, but, in Iran, there is no balance between different sectors of industry, agriculture, and service. Agriculture is sacrificed for the sake of industry; in fact, it has been sacrificed for the sake of montage, dependent industry. The service sector is suffering from inflation. In Japan, however, the balance between bases is considered critical and, if a base rises higher than it is supposed to, they cut it and connect it to other bases.

In Iran, while the exploitations are small and family-oriented, the government and planners do not consider this important issue and insist on turning them into large farms and units. Ignoring rural values and beliefs has misguided them and they have been lost for decades. Although the governments have experienced failure of large units in form of agricultural joint stock companies, production co-ops, agro-industries,

and agricultural networks, they have yet to abandon the idea.

We import agricultural machines from countries that have large farmlands and units and we do not think of building small-size machines. The fact is that, in Iran, since land reforms, agricultural units with an average size of 2 hectares have increased and the situation has not changed after the Islamic Revolution. In Japan, however, shortage of farmlands is accepted and proper policies are adopted to increase production efficiency with the available size of units to prevent importing of food products (wheat, barley, rice, etc.) (6).

In fact, while almost everybody accepts that rural development is a strategy to improve the lives of poor people, many of the poorest who lack any kind of economic facilities, such as large agricultural units, are ignored by these weak policies. In order to have a source of income, this class must

immigrate to large cities and be employed in fake jobs. This indeed, creates larger problems.

While, in many developed countries, governments try to decrease the differences between cities and rural areas in terms of facilities in order to increase motives for living in rural areas. However, in Iran, this is completely different.

Looking at the efficiency distribution of different agricultural products in Iran and Japan indicates that, according to Table 2, efficiency in Japan is much higher than Iran. It could be argued that the reason for this difference is a shortage of machines or chemical fertilizers. Therefore, in Table 3, some factors are mentioned.

Table 2: Efficiency distribution of different agricultural products in Iran and Japan

Legend	Wheat	Barley	Rice	Potato	sugar beet	sugarcane
Global Average	2009	2068	2871	13321	31725	57238
Developing Countries Average	1595	1575	2181	11597	31891	55589
Japan Average	3265	3144	5688	28027	58938	63914
Iran Average	1083	857	3232	8519	23000	10000

Source: Table(2)

Discussion

After reviewing past experiences in planning for rural development, the question could be asked that, to what extent is the failure of these plans due to development perspectives and the content of these plans and to what extent is the failure connected to methods of development planning? When development is defined as human eminence, its general objective

must be public-oriented and dependent on the people and expanding their choices. Fundamental major values of this perspective are:

- Reducing political, social, and economic inequalities;
- Dominance of collective spirit and collective effort over development;
- Believing in reasoning and resurrecting national identity and solidarity;

- Independence in development or correctly using domestic human and material resources;
- Reducing dependency on the so-called developed world.

The argument of this perspective is that the current, existing resources and equipment in the country could make it possible for the future generations to establish a self-sufficient development in the long run, when these resources are used in a correct manner.

Technologies and the size of exploitation units must not be selected merely based on optimized economic reasons, rather, they must be chosen through a series of important social limitations (extreme supply of workforce) and, if a redistribution of properties (lands) is necessary, a new plan must be designed (4).

In brief, it could be argued that, in Iran, agricultural and rural development have not enjoyed enough attention. In fact, the adopted strategy is chaotic and unplanned. For example, when we

considered innovation and modernization policy for development, the policy was not coherent and changed continuously. In the beginning, land reforms and reducing the size of farmlands was regarded as the proper strategy. Later on, it was decided that this strategy was uneconomic and we sought to create large and medium-size units while the situation was not proper for establishing these kinds of farms. For example, governmental agro-industries and private large farmlands were not in accordance with Iranian economy and their products were exported. Relying upon high oil income, the policy of paying subsidies to the consumers and importing food products was favored more than before and this extremely damaged the producers of agricultural products (6).

The amount of Japan's agricultural products, considering the number and size of its farmlands, is higher than Iran's, but their consumed calorie is less.

Table 3: Situation of agricultural inputs in Iran and Japan

Legend	Percentage of Agricultural Workforce to Whole	Share in Gross Domestic Product	Workforce in Each 1000 Hectares	Tractors in Each 1000 Hectares	Horsepower in 1 Hectare	Chemical Fertilizers in 1 Hectare
The World	48	-	720	17	0.85	87
Japan	9.2	3	1200	380	10	430
Iran	45	15	250	18	1	200

Source: Table (2)

Table 4. Consumption of some agricultural products (2001-2003); Energy Consumption, Nutritional Diet Kilocalorie/Person

Legend	Rice	Wheat	Sugar	Potato
Iran	314	1496	255	92
Japan	619	359	188	43

Source: Table (2)

In the feudal system that was present in Iranian rural societies for centuries, the lords dominated all aspects of rural life through its forces and planned in a way that the farmer or vassal always had only enough to survive. Therefore,

gradually they merely had the motive to fight only for themselves.

When we encounter rural population, we see particular norms. They are extremely polite and greet continuously that is

affected by the fear of past punishments by the lords and fear of hunger or homelessness. Using expressions like “you’re the master” is a reminder of those days when lords of feudal systems were truly the masters of rural lives and properties.

About the individualism that some have witnessed in Iranian rural societies, in comparison to the foreign peasants’ mentality after Industrial Revolution in 18th-century Europe, it must be argued to be wrong. Due to the particular situation of farming in Iran and the issue of irrigation and working on specific farming units, individualism could never materialize among Iranian rural population, rather, the spirit of cooperation and participation was strong among them. About pointless hopes and superstition in rural areas, it must be mentioned that, for thousands of years, an important part of our agricultural economy has been based on accidents and phrases such as “if it

rains”. Certainly, agricultural production in a society where success is based upon “maybe”, “if”, “accident”, or a timely rain, a particular ideology would materialize among the rural population.

Undoubtedly, production relations and the feudal system, along with the continental situation, have been effective in creating a static, spiritual inactivity and content and insecurity and fear of tomorrow, famine, and hunger among the rural areas in a way that our rural population today is content, with a static, inactive spirit. They are followers of the Shiite sect but believe in superstitions like stone, tree, and grave. They hope for something to help them from the beyond in every aspect of their lives (1).

Faster argues that peasants always imagine that good things in life always happen in small, limited sizes and, because peasants are not powerful or capable enough, their share could not be increased. If

good things are available in rural areas in a limited amount, considering the closed system of the area due to geographical isolation, if someone achieves something, it usually means that others are damaged. Therefore, if someone tries to acquire more than one's share, the others' share is necessarily reduced. This kind of conclusion, on the other hand, leads to the peasant to be suspicious of an always-hungry neighbor. Therefore, one of the reasons of mutual distrust in personal relations among peasants is "limited good" (9).

After land reforms and due to immigration to urban areas and the introduction of agricultural machines and flow of some groups of urban population into rural areas, the rural societies suffered from a form of isolation and the behaviors and personalities of the rural population rapidly and severely changed. The contact between urban and rural populations changed the collective

behavior of rural people. Land reforms not only severely changed the social and individual values, but also affected belief values (1).

In fact, after land reforms and the presence of governments in rural areas, the spirit of contentment in rural population began to decline. The entrance of free wheat and flour into rural areas from the United States¹ and services by the government in these areas by relying on oil income created a kind of expectation among the rural population that wanted the government to do any small all or big thing for them. After opening the doors of rural areas and immigration to urban areas and learning the urban culture, which was, in turn, affected by the Western culture, the culture of working and trying and the value of these concepts began to decline and continues today. This changed the beliefs and values of the rural population, including self-

¹For more information, look at *Rural Management in Iran* by Dr. Mehdi Taleb, published by University of Tehran Press in (11).

consumerism, self-sufficiency, contentment, solidarity and created the tradition of buying luxurious goods that were incoherent with rural culture and the country's economic status.

In fact, what is clear is that the Iranian government dedicated itself to adopting modernization policies and strategies that were dictated by the West without trying to coordinate them with Iranian rural society's culture. This imposed severe damages on agricultural production and consequently, sparked importing of these products to change the characteristics of self-sufficiency and self-consumerism in rural areas.

In fact, one of the objectives of evolution in Iran after land reforms was to turn the rural society into a consumer not a productive one, because European economy was in trouble at the time. Turning the rural society into a consumer one was accomplished quickly by the help of co-ops and goods that were

sold to rural population which were not needed by them until then. Working in urban areas had become possible for the rural population and the price of agricultural products were incomparable to the wage of a simple worker in urban areas. For example, the wage of 15 days of work was equal to the income from 2 hectares of fertile farmland.

However, the Japanese' culture is the culture of working and trying and the priority is always with national interest where patriotism is evident. The same spirit led the Japanese people to endure difficulties with patience, contentment, and understanding and this is what caused their victory today. Their belief in the idea that they cannot be developed if they were to ask for food from other countries that was the reason for the country's capital and the property was not spent on importing food products. In fact, Japan's experience shows that growth and development are not

only an outcome of material factors and natural resources, but also a result of productive culture, competition motive, and responsible government and private sector under any conditions. Economic ideas and policies of Japan are based on principles including local production, local consumption, local export, importing of raw materials and high-tech products and timely support of domestic industries in order to make them competitive against foreign products, reducing consumption and enduring its difficulties in order to increase national reserves and trade and business in terms of “promoting and distributing locally produced goods, not trading foreign products”.(8)

Japan learned from and cohabited with the West while rejecting its full-force, identity-oriented invasion. In other words, the country relied on its national identity and patriotic values and increased the material-spiritual

value of domestic choice to flow huge domestic and foreign resources of science and technology and raw materials into the national economy. This naturally caused the emergence of the methods and culture of countering the exit of human-material capital and infiltration of foreign consumer goods into domestic markets until the mid-1990s. Therefore, the declining trend of foreign choice value (values that are not effective in national development although beneficial such as importing and consumption of foreign products that are similar to domestic products) accelerated and concepts such as spontaneous relative advantages were ignored and constant, long-term advantages turned into principal indices of economic ideas and policies of government and institutions. Through such intellectual-cultural trends, the framework of socioeconomic development in Japan focused on the absorption of,

adaptation of, and precision over Western technology and ultimately positively defending cultural values and compensating for the public damages along the constant conflict with the West (4).

Unlike Iran, the Japanese innovations in the economy were never confined to theories and mostly included institutions, policies, and strategies coherent with socioeconomic situation of the country. They changed capitalist theories through their own concepts and employed those theories by their institutions. Japanese elite sought the maintenance of the country's traditions and acquiring Western techniques. In Iran, however, the elite approach toward Western culture has always been political. In fact, the infiltration of Western culture into Japan turned into a motive for nationalists who sought a return to their original ancient traditions. In fact, Japanese elite gradually strengthened the foundations for training skilled

human resources through importing modern machines and using foreign experts. Educating skilled forces was suggested by the modernist elite in Iran. However, this policy did not last long and the already educated human resources were not properly used. The main factor in Japan's success in economic modernism was that the country's elite, conservative or modernist considered the strengthening of production infrastructures as their primal objective. All the elite groups in Iran had ignored the growth of scientific and production fundamentals and imagined that through justice-seeking and modernist slogans they can overcome all socioeconomic problems (2).

The primary method of thinking in Japan is production culture. This idea sometimes goes further than maximizing consumption and distribution. For example, justifying the 50-billion-dollar surplus of trade balance with the

United States on Japan's side, the country states that Japanese goods satisfy American consumers. But, when the US tries to open the Japanese market for example, American agricultural products (such as rice), Japan, the advocate of free market argues that Japanese producers will suffer. Therefore, if economic units (family, economic institution, the government) look into economic realities from a social builder position, they can reasonably decide to consume fewer goods in a smaller house or produce more goods in a bigger workshop. There is no doubt that, in this cultural and economic situation, production is more respected than consumption and high living standards in the workspace is more valuable than high living standards in family life (1).

The behavior of Japanese consumers, which is rooted in economic ideologies of their society, is not in opposition to expanding the power of consumer

co-ops. In fact, they sometimes defend high prices. For example, the high price of rice due to its strategic and biologic value and or due to the healthiness of Japanese products against cheap, imported products is supported by consumer co-ops and families. Public opinion statistics in Japan shows that only 16 percent of the population defends using foreign products (1).

In addition, Japan has acted conservatively in terms of the size of farmland and cattle. The size of the farmlands is not more than a football field and the cattle size is not more than 6 head of cattle (11). in Iran, however, despite the fact that family exploitation units are the best choice therefore without attending to personal ownership that is very important for the rural population, large agricultural units and agro-industries have been established without any success.

Conclusion

The twist of socioeconomic development in Iran is neither due to a shortage of material resources,

such as raw materials, capital, and technology, nor because of a shortage of human resources or economic planning. The reason must be searched in the cultural-intellectual impasse and deadlock. Without culture and spirit of production and tendency to consider national interest as priority against individual interest, importing patterns and continents of natural resources will be useless.

Every economic system, with any ideological or belief system, cannot be safe from the damages of socioeconomic and cultural decline and the demise of economic systems if it consumes goods and services provided by others more than what it produces itself.

Considering the factors discussed in this study, a number of suggestions are provided for improving the function of rural and agricultural sectors.

Relying upon importing of food products, whose prices fluctuate and can be more expensive by the minute, is not rational, and,

regarding the removal of supports and production and exports subsidies of other food producer countries, which takes place after the teachings of the World Trade Organization, imports of food products in the future will cause a negative balance in the country's payments. Therefore, food products will be more expensive and enduring the prices will be more difficult for the public.

The price of agricultural products especially basic products, is very low. The solution is enfranchisement of the prices or increasing the guaranteed price of agricultural products. Otherwise, farmers will seek planting unnecessary product that secures higher income.

In any form, paying subsidies to urban consumers in order to keep the price of agricultural products at a low level instead of supporting the rural producers means imposing hidden taxes on rural producers and encouraging them to immigrate to cities. Iranians must

ultimately accept the bitter reality and understand that the larger is the gap between the rural producer and urban consumer, the more critical will be the damages imposed upon the country. Plans for nationalizing agricultural machines must be considered and we must stop using these machines without considering the specific domestic characteristics because, in this way, the rural human workforce will be replaced by machines and immigration to large cities will accelerate.

The rural population's inactive approach toward their society's local fate must change and they must learn to not await governmental aids and contributions. Attending small rural industries in areas where planting is not much possible can create an important source of income. Parallel organizations and institutions that are connected to agriculture must be merge and stop parallel works.

The number of the students educated in agriculture must increase to a balanced amount and the quality of education must be designed based on the country's requirements. The situation for conversations between farmers and students must be provided.

It is best that the country's agricultural future be determined based on research, education, and promotion not extremism avidity and tolerance of excessively using water, fertilizers, pesticides, and machines.

The government must design and execute its agricultural policies based on objective realities and experiences of similar countries.

We must try to correct the individualist culture, which prevents attention to national interests. The government must strongly defend development based on the country's culture and prevent the adoption of Western strategies that are at odds with Iranian rural structure. In fact, the government must make a

connection between useful traditions and proper foreign strategies.

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