



Home Business Opportunities for Rural Areas in Ilam Province

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ABSTRACT

The rural areas of Ilam province are facing many problems in the field of employment and production, and the development of entrepreneurial activities in these areas is very necessary. Opportunity identification has a very fundamental role in entrepreneurial activities. The study was carried out to home business opportunities for rural areas in Ilam province. The research used a combined qualitative and quantitative methodology. The methodology was qualitative in the first phase using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The second phase was run by a descriptive-survey methodology. Participants were purposefully selected from village administrators, experts of the Coordination Office of Economic Affairs Governor, experts of the Jihad-e Agriculture Organization, experts of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, and experts of the Industry, Mining and Trade Organization. Data were collected from 72 participants in nine sessions as focus group discussion attended by 6-11 people. They were qualitatively analyzed by Strauss and Corbin's constant comparison method in three coding phases. They were quantitatively analyzed with SPSS Software Package. In the end, the home businesses in priority in each Township were introduced for agricultural sector, processing industries, and hand-craft industries.

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INTRODUCTION

Accurate identification of issues related to villages is very important; because it helps to solve all problems and backwardness such as widespread and severe poverty, growing inequality, rapid population growth and increasing unemployment in rural areas (Li & Zhang, 2015). During the past decades, the establishment and development of rural businesses with the support of the government and other relevant institutions have grown twice as much (Geravand et al., 2019). It is obvious that the development of agricultural and non-agricultural jobs in rural areas leads to the guidance of young forces in constructive ways for regional and national development (Nain, et. al., 2015). Given the crucial role of rural areas in national economy in general and in agricultural production in particular, it is necessary to focus more on rural areas, particularly on their role in sustainable food security (Rezvani, 2004). A great part of employed people are working in rural areas, especially in developing countries (Badri, 2012). Subsistence stability and economical security in rural areas are two important components of sustainable development because they increase efficiency and boost the exploitation of potential and active capacities and strengths of economical activities on the one hand and allow spatial diversification of economical activities in rural areas to ensure subsistence persistence, job creation, and income generation on the other hand (Javan et al., 2011). The diversification of the activities should be taken into consideration in spatial and regional planning in order to have a dynamic rural economy (Motiei Langrudi & Najafi Kani, 2011). Development scholars argue that most issues in developing and third world countries including unemployment can be rooted in the undeveloped status of their villages (Azkia, 2006). Despite the presence of creative and assiduous people in rural areas, entrepreneurial activities are not institutionalized because of such reasons as the lack of funding for farmers, proposals and plans with no preplanned program, unresponsiveness to new ideas and suggestions and the

lack of a suggestions systems, the risk of idea stealing, the lack of common perspective on innovation, the lack of access to reliable and authentic information, mechanical structure, the lack of entrepreneurship support culture, the gap between market and services, the gap in access to capital, the decrease in networking and communication opportunities, and the lack of industrial clusters for innovation acceleration (Markley, 2002; Heritot, 2002). In Iran, the main problems in rural areas can be mentioned as the lack of job opportunities, unemployment, and poverty, which cause the migration to urban areas and create problems for both cities and villages, and indeed for whole country. So, it is necessary to seek solutions to unemployment problem in order to realize sustainable economical growth (Aghili et al., 2012). Economical development of rural areas needs approaches that can motivate entrepreneurship development, effective executive institutions, and environmental policy empowerment (REED, 2003). Rural small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) can play an effective role in fulfilling economical and social objectives of the rural development. SMBs are advantageous in some productions to some larger industries in terms of scale economy. It is shown that production units will be inefficient if they are larger than a specific size. The small size of economical units in western countries and the organizational division of larger institutions into smaller independent departments are examples of this economical rule (Sahraeie, 2001). There is always a hidden unemployment during farming activities and a kind of seasonal unemployment in villages due to high labor: land ratio and the seasonal nature of agricultural activities. Thus, the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in agricultural, industrial and service sectors in rural areas can create permanent employment for some rural people, especially the academic graduates and youths, and temporary employment for seasonally unemployed people because SMEs, in nature, have a high potential for job creation. Many development economists argue that

a strong self-employment sector plays a vital role in employment of rural residents (Mohanipatra et al., 2007). Since SMBs are diverse in such measures as objectives, need diverse resources, are less risk-taking, and need lower investment, it is necessary to facilitate their launch (Memili et al., 2015). The villagers will access their demanded goods and services with the development of entrepreneurship and the establishment of entrepreneurial small firms that will deeply influence the economical growth of the villages and the control of migration to urban areas. The villages like cities pose a lot of undiscovered opportunities whose discovery and exploitation and the establishment of new, competitive businesses on the basis of them can create considerable economical advantages for villagers (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005). The experience of many countries show that home businesses are a sensible approach to reduce unemployment rate and create jobs for women and youths (Fallah Jelodar et al., 2007). Home businesses are necessary to be developed as an approach to increase small and medium-sized employments, especially for women and youths who are adequately skillful but are not recruited due to the parlous state of employment in the market (Bigdali Shamlou, 1933). The development of these business is a good chance for fulfilling low-risk, low-cost entrepreneurial initiatives, so that they can help the growth of SMBs. It is shown that over 70 percent of successful entrepreneur have first started their business from the home (Gordon & Nell, 2006). Today, home businesses are a vital part of economical activities in developed countries. They can diversify and develop the community and economy of the countries through job creation and innovation in products and services. Also, home businesses are a good starting point for youths to launch their personal businesses because they are much easier to be started than other kinds of businesses (Mohebi, 2011). Currently, regulations of home businesses have adopted in over 150 countries. In china, 30 percent of all jobs are devoted to home businesses. This figure is 80 percent for Taiwan and 20 percent for the US

(Nejahi & Qasempour, 2010). Home businesses are the greatest business group in Australia, so that they form 67 percent of small businesses and 58 percent of all businesses. Also, this type of business constitutes about half of small businesses in the UK and 52 percent of private sector activities in the US, playing an important role in their economies (Khanifar et al., 2010). The Comprehensive Plan of Home Businesses has been developed on the basis of numerous studies to accomplish the development-aimed objectives (Larijani & Shabaninejad, 2010). The development of SMBs can reduce unemployment rate significantly, and the share of small businesses is estimated to be, on average, 30 percent in alleviating unemployment (Sepehri, 2009). According to a study by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor in 2002, home businesses have attracted trade and business researchers in the recent decade because of their potential impact on easy and low-cost creation of jobs (Ahmadpour Dariani, 2006). Despite the long history of this business type in Iran and the fact that it can be a good approach for optimizing and improving the efficiency of human resources and for creating new opportunities for rural women, it lacks the capacities as a good occupational option for women and its development faces some obstacles (Yaghoubi Farahani et al., 2014).

Ilam Province is located to the west of Iran. It has 20 counties and 627 inhabited villages. According to the census of 2011 conducted and published by Statistical Center of Iran, 35.74 percent of the population of the province lives in rural areas. Evidence shows that rural population always had a negative growth rate in 1966-2011, so that it reached -0.4 percent in 1996-2006. On the other hand, urban areas have had a population growth, partly because of the migration from rural areas (Anonymous, 2011). Rural areas in Ilam Province are struggling with some issues and challenges including families' income deficiency, high illiteracy rate, villages' discharge, high unemployment rate, and high family size. These problems hinder the development of rural areas in this province. Attempts to un-

derstand and analyze these challenges and to propose approaches to overcome or, at least, minimize them will have such consequences as the prosperity of agriculture sector, the optimum exploitation of the potentials of rural areas, the stabilization of population in these areas, and finally, the development of rural areas of this province (Azadi & Beik Mohammadi, 2012). Despite economic advantages and trained human resources in Ilam province, the unemployment rate is high and the rate of entrepreneurial activities is low (Moradanjadi, 2023). Surveys show that the state of development and economic indicators among the cities of Ilam province are also different and unequal (Meshkini et al., 2018). Since economical activities in particular and resources and facilities in general have inappropriate centralization in terms of spatial distribution, each region needs specific plans in accordance with its special requirements for which it is necessary to recognize the current status by scientific methodology (Faraji Sabokbar, 2015). It seems that the development of home businesses in Ilam Province can help the rural development of this province. Since no comprehensive study has been yet conducted on identifying home businesses in rural areas of Ilam Province, the present study was carried out to identify home businesses appropriate for rural areas of Ilam Province.

Review of Literature

Review of literature shows that despite of the importance of developing home businesses in rural areas and the necessity of identifying appropriate home businesses for different villages, unfortunately few studies have focused on them. This section summarizes some studies on subject closer to the topic of the present study Momenzadeh et al. (2023) in a research titled identifying small business opportunities and in the average tourist villages, they did Shemiranat. Among the opportunities for tourism development, the following categories were deemed suitable: economic, social-cultural, infrastructural-opportunity, spatial, psychological, and attractive opportunities. Based on the t-paired test, the most

crucial opportunities were determined to be the attractive, psychological, and infrastructural ones. Seif Elahi and Akbari Arbatan (2023) conducted a research titled identifying the challenges and opportunities of the digital economy in the development of rural women's home businesses. The results of the present study indicated that, the rapid growth of the digital economy, and especially the COVID-19 pandemic, has accelerated the spread of digital technology use, leading to an urgent need to align rural women's home businesses with government policies. Many rural women's home businesses have been digitally deprived due to the digital divide and the resulting limitations. They may face challenging business conditions to continue their careers. In addition, the female workforce in rural areas lacks the necessary flexibility in labor markets to adapt. This shows that rural women's home businesses should use technology and upgrade training programs to equip themselves with the right skill sets. Therefore, during the rapid digital transformation, not only should immediate investment be considered in digital connectivity and networks for rural businesses that are underserved by digital services, but also digital skills and literacy should be increased and help absorb new digital innovations.

Heydari et al. (2022) in a research titled Identifying opportunities of agricultural production businesses for rural cooperatives in Ilam province. The results showed that cases such as; Development of mushroom production and problem solving, development of native poultry production, development of honey production and problem solving of honey treatment, development of medicinal plants, development of livestock breeding (sheep, lamb and goat) and development of city gardens such as grapes and pomegranates and fruits and products market Garden, are some of the opportunities are available in all counties. Heydari et al. (2021) research titled identifying opportunities for service businesses in the agricultural sector (case study: cooperatives village of Ilam Province) did. The results showed that things like; Cre-

ation of livestock and agriculture input markets, collection and packaging of animal oil region, establishment of the village bazaar store (direct supply of agricultural products with the cooperation of rural cooperative companies) and creating a specialized store for agricultural tools and inputs are among the opportunities that are available in all cities. There are studies. The findings showed that the production and packaging of vermicomposting got an almost favorable grade. In general, the results indicated that according to the experts, jobs related to agriculture and related industries have the possibility of more development in the rural areas of Dezful, and on the other hand, jobs related to the field of animal husbandry have the possibility of less development (Forouzani & Mardani, 2021). Ahmadvand and Kanani's study (2018) showed that in relation to the identification of job development areas in the rural areas of Mashhad, Marghab, and infrastructure-environmental areas are suitable for creating employment. The results of the study by Aghajani Afrozi and Alizadeh (2017) in identifying entrepreneurial opportunities in the tourism industry in Mazandaran Province showed that among the five dimensions of horticulture and greenhouses, fish farming and fishing, packaging and transformation industries, livestock and poultry, and cultural and residential opportunities, cultural and residential opportunities as opportunities entrepreneurship was first recognized in the rural tourism industry. Nain et al. (2015) in rural areas India prioritized rural jobs and job opportunities. The results of their study showed that floriculture jobs, seed production, hand basket production, vermicomposting/organic products, breeding bees and honey production, mushroom production and dairy products were prioritized. In a study on strategic planning for the development of employment in rural regions of Javanrood city, Ghadermarzy (2015) concluded that offensive strategy that mainly relied on internal strengths and external opportunities could be the most appropriate approach for developing employment in deprived and very deprived villages of Javanrood. In a study aimed

at identifying non-agricultural businesses for youths in rural areas of Ilam Township, Ahmadi (2014) found that the top-rated agricultural service business was animal fat production and packaging, the top-rated non-agricultural service business was plastering, the top-rated agricultural industries business was the production of different sauces, the top-rated non-agricultural business was cement production unit, the top-rated handicraft and tourism industry business was carpet (silk and decorative), Kilim and Gabbeh weaving units, and the top-rated mine subsector business was sand mining unit. Vahedi (2015) prioritized agricultural processing industries for development in Ilam Province and presented 10 first feasible priorities for each township of the province. According to Najafi and Safa (2014)'s study on entrepreneurial home businesses, there are numerous impediments and challenges against their development in rural areas including, above all, the lack of a sound business plan, the lack of experience and expertise among villagers, the lack of villagers' access to market, unavailability of information and databanks, the lack of funding for investment on home businesses, and legal restrictions. In a study on the development of rural home businesses in Golestan Province, Sharifzadeh (2010) found the main obstructions of their development as to be unfavorable environment for businesses in rural areas, undeveloped market, transition and gap between generations in the transfer of values, skills and culture of rural home businesses, the lack of official, institutional support, harmful interaction between family and business, inefficient management of production and business functions, and social pressure. In a pathological investigation on the impacts of home business development in rural areas, Mirlotfi et al. (2014) reported buying products at low prices, the lack of support by officials, and the lack of financial support as the main impediments of home business development. Taghibaygi et al. (2014) looked at the impediments of the development of rural home businesses in Es-lamabad-e Gharb Township and found that the personality, personal, economical, family and

governmental factors were the main obstructions of the development of home businesses. In an economical evaluation of rural women's home businesses in Hamedan Province, [Saadi \(2013\)](#) reported that the businesses that had an innovation and had no or few similar analogies in the region had higher cost-benefit. [Moradnezhadi et al. \(2014\)](#) tried to identify medicinal herb businesses in Chardavol County and concluded that looking from both feasibility and necessity aspects, drying units, garlic powdering and packaging, and cowslip tea bag production units were the first-priority businesses among initial processing businesses and canola oil extraction and packaging units and mint extraction and packaging units were the first-priority businesses among secondary processing businesses. In an attempt to recognize impediments of rural women's attitudes towards home businesses, [Yaghoubi Farahani et al. \(2014\)](#) mentioned cultural and social, infrastructural and financial, personality-related, supportive, family and educational factors as the main obstructions.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology was a combined qualitative-quantitative method. A qualitative method was used in the first stage of data collection, and a quantitative method was used in the second stage. The research was a descriptive survey. The Q methodology was applied in the first stage. It consists of five steps. After the topic of the study is determined, the researcher first specifies the desired relevant study population. Then, some statements are collected as the concourse from the participants about the topic in question. In the third step, the researchers select a limited number of statements out of all statements collected in the previous step. In the fourth step, researcher asks the participants in concourse to rank and sort the statements according to a certain scale (from completely agree to completely disagree). Then, the researchers should describe and interpret participants' viewpoints (the sorts resulted from the fourth step) about studied topic ([Papzan et al. as cited in Barry and Proops, 1999](#)). The participants were se-

lected by purposive sampling method and it was tried to select people who were more informed of appropriate home businesses in rural areas of Ilam Province. So, participants were selected from Dehyars, experts of Governor's Economical Affairs Coordination Office, experts of Jahad-e Agriculture Organization, experts of Cultural Heritage Organization, and experts of Industry, Mining and Commerce Organization. The samples were selected until the saturation of data. Data were collected by two methods: semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Before interview and discussion, participants were briefed about the objective of the study. To collect data, nine sessions were held for 6-14 people in the form of focus group discussion. In total, 72 people participated in the interviews. Data were validated by their continuous checkout, their analysis along with their collection, the review of codes derived from participants, and the continuous review and revision of data. A secretary was present in all sessions for taking notes of the interviews. The sessions lasted for 45-80 minutes. Data were qualitatively analyzed by Strauss and Corbin's constant comparative method and were coded at three phases. SPSS Software Package was used in the quantitative stage. In the end of each focus group meeting, home businesses were derived and were handed to participants to sort and prioritize them from 1 to 10. Then, data were fed into SPSS Software Package to specify the prioritization of home businesses and to introduce businesses whose rank mean was greater than 5.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the PRIORITIES of home businesses for each Township in three sectors of handicraft, agricultural sector-related processing industries, and agricultural sector home businesses.

Home Businesses for Ilam Township

Table 1 shows the home businesses in priority for Ilam Township. It shows that the businesses in priority are lamb and kid husbandry in agricultural sector home businesses, animal fat production and packaging in processing industries, and carpet and Kilim weaving in handicraft sector.

Home Business Opportunities for ... / Moradnezehadi & Vahedi.

Table 1
Home Businesses Priority in Ilam Township.

Sector	Home businesses in priority	Mean
Agricultural	Lamb and kid husbandry	8.87
	Local chicken husbandry	8.81
	Honey bee husbandry	8.30
	Edible mushroom production	7.7
	Animal fat production and packaging	8.2
	Pastes and jams production	7.8
Processing industries	Dried fruits processing	6.3
	Vegetables processing and packaging	6.1
	Tarhana production and packaging	5.8
	Pickles production and packaging	5.7
	Medicinal herbs production and packaging	5.6
	Bakery	5.5
	Kilim weaving	8.6
	Hand-made leather artifacts	8.2
Handicraft industries	Local attire production	7.9
	Giveh weaving	7.5
	Decorative boxes production	7.3
	Toy assembly	6.7
	Wood mosaic	6.4

Table 2
Home Businesses Priority in Eyvan Township.

Sector	Home businesses in priority	Mean
Agricultural	Local chicken husbandry	7.5
	Lamb and kid husbandry	7.3
	Turkey husbandry	7.2
	Animal fat production and packaging	8.3
	Dried fruits processing	8.1
Processing industries	Cereals packaging	7.6
	Pastes and jams production	7.2
	Vinegar and grape syrup production	6.5
	Carpet weaving	7.9
Handicraft industries	Felt, Djadjim and Kilim weaving	7.3
	Local attire production	7.1
	Hand-made leather artifacts	6.2
	Giveh weaving	5.9

Home Business Opportunities for ... / Moradnezhadi & Vahedi.

Home Businesses for Eyvan Township

According to the findings about home business appropriate for Eyvan Township (Table 2), it can be concluded that such businesses as local chicken husbandry in agriculture sector, animal fat production and packaging in processing sector, and carpet, felt, and Djadjim weaving in handicraft sector are the options in priority for employment in this Township.

Home Businesses for Abdanan Township

According to the results summarized in Table 3, lamb and kid husbandry in agriculture sector, the production and packaging of pickles, pickled cucumber, and salt olive in processing sector, and the weaving of carpet (silk and decorate), Kilim, and Gabbeh, and traditional spinning in handicraft sector are the prioritized home businesses in Abdanan Township.

Table 3
Home Businesses Priority in Abdanan Township.

Sector	Home businesses in priority	Mean
Agricultural	Lamb and kid husbandry	7.2
	Local chicken husbandry	6.2
	Lamb finishing	5.8
	Pickles, pickled cucumber, and salt olive production	8.4
Processing industries	Cereals packaging	8.3
	Animal fat production and packaging	7.2
	Pastes and jams production	7.1
	Bakery	6.2
Handicraft industries	Carpet (silk, decorative), Kilim and Gabeh weaving	8.6
	Traditional spinning	8.4
	Djadjim weaving	6.3

Table 4
Home Businesses Priority in Darreh Shahr Township.

Sector	Home businesses in priority	Mean
Agricultural	Lamb and kid husbandry	8.9
	Local goose and turkey husbandry	6.7
	Quail husbandry	6.5
	Local chicken husbandry	6.0
Processing industries	Pickles, pickled cucumber, and salt olive production	8.4
	Pastes and jams production	8.1
	Medicinal herbs packaging	7.9
	Cereals packaging	7.3
	Animal fat production and packaging	6.8
Handicraft industries	Processing and package of the germs of wheat, vetch, lentil, ...	6.5
	Carpet (silk, decorative), Kilim and Gabeh weaving	7.1
	Traditional spinning	6.5
	Toy assembly	6.2

Table 5
Home Businesses Priority in Dehloran Township.

Sector	Home businesses in priority	Mean
Agricultural	Sheep and goat husbandry	9.7
	Local chicken husbandry	9.6
	Lamb and kid finishing	9.5
	Pastes and jams production	7.6
	Date packaging	7.3
Processing industries	Lump sugar production	6.7
	Noodle production	6.6
	Local candies production and packaging	6.3
	Processing and packaging of grains germs and bran	6.2
	Hand-made leather artifacts	8.5
Handicraft industries	Prayer rug weaving	8.3
	Basket weaving	7.6
	Decorative box production	7.2
	Wood mosaic	6.0

Home Businesses for Darreh Shahr Township

Results for superior home businesses for Darreh Shahr Township in accordance with its attributes and facilities show that lamb and kid husbandry in agricultural sector, the production and packaging of pickles, pickled cucumber, and salt olive in processing sector and the weaving of carpet (silk and decorative) in handicraft sector are the important businesses (Table 4).

Home Businesses for Dehloran Township

The sorting of priorities for home businesses proposed for Dehloran Township is shown in Table 5. It shows that sheep and goat husbandry in agriculture sector, the production of sauces, pastes and jams in processing sector, and hand-made leather textile in handicraft sector had higher ranks and so, they can be developed in this Township.

Home Businesses for Chardavol Township

Table 6 reveals that the superior businesses include sheep and goat husbandry, animal fat production and packaging, and carpet weaving in agricultural, processing and handicraft sec-

tors in Chardavol Township, respectively. Thus, they need to be implemented and invested on.

Home Businesses for Sirvan Township

Results about priority home businesses for Sirvan Township showed that such businesses as lamb husbandry in agriculture sector, the production of pickles, pastes, and jams in processing industries, and the weaving of Djadjim, Giveh, and Moaj in handicraft sector are of higher importance (Table 7).

Home Businesses for Malekshahi Township

Table 8 presents the top priorities of home businesses for Malekshahi Township in agricultural, processing and handicraft sectors. Accordingly, such businesses as sheep and goat husbandry in agricultural sector, the packaging of cereals in processing sector, and the weaving of carpet (silk and decorative) in handicraft sector are in priority.

Home Businesses for Mehran Township

As Table 9 shows, local chicken husbandry, sauces, pastes, and jams production, and carpet weaving are options in priority for implementation and investment in Mehran Township.

Home Business Opportunities for ... / Moradnezhadi & Vahedi.

Table 6
Home businesses priority in Chardavol Township.

Sector	Home businesses in priority	Mean
Agricultural	Sheep and goat husbandry	9.4
	Local chicken husbandry	9.4
	Lamb finishing	8.6
	Honey bee husbandry	7.2
	Turkey husbandry	6.5
	Edible mushroom production	6.5
	Animal fact production and packaging	7.5
Processing industries	Medicinal herbs packaging	6.8
	Lump sugar production	6.7
	Local egg packaging	5.6
	Edible mushroom production, collection, and packaging	5.5
	Rug weaving	6.8
Handicraft industries	Local attire production	5.7
	Kilim weaving	5.4
	Felt weaving	5.2
	Djadjim weaving	5.1

Table 7
Home Businesses Priority in Chardavol Township.

Sector	Home businesses in priority	Mean
Agricultural	Lamb finishing	9.9
	Local chicken husbandry	9.7
	Local goose and turkey husbandry	9.7
	Damask rose cultivation	9.4
	Honey bee husbandry	8.7
	Edible mushroom production	6.7
Processing industries	Pickles, pastes and jams production	8.7
	Animal fact production and packaging	7.1
	Dried fruit production and packaging	6.8
	Rice flour packaging	6.5
	Cereals packaging	6.2
Handicraft industries	Herbal essential oil extraction	5.4
	Djadjim, Giveh and Moaj weaving	8.5
	Felt weaving	7.9
	Local attire production	7.3
	Rug weaving	6.6

Home Business Opportunities for ... / **Moradnezhadi & Vahedi.**

Table 8
Home businesses priority in Malekshahi Township.

Sector	Home businesses in priority	Mean
Agricultural	Sheep and goat husbandry	10.0
	Local chicken husbandry	10.0
	Honey bee husbandry	9.9
	Lamb and kid finishing	7.9
	Goose and turkey husbandry	6.4
	Cereals packaging	8.5
Processing industries	Animal fat production and packaging	8.2
	Pastes and jams production	8.0
	Medicinal herbs packaging	7.7
	Pickles production and packaging	7.4
Handicraft industries	Carpet (silk and decorative), Kilim, Djadjim and Giveh weaving	7.1
	Felt weaving	6.4
	Moaj weaving	6.1
	Local attire production	5.5

Table 9
Home businesses priority in Mehran Township.

Sector	Home businesses in priority	Mean
Agricultural	Local chicken husbandry	10.0
	Lamb and kid finishing	9.8
	Damask rose cultivation	9.5
	Turkey husbandry	9.1
Processing industries	Pastes and jams production	9.6
	Medicinal herbs packaging	9.3
	Lump sugar production	8.4
	Candy production	7.9
	Olive, sesame and soybean oil production	6.2
	Bakery	5.3
Handicraft industries	Rug, Djadjim, prayer's rug and Kilim weaving	7.8
	Felt weaving	7.3
	Basket weaving	6.8
	Painting on pottery	6.1
	Pottery	5.7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to its geographical location, Ilam province is a four-season province, and each city has many potentials for the production of various agricultural products due to its geographical location and climate. The economy of Ilam province is based on agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry. Therefore, the development of agricultural businesses is a necessity. Results of the study on identifying home businesses appropriate for rural areas of Ilam Province shows that agricultural home businesses are of higher priority in rural areas of all cities in this province. This is in agreement with [Alikhani \(2014\)](#) and [Ahmadi \(2014\)](#). These findings reveal the relative advantage of rural areas of the province in agricultural sector. So, the Jihad-e Agriculture Organization is recommended to give permit for the initiation of the agricultural businesses reported as the priorities. Also, the Training and Extension Service of the Jihad-e Agriculture Organization should focus on preparing appropriate training packages for these businesses and on taking extension and training actions for these businesses.

Also, it was found that a lot of prioritized home businesses are in handicraft sector, which is consistent with [Ahmadi \(2014\)](#). Therefore, it is suggested to the Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Office of Ilam Province to design a comprehensive plan for the launch and support of these businesses and to give solutions for the impediments to facilitate their launch.

The Employment and Investment Workgroup in this province should prioritize these businesses and should require banks and financial institutions of the province to prioritize these businesses in loan granting. Also, it should be tried to simplify the regulations for giving loans to people who are going to launch a home business in rural areas.

The Technical and Vocational Training Offices in different cities of the province are recommended to hold training workshops for the home businesses identified for the respective township, so that most training courses in each township should be held for home busi-

nesses appropriate for that township.

The Entrepreneurship and Hope Fund should have a special program for giving loans to home businesses identified as appropriate for each township.

The Employment and Investment Workgroup in the province should cooperate with home business-related organizations and executives to design a plan for marketing the products of the home businesses.

Holding exhibitions at city, province, and regional level to offer and sale the products of home businesses should be in the agenda of the relevant governmental organizations. It is recommended to recognize competitive goods of rural home businesses in order to help them being offered in domestic exhibitions. Also, given that the Iraqi market is near Ilam Province, the province governor should cooperate with commerce chamber of the province to hold goods exhibitions in different provinces of Iraq.

Given the potential role of home businesses in generating wealth and increasing employment rate in rural areas, it is recommended to introduce the home businesses that have a relative advantage to the students in universities and higher education centers in order to motivate students, especially those from rural areas, to launch similar businesses. The introduction of successful home businesses and lecture by those who run successful home businesses can encourage students.

The provincial IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting) is recommended to introduce the businesses that have a relative advantage to different cities and the successful entrepreneurs who have launched home businesses in rural areas. Since studies show the effectiveness of radio programs in rural areas, it is suggested to produce radio programs for the development and extension of home businesses in rural areas.

Given the potential role of entrepreneurship consulting centers in the development of home businesses and in the guidance of villagers to run appropriate businesses, the Cooperative, Labor and Social Welfare Organization is recommended to develop similar centers.

Since insurance can motivate villagers to start home businesses, the Employment and Investment Workgroup in the province is recommended to find legal solutions for the insurance coverage of villagers and people who run home businesses in rural areas.

Because the initiation and development of some home businesses may need access to raw materials that are difficult to be procured by villagers, it is recommended to launch co-operatives and supportive businesses in each Township to provide home businesses with the required raw material.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors contributed to the development of different section of the paper.

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