



The Quarterly Journal of  
*The History of Village and Rural Settlement in  
Iran and Islam*

Online Issn: 3060- 6012

Vol. 2, No. 4, Winter 2025



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## Nasrabad, Kashan, and its Connection with the Ghaffari Family during the Qajar Era

Seyed Hossein Chakeri Badi<sup>1</sup>, Seyed Abolfazl Razavi<sup>2\*</sup>, Amir Teimour Rafiei<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>- PhD Student in History, Department of History, Maha.c. Islamic Azad University, Mahallat, Iran. [\\_amirchakeri52@gmail.com](mailto:_amirchakeri52@gmail.com)

<sup>2\*</sup>- Associate Professor, Department of History, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran.

[abolfazlrazavi@khu.ac.ir](mailto:abolfazlrazavi@khu.ac.ir)

<sup>3</sup>- Assistant Professor, Department of History, Maha.c. Islamic Azad University, Mahallat, Iran.

[amirteymourrafiei@yahoo.com](mailto:amirteymourrafiei@yahoo.com)

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<b>Article type:</b> <b>Research Article</b>	Nasrabad is a historic village located strategically between Kashan and Qom, known for its fertile agricultural lands. The region is home to the ruins of the "White Castle" and "Daram," which locals associate with Pharaonic remains, tracing their history back to ancient times. Due to its geographical location, Nasrabad has long been a site of interest and historical significance. During the Qajar era, the Ghaffari family, one of the most powerful families in Kashan, owned vast estates in Nasrabad and surrounding farmlands. This study explores the role of the Ghaffari family in landownership and agricultural development in the region. Research based on library documents and field studies reveals that the Ghaffari family played a significant role in expanding agriculture by managing farmland, constructing qanats, establishing farms, and utilizing mountainous water resources. Their efforts contributed to the economic prosperity of Nasrabad and shaped the agricultural structure of the region. The study examines the theory of landownership and agriculture in Iran, which is crucial for understanding the social and economic changes in Nasrabad during the Qajar period. In this context, the Ghaffari family's investments in irrigation projects, particularly qanats and water supply infrastructure, greatly increased agricultural production. These developments also created economic networks, leading to a lasting impact on the social and economic life of Nasrabad, strengthening its regional economy and influencing its transformation over time
<b>Received:</b> <b>12/05/2025</b>	
<b>Accepted:</b> <b>30/07/2025</b>	
	<b>Keywords:</b> Kashan, Nasrabad, Ghaffari family, Amin al-Dawlah, Sefid Shahr.

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DOI: 10.30479/hvri.2025.22057.1073



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**Publisher:** Imam Khomeini International University

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## **Introduction**

Nasrabad, a historic village on the route between Kashan and Qom, has long played a key role in supplying agricultural products to the region due to its strategic location and fertile soil. Evidence such as the ruins of “Qaleh Sefid” and “Doram” dates this area back to ancient times. Its position along the Tehran–Kashan route made Nasrabad an important caravan station during the Safavid and Qajar eras. In the Qajar period, concurrent with the economic boom of Kashan, the influential Ghaffari family acquired vast estates in Nasrabad. By undertaking irrigation projects and building qanats, they expanded the farmlands and transformed Nasrabad’s economy into a major agricultural hub serving the industrial city of Kashan. This illustrates how the political and economic influence of aristocratic families could bring profound changes to rural livelihoods, with Nasrabad serving as a prime example of this trend in Qajar Iran.

## **Materials & Method**

This study employs a descriptive–analytical approach, using library sources, field studies, and historical documents (including *Tarikh-e Kashan* by Kalantar Zarrabi, *the memoirs of Mohammad-Ali Ghaffari*, and *Rijal of the Qajar Era* by Sa’adat-Noori). The collected data were analyzed from a historical perspective in four main categories: Nasrabad’s geography and natural setting, the background and status of the Ghaffari family, their agricultural and irrigation projects, and the resulting socio-economic impacts.

## **Discussion**

### **1. Geographical Setting and Agricultural Potential of Nasrabad**

Nasrabad lies on the fertile plains northeast of Kashan, on the edge of the central desert. It enjoys early springs, rich soil, and abundant underground water. Numerous qanats, cotton fields, pomegranate and melon orchards, and proximity to trade routes made Nasrabad a major supplier of fruits and vegetables to Kashan. In the Safavid era, Shah Abbas ordered the construction of Nasrabad Caravanserai, and during the Qajar period, the village became the first stop on the Kashan–Tehran route.

### **2. The Ghaffari Family and Their Political-Economic Ascent**

The Ghaffaris were prominent Shi’a scholars and judges in Kashan who played important religious and political roles since the Safavid era. In the Qajar era, Farrokh Khan Amin al-Doleh, one of the family’s most notable figures, gained great influence through his court career and diplomatic missions to Europe. Upon returning, he took control of Kashan and, alongside urban development, acquired extensive estates in the Nasrabad plains. The family used their

political and financial power to impose centralized and innovative management over their Nasrabad properties, gradually turning the area into an agricultural hub.

### 3. **Irrigation and Agricultural Projects of the Ghaffaris**

Historical documents and the memoirs of Mohammad-Ali Ghaffari show that the main driver of Nasrabad's prosperity during this era was the Ghaffari family's numerous irrigation projects, especially under Mohammad-Ali Ghaffari's management. These infrastructural works turned barren lands around Qaleh Sefid and the nearby plains into fertile farms, greatly increasing production. The abundant water of the Aminabad Qanat, in particular, enhanced the quality of local produce, with Nasrabad melons even reaching Naser al-Din Shah's royal court.

### 4. **Economic and Social Impacts**

Agricultural development had widespread effects:

- Increased agricultural production and export of goods to Kashan and other cities;
- Job creation and growth of the local market;
- Formation of centralized landownership and economic networks tied to the Ghaffaris;
- Improved rural livelihoods and population growth in Nasrabad;
- Strengthening the social status and local influence of the Ghaffari family.

This shows that Nasrabad's agricultural development was directly linked to Kashan's economic growth and driven by the Ghaffaris' capitalist-style management.

## **Results and Conclusion**

This study reveals that the Ghaffari family—particularly Farrokh Khan Amin al-Doleh and Mohammad-Ali Ghaffari—played a central role in Nasrabad's prosperity during the Qajar era through investments in water resources and agricultural infrastructure. Constructing new qanats, reviving old installations, and establishing extensive farmlands increased production, boosted the economy, and transformed the region's social structure. These developments exemplify how aristocratic families shaped local economies in Iran prior to the Industrial Revolution. The results show that Nasrabad's growth was inseparable from Kashan's economic boom, and that the Ghaffaris leveraged Kashan's food demands to turn Nasrabad into an agricultural center.

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