

## **Tourism industry roles in rural environmental sustainability (Case study: Neyshabour city, Iran)**

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**Abstract:** Rural tourism can pave the way for rural areas' development as a type of tourism. The negative consequences of tourism in these areas have led to destruction of the environment. This survey research has aimed to recognize the negative consequences of tourists' presence in Neyshabour rural environment and has had a sample of 361 villagers and 32 experts. The findings suggest that the threshold of environmental vulnerability of rural areas with tourist attraction is high and the tourists' presence has negative consequences such as water and soil pollution, farming and gardening land degradation, change of land use, wildlife damage and litter accumulation. The suggestions presented in the paper can reduce the negative impacts of tourism on the rural environment.

**Index Terms:** Rural Tourism, Environment, Tourism, Neyshabour

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### **I. Introduction**

The development of tourism as an economic activity has strong effects on strengthening the economic bases of societies and the role of tourism as a new source of employment, income, currency and strengthening the infrastructure and peace and understanding between nations, has been confirmed in numerous studies (Kazemi, 1387: 79). Rural tourism generates economic growth, diversification and stability in employment, dynamic Commerce and Industry, opportunities for revenue growth as multiple activities, new markets for agricultural products and expansion of the regional economy (Sharply, 2002:332).

One of the current issues is preserving the environment. An environmental disaster not only takes peace and security away from human life, but also catches threatens human existence, thus the environmental debate in the scientific and political circles is the most serious and important debate of the day (Valaei, 1384: 24). Tourism planners' difficult task is to minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and the clutter it has created for local communities and trust the benefits of tourism and keep the tourists, especially those who are staying for short and long term holiday, enthusiastic (Sharply, 1380: 165). This paper seeks to identify the negative consequences of the development of rural tourism and rural environmental degradation, through the relationship between them.2 Procedure for Paper Submission.

The goals of this research are:

- Studying the relationship between tourism development in rural and urban environments in Neyshabour
- Finding out the negative environmental effects caused by the presence of tourists in rural areas of Neyshabour

Therefore, this study tried to answer the following questions:

- What is the relationship between tourism development and the rural environment in Neyshabour?
- What are the negative environmental consequences resulting from the presence of tourists in rural areas of Neyshabour?

The Hypothesis of this study is:

There is a significant relationship between tourism development and rural environmental degradation in Neyshabour.

Nowadays, Tourism industry is considered as one of the most profitable and intensively developing branches of the world economy in the area of services. This is confirmed by the fact that the share of tourism is about 10% of the world's gross national income. Development of tourism plays an important role in social and physical activities. World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) announced that tourism industry grows up and it will get about 25% of worlds gross national income (UNWTO, 2009).

According to UNWTO (2009) economic importance of tourism and travel, increasing the vast number of passengers continues 25 million people between the years 1950 to 1.18 billion in 2010. UNWTO (2009) fo-recasted that the numbers of tourist arrivals continue to growth and on 2020 will 16 be 1.6 billion passengers a year. In the view of tourism potential and opportunities to contribute to the attractiveness of country for the tourists, according to UNWTO (2009), Iran is ranked as one of the 10 top countries in the world in term of tour-

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ism attractions but its tourism receipts industry is ranked 77th and the number of international tourists arrivals who have traveled to Iran, was ranked as place 70th (UNWTO, 2009), this evidence shows that in current time Iran's tourist industry is not working with full capacity. Iran is a four season country whole of a year, tourists can travel from hottest place in the world to a very cold place by just a 45 minutes flight (Karimi, 2009).

Tourism is recognized as one of the key sectors of development in all countries and a major source of income, jobs and wealth creation. It also plays a wider role in promoting the image and international perception of a country externally as well as influencing complementary domestic policies. This range of influence and importance creates challenges in measuring competitiveness in tourism.

Understanding country competitiveness in tourism is a major consideration for policy makers and a major challenge for professionals in providing evidence to inform decision making. Various indicators have been developed by different organizations over the years to address particular aspects of competitiveness but there has remained a lack of an overall measurement framework for competitiveness in tourism for the use of governments. The current work by member and partner countries seeks to address this gap and make a positive contribution to the practical measurement of competitiveness.

The purpose of this research is, studying tourism indicators at LORESTAN province in Iran. Khoram abad is the center of Lorestan province.

## **II. Theoretical Bases**

Rural tourism as a social and recreational activity emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century in England and Europe. Before that rural areas were used for recreational activities too, but participation in recreational activities was limited to the higher levels of the society (Qaderi, 114: 1382). Villages have always been one of the tourist destinations for local people's journey. Many rural areas attract much of the urban population because of the fun environment on the weekends or the quarterly and annual vacations (Moti'ee Lange-roudi, 1375: 87). Though tourism industry has advantages for the tourist-attractive countries, like many other subjects, it has negative effects too. All over the world all governments are trying to minimize the negative effects and maximize the advantages through suitable planning (Kargar, 1388: 16). Tourism and the environment are mutually dependent on each other. Physical environment (natural and human-made) shapes many attractions and the development of tourism can have positive and negative effects on the environment. So the development and management of tourism should be compatible with the environment not result in a quality drop. That is a fundamental factor in achieving sustainable development (Ranjbarian, Zahedi, 1379: 75-74).

Thus, paying attention to sustainable tourism can control the negative consequences of tourism development.

Goals as a model for sustainable tourism development in the area include the following:

Modifying the quality of life of the host society

Providing quality experiences for the visitors

Preservation of the environment that both the host community and visitors depend on (Sinai, 135,1375)

## **III. Literature Review**

### **3.1. Tourism definition**

Up to now tourism has been under study and discussion from view of different science like economics, sociology, and geography and based on any views has raised various definitions that Rezvani (1996) accumulates the collection of them under title as geography and tourism industry. For example Artobruman has defined tourism the following: "tourism contains travels collection that it performs due to rest, fun, experience and other vocational activities or due to take part in the specific ceremonies and it is temporary and passing that tourist don't exist in her/himself address. It is clear that persons, who perform permanent vocational travel between her/himself address and place of work, don't include to this definition" ( Rezvani , 1996 ) .

From view of sociology, tourism is a relations collection that person creates with others in her/himself temporary address. According to Honziker-krapph, tourism is relation collection that it creates from travel and residence of one nonnative person without having permanent address and job. The definition was acceptable by international council of science experts in tourism for times. According to Morgan Rout, tourism in literal meaning is travel of persons that go away from themselves address temporary until they granted vital, cultural and personal needs in form of a consumer of economic and cultural goods. In competitions that tourism international union held to gain general definition for tourism, the following definition is selected. According to this definition "tourism is collection of changing place of persons and actions that conclude from it. The changing caused by come true demands that they force person to movement and there are potentially in any person by different intensity and weakness.

Today tourism phenomena is more than simple phenomena of visit and return visit and obtain specific importance that it is called as a huge, producer and main industry. In many advanced countries and some of countries exist many attractions of historical, cultural, natural and facilities of tourism attracted (Tulaii, 2007).

The great portion of nation income supplies with tourism development. It isn't UN due that most of countries, especially countries that have more historical, cultural and natural attractions, try to obtain more options in absorption of different countries tourists and get foreign exchange income for themselves by creating and development of necessary touristic facilities.

On the other hand, tourist is foreign person for travel, tourism, and sports. The residence is not less than 24 hours and not more than 2 months. According to a Committee on 22 January 1937, the following definition for tourists can be justified: a person who travels to a country for 24 hours or more and usually has the right to stay there (Moradi, 2007: 9 -14).

### **3.2. Classification of Tourism**

Classification of tourism is the important tool to understand the capacity of the country according to get the competitive advantages by focusing in some types of them. According to World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 1993 defined the word of tourism as the following: "travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four (24) hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited."

United Nations In 1994 classified three forms of tourism in its Recommendations on Tourism Statistics:

- Domestic tourism, which involving residents of a given country traveling only within this Country.
- Inbound tourism, involving non-residents of a given country that traveling within this country.
- Outbound tourism, which involving residents of a country traveling to the other countries.

In June 1991, the International conference held by organizing the World Tourism Organization and government of Canada about the travel and tourism statistics in Ottawa. Their defining words, phrases and their classification decisions were taken which are as below:

- Tourism, is the things or acts that the person who travelled doing in a place outside of his/her normal environment, the traveling take long not more than a year and its purpose is to fun, business or other activities.
- Traveler or tourist (overnight visitor) is someone who spent at least a night in public or private residence at the site visit.
- Same day visitor or one day tourist is someone who is staying in a place but not for the night.
- Based on the above classification, the governments must focus their forces to promote international tourism by making their strategies base on their capacity to attract travelers.

### **3.3. History of tourism industry in Iran**

Tourism shaped in Iran from the second decade of present century and the first time in 1994 year was established office named "attraction of foreign visitors and publicities office" in interior ministry and was assigned to this office do works related to tourism. "Iran tourism association" established for supplying comfort and facilitating travel of tourists in this same year. The association, that record officially in MAY /1939 year, organized different tour for tourists visit. Attraction of visitors office was changed its name to "tourism supreme council" in September of 1942 year. Tourism supreme council was changed to tourism affairs office and was centered in the interior ministry in 1333 year. From the office actions during 1955-1959 years, can indicate to doing some services of sub structural and compilation of laws and rules related to tourism as "entry law and residence of foreign national".

An organization named "attraction of visitors organization" depended on premiership was established on April /1964. The organization main purpose was presentation of country back ground, encouragement of interior and foreign tourists to traveled and visited ancient relics and natural views and created necessary concentration and coordination in affaires. Attraction visitors organization was combined on information ministry and made new ministry named "information and tourism ministry" in Jun /1975. To following of Islamic revolution victory, information and tourism ministry at firs changed name to ministry of national guidance and then to ministry of Islamic guidance and tourism assistance district of this ministry undertook tourism affairs supervision. Iranology and tourism office established for planning of tourism industry, educating of tourism charges, classification, supervision and evaluation of plants, establishment of international relationship with institutions and organs of foreign tourism and take part in meetings, tourism exhibitions and international gatherings. After a while this office according to ratified in 21/December /1980 of Islamic revolution council was changed its name to "organization of Iranology and tourism centers" that was made by combining four state companies as plants stocks of Iran tourism company, stocks of Iran visiting company, stocks of Iran homes centers company and stocks company of tourism centers tourism for winter sports (Moddaresi, 2000). Despite the fact that government hadn't clearly politic related to tourism industry until first developing plan and also in the private district due to didn't clear politics and laws, there wasn't tendency to make resident and reception centers and plants; but in the course of politics of first, second and third developing plans, tourism district is benefited from special position in planning country and people up to become interested in the investment within making and

developing resident and reception plants.

#### IV. Research Method

This research is a survey based on questionnaires. Development of rural tourism considered as the independent variable and its negative effects on the environment is the dependent variable in this study. The sample included the two groups of 32 experts and 361 villagers. Data analysis was done through descriptive statistics such as mean and statistical analysis methods such as one-sample T-test and correlation.

The study area is Neyshabour which according to The Last Country Divisions of Iran belongs to Khorasan Razavi and the city itself Includes 4 districts, 7 cities and 13 towns And 975 villages. The City is 14/6763 Km Square wide whose districts are: The central section whose center is NEYSHABOUR, the ZEBARKHAN section whose center is QADAMGAAH, The SARVELAYAT section whose center is CHEKENEH and MIANJOLGEH Section section whose center is ESHGH ABAD. (Iran statistics CENTER: 1390). 28 villages were identified as tourist attractions from among which 14 were studied as the sample: BOUJAN, BAQI, SHADMEHRAK/MEHRAABAAD, MIRAABAAD, FOUSHANJAN, DIZBAAD OLIYA, GERINEH, BOUJMEHRAN, ES-HAAGHAABAAD, FADISHEH, KALEYDAR, BARZENON, BARFRIZ and GOLBOOYE PAEEN.

#### V. Data Analysis

##### A - Impacts of tourism development in rural environment

Using one-sample test T Negative environmental impacts were assessed according to the villagers' views. According to Table 1 the results show:

Given that H1 In this research is the development of tourism in rural areas has led to water pollution, with a significant level of 0.000, H0 hypothesis was rejected. So it can be said that the presence of tourists has led to water pollution in rural areas of Neyshabour. The average (3.16) which is greater than the median (3) also confirms this point. Findings also suggest the presence of tourists has caused soil pollution, waste accumulation, and historical places destruction to some extent, damage to crops and gardens, harm to wildlife, sound pollution, and traffic. Change of land use for farming and gardening to Tourist Places has also been approved. But the data obtained does not confirm the tourists' impact on air pollution and visual pollution.

**Table 1- Results of Single sample T-Test, tourism impact on rural environmental variables**

Items	Sample size	T Amount	Degrees of freedom	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean	Deviation from the mean
Water pollution (surface and groundwater)	361	2.560	360	0.000	3.16	0.96
Soil pollution	361	2.879	360	0.000	3.3	0.86
Air pollution	361	4.352-	360	0.615	2.1	0.75
Accumulation of rubbish	361	5.231	360	0.000	3.74	1.02
Destruction of historical and architectural	361	1.158	360	0.015	2.9	0.89
Damage to crops and gardens	361	5.011	360	0.000	3.18	0.88
Damage to wildlife	361	4.113-	360	0.010	2.90	0.87
Switch arable land and gardens	361	8.564	360	0.000	3.4	0.89
Sound pollution	361	6.211	360	0.000	3.06	0.83
Visual pollution	361	0.257	360	0.598	2.33	1.01
Traffic	361	3.659	360	0.000	3.04	0.89

##### B - The relationship between tourism development and rural environment degradation

In order to assess the relationship between tourism development and environmental degradation with respect to the scaling parameters (distance - distance), the Pearson correlation was used. In this test Sig = 0.000 and since this figure is smaller than the desired consistency (01/0) H0 is Rejected and the research hypothesis is confirmed. Coefficient is 517/0. Hence, it is concluded that the development of rural tourism in Neyshabour creates negative impacts on the environment. Table 2 shows the results of this test.

**Table 2- Pearson's test to evaluate the relationship between tourism development and the environment from the perspective of the villagers**

Type of test	Number of	The correlation coefficient	Significance Level	Desired consistency
Pearson	361	517/0	0.000	01/0

Source: author's calculations

In this study the simple linear regression analysis was also used to analyze the variables rural tourism development and environmental degradation.

Table 3 shows Regression coefficients of the variables rural tourism development and environmental degradation. Correlation coefficient between these two variables is 517/0 and has a very high significance level (0.000 = p), and since this is a positive figure it indicates a direct relationship between these two variables. It means that the by the development of rural tourism, the negative consequences of environmental degradation in rural areas also increases. The coefficient of determination (R Square = 0.26 ) shows that the effect of the independent variable, rural tourism development, on Environmental Degradation is 26 percent.

**Table 3- regression analysis of the variable development of rural tourism on environmental degradation from the perspective of the villagers**

Significance level	Adjusted coefficient of determination	R2	The correlation coefficient (R2)
0.000	262/0	267/0	517/0

Source: author's calculations

Also to test the hypothesis according to expert opinions in Table 4, correlation coefficient between tourism development and environmental degradation is 576/0, and significance level of 0.000; since the significance level is smaller than the error rate 01/0, so it can be said with 0/99 of certainty that there is a direct correlation between the independent variable tourism development and the dependent variable, environmental degradation and it has led to an increase of the rural environment degradation.

**Table 4- Pearson correlation to investigate the development of tourism and the environment based on experts' opinions**

Type of test	Number of	The correlation coefficient	Significance Level	Desired consistency
Pearson	32	576/0	0.000	01/0

Source: author's calculations

Table 5 shows Regression coefficients of variables for rural tourism development and environmental degradation based on expert opinion. Since the correlation coefficient between these two variables is 576/0 and it has a high significance level (0/000) a direct relationship between the two variables exists. As rural tourism develops, the negative consequences of environmental degradation in rural areas also increase. According to the coefficient of determination (R Square) is 33/0 and it confirms that the effect of independent variable, rural tourism development, on environmental degradation is 33 percent.

**Table 5- regression analysis of the Variable development of rural tourism on environment degradation based on experts' opinions**

Significance level	Adjusted coefficient of determination		The correlation coefficient (R)
0.000	330/0	331/0	576/0

Source: author's calculations

## VI. Conclusions And Suggestions

**The results obtained in this study show that:**

- A: The environmental vulnerability in most areas is very high.
- B: tourists' presence in rural areas of Neyshabour has led to soil degradation, water pollution, destruction of historical sites, generating traffic at certain times, and the accumulation of waste.
- C: With the rural tourism development environmental degradation in rural areas has also increased in Neyshabour.
- D: Relevant Departments' negligence, villagers' and tourists' little awareness and lack of education are among the main causes of the negative impacts of tourism on the environment.

E: relevant departments more attention to areas of rural tourism, justifying the villagers, advertising and training courses for Environment Protection, getting the help of NGOs in protecting the environment, establishing annual funds for providing infrastructure and providing a set of basic amenities for tourists could be steps towards improving the rural environment.

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