

The Study of Tourism Effects in Rural Development and the Villagers' Attitude Subject to Rural Tourism Results (Case Study of Ghezghanchay Rural District in Firoozkooh City)

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Abstract: Tourism as one of the spreading bases and economic, social and cultural development is very important in all populations, especially in developing ones. Rural tourism as a powerful activity in villages is a factor to empower the rural capabilities, prevent the migration from village to city and promote the life level of villagers. The aim of this research is to investigate and study economic, social and bioenvironmental effects of tourism and villagers' attitude respect to rural tourism outcome in rural district Ghezghanchay of Firoozkooh city. The methodology of this research has been analytical -descriptive and data collection has done in two ways, field and library studies. In field study, the questionnaire prepared and completed. The statistic populations of this research are local residents in region villages. The sample volume has been selected by Cochran method based on the number of statistic populations in any village and then the prepared questionnaire completed separately and randomly in any village. Finally, the software SPSS was used for data analysis. The results showed that there is a significant relation between economic, social, cultural development and tourism. This significance percentage is 90%. Also, it was specified that there is a significant relationship between the native people behavior and tourist welcome by Pearson test. Of course, in some cases the tourism has bad effects on region. Finally, solutions are provided to improve the tourism situations. [M. Rahmani, T. Karimian, M. Hajilo, B. Hajari. **The Study of Tourism Effects in Rural Development and the Villagers' Attitude Subject to Rural Tourism Results (Case Study of Ghezghanchay Rural District in Firoozkooh City)**. *Life Sci J* 2013;10(5s):528-533] (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 93

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1. Introduction

According to the role played by tourism in economic, social, cultural development, it can be considered as one of the best solutions in rural development in which by empowering the village, the migration to city will be decreased and the production increased. Rural tourism is one of the attractive parts of tourism and its rapid development can be followed from 1950 up to now and it has prospered with the traditional activity such as outdoor leisure in the country and mountain climbing. Lately, it has been showed that rural tourism can be used as catalyst for social and economic development and renovation [2 and 6]. In rural regions, because of agricultural economy dominance and its vulnerability, attention to other developmental activities such as tourism as a complement can guarantee rural life improvement. Policy makers and planners consider the tourism as an industry that creates the economic and social sustainability for rural communities. Many think the tourism development is a solution for many problems that rural regions are involved in so it should be a requirement for development of rural regions. Among these, Iran with weather varieties, natural, cultural and climatic attractions and also varieties of local

customs is able to identify strengths and weaknesses of rural tourism development by assessment and validation of tourism position. Nowadays, tourism as an industry is of economic sectors with very high growth in the world, especially in developing countries [8].

In addition, one of the specific strategies of rural development is to log in the exchanges, make employment and support of multidimensional growth [7]. It should be noted that this industry has advantages and disadvantages like the others and if its development is undertaken inaccurately, it can impose harmful outcomes for host community. Successful formation and execution of tourism development policy should be based on mobilizing human resources, potentials, physical resources and other ones. These resources direct the tourism policy and if they were insufficient, the tourism program wouldn't be successful [9]. It is important, in spite of increasing government attention to tourism development especially in rural regions and enormous expenditures, there has been little attention devoted to residents' supportive attitude toward tourism development. However, the results [10] have shown in last years that reluctance and hostility of residents can make negative effects on tourists.

Therefore, the need for actions is sensed to remove differences between social values and tourism development. Comprehensive planning can help investigate potential resources of tourism development and society as well as environmental costs.

Ghezghanchay rural district located in Firoozkooh city with natural attractions such as forest, waterfalls and various springs has always attracted domestic tourists. Developing tourism flows accompanied by no efficient management and planning has made positive and negative environmental, social and economic effects in the area. This study has analyzed social and economic effects of tourism development in rural regions including Lasor, Shadmahan, Ahanz in Ghezghanchay rural district, Firoozkooh city and seeks to answer some questions: what are the positive economic effects resulted from rural tourism development?; what is the relationship between the tourism development level or its efficiency with positive economic effects?

Considering the mentioned questions, the study hypotheses are as follows:

1. The tourism can smooth rural socioeconomic development in Lazor, Shadmahan and Ahanz villages.
2. There is a relationship between social interaction and behaviour of villagers with tourists.

2. Literature review and basic theories

Rural tourism is one of different types of tourism and includes different activities and types of tourism, in rural regions and proximities. It is consisted of values as well as different effects on natural or human environment [16].

Also, rural tourism is defined as a kind of outdoor travel to the counties and shorelines [18]. Some believe that it is a kind of activity in commercial- recreational places of village which provides some services for tourists [17]. Classically speaking, it is a kind of tourism activity that makes extra income for those whose main business is in agriculture and industry [19].

Rural Tourism Conference (2006) [20 and 21] considers the rural tourism consisted of different types of tourism along with welfare facilities and services in rural regions which makes possible to take advantages of natural resources and attractions beside participation in rural life (working on farm and agriculture). In addition, it should be accepted that the rural tourism is differentiated from the other types of tourism by specific characteristics such as rural activities and situation. So, the development of tourism in rural regions, on one hand, can play an important role to diversify the economy of village communities and smooth rural sustainable

development and on the other hand, it is regarded as a stimulant factor for national economy growth (e.g. via overcoming underdevelopment and improvement of life standards [3].

Increasing income level and leisure time, changing new attitudes toward life concepts and necessity for providing minimum life standards require increasingly take much attentions into the tourism [2]. Therefore, many countries around the world have found the role and importance of tourism as an income and employment resource. As a result, many of them have developed their relations to utilize partial advantages of this industry. Nowadays, multilateral relations development has become important in interstate, state and regional level, according to agreements in the form of strategic cooperation for tourism development in which the aim is to take advantages of tourism market [13].

Tourism is known as one of active economic sectors in different regions and places in the world, increasing development of which can create favourable economic and social through attracting investments and developing infrastructures as well as provide the required facilities for the residents and tourists.

Collectively, rural tourism is an activity consisted of visits to rural regions with tourism attractions including rural architecture and texture, art, culture history, customs, rural nature and environment, handicrafts, farm tourism, green tourism and generally any life attractions and rural environment which can no longer be found in urban regions. Table 1 shows the number of tourism attractions in the country and its villages according to census reports (2007) [4].

Table 1: ICHTO 2007 [1]

Tourism attractions	Total number (in the country)	Total number (in the villages)	%
Museums	205	7	3.41
Monuments	12485	7606	60.92
Recreational units	3026	105	3.46
Sport and recreational residences	221	13	5.88
Mosques	57051	41362	72.5
Religious (Islamic) places	13446	8609	64.20
Shrines	9487	7933	83.6
Religious places (for other religions)	151	36	23.8

Rural tourism is one of the tourism subdivisions and also an active and new opportunity in rural economy context. Dot [15] defines the rural tourism as “a multidimensional activity that is undertaken out of city and shows tourists the rural life nature”.

Wing and Wong study [14] has shown that personal characteristics of the residents (age, sex, occupation, income, education and residency period in tourist place) tourists' specifications, knowledge level of residents respect to tourism development programs in the region and current situations of tourism development programs are the factors influence on resident understandings of tourism effects. These effects can be used in assessment of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of tourism industry which can be related to their attitude to tourists' reluctance.

The other factor effective on residents attitude respect to tourism is related to tourism industry such as raising communications of residents with tourism which increases the negative attitude degree to tourism development in future. If the people have many communications with tourists in daily life, more negative attitude will probably be reported regard to tourism [12].

Also, Allen et al. study [11] identified that both personal characteristics and perception of tourism negative and positive effects influence on residents' attitude regard to tourism and residents' perception of tourism personal benefits has direct positive relation with their attitudes [14].

Rural tourism can be a strategy for multilateral (economic, social and environmental) government development. Economically, rural tourism can have important economic effects on rural regions, so as rural tourists pay for accommodation, local goods and services. These payments spread over local activities, stimulate the rural regions to meet requirements better for visitors and as a result of their economic effects, they cause to lessen the evacuation of rural settlements [5].

3. Methodology

The methodology of this study is analytical-descriptive and data collection is conducted by two (field and library studies) methods. In the field studies a questionnaire has been prepared and completed from villagers. The library studies were conducted by investigation of the literature, history and theories using textbooks, (domestic and foreign) journals and reliable databases. Finally, two software SPSS and Microsoft Excel were used for analysis.

Statistical population of the study is consisted of Ghezghanchay rural district with 2927 people (723 households). In order to determine sample size, Cochran method was used at first and then the

questionnaires were completed by villagers through random sampling. Required sample size was obtained by Eq. (1) as the following:

$$n \equiv \frac{t^2(Npq)}{t^2pq + Nd^2}; \quad (1)$$

where (Table 2):

N = community size (2927)

Lazor village size = 326

Ahanz village size = 214

Shadmahan village size = 162

p = description possibility (95%)

Q = possibility of p complement

n=required size

T=1.96

Table 2: The villages under study [4]

Name	The number of households	Total population
Lazor	521	2160
Ahanz	124	485
Shadmahan	78	282

4. The study region

Ghezghanchay rural district is located in Firoozkooh city at 52°46' in longitude and 35°28' in latitude (Figure 1). This place has enormous natural attractions because of suitable weather and fertile lands.

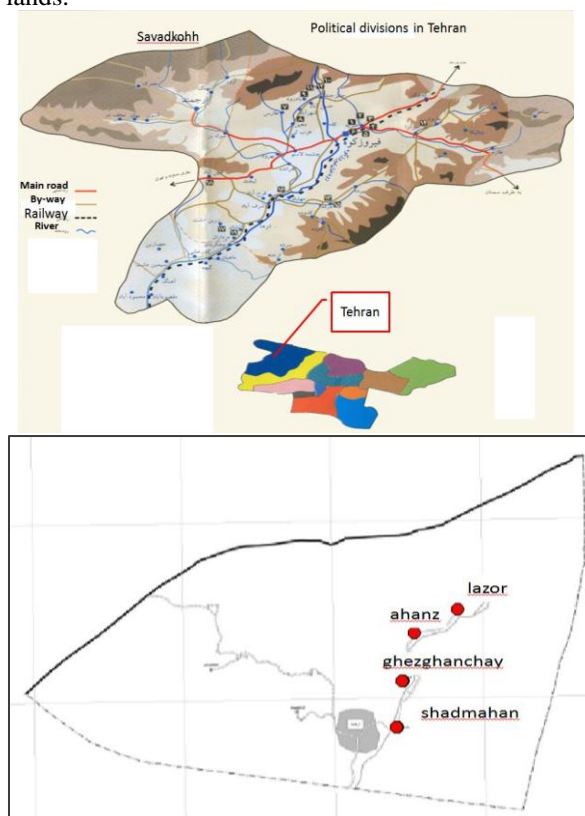


Figure 1: The study region

5. Research findings

Rural tourism is a type of cultural ecotourism with aim of enjoying natural attractions and smoothing development for local populations in different economic, social and bioenvironmental dimensions. So, knowledge of cultural environment and its subcultures is an effort in order to control local populations to achieve benefits from this type of tourism. The responses of residents indicate satisfaction from tourism activities and their development in the region which makes possible smooth their employment in the sectors other than ranching and agriculture. Having investigated the occupations of villagers, it has been found that job preferences were ranching, agriculture and retailing against tourism with no priority in the area.

6. Economic effects of Tourism

According to residents' points of view, tourism has comprised more economic positive effects than negative ones. Although the mentioned villages are located near to tourism places, this has no considerable effect on the cost of agricultural and residential lands as well as that of goods and products. One of the most important tourism challenges in economic sector is seasonality such that there are no tourists in the area in the winter because of severe cold. Of characteristics before tourism season beginning are immigration, hidden and clear unemployment because deep slopes of the lands and accordingly, low agricultural efficiency and livestock reduction in the region. Having developed in the region, the tourism brings about positive economic effects such as high income, low unemployment, occupational variety, immigration decline.

Table 3: Economic effects of tourism

Num.	Economic effects of tourism	High	Medium	Low	Very low
1	How much has tourism led to employments for villagers?	45.3	28.6	24.6	1.5
2	How much has tourism improved the villagers' incomes?	37.2	30.1	15.9	16.8
3	How much has tourism increased land and habitation prices?	6.4	5.8	30.3	57.5
4	How much has tourism made diversify domestic products?	26.3	29.1	37.6	7
5	How much has tourism influenced on increasing construction ins in the district?	19.5	23.8	39.7	17
6	How much has tourism caused economic development in the villages of the district?	22.6	21.7	44.1	11.6
7	How much has tourism raised their quality of life?	25.4	32.1	24.9	17.6
8	How much do tourists welcome rural products such as handicrafts?	43.9	30.4	23.1	2.6
9	How much is the village economic situation dependent on tourism sector?	32.1	24	29.2	14.7
10	How much have people's occupations being changed by tourism?	42.1	23.2	19.4	15.3

7. Social effects of tourism on the region

To study the social effects of tourism, the factors such as changes in the kind of clothes, communication approach and etiquette, urban culture extension and improvements in indoor welfare facilities has been considered. The results showed that tourism is the most effective in this region on decreasing rural immigration to cities due to

availability for job opportunities, sufficient income and increasing senses of belonging. The negative effects of tourists' presence are deviation from the native culture especially in rural youths and increasing their desire toward urban culture so that it has even made a change in their appearances; also raising some abnormalities and crimes resulted in insecurity especial at nights for tourists.

Table 4: Social effects of tourism

Num.	Social effects of tourism	High	Medium	Low	Very low
1	How much has the tourism led to change of appearances in the villagers?	39.9	30.3	19.7	10.1
2	How much has the tourism caused to improve education in the village?	37.5	31.2	20.4	10.9
3	How much has the tourism caused to urban culture extension and deviation from rural one among the villagers?	49.5	30.2	13.4	6.9
4	How much has the tourism improved the personal and public health in your village?	37.7	30.2	14.3	17.8
5	How much has the tourism led to the immigrants to be returned?	3.2	6.5	56.9	33.4
6	How much has the tourism caused increasing the sense of belonging in the village?	20.5	25.9	39.9	13.7
7	How much has the tourism led to change of food consumption pattern in the village?	36.7	26.9	35.3	1.1

8	How much has tourism led to improve home appliances (TV, radio, refrigerator, washing machine and etc.)?	40.5	26.8	25.2	7.5
9	How much has the tourism led to change the type of ceremonies (funeral, wedding and etc.)?	16.5	20.5	49.1	13.9
10	How much has the tourism led to supply health products (dairy and etc.)?	35.5	32.3	14.5	17.7

8. The rural attitude to tourism

In this section, the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the relationships between some of these characteristics and dependent variable of the study (residents' attitude) have been analyzed. According to the results, 43% of respondents were women and the remaining 57% were men. Totally 76% were in range of 25-51y, 13% over 51, and 11% in range 18-24 yrs. The correlation test was done in order to study the relationship between some demographic variables of respondents and their attitudes respect to the development of rural tourism activities. As it is shown in Table 5, there is no significant relation between age and attitude of the respondents; it means the more elder (younger) the person, the attitudes are more negative (positive).

Table 5: Correlation between villagers attitude to tourism according to age variable

Village	Correlation between villagers attitude to tourism according to age variable based on Pearson
Lazor	N=326 Sig=0.665
Shadmahan	N=162 Sig=0.623
Ahanz	N=214 Sig=0.597

Likert scale was used in order to assess dependence rate of residents' income to tourism activities and also their relationship with tourists was indicated by "very high", "high", "medium", "low" and "very low" end-points of scale respectively for numbers 1 to 5. The results of Pearson test showed that these two variables have significant relationship with residents' attitude and relationship rate variable has negative relationship with. Finally, the results from multivariable stepwise regression method showed that the two variables, resident conceptions of bioenvironmental and economic effects, have the most relationship with residents' attitude from rural tourism development and generally 72% of changes has been related to residents attitude in rural district.

9. Conclusions and suggestions for the future

Nowadays, tourism is known as one of the main bases of global economy and plays significant role in international economic equations, thus developing tourism activities and introducing a part of tourism attractions in Iran (especially in villages) can considerably help to improve and upgrade

international levels. During the studies in mentioned rural district by field study and submitting randomly the questionnaires among villagers, it is shown that this area has high tourism potentials and many tourists visit there especially in the first half of the year. The tourism in mentioned region has influenced both in negative and positive sides in economy, social and bioenvironmental fields. According to this assessment, although the tourism has created new job opportunities and higher income, its negative effects has approximately been increasing the prices of goods, lands, accommodations and land trading and construction. So tourism has no economic desirability in the region. After all, as shown in the studies, the positive effects of tourism have been so much and it has been able to prevent the immigration issue because of increasing familiarity and connection with cities, urban culture and also public and personal health improvement. Therefore, the tourism has been successful in social field. In environmental and villagers' satisfaction of tourists points of view, it can be stated that the villagers have found out tourists have improved the social, cultural and economic issues in the place. Although sometimes they had the negative effects for villagers, the villagers see the positive sides. As it was cited in studies, the tourists visit this place because of proximity to Tehran and being located in Tehran- North highway. But in spite of beautiful environment, good weather and attractions such as waterfall, the tourists have no desire to stay over there at night because of no attention of authorities and villagers to rural tourism, lack of basic facilities like suitable accommodations, recreational and parking space. So, doing the necessary actions and preparing the facilities and services for tourists in the place can create economic, social and bioenvironmental favorable effects in the villages of the region and smooth the development. Considering the high volume of tourists in the place and correct, fundamental planning, one can make social-economic improvements in the villages.

Among the most important suggestions to promote the tourism situation in the place are as following:

- **Economic actions**

- *To build high quality residential centers and welfare services in the place for tourists;
- *To manage the transportation and transit services in the place;

*To develop and make services on the highway such as gas station, car repair center, guidance sign for tourism centers;

*To participate and invest of government in developing of tourism activities in the place;

*To raise the health level in residential and entertainment centers.

*To control prices and prevent multi prices in the place.

- **Social and cultural actions**

*To advertise by brochure, photo, postal card of rural attractive places;

*To make public order and discipline in entertainment and tourism centers especially in holidays;

*To spread tourism culture in the place, introduce it as an industry and count its effects for natives.

- **Bioenvironmental actions**

*To prevent of environment damage by tourists, villagers and natives;

*To install warning signs in order to maintain the environment field;

*To take a policy to prevent the land use change;

*To pay more attention to environment health by native and tourism authorities.

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