Review of Capabilities and Solutions on Rural Tourism Development in District of Kahak in Qom Province

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Rural tourism in Qom province – that have special feature of religious tourism - the may seem an unusual phenomenon. But the province with 93.88 percent of urbanization, after Tehran province has the second rank. It is as a metropolis with 6 percent growth that has urbanization problems including traffic and air pollution and marginalized and informal settlements where may affect rural tourism. Kahak District of Qom province has villa villages (Vashnoveh, Karmejegan and Fordo) for tourism purposes. The present paper survey method is a library and field studies, with regard to participants views in three groups (tourists, officials, families living in). We first determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in rural parts of Kahak (Vashnoveh, Karmejegan and Fordo) for Rural Tourism by the SWOT method. Tourism development strategy has provided the target villages. Community households in the survey included 874 residents, more than 1000 tourists and 25 persons are responsible for tourism in the area. Sampling method of Cochrane helped select 267 people and 306 rural residents and 25 tourists as statistical population. Research findings indicate a lack of necessary infrastructure including residential locations, catering, recreation and tourism development in the field of...
management of weaknesses. Review and analysis of the results from increasing environmental
damage due to inadequate infrastructure and poor agents to invest in this sector for the use of
positive effects in promoting rural tourism is a tale of rural development.

Rural tourism may have significant economic effects such as preventing the flow of rural
migration, raising income levels of rural households and creating demand for agricultural
products and handicrafts. In Kahak (Qom province), three target villages have the necessary
capabilities in the field of tourism, but have been unable to benefit from tourism in creating
jobs, increasing income and building service locations. It is while; tourism is the most suitable
choice for rural development. This is especially important when the tourists are residing in the
second homes during the warm seasons. This provides an opportunity for tourists who plan to
strengthen rural areas, while there are no negative environmental effects. This study is seeking
to answer these questions: Do we have target villages foundations for environmental and rural
tourism development that can require us to attract tourists? Is there any relationship between
lack of appropriate infrastructure (including roads and access to residential and entertainment
venues) and the amount of tourists? To answer questions, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities
and threats in the area were assessed by two internal and external factors using the SWOT
analysis model.

Methodology
The aim of this study is to examine the hospitality and the foundations of rural tourism in the
three interested villages of Kahak to provide strategies for tourism development in this area.
Hence, information was provided through observation, questionnaires and interviews. The
population of the study was more than 10,000 thousand people (tourists annually three villages)
and rural population, which has 874 households, and 25 persons of authorities. Population
samples were studied in three groups: tourists with 306 people, 267 households living in
villages and 25 patients and associated persons in charge. Sampling in the study was Cochrane
formula. Questionnaires were distributed among the tourists using random sampling and among
households living in targeted areas by qualitative methods. After completing the questionnaire,
the SWOT model was used to develop strategies and provide solutions. In this model, four
concepts of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from the main foundation of the
model. they are the internal (domestic) and external (foreign) fields that were studied on rural
tourism.

Results and Discussion
Internal and external factors affecting rural tourism in the study area (Tables 5 and 6 which are
provided) shows that among the internal factors that influence rural tourism, there are nine
strong points against 12 weaknesses. On external factors influence, there are 8 opportunities
against the 8 threats. Total of 17 strengths and opportunities are considered as an advantage.
Up to 21threats are as disadvantage to pull constraints for developing rural tourism. In Table 7,
the total weight for each of the factors, were set based on questionnaires frequencies, as well as
weight and concepts from the viewpoint of the four respondents. Finally, in Table 8, there is the
priority of each effective internal and external factors; Table 7 shows that the most important strengths is the most beautiful landscapes. The weakness is the poor inadequate facilities and services. Increasing and becoming more motivated to travel to the villages is the main opportunities and environmental damage is the main threats of the area.

Conclusion
The main result is the necessity for more researches in rural tourism planning in Iran. The necessity is more in some villages like those studied in this article. Tourism development in the study area can be at two levels of long-term and short term.

1-long-term programs includes:
- To create and develop infrastructures such as accommodation and welfare facilities, catering facilities and service facilities.
- To prepare a comprehensive tourism plan and set plans for developing tourism and attracting tourists, which is proportional to the ecological conditions of the region and prevent environmental degradation.
- Provide a suitable ground for private sector investment in regional tourism activities.

2 - Short-term programs includes:
- Tourist attractions and advertising recognition to mark them with different methods, like TV shows in the province and marketing to attract tourists and become a regional pole of rural tourism in the province.
- Holding training classes for the villagers interested in interacting with tourists, tourism and education.
- Create partnerships in rural areas for rural development.
- Revival of handicrafts and production of local handicrafts for offering to tourists using the experiences of people with skills.
- Install warning signs and collect accurate and automated garbage and rural sanitation to prevent environmental pollution.

Keywords: Kahak, Qom Province, Rural Tourism, Sustainable Rural Development, Sustainable Tourism, SWOT Model.