Assessment and Strategy formulation of destination in the framework of Tourism sustainable development (case study the city of Mashhad)

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Extended abstract

1- Introduction

Mashhad as the second religious metropolis in the world and as the country's spiritual capital, is encountered with cost and benefit challenges towards sustainable tourism development. If the present condition continues, all the weaknesses and threats of Mashhad tourism system, will profoundly affect its abilities towards tourism sustainable development in long-term, while the city has competitive advantages in tourism development. So optimum exploitation of its all tourism abilities in a long-term, clear and sustainable framework, can play a noticeable role towards national and regional development goals. According to situation of Mashhad in country's tourism and urban system and its numerous problems, this research aimed to assess the tourism development model of Mashhad metropolitan area and offering proper strategies.

2- Theoretical Bases

Tourism sustainable development approach shows a turn from traditional neoclassic approaches in tourism to a holistic and more systematic approach in which, not only the market needs are respected but also social and environmental necessities are emphasized (Hawkes & Williams, 1993: V). Some authors define sustainable tourism as an approach, which involves long-term lifetime and quality for either natural resource or human resource (Bramwell & Lane, 1993: 71). Tourism sustainable development is the process of improving the host quality of life, supplying the guest needs, and as well natural and human resource conservation. (Butler, 1998: 25; Hall & Lew, 1998: 24; UNCED, 1992; Hunter & Green, 1995: 22; WTO, 1996).

3- Discussion

In this analysis, while tourism supply and demand of Mashhad have been reviewed, SWOT technique and Internal-
External Analysis (IEA), and QSPM have been utilized in the line of research questions and objectives.

The main results show that Mashhad, as a touristic area, has deep and serious weaknesses compared to its strengths based on the internal factors. Although, the area enjoys strong opportunities as guaranteed religious domestic tourism market, which will provide proper basis in achieving development goals.

There is an unexpected point. While Mashhad is counted as one of the main tourism destination in the world, it is faced with key weaknesses in tourism services supply because of low abilities of urban and tourism management system. In this regard, the lack of tourism strategic plans and reliance on fitful and short time actions in destination’s tourism management process are also added to the problems. These weaknesses will interrupt exploitation of current opportunities, which is not sustainable manner in long-term period. This analysis has confronted to some financial-temporal restrictions so the followed affairs are suggested to next researchers: participating analysis methods, feasibility study on establishing the integrated tourism management strategies, respect for tourists attitude to tourism management in the destination.

4- Conclusion

The main results of the analysis regarding the internal and external factors show that the destination’s tourism sector confronts to some more strong opportunities and weaknesses than threats and strengths.

Enjoying the guarantied domestic tourism market and its growing rate and adapted typology of its tourism market to government ideological principles are counted as some key factors to improving Mashhad strategic situation towards tourism sustainable development.

Nevertheless, on the other hand, the world religious metropolitan area faces some serious weaknesses and threats in the field of tourism management. Multiplex tourism management system, poor executive system, growing trend of dissatisfaction of domestic tourists, low ability of urban and tourism management system, and short term and emergency decision making without reliance on strategic plans are some of the key threats and weaknesses.

5- Suggestions

Strategic assessment results of present situation of Mashhad metropolitan area show that in a 25 years perspective, WO strategies seems to be suitable tourism development strategies. Establishment of integrated tourism management strategy - among five kinds of alternative WO strategies - aimed to harmonize and clarify of goals, policies, and acts of different executive tourism sectors and encouragement of coordinated and aligned movement in the metropolitan tourism management system sounds optimum.

Key Words: Tourism sustainable development, strategic assessment, integrated tourism management Strategy, Mashhad.

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