Economic effects of agricultural land use change on rural area
(Case study: Dehestan of Licharaki Hasan-rood, Bandar Anzali)

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Received 27 August 2012 Accepted 31 October 2012

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, the concerns and discussions on environmental and land use changes have been considered seriously. In this situation, the constant land use has been a significant political and analytical issue. Land use is a sample of human effects on environment (Longly and Mesev, 2004:473). One of the reasons for land use change is tourism activity. So, the land use for tourism purposes is considered as a key subject (Ghadami, 2010:35). Because of land restriction and the competition for it, in most of tourism applications, land uses are considered in local policy makings and world level. (Kytzia & et al., 2011: 130). Today, the increasing demands for tourists, second homes and villas, the improvement of stock market for lands and villas and also the weakness of agricultural lands in production process, rise in income and employment led to allocating agricultural and sterile lands to tourists. This caused depletion of natural resources and changing in agricultural lands to non-productive areas such as villas, residential regions, etc., (Ghadami, 2007: 57). During two last decades, the Northern towns especially Bandar Anzali and the surrounding villages have faced land changes as an increasing and serious issue. Tourism activities in this region increased second home construction, recreational complexes and tourism structures, it also lead to wide land use changes. Considering Bandar Anzali situation (coastal region), it encourage tourists to buy land in order to build second homes and it also attracts hotel builders, recreational complex builders and people who wish to have service jobs in tourism activities such as restaurants, inns, etc. These resulted in change in land use from agriculture to housing by local people and non-local residents (tourists and investors).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Land use change means the change in land applications, such changes are the result of complex reactions between management policies, economics, culture, environment and human behaviors (Mcloughlin, 1973:85). The changes in land cover and land use play an important role...
in the process of changes in this global phenomenon (Chapin, 1965:306-317). The development in tourism substructure is considered a key factor in land use change especially in coastal regions (Bermanian and Mahmoudi Nejad 2005:148). Tourism can lead to changes in living systems and land uses in rural districts. (Fletcher, 2003:6). Among the first effects of tourists’ presence in tourist regions, we can mention the increasing demands in retailing and craft shops. In this situation rural districts (George Kajeh, 2003:54) the construction of villas, rural inns, changing residential houses to hotel-apartment, home rent for short terms, making different reception units such as restaurants, tea-shops, etc., are among the construction activities which can help to develop services for tourists (Kang, 2001:12)

3. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in a descriptive-analytical method. Regarding the current nature of the study, the data was collected in two forms: library research and field study. This subject was studied with regard to its past records, so some factors have been selected due to their economic effects and land change indexes. Among 2155 households of this rural district, approximately 328 households were chosen as the sample volume by Cochran test. Data was analyzed by two methods: quantitative (Lickert five-item range) and qualitative (parametric statistical methods of Spearman correlation test). To investigate land use, and the current situation, we have used the satellite images taken by Landsat TM during 1997-2008.

4. DISCUSSION

According to the average of Lickert range and Spearman correlation test between land use change indices and positive economic effects, more than 70 percent of population believed that the land use change from agricultural to tourism had positive effects, as the positive economic effects indices in with confidence level of 99% were significant, and also more than 50% believed that it had negative results in a way that the negative economic effects indices with the confidence level of 99% were also significant.

5. CONCLUSION

High income, more jobs, more employment rate, creating jobs for youth of the villages increased general income of local institutions such as governor of rural districts are considered as the positive effects of land use change. Besides, land use change from agricultural to tourism has increased land and house price unrealistically and eventually the living expenses have been increased. According to the results of the land use change map during 1997-2008, because of increased construction within and near the rural district, this region is facing lack of agricultural land so the arid lands have been used for agricultural purposes to compensate for that. The land use change has accelerated increased constructions in the villages, mainly in agricultural lands and near main road so people don’t face lack of agricultural lands.
6. SUGGESTIONS

- To develop tourism as the main economic activity in the region in line with agricultural activities, not against them.
- To use arid lands for new constructions.
- To achieve harmony between agricultural activities or activities related to tourism and coastal integrated management to make use of coastal lands in its best form.

Keywords: land use, tourism industry, rural district of Licharaki Hasan Rood, Bandar Anzali

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