Exploring the Effects of Tourism on Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
(Case Study: Dohezar Dehestan, Tonekabon County)

Sadegh Salehi1 - Zahra Heydari2 - Hadi Karimi3
1- Assistant Prof, Environmental Sociology, University of Mazandaran, Babolsar, Iran
2- MA in Geography and rural planning, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran
3- MA in Geography and rural planning, Payam-e-Noor University, Tehran, Iran

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Extended Abstract

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the essential criteria in sustainable tourism development approach is the amount of host community support for this issue. Local resident support for tourism development is critical because successful tourism operation and sustainability (social, economic and, environmental) depend heavily on their good will. Therefore, planning with respect to sustainable tourism development should be based on the goals and priorities of local residents. The case study region is rural areas of Dohezar Dehestan located in Tonekabon Township in Mazandaran province. Nowadays, the development and general issues related to sustainability have been considered in many areas. One of these studies is the variety of issues related to tourism in different geographical areas. In recent years rural areas of Dohezar Dehestan is introduced as one of the tourism sample regions in Iran. Special natural attraction, suitable weather, access, and other necessary facilities for tourists have caused many tourists to come and visit Dohezar Dehestan either in the form of mass tourism or second home tourism. Today, in Dohezar mountainous areas, second home tourism is a kind of tourism that has led to land use change. Considering that the tourism development would have many effects on economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects of tourist areas, the purpose of this research is to answer one main question: what is the effect of tourism development of Dohezar Rural District on sustainable development of tourism?

2. METHODOLOGY

Tourism development is the independent variable, whereas dependent variable includes: economic, social, environmental and Institutional dimensions. This research was conducted in order to answer the main question:

Is there any significant difference between the level of tourism development and sustainable development dimensions (economic, social, environmental and institutional) in the case study region?

The research is descriptive and analytical. The research statistical population includes the native and local residents in Dohezar Dehestan. Sample size includes 200 subjects and the information was collected using a questionnaire and was analyzed by SPSS statistical software. Cronbach's alpha test was estimated 0.82. To analyze the research data, mean, and correlation, Pearson and Spearman tests, along with regression test were applied. The data quality and the research objective were considered as criterion for statistical test usage.

3. DISCUSSION

The research findings about the impacts of tourism development in Dohezar Dehestan in recent years revealed that the economic and life quality have improved. Single-sample t-test findings showed that from economic aspect, the total calculated mean is 25.2 which is higher than the favorable mean that is (21). In addition, the significance level (0.000) indicates the improvement of the economic situation of residents due to the tourism development. Results of regression test showed that Tourism Development has had an impact on sustainability of Economic aspect (Justice and economic prosperity (0.266), Economic stability (0.198) and Job condition (0.043)). 10 questions have been examined about the socio-cultural situation as one of the most important aspects of sustainable tourism. These questions include: cultural change, cultural local change, language
change and destruction of native accent, rural livelihoods change, and cloth style change. The single-sample t-test was used for better perception of social sustainability. In social and cultural aspects, the calculated means is 29.1 that shows a lower rate in comparison to the favorable mean (30), and these results have a significant agreement among the residents (0.000). Results of regression test show that tourism development has affected the sustainability of socio-cultural aspect (human rights (0.194), life quality (0.275), protection of the social and cultural patterns (0.086) and participation (0.242)). From environmental aspect, one of the environmental challenges in the Dohezar area is water which would increase in the summer. The other challenges include: land use change, environmental damage, soil erosion, and reduction in agricultural production. The calculated mean from the single-sample t-test is (26.8) which is much lower than the favorable mean (30) that shows undesirable environmental changes caused by tourism development. Results of regression test show that tourism development has had an impact on sustainability of environmental aspect (land use (0.194), water resource (0.275), air quality and landscape (0.26), vegetation and pastures (0.142), farming and gardening Lands (0.342), climate tectonics natural hazards (0.052), protection of natural heritage and attractions (0.242), production and waste management (0.263), wastewater system management (0.21), enhancement of environmental awareness (0.182), and energy consumption (0.264)). From managerial and institutional aspect, the mean obtained from the t-test (18.1) shows an insignificant difference compared to the favorable mean (18) which indicates that in some variables, the inhabitants are not satisfied with the performance of managers, but they are indulged with some other cases.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the present study raise the need for paying attention to the sustainable tourism. Obviously, with the increasing demand for tourism at the community level, the places that have the required capacity, as one of the important tourist places, will be noticed by tourists. To improve the sustainability of tourism development, management requirements and the protection of the environment is essential for future generations. This research is mainly based on quantitative methods which might not be able to show all the hidden aspects of tourist behavior or the host community. Therefore, the researchers are recommended to use qualitative research methods as well to clarify the relationships between variables in this study.

**Keywords:** Sustainable development of tourism, rural tourism, Dohezar Dehestan, Mazandaran.

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