

Effects of Religious Tourists on Rural Development of Rural Settlements from the Perspective (Case Study: Nodeh-e-Enghelab Village in Khushab County)

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Extended Abstract

1. INTRODUCTION

From ancient times, religion is one of the key factors in distribution of populations and settlements across the world. Since the beginning of human history, people considered some places sacred and visited them to meet their needs of spiritual, psychological, physical demands and fear of natural disasters that have threatened their lives. Today, religious tourism is a promising type of tourism to earn money and also preserve the cultural heritage. This article attempts to investigate the effects of religious tourists on the development of rural settlements from the perspective of the villagers in Nodeh-e-Enghelab Village. The results can be used as a basis for further research, planning and policy making in the rural areas.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study is applied in terms of the aim and descriptive - analytical in terms of method. Part of the research data was collected from field studies and questionnaire the other part such as theoretical- conceptual framework, censuses and the related documents were obtained from library research.

According to the 1390 census, the village has a population of 3469 and 1050 households. According Cochran formula, the appropriate sample of 165 families was determined. The households' selection in each village is random to observe the principle of equal opportunity. The method of data analysis has been conducted through descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (one-sample t-test and Friedman). According to the survey questions, the following hypothesis is presented: "religious tourists seem to have the greatest impact on the social and cultural dimensions of Nodeh-e-Enghelab Village".

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The general definition of religious tourism is a form of tourism that participants in religious motives (exclusively or in combination with other motives) are the holy places, such as churches, mosques, tombs, visit the shrine and so on. According to sources, the pilgrimage affects the place of destination, whether city or village in different forms; because pilgrimage is considered as a form of tourism, a kind of dynamism and population movement. Religious tourism can affect the environment by the number of tourists and also leads to dynamics of the region's population through an expansion of cultural and political trade.

Religious tourism is capable of making impacts on the political, social, cultural and economic processes and even affects people's health and this is why geographers are interested in studying its consequences on spatial and space behavior. Based on this, religious tourism is one of the important reasons of locations' radical changes which affect the economic activities in the region.

4. DISCUSSION

In studying the effects of religious tourists in Nodeh-e-Enghelab Village from four dimensions: economic, social and cultural, physical and special, and environmental. One-sample t-test in average variables comparison with theoretical median of 3 showed that among the studied parameters, social and cultural consequences of religious tourism was significantly ($<0/05$) different from the sample and theoretical median in the studied village. Due to the non-normal distribution of data in variables, for ranking the influence of four outcome indicators of religious tourism in the village, Friedman nonparametric test was used. Among the four indicators of religious tourism in the village, the social and cultural indicator and physical-spatial indicator respectively with 3.24 and 2.56 had the most effect and economic and environmental

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indicators with 1.96 and 2.24 had the least effect on the development of rural settlements.

Considering the fact that the number of tourists entering the village was not significant and the religious and economic effects are usually long-term, the present statistical analysis confirms the status quo in the village in the field of religious tourism.

5. CONCLUSION

The results show that to answer this question: what is the effects of the religious tourists on the development of rural settlements? based on the collected data from surveys obtained from villagers, among the variables of religious tourism, the most important factor is the social and cultural impacts with the average of 4.3, and based on one-sample t-test, there is a significant differences between the sample idea and the theoretical median (3) in this indicator. Since the normality of data was not proved in any of the four groups, nonparametric Friedman test showed that the indicator of rural social and cultural consequences (3.24) had the highest average rank. Therefore, it is the most influential factor in the development of

rural settlements. As a result, the research hypothesis is confirmed.

According to studies conducted during the research process and the obtained results, the following suggestions are offered:

- Possible interest of the ruin area and the empty grounds around the shrine of Abraham (Ibrahim) to compensate the shortage of services and the applications required religious by pilgrims and religious tourists.
- Land allowed to establish the future development of the shrine of Abraham (Ibrahim) mainly small and local activities and other applications related to religious tourism.
- Making legible the address of close ranges and the single elements and the tourism paths in the historical context surrounding the shrine to inform the tourists appropriately.
- The development projects of the shrine of Abraham (AS) should be Homogeneous to the historical context of Nodeh-e-Enghelab Village.
- And etc.

Keywords: Religious tourism, rural development, social and cultural consequences, Nodeh-e-Enghelab Village.

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