The Assessment of the Role of Second Homes Tourism in Rural Economic Diversification,  
(Case Study: Hesar-e-Valiasr Dehestan of Avaj County)  

Jamshid Einali*  
Assistant prof, Geography and Rural Planning, Zanjan University, Zanjan, Iran  

Received: 14 Oct. 2013  
Accepted: 25 Feb. 2014  

Extended Abstract  

1. INTRODUCTION  
Due to the dominance of agricultural activities as the main source of job and income, rural settlements in underdeveloped regions in developing countries have limited options for economic development. For this reason, planners and decision makers try to find new ways to diversify the economic bases of these areas. Therefore, rural tourism, as a recreational and social activity, can help the development of these areas through the improvement of networks and connections with other economic activities; and can play an important role in diversification of rural economy. The aim of this study was to investigate the role of rural tourism, especially the extension of second home tourism, in economic bases development in rural areas with environmental attractions through diversification of rural economy in Hesar-e-Valiasr Dehstan (Avaj County- Qazvin Province).  

2. METHODOLOGY  
This study is an applied, descriptive-analytical research. The research data was collected by using questionnaires. For this purpose, from a total number of 358 permanent households in 8 settlements with second homes, a sample size including 170 respondents were selected. The questionnaires were distributed among them randomly. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by a panel of experts and the reliability of the variables was calculated via Cronbach’s alpha (α=0.70). For the data analysis, statistical tests such as Wilcoxon, One sample t-test, Kruskal Wallis, and Spearman Correlation Coefficient were used.  

3. DISCUSSION  
From the planners’ viewpoint, diversification of economic activities in rural areas with emphasis on non-agricultural activities can help rural development by creating job and income opportunities. Based on theoretical studies, diversification of rural household economy is defined as “… participation in multiple activities by rural families in diverse agricultural and non-agricultural activities that can create opportunities for structural changes in economic base of rural areas”. Thus, the development of small scale tourism activities in rural areas, through creating structural changes in rural economy especially by compounding tourism with other economic activities and supplying needed services for tourists, increases the rate of investment in these areas. This might supply effective opportunities for socio-economic development and regeneration of rural areas. Therefore, this study has investigated the impacts of second homes built in the recent decade, in tourism destination villages in rural economy diversification from four aspects: 1- improvement of rural services infrastructure; 2- non-agricultural job creation in rural settlement; 3- new job creation in agricultural activities; and 4- new income resources generation in rural settlement.  

4. CONCLUSION  
The number of second homes built in the last decade in rural tourism destinations in cooperation with local authorities is estimated 2588. This has been able to create the necessary conditions for non-agricultural employment for permanent residents in sample rural settlements. So that, the new non-agricultural jobs opportunities are mainly developed in activities such as supply and sale of building materials, workforce, and construction (decorative and indoor work, digging wells,
masonry works), building services (electricity, water, welding), custodianship and security of homes, facilities and assets, work in gardens and in livestock, horticulture and livestock products sale, collecting drug plants and etc.

The results of data analysis showed a significant difference in the period before and after expanding second houses in diversification of rural economy from the perspective of the respondents in the study area. Therefore, the indicators of improvement of rural infrastructure and income generation and job creation were highly affected respectively and the index of job creation in agricultural activities was affected the least. Furthermore, the results of using Kruskal Wallis test showed that Changureh and Esmaelabad villages are the highest and Abdareh and Qarabolagh villages are the lowest in economic activities diversification ranking among the study villages. This ranking is in relation with the second houses and villas. Regarding the findings of the research, these suggestions are offered:

* Organizing new constructions in sample rural areas by strengthening local institutions.
* Avoiding land use changes, especially in slopes due to the probability of Risk of slope movements.

**Keywords:** Rural development, second homes, economic development, Avaj County.

**References:**

25. Qazvin Governor. (2013). *The statistical yearbook of Qazvin*. Qazvin: Governor of Qazvin. [In Persian]

**How to cite this article:**
URL: http://jrrp.um.ac.ir/index.php/RRP/article/view/27065

**ISSN: 2322-2514**
**eISSN: 2383-2495**