

## **WHAT ARE THE TOURISM POTENTIALS AND CAPABILITIES OF BAGHBAHADORAN REGION? EVIDENCE FROM THERE RESIDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of tourism in rural regions with emphasis on behavioral geography of the rural residential and to present strategies in order to improve these regions. In this study, procedure documents and field methods have been employed. After studying relevant resources, questionnaires have been used in order to obtain the rural residential attitudes about the ways of developing the industry of tourism in the region. After the analysis of the questionnaires' data, strategies have been concluded to develop the industry of tourism. Therefore, the rural tourism has an effective role in developing the rural regions and the behavior of the rural residential has an effective role to attract tourists. However, various natural capacities play an effective role in attracting tourists.

*Key Words: Rural Development, Rural Tourism, Behavioral Geography*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Rural tourism is also a part of the big industry of tourism that can play effective role to enable local people and to develop economical growth. However, it can help create new career opportunities for rural people. Rural tourism has been regarded as an effective economical element in recent years. Its development can create economical activities and various careers in rural regions. These career opportunities are mostly in the form of services (Sharifzadeh & Moradnejad, 2002). In rural tourism, the cultural, natural, and historical resources of the rural regions can be presented as the tourism cultural goods. Rural tourism creates economical growth, career opportunities, industry and trade development, and income growth in the form of multiple activities. It can also create new places for agricultural products and helps create a regional economy (Sharply, 2002). One of the important characteristics of the rural tourism economy is to encourage private sector as the plans are small, simple and various (Papley et al, 2002). Webster (1975) defines rural development as the process that helps develop rural people capabilities to control their environment which leads to wide use of the profit of this control (Khayati, 2002, p. 31).

In recent years, rural tourism has been regarded as an important element in developing rural regions. Most of the rural economic activities have been decreased during recent years and most of the income and careers created by the old agricultural activities, especially capital income of the rural people have been decreased less than average amount of the capital income of the country. However, the increasing amount of unemployment has made young generation and educated people to leave rural regions. This problem damages the structure of rural regions. Therefore, tourism has been regarded not only as a means of changing this situation, but also as an inseparable element for developing rural regions (Sharply, 2002). Nowadays, in most of rural regions, tourism has been changed from potential to actual state to control rural societies' perspective. The essence and importance of these changes caused to pay more attention to the

role of tourism in rural regions. So that in many cases, it has determined possible effects and even some experts believe that rural tourism saves European rural regions (Butler et al., 1998). Tourism creates great economic benefits such as income and substructure development (especially from economical aspects for marginal and under developing regions) for rural areas. From local aspects, tourism can provide organic economic growth for small trade. However, it presents potential replacement for old activities in villages (Hall, 2005). Rural tourism provides opportunities for small trades that may not be possible as a result of little population in rural societies. In addition to rural activities such as agriculture, rural tourism has an appropriate effect and caused to obtain other income for agricultural families (Wilson et al., 2001).

Rural regions development besides knowing its capabilities and difficulties, regarding the process of development in developing countries have been considered as the basic element for developing environmental, economic, social and cultural planning. Therefore, the development of rural regions is the basic necessity for local, regional and national development and requires a coherent and integrated planning which can demonstrate the important purposes of development (Eftekhari & Qaderi, 2003).

Iran has been considered as the world's wonderful countries from cultural, artistic, environmental attractions and having various attractive village perspectives (Mahdavi, 2003). Regarding the fact that the economy of the country is single product and most of the rural young people have the difficulty of unemployment and the present structure of the villages do not fit educational structure of the educated people of villages and also the planners emphasis on relying on other resources instead of relying only on oil exports, the necessity of developing economic activities in various aspects such as the industry of tourism with the aim of obtaining new foreign exchange resources and employment is unavoidable (WTO, 2008).

The worlds' tourism organization defines tourism as the set of works that a person does in travelling and in a place outside of place of life and do not take more than a year and its purpose is fun, amusement, rest and sport (WTO, 2008). With accepting this definition in recent years for different developing reasons such as economic, social and ecological, tourism has been considered as a means for developing rural regions which are under developing from economic and social aspects (Pilar and Teresa, 2005) and tourism is increasing regarding the amount of tourists and exchange income in international level (Thomas et al., 2005). According to the statistics of the worlds' tourism organization, every tourist that travels to the region creates career opportunities for 4 people (WTO, 1999) and the number of them is increasing every day. According to the definition of the European society's commission, rural tourism does not only include agricultural tourism but also it includes all the activities that tourists do in rural regions. So that we can say tourist visit rural regions for different reasons and enthusiasm and take part in many activities. For this reason special kinds of tourism can be seen in rural regions that depend on the tourists, the characteristics of the region and the enthusiasm. Therefore, regarding the purpose of tourists the rural tourism is divided into five groups.

- *Natural tourism:* deals with ecological attractions
- *Cultural tourism:* deals with culture, history, cultural and ancient inheritance of the rural people.
- *Ecotourism:* deals not only with natural attractions such as rivers, seasonal lakes, mountains, but also with the life and social manners of the local people who are dealt with natural attractions.
- *Village tourism:* in this kind of tourism, tourists live in village and take part in economic and social activities of the village.
- *Agro tourism:* Or agricultural tourism that tourists deal with the ecosystem of the host regions or the old agricultural activities without making negative results (Sharifzadeh & Moradnejad, 2002, p.54).

So, in this research we trying to answer questions like: Do the rural residential has a positive attitude towards tourism and rural development? Do the rural residential is aware of their potential for attracting tourists?

**THE REGION UNDER STUDYING**

The region of Baghbahadoran has been located in 60 km in south west of Isfahan between 50 degree, 56 and 18 minutes from east length and 32 degree and 41 minutes from northern width. This region has been located in western part of the city of Lenjan. This region borders to Tiran and Kroon from north, from east to the central section and from west to the province of Charmahal Bakhtiari. The river of Zayanderood has been located in its central regions and flows from west to the east (Fathi Baghbahadorani, 1993).

Map 1: The condition of the region under studying



**METHODOLOGY**

The methodology that has been employed is descriptive and analytic. For collecting data the following methods have been used. First we used library method and internet: it is used for studying the literature of the topic and the theoretical background of the study. Second, documental and achieve method: it is used for preparing statistics and the data dealt with tourists, their numbers and preparing welfare facilities and resident centers from relevant organizations and third Field method: it is accomplished in the form of completing questionnaire from the rural residential under studying and the observation of the places phenomena. The present research employed survey. Questionnaires have been employed for collecting data. The statistical population consists of specific data. This population consists of variable numbers of elements that have been collected by means of questionnaires. Sampling was conducted among 24000 rural people and 30 sample people were selected as the sample population for this research. The questionnaires were distributed among the sample population and were collected after completing. The data were processed by SPSS programmer and the results were analyzed.

**RESULTS**

The results of Demographical analysis show that most of the responders has private work position. Table 1 shows the response distribution according to the work position.

Table (1) Response distribution according to the work position

work position	Frequency	Percentage
State	94	30.5
Private	168	54.5
Housewife	46	15
Total	308	100

Table3- Responders educational degree

Degree	Frequency	Percent
Elementary	29	9.4
Guidance	55	17.9
Graduate	115	37.6
Associate and B.A	106	33.4
M.A and upper	6	1.9
Total	121	100.0

According to table 3, 9.4 percent of responder has Elementary educational degree, 17.9 percent has Guidance, 37.6 percent has Graduate, 33.4 percent has Associate and B.A, and finally 1.9 percent has M.A and upper.

A total of 11/1 percent of the rural district residences under mountain uses Zayanderood River for agricultural purposes. However, a total of 23/3 and 55/6 percent of the Zayanderood River was used by the rural districts of Chamkoooh and Chamrood respectively. Therefore, a great deal amount of the water of Zayanderood has been used by the residences such as Champir, Khshouye, Rahmatabad Dourak, Sadegabad and Karchegan which are located beside river. It is obvious that, the residential centers of the rural district of Chamkoooh have been located in high areas and beside river such as Cham Heydar, Cham Tagh, Cham Yousefali, Cham Gave, Parkestan and Chamkahriz. They use river for doing economic and agricultural activities.

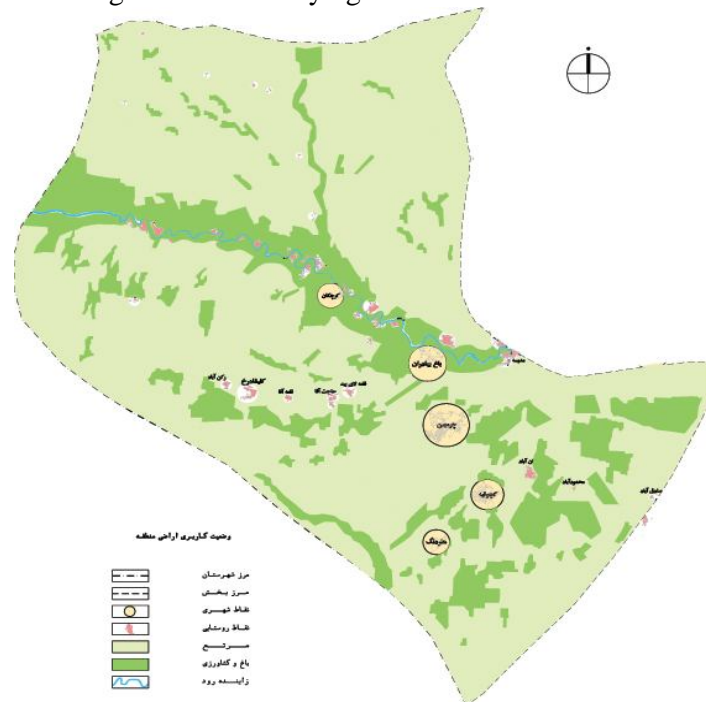
Table (3): The frequency and percentage distribution of responses concerning potentials and capabilities of the rural regions for developing tourism.

		Very Low	Low	Normal	Many	More	Average
Having beautiful and unique perspectives in addition to gardens	<i>f</i>	9	27	99	95	78	3.67
	%	2.9	8.8	32.1	30.8	32.5	
Having high mountains for sport and fun	<i>f</i>	11	27	114	77	79	3.60
	%	3.6	8.8	37	25	25.6	
17.9H30.8a17.2v19.2ing the River of Zayanderood and its usage as a vital resource	<i>f</i>	46	55	95	53	59	3.08
	%	14.9	17.9	30.8	17.2	19.2	
The available attractions of fun and sport in village	<i>f</i>	29	80	111	60	28	2.93
	%	9.4	26	36	19.5	9.1	
The easy access of tourists to these regions	<i>f</i>	21	60	105	91	31	3.17
	%	6.8	19.5	34.1	29.5	10.1	
Neighbouring to the big cities of Isfahan, Zarrinshahr and Shahrekord	<i>f</i>	21	60	105	91	31	3.17
	%	6.89	19.5	34.1	29.5	10.1	
Having road network to the different regions of the country such as the provinces of Charmahal Bakhtiari-Khoozestan and Lorestan...	<i>f</i>	13	44	96	106	54	3.46
	%	4.2	14.3	30.2	33.8	17.5	
Having local and native customs and culture	<i>f</i>	14	50	95	100	49	3.39
	%	4.5	16.2	30.8	32.5	15.9	
Having local and native customs and	<i>f</i>	23	80	93	80	32	3.06

culture	%	7.5	26	30.2	26	1.04	
Having calm and comfortable environment	f	13	41	100	76	17	3.54
	%	4.2	13.3	22.5	24.7	25.3	
Having suitable places for selling agricultural products	f	43	66	116	66	17	2.83
	%	14	21.4	37.7	21.4	5.5	
Having the industry of military and steel and other dependent companies	f	22	55	108	79	34	3.19
	%	7.1	19.9	35.1	28.9	11	
Having appropriate facilities for planting agricultural products, gardening, forestry...	f	18	81	117	68	34	3
	%	5.8	26.3	38	22.1	7.8	
There are places of pilgrimage and tourism in the area and the city center	f	37	78	114	58	21	2.83
	%	12	25.3	27	18.8	6.8	
Having the city centers of higher education and vocational	f	56	90	91	50	21	2.64
	%	18.2	2.2	29.5	16.2	6.8	

According to table 4, item 1 ‘having beautiful and unique perspectives besides gardens’ had the highest average of 3/67, then item 2 ‘having high mountains for sport and fun’ had an average of 3/60 and item 9 ‘having calm and comfortable environment’ had an average of 3/54 for responses. The lowest average of responses has been given to item 14 ‘having the city centers of higher education and vocational’ with the average of 2/64.

Map 2: Efficiency of the regions under studying



Based on the findings in Table 5, a total of 19/8 percent of the respondents have little and a little importance to tourism, a total of 31/5 percent of the respondents have average and a total of 48/7 percent have much and too much importance to tourism.

Table 4: The distribution of frequency and percentage of the importance of the tourism industry in developing rural areas

	Frequency	Percent
Very Low	23	4.5
Low	38	12.3
Normal	97	31.5
Many	114	37.0
More	36	11.7
Total	308	100

The various natural opportunities and capacities in the region under studying can help to attract tourists and improve the negative and positive aspects of tourism.

Table 5: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents look at the profitability of the tourism industry.

	Frequency	Percent
Very Low	78	25.3
Low	81	26.3
Normal	105	33.8
Many	38	12.3
More	7	2.3
Total	308	100

Based on the findings of table 6, 51.6 percent of the respondents regarded to have low and very low, 33/8 percent regarded to have average, and 14.6 percent regarded to have much and too much profitability of the tourism industry.

Table 6: The mean total score of potential and existing capabilities in the development of tourism in rural areas with an average of three hypothetical.

	Mean	SD	Error	t
Total potential and existing capabilities	3.17	0.661	0.037	4.51

Based on the results shown in Table 7 t-value in the table is greater than 5% error. Therefore, the whole available potentials and capabilities under studying have more than average effect in developing tourism in rural regions.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of table (3), the most potentials, capacities and available opportunities in the region included the beautiful and unique spectacles besides green gardens, the River of Zayanderood, high mountains for sport and fun, and comfortable and quiet environment. However, great opportunities related to the increasing motivation for travel have much importance for the planners of the tourism industry.

Based on the findings of this research, a total of 14/6 and 33/8 percent of the rural people, have very low, low and average importance to the profitability of the tourism industry. However, 48/7 percent of the rural people have too much and much importance to the tourism industry to develop rural regions.

Statistical data indicates that the awareness of the capabilities and potential of rural areas, the priority of the items also have a good knowledge. The highest mean response, including the beautiful and unique landscapes with landscape gardens with an average of 67/3, recreation and Sports peaks with an average elevation of 60/3 and having a quiet and no noise with a mean of 54/3 .

Based on the attitudes of the rural people concerning the effects of the tourism industry in the village, the profitability of this industry is 56/6 percent, very low and low, 33/8 percent average, 14/6 percent too much and much.

This indicates the importance of rural education and rural development in the areas of tourism, culture and suitable for serious measures, targets and more should be done.

The result of data analysis indicates that more than 48/8 percent of the respondents, have too much and much importance to the tourism industry in developing rural regions. The highest mean score related to poverty reduction in rural areas, with a mean of 3 and a change in attitude towards rural village lifestyle and desire for a new life with an average of 02/3, Increase public awareness and knowledge of the environment "to mean 03/3 is its role" is a sustainable development of rural areas. However, based on the questionnaire and the rural peoples' responses to the effect of economic, social, cultural and ecological factors on the tourism industry, these factors have had average effect .

Based on the findings of the main factors that attract tourists can be effective in rural, beautiful and unique landscapes, gardens and green spaces along the river, the heights of peaks for fun and exercise and quiet and no noise which can sense it as touristy attractions the region has Rural peoples' behavior and tourists' dealing with behavioral properties are assessed as culture differences and conflicts between tourists and villagers is (6/40%) low and very low and (8/31) medium which indicates that tourists do not have problems with the behavioral characteristics of the villagers.

However, examining the questionnaire items indicates that the unfamiliarity of villagers and lack training in how to deal with tourists is very small (1/8%) and low (8/30%), moderate (4/34%), high (8/19%) and very high which indicates that 65 percent of the villagers assessed the training of villagers in dealing with tourists medium and low that have the most percentage of variables.

The main supply of income for rural households is through agricultural sectors 5/29%, livestock and beekeeping / 4%, industry and services 70%. A total of 2/94% of its employees dedicated to these jobs and only 8/6% of workers in the different sectors are tourism livelihood. Rural landscape of each of the economic sectors (tourism, agriculture, industry and services) in terms of making career opportunities is agriculture (26/3), industry (98/2), services (55/2) and tourism (53/2) respectively. In terms of rural income, the mean is 16/3, 96/2, 52/2 and 44/2 respectively. Among the important factors in the development of rural tourism in rural areas in terms of responses to the highest level of public awareness and knowledge about the environment the highest average is 303/3. The change of villagers' attitudes to the rural lifestyle and their interest toward having new life have the average of 3/20 and the decrease of unemployment in rural regions have the average of -/3 .

Major opportunities are relevant to developing important tourism and recreational travel outside of rural areas and to increase the incentive for people in urban and suburban population, to increase the attention of the government to the planning of rural tourism and the great industrial centers of the surrounding rural area.

Given the substantial changes due to real changes in rural areas in the region, the tourism industry's growth rate over the last 5/18% too low, 4/21% low, 4/36% average 5/18. The dominant tendency of rural tourism represents 60% growth over the past year, the average response to the increase in female employment in tourism activities, with an average 44/2, respectively.

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