

Research Article

THE SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN DEVELOPMENT OF GILAN PROVINCE

***Hamid Aqajani and Mostafa Azkia**

Department of Sociology, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch

**Author for Correspondence*

ABSTRACT

Tourism is an important factor in economic growth and it creates developments in urban and rural economic in many industrial countries. It is also considered as an important economic factor and it leads to create jobs, income, foreign exchange and it is a tool for distribute wealth. We aim to provide a sociological analysis of tourism industry and its effects on Gilan Province. The applied method in this research is field and library research method. According to studies about effects of tourism industry we can conclude that when tourists enter an area, different jobs are created in macro level and consequently economic, cultural and social improvements appear. Today, tourism industry is improved a lot all around the world and many countries make progress in their situation by tourism industry. In addition, they solve many problems and remove many obstacles such as unemployment, decreased level of income and loss of exchange income.

Keywords: *Tourism, Sustainable Developments, Economic Developments, Cultural Developments*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry is known as one of the greatest and most important industries all around the world. Many countries believe that this industry is the basis of making money, creating jobs, developing private sector and infrastructures (Lee, 1999). According to these significant developments and the economic importance of tourism, tourism industry is considered as the most important and efficient way of achieving economic and social developments in tourist areas.

Tourism is defined as the greatest peace movement in cultural and historical borders. In addition to make profits in economic, it facilitate cross cultural interactions among different societies and it establishes required cultural patterns and ways of making behavioral interactions based on peace. Tourism industry leads urbanized man to nature and reduces aggression and false negative emotions (Let, 1989).

Tourism industry is considered as a pull factor of development or redevelopment that creates jobs and it facilitate making money. In addition, even in countries in which tourism has a short history such as newly independent states of the former Soviet Union in central Asian; tourism is a way of making developments (Palmer, 2006). The importance of tourism industry as a development strategy is originated from its local economic potential especially the balance of payments (Aperman and Chan, 1997). Many countries put emphasize on tourism industry as an economic section which intensify dependency to industrial and reach countries (Ride, 2003). Anyway by taking into account the pros and cons of tourism industry we should pay attention to the point that how development and tourism industry are related to each other. Tourism is a way of making social and economic developments in tourist areas. But mostly there are not any developments and local elites are the only beneficiaries or its advantages in comparing to its costs are negligible. So, the most important challenge for developing countries is that how to manage the negative consequences and reach sustainable developments. Tourist attractions of Gilan Province (economic, natural, historical, social and cultural) and its effects on different aspects of life are studied to reach main goals of tourist planning in regional level. This study aims to analyze economic and social influences of tourism industry on regional developments of Rasht County to remove obstacles and improve related policies to tourism industry.

Concepts and Principles of Regional Developments

To better understand regional developments we should first define it. According to benefits of target groups and different policies, there are different definitions for the concept of regional developments.

Research Article

According to Raymond Williams (1983), “Although it seems easy, giving a definition for economic and political concept of regional development is a difficult task and challenging. In theoretical literature, different aspects of economic such as growth, making money and creating jobs are in the center of defining regional developments (Armstrong and Taylor, 2000). According to Beyer *et al.*, (2003), there is a reasonable consensus about parameters of regional developments and it is set of activities to improve economic welfare of a region. It includes economic development strategy, research, investment, labor market, technological innovations and political bargaining. Economic was the most important factor in defining regional developments until 1990s and gradually social, ecological, political and cultural were defined (Geddes and Newman, 1999). Different types of regional development, principals and values are closely related to each other. Different types of local and regional developments can be divided into categories according to their degree of progress and according to what extend they focus on quantitative or qualitative features and characteristics. Different types of developments, principals and values include economic, social, environmental, political and cultural requirements are different for various social groups in different zones and region (Pike *et al.*, 2006).

Historical changes affect different issues in local and regional development and their definition; first, the concept of development has changed during time. The concept of development has been changed by critics, moderates and extremists reformists. Second, the definition of development is different according to geographical areas. These definitions are also different according to different places and different eras of time. Third, the concentration and historical emphasis are put on economic aspects and it covers social, environmental, political and cultural concerns. Different approaches and development evaluation are so sensitive to the balance of economic, social, political, ecological and cultural development. Forth, in different aspects of development, local and regional levels are of different importance. Paying attention to national and international issues affect the ways that different zones and regions affect developments (Pike *et al.*, 2006).

The Concept of Sustainable Development

This concept was first applied by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 1980 and it became popular in 1987 in “Brundtd Report” by World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (Simon Dres Will, 2002). Literally, sustainable development refers to maintain development during time. Since early 1990s there were more than 70 definitions for the concept of development in academic circles (Holmberg and Sandbrouk, 1992). There is not any fixed definition for the concept of development; it can be defined as a combination of the processes development and sustainability (Telfer and Sharply, 2008). Most definitions of sustainable development include three main elements: environmental, economic and social. The purpose of sustainable development is to analyze the related goals of these three main elements. The idea is that the purpose of each element is understood according to social concepts and reaching sustainable development depends on the consistency of all three elements simultaneously.

Tourism as an Industry

Tourism industry is subject of dispute due to many reasons. Researchers believe that tourism does not have any general definition (Debij and Anonayds, 2004). So, there is no doubt that tourism is considered as an industry with rapid growth (World Tourism Organization Business Council, 1998) and it has the highest level of employment or other similar economic index. Smith defines tourism industry as: “industries which are shaped to support tourism by Standard Industrial Classification and if tourism is weaken these related industries are stopped or modified” (Smith, 1998).

Some believe that tourism is not just an industry and it is beyond the concept of industry as Thomas David expressed that “tourism is something beyond industry and by defining it as an industry weundervalue its real meaning”.

Tourism is a social and economic concept which acts as motivation for social and economic systems. Tourism is not just something related to commercial or governmental corporation, but people can also take participate in related activities to tourism. If these activities have economic consequences then we can say that tourism is an industry (Gay, 2003). Tourism can be considered as a development factor. The

Research Article

relationship between tourism and development has various aspects, since theories, values, actors, power, strategies, political systems, programs, making policies, societies and environments are all in contraction with each other in this dynamic global system. Detection of interactions between these concepts and issues lead us to better understand the nature of tourism development in developing countries.

According to what we said there are many factors which put emphasize on tourism attraction as a way to reach developments, these factors are as below:

- Tourism as a growth industry. As it was mentioned before international tourism has the average annual growth of 6/2 since 1950.
- Tourism distributes wealth. It is a good way to transfer wealth whether through direct expanses or international investment on infrastructures and tourism facilities by rich countries. But we should note that tourism promotion plays an important role in distribution of wealth.
- It leads to economic and service activities. Due to demand for goods and services, tourism is potential of creating opportunities for other industries and connects them to each other in different levels (PapoliYazdi and Saghaie, 2007).
- Tourism takes advantage of natural and free infrastructures. Tourism development depends on natural or man-made attractions such as beaches, deserts, wilderness or cultural places. So, tourism industry is more cost effective comparing to other industries and we can say that it is somehow free.
- There is not any obstacle against business tourism. In many cases countries or trade blocks put some limitations on some goods or markets, but international does not experience such obstacles (Telfer and Sharply, 2008).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology

The applied method in this study is documentary. Different articles, thesis and internet resources are used in this method. A questionnaire is designed and different variables are extracted. We conducted this research by the help of field study. In survey method features, characteristics, frequencies and distribution of statistical indicators are studied. By this method we can also recognize the correlations between different variables.

Since the best way in gathering information is through designing questionnaire, survey method is chosen. The gathered information is given to computer via SPSS application and information is analyzed. The statistical population is tourists who entered Gilan provenience during 2003 to 2013 and they were about 200 people whose common feature was being tourist.

Test of Hypothesis

First hypothesis: tourism industry affects social aspect of regional development of Rasht. If the average score of social development is higher than mean value we conclude that development of tourism industry affects regional social development. To test this hypothesis we use one-sample t-test. In this test, the mean value of social development is estimated $M=14/84$ and obtained results of the test ($\text{sig}>0/05$) implies that the hypothesis is significant. It means that tourism in Rasht affects social development.

Table 1: The Results of One-Sample T-Test in Social Development

t	Degrees of Freedom	Significance	Difference of Mean Value	Confidence Interval of 95%	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
25/297	199	0/000	2/840	4/4627	5/2173

Second hypothesis: tourism industry affects cultural aspect of regional development of Rasht. In one-sample t-test, the mean value of cultural development is estimated $M=13/78$ and obtained results ($\text{sig}>0/05$) implies that the hypothesis is significant. It means that tourism industry affect cultural development of Rasht.

Research Article

Table 2: The Results of One Sample T-Test in Cultural Development

t	Degrees of Freedom	Significance	Difference of Mean Value	Confidence Interval of 95%	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
15/463	199	0/000	1/780	4/542	5/461

Third hypothesis: tourism industry affects environmental dimension of regional development in Rasht. In one sample t-test, the mean value of environmentally-friendly development is estimated (M=14/06) and obtained results of the test (sig>0/05) implies that the hypothesis is significant. It means that tourism industry affects environmentally-friendly development in Rasht.

Table 3: The Results of One Sample T-Test of Environmentally-Friendly Development

t	Degrees of Freedom	Significance	Difference of Mean Value	Confidence Interval of 95%	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
24/356	199	0/000	2/06	3/298	4/262

Forth hypothesis: tourism industry in economic dimension of regional development of Rasht. In one sample test, the mean value of economic development is estimated (M=13.24) and obtained results (sig>0/05) implies that the hypothesis is significant. It means that tourism industry affects economic development of Rasht.

Table 4: The Results of One Sample T-Test in Economic Development

t	Degrees of Freedom	Significance	Difference of Mean Value	Confidence Interval of 95%	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
16/573	199	0/000	1/24	3/388	4/358

We use Friedman test to analyze variance. Friedman test is a non-parametric test that is used to compare the mean value of variables. It is applicable when we want to study the ideas of a group in different fields and then prioritize them.

Table 5: The Results of Average Rating

Rank	Characteristic	Mean Value of Ranking
1	Social Dimension	3.90
2	Environmental Dimension	3.29
3	Cultural Dimension	3.13
4	Economic Dimension	3.00

According to the output of above table we can conclude that tourism industry mostly affects social aspects. Environmental, cultural and economic aspects are also important.

Table 6: The Results of Friedman Test

	N	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Friedman	200	105.445	5	0.000

In following sections we study the surveys which are conducted to answers the related questions to the research. The results of the survey put more emphasize on the consequences of tourism industry and its potential effects on sustainable developments in Rasht.

Research Article

Tourism Economic Impact

Tourism industry has many significant economic and social impacts such as creating jobs, reaching foreign exchange earnings and it also improves cross-cultural understanding (Makian and Naderi, 2003). In most analysis of tourism development in third world, economic impacts are more significant than other elements (Mahdavi, 2004). In fact, tourism as an important economic factor has attracted attention during recent years. So, it is tried to improve it and remove obstacle. Researchers put emphasize on the economic influences of tourism and they expressed that “tourism is considered as a growth industry in the world and it plays a very important role in economic.” Rasht has many natural attractions such as forests, seas, beaches and historical monuments and these attractions attract tourist from all over the world. It is said that tourism as an industry has a positive effect on attracting investment and creating jobs, in a way that each hotel has at least 30 full-time employees and about 30 part-time employees. Some other researchers put emphasize on entrepreneurial capacity of tourism industry in Rasht. So, tourism is a reliable source in many developed and developing countries which increase income create jobs and it leads to many other changes.

Social and Cultural Effects of Tourism

Social effects refer to changes which occur in host community and these changes are mostly because of interactions between people and tourists. Cultural effects refer to changes which are occurred in art, customs and architectures. These changes are long term and will be occurred as a result of development in tourism industry. Anyway, tourism developments in a region lead to cultural and social changes (Mahdavi, 2004). In a survey many experts mention the positive and negative effects that tourism has on life style and social and cultural aspects of life. An expert expressed that “if in tourism industry culture is seen as a product and local residents change it to a form that is desirable for tourists then we can say that this process will result in alienation”. But fans of tourism industry believe that cultural, social and historical monuments do not belong to a group or nation and tourism attractions are identifier of human civilization and they belong to people all around the world and tourism is a policy through which we can maintain universal heritage and global culture. Another interviewee expressed ideas about positive and negative influences of tourism on social and cultural aspects of local living and said that tourism analyze cross cultural behavior by details. Anyway experiences show that tourism influences the culture of host community. Tourism protects cultural heritage and improves cultural patterns such as music, theater, art, customs, and life styles etc. these are the main important tourism attractions and through tourism industry they are maintained (Ranjbaran and Zahedi, 2000).

Environmental Effects

Tourism and environment are in close relationships with each other. In one hand, environment has so many cultural attractions and in the other hand tourism development has positive and negative influences on environment (Mahdavi, 2004). The influences which tourism development and environment have on each other can be whether positive or negative. Researchers mention many of these consequences as one of them expressed that “tourism presence in different places is like a double-edged sword, it protects natural wealth and historical monument in one hand but in the other hand it degrades natural resources. According to what we said we should consider the elements which increase positive influence and minimize negative effects of tourism development in Rasht. For instance, to protect vegetation and wild life, regional and national parks should be expanded.

Sustainable Development the Result of Tourism Industry

Sustainable development of tourism is the optimal use of natural and cultural resources to meet current and future generation’s needs in a way that integration, cultural identity, Environmental preservation and economic balance is maintained in order to provide welfare for local residents and visitors. Some other experts expressed ideas about the roles of tourism industry in sustainable development and said that to optimize the profits which are obtained through developing tourism and to remove obstacles and minimize problems we need to set a detailed plan and keep going based on principals of tourism management. The importance of tourism planning lies behind the fact that its principals leads to improvements and removing obstacles. In addition, it is said that in tourism, tourists know the place they

Research Article

want to visit, they set the exact duration of trip and they design a plan according to which they start up traveling. By doing so, tourists get currency into circulation in host community by going to hotels and restaurants, go shopping etc. and it improves the economic markets of host community and those who make investment in this field. Considering all these facts we can say that tourism helps keeping environment and it leads to sustainable development. Adopting a long-term perspective in urban planning we can reach sustainable development. In addition to fulfill economic, social, cultural and recreational needs of current generation we should keep and maintain non renewable resources such as natural resources, underground mines, water resources etc. for future generations.

Conclusion

Tourism industry affects the host community in many different aspects such as social, cultural, economic and environmental. Policy makers consider tourism industry as the main aspect of sustainable development. Cultural, social, political and environmental factors play an important role in developing tourism industry and attracting tourists. In fact, tourism industry applies a geographical zone which includes a physical construction with biological and natural (Climate, geology, topography and plant and animal community) factors (Ziyari and Omranzadeh, 2009). Tourism entrance into any region leads to creating jobs in comprehensive level and it improves cultural, social and economic development. Today, tourism industry is developed a lot and many countries are developed thorough it and they solve many problems such as unemployment, decreased rate of income and etc.

REFERENCES

- Papoli Yazdi M and Saghaei M (2007).** *The Concept of Tourism*, second edition, Geographical Quarterly, Scientific and Research, (Tehran, Samt Press) 7(25).
- Telfer D and Sharply R (2012).** *Tourism Development Planning in Developing Countries*, translated by Hamid Zargham, (Tehran, Mahkameh Press).
- Gay CV (2003).** *Tourism in Comprehensive Perspective*, translated by Ali Parsayian and Mohammad Arabi, (Tehran, Cultural Research Office).
- Lee J (1999).** *Tourism and Development in Third World*, translated by Reza Eftekhari et al, (Tehran: Bazargani Publications Company).
- Palmer N (2006).** Economic transition and the struggle for local control in ecotourism development: the case of Kyrgyzstan, *Journal of Ecotourism* 5(1 and 2) 40–61.
- Pike A, Rodriguez-Pose A and Tomaney J (2006).** *Local and Regional Development*, (Routledge, London, UK).
- Reid D (2003).** *Tourism, Globalization and Development: Responsible Tourism Planning*, (UK, London: Pluto Press).
- Smith SLJ (1998).** Tourism as an Industry: Debates and Concepts, In D. Ioannides and K.G. Debbage (edition), *The Economic Geography of the Tourism Industry: A Supply-Side Analysis*, 31–52. (UK, London: Routledge).