



An investigation on capabilities and potentials of Hasan Abad village for tourism development

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Abstract: *Tourism industry is considered as the largest and most diverse industry in the World. Many countries know this dynamic industry as the main source of income, employment, Private section growth and infrastructure development. Especially in developing countries where other forms of economic development such as production and extraction are not economical or do not have an important role in commerce and trading, so much attention is given to development of tourism industry. Kurdistan province due to its appropriate historical and cultural conditions and facilities and also its natural tourism attractions is one of the tourism hubs in the country and every year it attracts so many tourists. Present paper introduces natural and historical attractions of Hasan Abad village in Kurdistan province to encourage tourists and interested people in tourism to visit this village. For this aim, several field studies and information collection from different organizations were conducted and potentials and attractions, the number of tourists, kind and objectives of the village visitors were determined qualitatively and quantitatively and finally some recommendation were proposed for tourism development in this village.*

Keywords: *capabilities, potentials, tourism development, Hasan Abad village.*

INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism is a very old phenomenon but yet was introduced as a recreational-social activity in the second half of 18th century in England and Europe. (Hamidi, 2009)

Rural tourism is not only equivalent to visiting regions around the village and site seeing because rural tourism is cooperative. For its precise definition it can be stated that rural tourism is composed of some activities and services for entertainment and relaxation of tourists pertaining to rural activities which is done by farmers and rural people for attracting tourists to their regions in order to earn money. If we accept this more broaden definition, then rural tourism also includes agricultural tourism and consequently it includes offering some services to tourists, such as accommodation, hosting, recreational and entertainment facilities, conducting regional celebrations and ceremonies, producing and selling handicrafts and agricultural products. (Sharifzadeh and Moradinezhad, 2002; Rohn Aldin Eftekhari and Ghaderi, 2002).

Tourism is an alternative for a concept that we know it as common and conventional tourism, mass tourism. One main feature of mass tourism was that many people just for recreational purposes visit some places such as shorelines with no attention to regional situation of those places. This type of tourism is mostly consumption-oriented. Negative consequences and side effects of this type of tourism caused many people to move towards an alternative tourism and they chose rural regions instead of shorelines. Of course this should

be accomplished with an approach of protecting and attention to these areas and not just for enjoyment and recreation. (Sharifzadeh and Moradinezhad, 2002; Shokuoei, 1996)

However another important reason for rural tourism is human fatigue due to urban and industrial environments and his innate tendency to earthiness of the village. In another words, today's civilized human which suffer from various pressures of industrial urbanization and industrialization have an increasing tendency to achieving natural relation and cultural of rural societies. Also extension of organizations which offer services to tourists is another main factor for growth of rural tourism. (Sharifzadeh and Moradinezhad, 2002; Shokuoei, 1996)

Every country at any development level tries to find necessary response to concerns such as industrialization and pollution in large cities which is higher than standard level. Meanwhile countries that move towards diversifying their economies and want to disengage themselves from a single base economy, are seeking to recognize its ways or develop new ways and methods. One of these methods, as mentioned previously, is tourism which is included to development plans of most countries, especially those that take advantage of a good location, in order to enhance their national development process. Rural dwellings especially in third world countries which constitute about half of the world population are facing more severe problems such as rural immigrations, low level of employment, low level of efficiency in agricultural sections or shortage of welfare and service infrastructures and etc., while considerable numbers of these dwellings have an appropriate location and important elements for attracting tourists, such as natural scenery, ancient monument, climate diversity, social traditions and etc., and are good sites for tourism activities. (Shokuoei, 1996)

However rural dwellings of Iran also encounter the mentioned problems, they are good choices for tourism development. The government planned to move from single base economy towards diverse and sustainable economy and one of its plans is tourism development and rural dwellings are good sites for development of this part of economic activities. (Shokuoei, 1996) Undoubtedly, to achieve this goal we need to know tourism process and classification of approaches, policies and socio-cultural, environmental and economic influences, so relying on a scientific background and our awareness of negative and positive influences of this phenomenon in Iran and the world, we can select a reasonable, realistic approach along with correct planning and management of tourism within a sustainable and comprehensive development process.

Kurdistan province as a part of Iranian territory is full of virginal and potential tourism creativities and capabilities in different areas specially ecotourism. According to its climate and weather condition and based on historical texts and archeological researches, this province is the first dwelling of Aryan tribes at western and eastern regions of Orumiyeh Lake.

Kurdistan has diverse natural sceneries. Mountains, hills, plateaus and plains in this province are very eye-catching. (Shah Hoseini, A. 2005).

Natural attractions of Kurdistan province such as AbidarForest Park, Uraman region, Ghirveh mirage, Koilehwaterfall, PirSalehfountain, Babagar fountain, Karaftu cave and other dozens of regions and also remained heritages of ancestors of this territory such as manuscripts, relievos, ancient monuments, castles, governmental constructions and other lasting relicsredouble our responsibilityforintroduction and appropriateuse of these relics and attractions. Capacities and potentials which can be activated and play a significant role in creation of job and income in the region could reduce some social problems.

Based on above issues, to improve development operation in rural regions specially the studied region, appropriate strategies based on environmental condition and features, attractions and ecological products of the region is needed for rural tourism development. Reports of national database of earth science. (2006).

In this research, understanding the fact that knowing abilities and constrains of tourism in Rameh rural region can have a constructive effect on appropriate tourism planning in this rural region and resolving its problems, it is tried to answer these questions. What are abilities and constrains to rural tourism

development? Which strategies are there for tourism development conducive to rural and national development?

Theoretical principles of the research

Rural development specifically has promoted since 1950s. Initially, i.e. 1960s and 1970s, rural development was economically important for regional societies. Thereafter rural development was introduced as a tool for development of rural societies and experts have been trying to present different patterns and methods for increasing role of tourism in economic and social revitalization. Today different economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects of rural tourism are discussed and considered.

In the context of relation between tourism and rural development, there are three viewpoints. The first viewpoint uses tourism as a strategy for rural development. In this viewpoint considering increasing trend of destruction of villages and reduction in farming, it is tried to propose a new strategy for revival of rural regions through supplementary activities or evolving these regions according to their human and natural resources. The only way for revitalization of these villages is proposing plans which can utilize their human and natural resources, create income and increase welfare of rural regions dwellers. Environmental conservation organization. (1994).

In second viewpoint, tourism is considered as a policy for reconstructing rural dwellings. Proponents of this viewpoint believe that excessive reliance of rural producers on farming can be reduced and they can participate in new economic opportunities. In eastern European countries, it is emphasized on this viewpoint, i.e. tourism development as a tool for reconstruction of villages after farming collapse.

In third viewpoint, rural tourism is discussed as a tool for sustainable development and protection of natural resources. This viewpoint is demanding long-term growth of tourism without destructive effects on natural ecosystems. (Alvani, 1993; Shah Hoseini, 2006)

Rural regions are vulnerable and prone to environmental, social and economic changes. Especially experience shows that wherever tourism is extended spontaneously and without effective planning and management, it will lead to undesired consequences and in long time its disadvantages are greater than its benefits. (Hamidi, 2009) Consequences such as environment pollution, destruction of water resources, flood, soil erosion and destruction of forests and pastures are some obvious side effects during two recent decades. For this reason, during last years the concept of sustainable tourism has been improved to respond threats of unorganized tourism.

Sustainable tourism tries to regulate relations between host society, tourism site and tourists because these relations can be either dynamic and constructive or destructive. It also seeks to adjust pressure and conjuncture among these elements which consequently reduces environmental and cultural damages, satisfies visitors and helps in economic growth of the region. Tourism can contribute to creation of job and income and revival economy of regional societies. It also can impart in reinforcement of regional culture and can be effective in protection of environment or its reconstruction. On the other hand, tourism is able to weaken economy of regional societies and reduce life quality.

Sustainable tourism development is a development in which balance, preservation of values, morality quality and beliefs and economic advantages all together can be seen and it is tried to replace a purely economic development by an excellent, well-adjusted and comprehensive development. In this view, tourism development using available resources is such that it not only fulfills economic, social, cultural needs, legal rules of society and tourists expectations but also provides unity and integration, cultural identity, environment health, economic balance and local people's welfare (Asadi, 1999).

Thus, on one side, tourism development in rural regions can have an important role in diversifying economy of rural societies and be an underlying for sustainable rural development and on the other side, it is a tool for

excitation of national economic growth through overcoming underdevelopment notions and improving local people's life standards.

Research Method

In all social researches, there are especial techniques for information and data collection. In this research the secondary data analysis technique was used. In this technique, initially required information is selected from available data and then it is analyzed. Therefore, in this research initially necessary data were gathered from statistical annals of Semnan province, journals, reports of authorities (such as county (Ostandari), Municipality and organizations of tourism and cultural heritages, management and planning, geological sciences, environment and natural resources protection, National Cartographic Center and aerology) books and articles and then they were analyzed. Finally required conclusion was driven from data analysis and in addition to study available problems and barriers some recommendation was made.

The Research Findings

1. investigating situation of the studied region

- Introducing Hasan Abad village

This village is located at Sanandaj township, 5 km south-west of Sanandaj city, and is the center of Abidar rural district and is considered as one of villages in central part of Sanandaj and its suburbs. This village is the biggest village of the province and covers 18 villages under its penetration.

- Historical situation:

According to available references, Hasan Abad village was founded by Amir Khan Ardalan in 746 AH. At that time a strong castle was constructed on a hill overlooking the village for Darala Yalah's reign and later in 1046 AH this centrality was transferred to Sanandaj.

- Ancient monuments of the village
 - 1) Hasan Abad Fort on a hill overlooking the village, whose destroyed watchtower, fence and long wall surrounding the fort are remained.
 - 2) Yahud hill, local people calls it Na'al Band, is located at 2 km of the village.

Both ancient places are historical monuments and were recorded by cultural heritages organization by record No. 11858.

- Handicrafts

At current condition, Hasan Abad village has handicrafts such as carpet-weaving, Kilim weaving, Jajim weaving and producing different kinds of potteries with a traditional method which is called "Hehvar" and knife making using goat horn.

- The nature and farming

For many years, due to existence of large plains and farms and also proximity to Gheslugh River, people in Hasan Abad have been cultivating crops such as rice, wheat, beans, corn and summer crops and rice pollen is famous all over the Iran. Now with an increase and growth in population and expansion of residential and industrial areas and adjacency to city, most of agricultural lands have been sold for constructing airport, water treatment systems and different offices.

Hasan Abad has green nature and pastures and presence of a part of Abidar nature in this village helped in beauty and attractiveness of natural sceneries.

Generally because of proximity of Hasan Abad to city, in a way that it is gradually becoming city suburb. Therefore, the number of passengers who annually travel to Hasan Abad is more than other villages of the region. But what is important is that small number of visitors have tourism purposes because despite of its

broadness comparing to other villages, Hasan Abad has no tourism facilities and attractions, even its rural texture has been approximately lost or a texture similar to that of marginal places of city has been replaced it. At this time, except old castle of Hasan Abad which is historically important not architecturally there is no attraction in Hasan Abad. Even the nature of this village has been approximately destroyed due to recent construction activities. Most attractive places actually are located at the route to the village, between Hasan Abad and sanandaj, i.e. intact and attractive nature of Abidar Foothill which attracts many visitors during warm seasons.

Therefore, many people visit regions around the Hasan Abad village but not for tourism purposes rather for selling or buying land or vocational activities. Thus it cannot be known as tourism. A small part of activities which can be included in tourism is a short time resident and the main intention of visitors is traveling to other villages in the way to Dadaneh and Karju.

Currently there is no certain statistics to determine the number of visitors or tourists of Hasan Abad village and what is known is mostly qualitative information which was obtained by field studies and there is no quantitative information.

- view and scenery

The road to Hasan Abad village has eye-catching and beautiful scenery which is unique among all roads of the province. The main reason for such scenery is that this road passes through Abidar foothill and consequently on one side it reaches mountain and on the other side it reaches urban texture of sanandaj city. Therefore it has beautiful scenery which is attractive both at night and during the day. At another side it leads to Abidar which is the region epitome of beauty. Along Sanandaj-Hasan Abad route, there are Kilaneh, Dadaneh and Karju villages which are located west of sanandaj and Abidar rural district and are important villages of the region, whose people have relatively high commercial and social intercourses with sanandaj city and most of the people travel to sanandaj at least once a day.

On the other hand, some part of the road between Dadaneh and Karju attracts many tourists especially at the end of spring and in early summer. Therefore it is natural that according to considerable traffic in this part of exit route of Hasan Abad village, one appropriate road which meets visitor's needs is required.

Tourism potentials:

Maybe the most important tourism attraction of Hasanabad village is Hasan Abad Castle. This castle which is located approximately at eastern edge of the village is observable from all points of the village and is mostly historically important.

Of course it is noteworthy that at early months of New Year, Hasan Abad village has a beautiful and green nature which is due to nature of Abidar and sanandaj. For this reason more local tourists stay at the village for several hours during these months.

Handicrafts of the village such as carpet weaving, kilim weaving, Jajim weaving and production of potteries are completely performed by traditional methods then they can be considered as another tourism potential of Hasan Abad village.

However, Hasan Abad village is losing its rural appearance; some old and rural buildings among its lanes can attract attention of visitors.

- Capabilities of Hasan Abad village

1- Generally, because of proximity of Hasan Abad village to the province center (as the largest village in the province and the nearest village to Sanandaj city) it has better infrastructure facilities comparing to other villages of the province. Consequently it can offer more services and basically the possibility of investment is greater. In addition, because there is a blend of rural and urban biological systems and also due to changes in people's behaviors and life in Hasan Abad village, the possibility for creating new spaces and satisfying tourist's needs is considerably higher. This fact along with extensiveness of the village is considered as the most important capability of the village, which compensate other deficiencies of the village.

- Tourism installations and facilities

However, Hasan Abad village is larger than other villages of the region and province and also it has more facilities because of recent developments, unfortunately due to lack of attention to tourism, the condition of Hasan Abad is not much better than other villages with respect to tourism installations and facilities.

Nevertheless, maybe Hasan Abad is the only village in the province which has a relatively large restaurant and hall which needs more appropriate handling and services to service urban visitors and actually it has this potential with respect to its location and size.

Also a small boarding accommodation belonging to Education organization is the only accommodation in the village and it cannot be applied for other uses such as residence of visitors. Moreover, in this village yet there is no room or hostel appropriate for temporary residence of tourists. Even there is no appropriate land in any scale for providing services to tourists because no place was predicted in previous plans of the village. About five grocery stores, one of which has good facilities, are the only facilities and services which can be useful for tourists.

Furthermore, during recent years because of an increase in price of lands, land trade and an increasing tendency of people in surrounding areas such as Sanandaj for real estate trade in Hasan Abad, real estate firms has considerably been grown and the number of these firms is increasing.

In this condition, it can be stated that Hasan Abad does not have a good situation with respect to tourism facilities and services and despite of its relative extensiveness, no acceptable growth has been observed in this context and Hasan Abad does not have a good condition both from facilities perspective such as accommodation and halls and also from providing information perspective.

Influence of Sanandaj city on Hasan Abad village and its attractions

Proximity of Hasan Abad village to Sanandaj city (5 km south-west of Sanandaj city) caused resulting changes in Sanandaj city to influence this village so that despite of its rural condition it is considered as a center for attracting population around the Sanandaj city. It is one of satellite regions and marginal villages of Sanandaj city which attracts considerable number of immigrants to Sanandaj. Indeed, the most important population center which influences Hasan Abad village and its tourism attractions is Sanandaj city. Sanandaj as administrative and political center of the province with its centralized markets has a significant effect on growth and flourishing of tourism within this city and its surrounding areas. Sanandaj city is one of old and historical cities of the province which contains many historical attractions and valuable places, therefore it always attracts the attention of tourists. Its attractions along with its political, administrative and market centrality caused this city to be the main effective center in the province. Every change in this city initially manifests itself on its appearance and at the least possible time affects its surrounding centers.

Hasan Abad village like other rural regions around Sanandaj city has been affected by development process in this city. During recent decades residing in suburbs inside the legal domain of Sanandaj city has been limited and housing transferred to rural regions around the city one of which is Hasan Abad village.

Location of Hasan Abad village in southwest of Abidar mountain which always attracts many mountain climbers and tourists during different seasons influenced the situation of Hasan Abad village and made this village the center of relevant changes in tourism. Furthermore, since Hasan Abad village is the center of Abidar rural district, the attention is also given to it from perspective of offering service to villages of this rural district and this caused the population to move from surrounding towards this village. Particularly location of Hasan Abad village and its castle on the way to southwestern villages with good weather condition, such as Kilaneh, Kani Meshkan, Dadaneh and Karju has been effective in attracting tourists and passengers of these villages.

Investigating the number of tourists, type and objectives of the village visitors

The number of tourists:

Hasan Abad village with its hill and historical castle and a green and enchanting environment especially southern hillside of Abidar mountain accepts many tourists particularly citizens of Sanandaj. The scenery of this village and interest of Sanandaj people in using natural graces and beautiful nature of Hasan Abad village

and visiting its historical castle attracts many visitors. What can be easily observed is a sudden increasing trend in the number of tourists and passengers entering Hasan Abad at weekends and holidays such that all entry and exit paths of this village and other usable routes encounter crowd of population who want to spend last hours of the week near the scenery of Dadaneh and Karju villages and need to pass through Hasan Abad village. In these days many citizens and passengers even intending to pass Hasan Abad village, rest for some hours or minutes near the beauties of these village. Although the number of visitors of Hasan Abad village is considerably more during warm seasons of year, mountain climbers and citizens of Sanadaj also visits the nature of this village during cold months and holidays of the cold season. Several interviews with trustees of this village revealed that at weekends and holidays approximately one thousand visitors visit this village and its surrounding arboretum and scenery.

Type of tourists

Field studies and interviews with trustees of Hasan Abad village indicated that people specially citizens of Sanadaj to take a jaunt to Hasan Abad and its surrounding arboretums during all seasons of year but during summer, spring, fall and winter, respectively, the highest number of tourists visit this village. Although these tourists may visit Hasan Abad village during the week, mostly they go there at weekends and holidays.

According to performed studies, the majority of visitors of this village are local and of our compatriots. Based on the proximity of the village to Sanadaj city, sanadajian citizens are the main visitors of Hasan Abad. These are of different sexual and age groups who go to Hasan Abad individually or with their families or friends. But the resident time is very short such that some only stay for some hours in the evening of Friday. (Hamun, 1996).

Objectives of tourists

The main objectives of tourists for taking a trip to Hasan Abad are recreation and relaxation at farms, arboretum and green space, then mountain climbing and rarely visiting historical castle of Hasan Abad as the initial and old center of Kurdistan province.

Tourism Facilities and installations in Hasan Abad village have a poor condition and this can be a weakness point of this village. (Lanea, 1994).

Instead because Hasan Abad village is located on the path to Dadaneh and Karju villages and is capable of attracting tourists, it can use the tourism industry as a source of income and employment.

Totally with reinforcing infrastructures of Hasanabad village and equipping it with tourism facilities and installations we can observe a boom in tourism industry and creation of income and job in this village.

Kurdistan province is one of the richest provinces in Iran from diversity and values of handicrafts perspective and Hasan Abad village, which is of Sanadaj city suburbs and is a village of great antiquity, undoubtedly had a significant role in production of handicrafts specially carpet, Kilim and Jajim in the past. But today the tendency to produce handicrafts has been decreased. By encouraging people to produce and develop handicrafts and also creation of a small handicrafts bazaar in the village indirect employment opportunities can be created. Considering that available potential capabilities in Hasan Abad village in agricultural and horticultural areas are unique and creation of more jobs in horticulture and its development and even development of traditional and industrial beekeeping directly are influenced by tourism, production of horticultural products (fruits) is increased through an increasing demand for tourism. Tourism development in Hasan Abad village indirectly gives rise to creation of new job opportunities in productive sections, i.e. agriculture and industries.

Hasan Abad village has required and potential capabilities for tourism development. By reinforcing economic infrastructures such as roads, hotels, restaurants and other tourism plans, many tourists visit this village and each internal or foreign tourist should pay some expenditure and this tourism expenditure is source of income for people of the region and village.

The most important objectives which are taken into account for economic and political aspects of tourism development in Hasan Abad village are either qualitative or quantitative. They are discussed as follows:

1) Quantitative objectives:

- increasing foreign currency and Rial income through exploitation of historical monuments (Hasan Abad Castle), recreational places such as parks and selling local handicraft products
- creating new job opportunities at different sections
- Constructing buildings for accommodation and food services, such as restaurants and hostels
- increasing the contribution of tourists comparing to the past and creating a competition among rural and urban tourism sites

2) Qualitative objectives:

- providing appropriate condition and facilities for tourists to spend their leisure time well
- offering tourism services by educated and experienced human force
- developing handicrafts of the village and region
- Creating new thoughts and ideas through cultural exchange
- Relative economic and social welfare of Hasan Abad dwellers

Conclusion

Regarding the value added, income and job which is resulted from tourism along with cultural exchange and knowing different people and ethnicities as well as preserving old beliefs and traditions of different regions, importance of tourism industry and the necessity of paying attention to it become obvious. Certainly since villages in Iran are located in the nature and utilize its graces and also many ancient and historical monuments and abundant human force exist in these villages, they have the necessary requirements for using profits resulted from tourism industry. In this regard, paying attention to issues that are conducive to satisfaction of tourists as the main element of tourism and also those which prevent possible cultural and environmental damages is needed to be considered in order to observe a growth in the number of tourists. Present study showed that due to specific climatic, natural and Geomorphologic features of Hasan Abad village, this village has many capabilities and natural and historical attractions that can be employed for tourism development and they can result in sustainable development of the village and protection of intact and beautiful nature of the region.

The results revealed that Hasan Abad village does not offer good facilities and services to tourists and despite of its relative extensiveness, no acceptable growth has observed in this context. Hasan Abad village does not have a good situation with respect to both facilities such as accommodation and restaurants and informing people. Generally its facilities and installations for tourist attraction are in a poor condition and this is one of its weaknesses. (Slee, Farr and Snowdon, 1997).

Performed studies on the number, type and objectives of Hasan Abad village showed that a sudden increase is observed in the number of tourists and passengers visiting Hasan Abad village at weekends and holidays such that all entry and exit paths are full of people who want to spend the last hours of the week near the scenery of Dadaneh and Karuj villages and must pass through Hasan Abad village. During summer, spring, fall and winter, respectively, the highest number of tourists visits this village.

The majority of visitors of this village are local and of our compatriots. Due to the proximity of the village to Sanadaj city, sanadajian citizens are the main visitors of Hasan Abad.

The main objectives of tourists for taking a trip to Hasan Abad are recreation and relaxation at farms, arboretum and green space, then mountain climbing and rarely visiting historical castle of Hasan Abad as the initial and old center of Kurdistan province.

Recommendations:

According to importance of this village in rural tourism development within Kurdistan province, it is recommended to:

- Increase necessary facilities and services for tourists (constructing hotel and restaurant, development of handicrafts production and sale, constructing spaces for children to play, creating green space, constructing parking lots and etc.)
- Construct tourist service centers along the path according to people's interests in tourism attractions.
- Provide the opportunity for all tourists to visit historical castle of Hasan Abad by excavation, archeological and repair activities
- Regarding the proximity to Sanandaj city, create forest park at margin of hill overlooking the village for optimized use of people
- Prevent illegal constructions on farms and arboretums
- Due to lack of appropriate transportation systems, its recommended to improve the accessibility to this village by foundation of travel agencies and firms that offer transportation services
- Due to destruction of houses and their old structure, authorities can encourage investment on tourism activities, consequently by constructing beautiful villas and buildings which are compatible with traditional texture of the region as far as possible; they can help in growth of tourism.
- Establish required healthcare centers, restaurants and super markets in the region
- Based on climatic and geological characteristics of the region, appropriate location studies must be conducted for constructing new buildings
- Publish notes and brochures in English, Persian and other languages for informing people about the recreational sites of the region.
- Train local people how to contact and host visitors. Training sanitary issues is also essential.
- Control and manage the number of tourists entering the region and scattering them all over the region. To achieve this, it is recommended to implement training plans and train people how to protect environment, also group tours should be conducted. Cooperation of local people in these activities ensures the success of the plan.

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