

Studying the Role and Situation of Tourism (Third Millennium Business) on Sustainable Development of Island of Persian Gulf (Stressing on Hormoz Island)

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Abstract

After industrial revolution and transformation of status quo in human living, the necessities and objectivities have been more decreased or increased the same as travel. Since 18th century, the necessity and importance of travel has been promoted such that it turned to an industry. By the time, tourism industry shined and justified economically such that the transportation industry obtained most profitable rank after oil industry. In Persian gulf and its islands, there are various tourism attractions including oil and gas reservoirs, types of fish and shrimp, and edible and industrial aquatics, prey and fishing, islands as the center of reproduction of tortoises, Mangrove forests, coexistence of deer and sea birds in Khark island and sand and cleft coasts that can attract thousands of tourists annually. This paper aims to study Hormoz Island where by its geographical landscape, various minerals, cleft coasts, sea caves and some historical monuments like Hormoz castle can attract hundreds of tourists. According to such capabilities, by providing the bed for nourishing the tourism capabilities and providing investment opportunities, one can promote the economic situation of island and develop tourism industry in islands of Persian Gulf and consequently by developing tourism industry could be attained sustainable development of Persian Gulf Islands. This study aims to investigate potentials of Hormoz Island in the field of tourism development and provide executive alternatives for improving this industry.

Keywords: *Persian Gulf islands, tourism, sustainable development, Hormoz Island*

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Introduction

Tourism industry is most peaceful movement of human family with direct effect on the progress of knowledge, culture and economy in the societies and may play role as the most effective factor for understanding among nations. This industry may be accounted as one of the most dynamic economical parts through the world (Fargam, 1996, P. 13). Tourism is accounted as one of the propelled economic sectors called “Third Millennium Business” and international tourism flows may provide the most dynamic economic transactions among countries (Vala & Bichril, 2005: 31). Tourism development may cause dynamism and promoting the economic power, growth of creativity and innovation in the economy, making legal and incentive beds for attracting the private sector for investment to make and develop infrastructures of tourism industry, making the identity and promoting the dignity and respect of residents, promoting the trend of social and cultural development, natural resources protection and increasing the ecological capacities, maintaining and protecting the historical values,... in the islands of Persian Gulf and this indicates that by development of tourism we may obtain a thing more beyond of economy and that is the development of peace and friendship as well as protecting the human and nature rights and on the other hand, it may be considered as the basis for development of geostrategic regions of human factor and economic benefits (Ezzati, 2002: 55) and because Persian Gulf is one of the most important strategic regions through the world, so, tourism may be considered as very important factors for attracting the investments by attracting the tourists. Persian Gulf states are competing with each other by attracting the tourists and making a proper infrastructure, for this reason, it is very important attending to tourism geopolitics. By enjoying from types of main attractions of tourism, Iran may play effective and important role both economically and by recognizing itself as an independent culture through modern world (Karami, 2008: 34). According to classification

of UNESCO, due to having tourism capabilities, Iran possesses fourth rank through the world; but it has the fourth rank for attracting the tourists and income from it, and its main reason is lack of introducing the tourism potentials in Iran (Goharian, 2005: 37).

Wide territory of Iran may not be only limited to 30 provinces attached to themselves on the map, but it has tens of small and big islands among waters of Persian Gulf that are belonged to this culture and territory, islands that nourished border guards in itself.

These islands play important role strategically and from past they were the center of trading in Persian Gulf with exporting or importing many goods to/ from, but some of these islands lost their past commercial importance, but are important politically and strategically. Due to their suitable situation, these islands were very important. But today, due to some problems in these islands, they lost their boom and consequently their population is reducing. One of the most important activities for stability of population in these islands is development of tourism that can flourish them. Islands, where due to their suitable situation, have high potentials of tourism include Qeshm, Hormoz, Lark, Kish and Hengam Islands. Qeshm and Kish islands, due to their very suitable situation and role playing in the region, as well as making free zone in them, there have been conducted some activities in the field of tourism, but other islands were less successful in this field. Because, Hormoz Island has unusual military importance, but today its importance has been reduced and because in modern day that economy of developed countries is based on the income resulted from tourism, in this island also due to tourism potentials, one can hope to the income resulted from such attractions. It is necessary to attend the tourism program of Hormoz Island by relying on the physical development of Bandar Abbas (Nourbakhsh, 1983).

This paper, by recognizing the geographical situation of Hormoz Island and tourism powers of this island, aims to provide alternatives and recommendations in the field of development of tourism industry in the region to finally can be obtained sustainable development in this island.

1- Literature Review

Almost 50% of \$400 million income from tourism industry in the world only enjoyed by 5 European and US countries such as USA,

France, Spain, Italy, UK, and Germany and could allocate maximum portion. In this case, France by attracting 76 million tourists annually is in the first rank and USA with about 60 million tourists annually in the second rank followed by Italy, UK and Germany (Moshiri, 2006, P. 12). According to the statistics of Tourism Global Organization on 2006, France could attain first rank in the table for best countries attracting the tourists and followed by Spain and US, but based on achieving the income, US could attain first rank.

According to anticipations of World Tourism Organization (WTO), the number of tourists globally may be attained to more than 1.5 billion people on 2020 (Ranjbaran, 2000).

For attracting the tourist and attaining the income by this profession, world's countries have come to the coasts and islands on their surroundings. Development of coastal strip and islands in different countries has been influenced by various factors, but during two past centuries, there were two main reasons for development of coastal strip as well as islands including:

- 1- People's need to sea for spending their life and recreational requirements in the sea side;
- 2- Because colonialist countries in the past more attended to the coasts and islands and there they could grasp the trade of a part of world, so they dealt with reclaiming there and now some buildings of that era can be seen.

Countries that have high rank in tourism industry through the world and obtained more income from this industry, could successfully act related to tourism in the islands. Some of such countries include in Sweden, islands such as Uland and Gotland, in USA, islands such as Virgin in Caribbean Sea, east of Portorico and southern west of Virgin islands, in Malaysia, islands such as Poalo Payar, Poalo Radang and Tioman (Beig Mohammadi, 2000, P. 44).

In Iran, in the coastal provinces, there are also some islands most of them aren't residential and or have fewer possibilities for attracting the tourists some of such islands are located in Khouzestan, Boushehr and Hormozgan provinces including Qeshm and Kish islands. On the other hand, establishing free zone is irrevocable for development of tourism in such islands.

Hormoz Island is also one of the islands in Hormozgan that despite having beautiful coasts and historical monuments couldn't yet find its place in the tourism (Nourbakhsh, 1990).

3- Methodology

Methodology is historical, descriptive- analytic and study area includes Hormoz Island located in the mouth of Hormoz Strait in the entrance of Persian Gulf from Oman. This study aimed to investigate the potentials and issues of attracting tourists in Hormo Island as well as tourism industry as an effective factor in development of this island.

4- Study Area

The study area is the elliptical Hormoz Island with surrounding area of 6000m. it is located in the entrance of Persian Gulf 6km far from Bandar Abbas. Due to its geographical situation (its closeness to Hormoz Strait) it is called as key of Persian Gulf. This situation made it important strategically and commercially. Drawing No. 1 indicates the situation of Hormoz Island (Nourbakhsh, 1983).

Based on political divisions, Hormoz Island is among Qeshm Town. In the newest census conducted on 2006, this island with 1143 familie, 5699 people with 2797 males and 2902 females. People in this island have fishing jobs and by this method may spend their living, but extraction and export of red soil of this island is another source of incoming for their habitats. Hormoz Island is one of the most suitable places in Persian Gulf for investing. This island is located in Hormoz island enjoying a special situation between Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean (Nourbakhsh, 1980: 25).

5- Historical Geography of Hormoz Island

The name of this island, today called "Hormoz", anciently called Jeron, Zeron, Old Ogiris, Oromoz, Harmoza, Hormooz, Armos and Hormozia.

Ibn Khordadbeh, great geographer of Iran mentioned an island next to old Hormoz called "Ormoz" in mid-9th century.

On 1300, due to invasion of Mogul riders to Old Hormoz, 15th Amir of Hormoz with a group of people, initially immigrated to Kish Island and then to Jeron (today Hormoz) Island. He established a new town in Hormoz Island and this town was considered as famous towns

during its era for two centuries. This king was the first king of new town and turned the original name of this island by virtue of its old territory to “Hormoz”. This town was considered as capital of new Hormoz and one of the most famous commercial centers in Persian Gulf. Its dignity continued until being conquered by Portugal. Alfotsoalbokerk encircled Hormoz Island on 1507 or 1508 and could establish a castle in a site called Morona.

Long times from conquer of Hormoz by Portugal, Shah Abbas could extrude Portugal people from islands of Persian Gulf, especially from Hormoz and it was considered as trading center in Persian Gulf and opened the route for trade of businessmen and remove their limitations.

Due to the security of Hormoz Island and its situation in Hormoz Strait, it was considered as trading center with Somalia, India, China and other countries and reinforced their situation.

By evolutions occurred in Gambron port in that time and current Bandar Abbas, Hormoz slightly lost its importance and all ships were docked in Gambron port and had business with Iranian businessmen. In the past times, Hormoz Island played an intermediate role such that goods were being purchased in Hormoz Port and then handled to Gambron (Bandar Ababs) port and then sent to all points through the country. But such intermediate role was lost and ships directly docked in Bandar Abbas and goods were sent to other points through the country by this port.

By continuing this trend and increasingly development of Bandar Abbas and turning it to the greatest port in Hormozgan province, the role of other ports such as Hormoz was reduced and this port couldn't recover its situation.

Hormoz also deals with goods imports with small scale from countries in the area of Persian Gulf, particularly UAE.

As indicated above, due to its long history, Hormoz Island possesses treasure rich of historical and cultural events and due to having beautiful coasts; it has different forms of tourism.

Due to ignoring the islands in past decades and lack of supplying the needs of its inhabitants, these islands either expelled or deserted town and this was seriously indicated in Hengam, Lark and Hormoz Islands and their population immigrated to the countries of Gulf area.

Hengam and Hormoz Islands, due to their historical and strategical bases are among islands that can have activity in the tourism (Resource No. 12, 2006).

6- Touristic Attractions of Hormoz Island

Interesting places and attractions of Qeshm Island may be divided into two main groups (Nourbakhsh, 1980)

Group one- Natural attractions (for people who are interested in nature, environment, sports, coastal and marine recreations, researchers of geology, researchers of zoology,...)

Group Two- Cultural attractions (for people who are interested in art, culture, native and traditional customs)

6-1- Natural attractions

The perspectives and recreational sources of Hormoz Island include coral reefs in the coastal waters, Mangrove forests, sea turtles, aquatic birds, sea caves and stone borders, rocky banks, tidal zones, sandy beaches and geographical features.

Coral Reef:

Coral reef are among marine systems found in the tropical and semi-tropical shallow waters in where corals are dominated together with rubbles and dispersed sands. Coral reefs comprise the second rich biomass through the world after tropical forests. Coral reefs of Hormoz, with 125ha in area are located in the eastern south of island. This habitat provides a suitable place for nutrition and activity of marine turtles with high variety of aquatics. These corals may exit from water during tidal time and are accounted as attractions of Hormoz Island for tourists.

Mangrove Forests:

The Mangrove complexes of Hormoz Island is a man-made community with area of 16 ha located in a mud zone and this habitat comprises from about 1000 birds of 20 species of aquatics and near aquatics birds like egrets, terns and Kakaeis. These plant communities are the only wooden vegetation of tidal zone of tropical and semi-tropical shores with ability of tolerating with brines of sea due to different mechanisms that accounted as exclusive properties of these

plants. These Mangroves enjoy suitable habitat conditions for most aquatics and birds.



Figure 2- Mangrove Forests in Hormoz Island

Source: Authors

Sea Turtles

Sea turtles may be considered as the most oppressed aquatics that found very limited variety and species population as well as habitats. Among 5 species of marine turtles recognized in Persian Gulf waters, green marine turtle and hooked turtle laying eggs on the sandy coasts with mild slop in Hormoz Island and feeding in the coral regions and regions with sea weeds and Mangrove forests. Sandy habitats are suitable place for oviposition located in the eastern rank of Hormoz with length of 2500m and recent studies indicated their density in this area with about 60 turtles. These turtles come for laying eggs every year during late winter to early spring and about 50 turtles may be hatched and move towards sea that is one of the attractions for tourists.

Algae Communities:

Main habitat of sea algae include rocky shores that is because of presence of a fixed support for their growth. The main habitats for algae located in the range between tidal zones. Most marine organisms and aquatics like Mollusca, crustacean, fish, sea turtles and sea mammals directly feed algae. Algae carpets in the rocky shores, particularly during tidal period may be considered as natural interesting places and attractions on Hormoz Island.

Geographical Attractions:

Hormoz Island has been introduced as geographical gem of Persian Gulf due to its high rock and mineral variety that is another attraction of this island, particularly for people who are interested in geomorphology sciences. The main part of island comprises from salt dome, with area of 69% of total area of island comprising the southern

parts of island. Rock salt together with other stones are very crystalline and also suffered from deformation such that in the southern parts of island, one can see a network of great salty crystalline. Solubility and erodible of salt with strength of rocky blocks with it, like riolits, trakits and basalts caused many relieves and dry surface erosions in the salt dome of Hormoz and occurred a topography with many cracks and sharp wings and salty caves, particularly in the central part and west.



Figures 3 and 4- Salty caves in Hormoz Island

Source: Authors

Tidal Mud Zones:

They include low slop zones of southern shores that during day and night may be influenced by tidal hydrologic system with maximum 4m in height; due to their low slop and being secured from sea and wave shocks are mostly accounted as a deposits rich in organic materials. Mud zones of Hormoz Island with area of 200ha are located in the east and northern east of Island.

Sandy Shores:

These shores mostly comprise a strip with 20 to 30m in width located in the east to south of island attended by sea turtles for laying eggs; therefore they are accounted as sensitive coastal regions. In the sandy shores, there can be usually seen types of birds all year. Such coasts enjoy high recreational capability. They are considered as the most suitable sea side for swimming and water recreations and may be planned for this reason.

Rocky Shores:

This class of shores are seen in regions where there are mountains in the sea side and can be also seen in the southern to western shores of island. These shores may be raised as clefts with or without sandy strips during tides and or can be seen as low height rocky zones. Most algae zones of island has been located in such regions. One of the

attractions of these coasts include presence of marine caves that can be seen in the south and western south of this island.

Land Habitats:

Sensitive habitats include eastern north, south and western south of island due to the presence of birds particularly in the rocky zones due to their value for being the habitat of fishing eagle. It is also the inhabit of Jebeer Gazzal, radish and Jiroft that living in the central part of island towards south occasionally attains close to the urban region.

6-2- Cultural and Historical Attractions of Hormoz Island

Besides potential natural capacities of Hormoz Island, the various cultural and historical properties may influence on the wealth of tourism activity in this island and can complement the tourism; followings indicate the most important historical and cultural attractions of Hormoz Island.

Hormoz Castle

This castle that is located in the northern side of Hormoz Island and in the sea side is the most important castle remained from the era of dominance of Portugal people on the shores and islands of Persian Gulf. This castle established by the order of “Alfunso Albocork”, a Portuguese sailor on 1507 in a place called “Morta”. This castle has an irregular polygonal form. Its building is very strength and has walls with 3.5m in diameter with several towers with 12m in height. This castle comprises from ammunition warehouses, water reservoirs and rooms with arc ceiling. In the era of Shah Abbas that ended to the colonialism of Portuguese people in Iran, this castle could be occupied by Imam Goli Khan, a commander of Shah Abbas.



Figure 5- Hormoz Castle in Hormoz Island, a monument by Portuguese people
Source: Authors

Gelak Tower

Gelak in the dialectic of people in Bandar Abbas and Hormoz means Red Soil; due to anchoring the sailboats, this tower contains red soil in

the old building, this name has been selected for this coastal ruin located in the sea side.

Bibi Gol Castle

In the west of Portuguese building and near the Ridge of Tamkin Mountain passing from a hard route from the heights of Tamkin, and ended to Gariveh and Gardaneh Kooch, there can be seen the ruins of a small building called “Bibi Gol Castle”. The antiquity of this building goes back to Samanid and Saljougid era.

Zaferani House:

It is located in the east of Hormoz Island that was a place of loading and storing the goods in the warehouse in the past.

Other cultural and historical attractions of this island include: Hemola Shrine, Schools, and Tortabak (Nourbakhsh, 1980, Karami, 2008).

Situation of Tourism Industry in Hormoz Island:

Today, tourism industry in most countries is accounted as a symbol of cultural identity and is one of the main sources for earning foreign exchange (Fleischer, 1997: 12-13).

Tourism is one of the most important factor for regional civil work that is an exchange binding activity and balancing the economic and social development through the regions with distributing the income fairly (translated by Goharian et al. 2005: 25). This industry enjoys fundamental role for making the employment and complementary sources and secondary system, income, wealth adjustment, transforming the economic activities.

In Iran, despites presence of many islands and natural and manmade landscapes, these islands may be accounted as the beds tourism islands in Persian Gulf; but this needs long term and mid-term plans for tourism development in the islands and continuous management. By continuous planning for these islands, they can dominate from artificial islands in UAE in the field of attracting the tourists (Thabouti, 2008).

Due to its important and irrevocable role in the past, Hormoz Island is considered very important among foreign countries. This importance may flourish these islands in the time of colonization of England and Portugal.

The job of most people in this island is fishing but because it is populated, this job cannot meet their needs together with complications like lack of possibilities and unemployment. Because this island is isolated with no other jobs there, so tourism industry may provide them with the best job. This can also force its inhabitants to remain in the island and also operate from coasts of such islands. According to statistics, the number of tourists entered to Hengam Island during different years include as below:

Table 1- The number of entrance of tourists to Hormoz Island from 2004- 2008

Number of tourists	Year
300	2004
500	2005
650	2006
760	2007
850	2008
2700	Total

Source: Boat Owners Cooperative of Hormoz Island

According to table 1, the number of tourists attained to 850 people on 2008 and it may be increased by providing better services for them. These tourists due to lack of a place for residence, of course forced to have a one day travel to this island.

Role of Tourism on Sustainable Development in Hormoz Island

Tourism has a balancing role in the preparation of territory and results in development of social justice and optimal distribution of incomes and regional equilibrium. Tourism not only helps local economy but also improving the situation of local communities (Fleischer, 1997: 368). Tourism followed by sustainable development of Hormoz Island when it is protected from the environment of island and its cultural heritage; for having tourism with sustainable development in this island, followings may be recommended:

- 1- Protection from Natural, social and cultural sources and promoting these resources that it is possible by approaching national and regional planning.
- 2- Protection and development of economic activities and systems particularly handicrafts, because it may force local community cooperation.
- 3- Suitable marketing and full and comprehensive data sharing in the field of various natural, cultural and economic attractions of Hormoz is accounted as the most important alternative for sustainable tourism

and in this field enjoying from information and communication technology (ICT) is recommended, because electronic marketing is the most important approaches of tourism development.

4- Conducting the comprehensive researches for protecting the cultural values, environment and natural sources by attracting tourists, because upon conducting the fundamental and applied researches one can attain to such tourism objectives.

5- Training the local community as well as training the crew for achieving to International Standards (Gaderi, 2001).

Upon attending to above alternatives, tourism development in Hormoz Island including development of infrastructures, facilities, hotels, marine restaurants, development of marine transportation, development of water sports, creating recreational and welfare complexes,... follows the protection of environment and nature for hosts and guests (tourists).

In addition, tourism may promote the living of local people and helping the integrity of cultural and social structures of host community. In this case, tourism in the region, besides meeting the recreational needs of tourists and meeting the needs of current generation in the region may secure the enjoyment of future generation (Kazemi, 2006: 40). In addition to above mentioned, some factors are vital for development of tourism including security, discipline in providing the services, hygiene and health factors, transportation systems, data sharing systems and developing the infrastructures of tourism industry particularly hotel and restaurant. Finally, one can state that for attaining to a sustainable tourism and development in Hormoz Island, it is needed to have a strong managerial system, a management that must be formed in the field of efficiency of tourism in the regions and adapting with a systemic view in which there is a dynamism in the framework of supply and demand stressing on sustainable development (Papoli Yazdi & Sagaei, 2006: 113). If there is a strong managerial system in the tourism, Hormoz Island has applied all natural, social, cultural and economic capacities of region such that tourism development may result in social justice and geographical justice as well as sustainable development and donating the host community with promoted living quality with higher foreign exchange income for the region and country (Aarabi, 2003).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In Iran, in conditions that main part of economy depends on the oil export, therefore it is necessary to relieve from mono-product economy. Therefore, according to the mentioned conditions, one of the alternative suitable for achieving to sustainable economic development against severe price fluctuations and instability in the market of other exports products is development of tourism industry with optimally enjoying from capacities and powers of natural resources, historical, cultural and religious resources for attracting more tourists from overseas. Despite beautiful and historical towns present in the country, Persian Gulf also has vital importance and based on tourism attractions, due to its interesting places, it has been more attended, particularly water recreations in the Persian Gulf coasts is accounted as main issues.

This study investigates the tourist attractions of region and finally providing some recommendations for attracting more tourists in the region:

- 1- Investment for tourism facilities must be such that native population, while owning its possibilities, enjoying from suitable population situation and relative economic improvement.
- 2- One must provide the field of presence of private sector to progress the tourism industry in Persian Gulf region by presence of investors.
- 3- Making the beds and development of variety in the tourism attractions, particularly in the field of marine tourism in the region;
- 4- Making the security results in development of tourism; therefore attempting for stabilizing the domestic and foreign security may increase the number of tourists to the country as well as development of tourism in the region, increased income and making the stability.
- 5- Development of transportation may has positive effect on development of tourism industry. Developed transportation is very important for traveling to different provinces and towns in the region.
- 6- Proper data sharing is also important for making the people familiar with attractions and cultures and is also has positive effect on attracting the foreign and domestic tours in the Persian Gulf.
- 7- Making the tourism equipment and installations like building, hotel, landscaping, required services, and making tourism estates in the Persian Gulf.

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