

Studying the effects of Tourism in the economy, social and cultural development of The Persian Gulf with emphasis on the Iran

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Abstract

In order to plan, develop and manage the tourism industry, factors such as economy, natural and socio-cultural should be considered. Tourism has various positive and negative effects on the environment and on its context. Also, the environment affects the tourism trend. The effects of tourists' presence in the The Persian Gulf and in the island sections, especially on Kish Island, have a great importance. So their presence in this region will lead to a few economic, socio-cultural, environmental, infrastructural and managerial positive and negative effects. But what is important in this article is that the investigation and analyze of the tourism effects in the status qua of the region has a special condition. The The Persian Gulf region at the moment is the main center of tourism and being the attractive place for tourists in the region and Iran because of having extremely beautiful nature, historical, religious and human made attractions, also because of locating in the special strategic location and neighboring with the Strait of Hormuz. In the present study, a descriptive - analytical method and SWOT technique is used. The results show that the main effects of the tourism in economy, environmental, socio-cultural, infrastructural and managerial context of The Persian Gulf region is lead to special conditions such as improving the quality of local residents life, creating new job opportunities for the sections providing services and goods for tourists in agriculture and industry, revenue increase for the local residents in all economical sections such as services, agriculture and industry, expanding cultural exchange of local residents with tourists and reconstruction opportunities of environment and landscapes in the region.

Keywords: tourism, development, strategy, strengths and weaknesses, Persian Gulf

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Introduction

Tourism development will lead to economic prosperity and poverty decrease. Also, it has significant effects in revenue increase and unemployment decrease and as a result, it will improve people's life quality and welfare increase. In addition, tourism is a criterion for various cultures and civilizations and also from the political perspective, it makes international relations between governments more balanced and closer. From the religious point of view, most of the religions lay special emphasis on travel to all over the world for learning.

Tourism in high levels of economy and society will lead to talents flourish and educational improvement in all fields.

Countries which are active in the tourism industry attract millions of tourists; in addition, they are successful in producing high value art products with high quality in low amount beside the low value mass industrial products. On the other hand, due to technology, cultural, political, social and economic infrastructures created in the 21st century, tourism phenomenon is an inevitable reality in human behavior for satisfying curious spirit of him/her. Due to the nature and ability of tourism, in the post-structural economy era, it will accelerate the formation of the global village. In the growing trend of tourism, it will force undemocratic, conventional and introverted states to provide facilities in all fields for tourism development.

Iran, which has significant potential abilities in the environmental, historical, cultural heritage and etc. fields, due to the political issues and cultural-social concerns could not and should not keep itself far from the economy stream and on the other hand the international tourism market could not ignore Iran's tourism attractions.

Research method

In the current research, we used an analytic-descriptive method together with the SWOT method.

Research history

Tourism is introduced for the first time in 1811 Gregorian year in the English magazine (sporting magazine). Gradually the word “tourist” entered into other languages and the word “tourism” created. The touring for resting started from the 16th century.

In the prehistoric times, human travels to another place for finding food, escaping dangers, pastures. In later periods, they travel for business, curiosity fulfillment and discovery of unknown phenomena. Five thousand years ago, people travelled for commerce and trade, military actions and for the empires state administration, such as the Sumerians, Iranian, Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks and Roman Empire in the Mediterranean and Middle East. With the expansion of empires, the need for controlling borders and also for facilitating commerce and trade, roads are built. Meanwhile, Iranian by building four wheel carriages, Greeks by minting coins and use it instead of goods, promoting the Greek language and holding Olympic Games boost travels and tourism.

The Region’s Historical background

The Persian Gulf is a shallow marginal sea, which has an area of about 240 square meters lies southwestern of Asia and south of Iran. Geologists believe that about five thousand years ago, the primary form of The Persian Gulf formed besides the south plains of Iran and over time, under the effects of transformation of the internal and external structure of the Earth the current constant figure formed. The Persian Gulf formation back to a long time ago, which a few researchers believe that The Persian Gulf is the cradle of civilization of the world or the origin of mankind’s creation. Ancient residents of this region were the first people learnt seafaring and invent a ship to connect east and west. But Iranian seafaring in The Persian Gulf began five hundred years BC and during the reign of Darius I. Darius the Great creates world’s first navy. His navy crossed over the Indus River to Indian Ocean coast, Oman Sea and Persian Gulf, and then they went around the Arabian Sea and reached the end of Red Sea. He, for the first time, in the current location of Suez Canal commanded to dig a canal and his navy arrived the Mediterranean Sea from this canal. On the inscription placed on this canal, it is written

that: I am Persian. I dominate Egypt from Iran. I command to dig this canal. From the river flows in Egypt to the Sea which stream from Persia so this canal was dug as I command and navies travel to Iran from this canal as it is my will. In this inscription, Darius named The Persian Gulf as a Sea came from Persia.

Sinus Persicus or The Persian Gulf is the name for the first time Greeks called. As this is the first non-Iranian historic document about The Persian Gulf so there isn't any doubt that the name is racially selected. The Greeks named Iran "Persia and Persepolis" the Persian city or country for the first time. Strabo, a geographer born in the 1st AD century, had frequently mentioned The Persian Gulf in his book. He indicated that the Arabs' location is between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Flavius Arianus a Greek historian in his book "The Life of Alexander the Great" named this Gulf Prisco which is not nothing but Persian Gulf.

Of course, a survey in the travelogues or history books will increase the undeniable documents which emphasis on the name "the Persian Gulf". This irrigated land is always significantly important for Iranians both in terms of economy and military who had the powerful government and their empire spread for centuries. They can reach to the oceans by their ships and reach their economic and military goals.

Arabic literatures, also, are the best and rich sources for finding and justifying appellation of this Sea. In these sources and literatures discussed more than any cultural issues in any language about the Persian Gulf. Individuals who have a little knowledge about Islamic literature are familiar with Masoud Ibn Battuta, Hamdollah Mostofi, Yaqut al-Hamawi, Hamzah al-Isfahani, Nāsir Khusraw Qubādiyānī, Abū Rayḥān Al-Bīrūnī, Ibn Balkhi and others who write their books in Arabic. Despite the mentioned earlier scholars, there are new Arab writers who mentioned The Persian Gulf in their works without any change.

The Region's location and Ecologic characteristics

The Persian Gulf or "Khalīj-e Fārs" is the shallow marginal sea of the Indian Ocean that lies between the Arabian Peninsula and southwestern Iran. The sea has an area of about 233, 000 square km which is the third biggest Gulf in the world after Mexico Gulf and

Hudson Bay. This Gulf is located between 24° to 30° 30' N latitude and 48° to 56° 25' E longitude. The Persian Gulf is connected to the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea in the east by the Strait of Hormuz; and its western end is marked by the major river delta of the Shatt al-Arab, which carries the waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris. It is bordered on the north, northeast, and east by Iran; on the southeast and south by part of Oman and by the United Arab Emirates; on the southwest and west by Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia; and on the northwest by Kuwait and Iraq.

The Persian Gulf is one of the Iran's regions which has bad climate. The relative humidity is very high everywhere. Its wind is a wind that blows predominantly from a north-northwest direction and in west shore it blows along from the north to northwest and in the center of the Gulf from Iran's side, it blows from northeast to northwest and its direction changed in south shore from west to southwest. The Winds, known as "arc winds" blows from the southeast or the east and after that often the southwestern wind blows after that which locals afraid of it significantly because it damages their harbors.

The Persian Gulf water is saltier than the other waters because its rivers have more salt and minerals and also its evaporation is relatively higher than the rate of water received from rains and rivers. Its temperature in summer is 32 to 34 and in winter 15 centigrade. The Persian Gulf with unique features such as shallowness, saltiness, limited connection with high Seas, forms a special ecosystem and creates a set of dependent and constant life in its floor, inside and upper surfaces and shores. In terms of topography, The Persian Gulf region is dividable into several major areas. Very high and high lands, hills and lowlands are placed in this classification. Dispersion of high and very high lands is mainly within the range of the Islamic Republic of Iran country division and has surrounded all parts of this country from the northwest-northeast and also from the northwest-south and southeast. The highest point of The Persian Gulf, which is more than 5, 000 meters height is located in this topographic unit. The high unit located in the south of Iran is running parallel to the Persian Gulf. This unit draws to the vicinity of the Persian Gulf in some areas and in addition to the coast, it creates highlands and ridges. Amongst the

highlands are narrow but significant areas of the north and northeast of Iraq. This highland, which is the continuation of Alborz and Zagros Mountains, due to the Hydro-climatology feature, is followed with too many benefits for this country. In southern waters of The Persian Gulf there are not any notable high units. Only in the west and southwest of Saudi Arabia there are high strips have been developed with northwest-southeast trend which constitutes Hejaz and Asir mountains. Except the three above-mentioned areas, other areas are gravel ridges and lowlands.

Economic aspects

The enormous Oil and Gas reserves in the Persian Gulf and neighboring countries are the main reason for the economic importance of this region. The south Arabian countries of The Persian Gulf held half of worlds known oil and gas reserves and the remaining 10% is held by Iran. The appropriate economic situation of this region makes it as a commercial center or the connection route of the west and east. The Persian Gulf continues to keep its value as the market for selling, consuming and capital goods, or stock exchange and has a very important role in balancing the foreign payments of different countries of the world, especially industrialized countries and Japan. The other important criterion of the Persian Gulf is related to the rich mineral and food resources of the Persian Gulf states. In this region, there are all kinds of edible and decorative fishes, and also mineral resources such as iron, red soil, sulfur, Lead and etc.

Research findings

In this section we will introduce natural and historical attractions of The Persian Gulf with emphasis on Iran's attractions.

The Persian Gulf Islands

Kish Island's tourism attractions

The coral beaches, Grand Recreational Pier, coastal road which is extended around the island and a cycling track with an approximate length of 70 kilometers around with the tourists do cycling until midnight, and tourists can enjoy the following facilities bike rental stations, the Kish Olympic Sport Complex is allocated to 11 sports

fields, including volleyball, basketball, handball, indoor football, gymnastics, wrestling, Tae Kwon Do, judo, karate, chess, Billiard and Bowling.

The Coral Beach Park, The Bird Garden, The Ahovan (the deer) park, which too many Deer and birds live in a natural space, Wildlife Park, Dolphin Park and their beautiful playing are among the Kish attractions which tourists couldn't neglect to visit them.

Kish markets have special attraction and normally travelers during the day spending their time in these markets and at the night they are sightseeing along the beach and watching beauties of the Sea and do marine sports and cycling.

Tourism impact on the region's current situation

The major tourism impacts on The Persian Gulf region and on the economic, environmental, social, cultural, infrastructural and managerial contexts are, in total, caused certain conditions in the region which will be mentioned in the following:

- Facilities and services in the region and lack of these facilities in the neighboring regions lead to the fact that tourists' approach and attention to this region do not impress by the neighboring regions.
- Among the strength points of this region is that the accessibility to the Sea is very convenient. In a way that the Sea is conveniently accessible from the city's main road and the road to the city entrance.
- Revenue increase for the locals in all the economy sections such as services, agriculture and industry. In a way that the locals have an appropriate increase in their revenue by providing services and goods required by the tourists.
- Creating new job opportunities in the providing services and goods section to the tourists also individuals' employment at the launched or under formation tourist facilities as a local workforce.
- The studied region, due to the significant, valuable natural, cultural and historical attractions, has very high potential and ability for attracting tourists. Among the positive impacts of tourism in the region is using these abilities for attracting tourists and developing tourism in the region.
- From the general point of view, it can indicate that tourists' presence in the region, to some extent, has been able to be the origin of positive

impacts on most of economic aspects and this issue at the macro level provides comprehensive development aspects in the region.

- Life quality improvement of natives especially rural.
- According to the high volume demand of tourists for visiting the region, the facilities and accommodation services and hospitality sections in this region has been increased.
- Among the positive impacts of the tourists visiting the region is the increase of the recreational and entertainment facilities for tourists use, also the indigenous people benefits from these facilities.
- Instilling sense of pride from cultural assets and natural attractions in addition to introducing the region as a tourism hub in the country and in the world.
- Cultural exchange between locals and the rest of the country's tourists and creating cultural interaction and exchange.
- Creating a false culture due to the entrance of too many tourists with different cultures and impressibility of some local sub-cultures from them.
- Causing congestion in the region and disrupt the peace of residents and creating noise and visual pollutions and ...
- Cultural encounters and conflicts and sometimes physical impacts between locals and tourists
- Due to the tourists' presence in the region, the opportunity of environment and landscape improvement is provided. So the indigenous and residents together with the local officials pay more attention to preserve it. Among other positive impacts in the region, the increased public awareness towards the natural wealth can be cited.
- Increasing some kind of pollutions and damage to the natural environment and ecosystems due to the tourists' presence, waste production, sound pollutions and ...
- The studies show that the presence of tourists in the region, especially in the high demand seasons and their travel to Iran had numerous impacts on the infrastructure situation and their amount of utilization. Number of infrastructures in the region shows that the region has deficient and deficits in this matter and generally this region suffered from weakness. Indeed, if this huge amount of demand

and load imposed to the infrastructure's service capacity by the tourists, the weaknesses and shortcomings will be more apparent.

- Road traffic jams at the high demand seasons
- Accidents on the roads
- Political decisions of neighboring countries about Persian Gulf
- Lack of accountability of sanitary, health and first aid facilities to the tourists needs

High demand for welfare facilities such as:

- Information center
- Praying rooms
- Public sanitary facilities
- Telecommunication and internet installations

One of the most important organizational and managerial effects of tourism and tourists presence in the region is feeling the need to plan and design toward tourism improvement and organizing the tourists by the responsible managers in the country.

- The positive approach of the tourism's public sector managers and policy makers toward the preparation and providing informational and advertisement plans for the introduction of the region and its tourism ability for attracting more and more tourists.

SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis is a method which used for analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the region's tourism and its survival.

Strengths:

Strengths of tourism system are related to the points that inside the circle in the region are the sign of strength and it is noteworthy and preservative such as tourism institutions, welfare facilities and our strength banks and investors in the tourism economy.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses are the available deficits in the tourism of the region, which lead to a weakness in the appropriate function of it. Criteria such as lack of sufficient health facilities, lack of access to tourism institutions by some tourism sources, lack of convenient and sufficient hotels and these can be considered in this issue.

Opportunities:

Opportunities or facilities relate to the situations and facilities of this system such as geographic location, international relations, development infrastructures, tourism, culture and Etc. of the region, the country and the entire world which provide sufficient opportunity for tourism development or development of one of its dimensions.

Threats:

Deficits and threats are always causing slowdown in its development process so it should be recognized and some recommendations should be proposed for overcoming it.

On the following pages, we work on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of any kind of this study's dimension.

Table 1: residential and non-residential islands of Persian Gulf

Residential	Nonresidential Islands
Qeshm	Forurgan
Kish	Shidvar
Hormuz	Abbasak
Hengham	Ommolkorm
Larak	Nakhiloo
Lavan	Tahmadu Island (Jabrin)
Hendurabi	Om e Sile Island (Khan)
Greater Tunb	Garm
Lesser Tunb	Bunch
Sirri	Dara
Forur Bozorg	Qabre Nakhoda
Farsi	Kharu
Khark	mulyat
Kharko	SeDandon
Shif	Motaff
	Morqi
	Mir Mohna
	Cheraghi



Table 2: SWOT Analysis

Description	Inside situation		Outside situation	
	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Economic, social, geographical, environmental and cultural	There are abundant water resources specially in spring and Aqueduct	Extreme Heat of Areas such as Bandar Abbas and Bushehr, especially in summer	Commercial docks and establishing relationships with countries in the region	Ecotourism life destruction due to the lack of supervision at high demand seasons of the year
	Proximity to the Strait of Hormuz as a strategic area	Tourism's high costs and people's low per capita income	There are main accesses to reaching attractions in the region	Permitting immigration and urbanization which is leading to forgetting customs and cultural traditions of indigenous peoples

	There are potential human resources in the private sector for investing in tourism industry	Imperfect statistics and information about monuments	Private sector investment opportunities	There are a strong Association for attracting tourists in the region such as Emirates
	Availability of the Kish and Qeshm islands in the region as areas with high tourist attraction	Environmental degradation in aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems due to the overuse of the area	Becoming the first place of recreation and tourism center in the region	
	Enjoy beautiful beaches for watersports	Lack of access to sources of places prepared for tourism	Cultural and social interactions with the The Persian Gulf countries	Failure to allocate adequate funding to the region's tourism sector by the government
	There are different ecosystems such as mountain, desert, prairie, forest and sea	Lack of hotels and restaurants in the way stations	There are opportunities for various water sports	

Source: Research Findings

Proposing recommendations and suggestions

In order to adopt appropriate strategies for tourism development in the region and subsequently offering necessary programs and projects in this regard, as a result of studying cognition and analyzing the region's current situation of tourism we got the main advisor frameworks which can be offered in the form of following recommendations. These recommendations are the base for offering future strategies and suggestions.

- 1- Providing the necessary conditions for increasing the length of stay of passing travelers through the region
- 2- Paying attention to the natural tourism as the main element for tourism development in the region
- 3- Adopting an approach for detailed planning of tourism in the region specially on the natural tourism.
- 4- Tourism management system reform in a way that ensures the various organizations constructive engagement and two aspects of preservation and restoration and sustainable exploitation of their resources should be considered simultaneously.

- 5- Establishment and strengthening of tourism information system and information feedback system of markets and tourists in a way that creates interactive and dynamic information system.
- 6- Giving preference to resource mobilization prepared for tourism according to the attractiveness level and the possibility of tourism development.
- 7- Complete antenna communication networks and necessary access for tourist sites.
- 8- Paying particular attention to the health situation in tourism development in the region.
- 9- Strengthen formal and informal organizational structure and pay particular attention to the training of human resources.
- 10- Providing a substrate for cultural and educational exchanges and awareness in the region and establish two-way communication with other centers of world tourism.

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