

## **Challenges and Consequences of Rural Tourism in Rural Areas**

**Maryam Seyednazari\***

*Ph.D. Student of Agricultural Development, Department of Extension and Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.*

**Hossein Kuhstani**

*Associate Professor, Department of Extension and Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.*

**Fatemeh Kazemiyeh**

*Associate Professor, Department of Extension and Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.*

**Ghader Dashti**

*Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.*

### **Abstract**

In today's world, rural tourism is one of the most important parts of economic activities. This essential economic activity has been considered from different perspectives. Some consider it as a part of the tourism market and some consider it as a policy for rural development. The question is, what role and effect does rural tourism have in rural development? In the last decade of the 20th century, many socio-economic planners in European countries have introduced tourism as a reliable method with an evident vision for the development of villages, especially the most deprived ones. The nature of the tourism industry is to create employment and income, diversify the economy, social participation and use local resources. Most of the problems of backwardness and underdevelopment of villages are due to the lack of this industry rural tourism can help rural development by solving the above problems. Therefore, according to the importance of the topic, in this research, the consequences and challenges of rural tourism in rural areas are investigated.

**Keywords:** Village; Rural tourism, Consequence, Challenge.

---

\*Corresponding author: [M\\_seyednazari@tabrizu.ac.ir](mailto:M_seyednazari@tabrizu.ac.ir)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7834-9240>

Received: 11/08/2024

Accepted: 10/01/2024



## **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, according to the scope of demand and needs of rural environments, rural tourism is developing, and its importance and unique attractions are increasing daily. In the process of regional planning, rural tourism can be considered as a tool to increase local employment and improve the quality of life, and as a result, increase the level of economic well-being and regional social facilities. Women play an essential role as workers in the production of rural industries (Safari Almouti and Shams, 2018). The World Organization of Rural Tourism considers rural tourism to include all types of tourism with facilities and welfare services in rural areas that provide the opportunity to benefit from natural resources and natural attractions along with participation in rural life (Baylor, 2018). Therefore, he considers rural tourism as an approach to attract and retain tourists, to get to know rural life, which, in addition to rural prosperity and development, provides the possibility of benefiting from the natural gifts and environmental attractions of the village for urban residents (Mahdavi, 2019). The concepts of the rural environment have changed fundamentally. Previously, the rural economy was provided only through agriculture, but now it is increasingly based on the service economy, one of which is tourism services (Lopez Sanz, 2021).

Rural tourism is a relatively ambiguous concept. In general, it can be considered as an alternative activity for the declining and threatened traditional rural economy, or as an additional and surplus activity to diversify the rural economy and preserve rural communities and life. Local people looked. In both cases, rural tourism can have various effects on the rural environment and may create various changes in the rural lifestyle (Saarinen, 2007). Therefore, rural tourism as an alternative activity has been noticed by planners for two reasons: a) the ability of tourism to help solve problems and challenges facing rural areas, such as planning, village-city balance, laying the groundwork for social changes, b) laying the groundwork for economic and infrastructural development and better access to employment and income opportunities; Both of these goals help rural residents to stay in the village.

Rural development experts, considering the advantages and positive effects of tourism activities in creating income and job opportunities as a new option, believe that rural tourism has a high ability to promote rural lifestyles and to create positive changes in Income distribution is done in these areas and as an efficient tool, it plays a special role in creating added commercial value for important local producers (Sidjani, 2016).

## **2. Research method**

This article was compiled in the manner of a review of internal and external sources and integrated with the analysis of experts. Therefore, research materials and methods are a combination of library work and the use of internet resources.

## **3. Findings and discussion**

Rural tourism was formed in the 19th and 20th centuries and expanded as a separate and specific part of tourism due to the growth of demand and more due to the increase in accessibility and mobility, increase in income, and leisure time. But the nature of demand changes due to the increase in competition among new tourist destinations and attractions (Amiri et al., 2001). In general, rural tourists are important from two aspects. One as a broad global activity and the other in terms of emphasizing it in regional and local development policies; (Hatami, 2014). Rural tourism also as a suprastructural function can expand and continue through participation and dependence on other economic and cultural sectors of the society and in turn play an essential role in the growth and excellence of the village and as a result of its connection with national development in the development process of the country to perform (Shamsaldini, 2009). In addition to these positive economic and social effects of tourism, this phenomenon has also created some negative consequences for these areas. Tourism can lead to adverse social effects such as creating a dramatic effect, commodification of culture, displacement and migration, dependency, crime, addiction, change in the social values of the host society, and language change (Ziaei and Tarabian, 2019). ). In the following, we will fully address the consequences and challenges of rural tourism.

The consequences of tourism, especially its rural type, are often examined in a theoretical framework including economic, environmental, social, cultural and physical-physical effects, these effects are not separate from each other. Economic, environmental, and cultural effects operate in an interactive field with social effects, which have multiple effects on rural settlements, which are briefly discussed below.

### *3.1. Economic effects*

The positive and negative economic effects of tourism on rural settlements are given in Table (1).

**Table 1.** Positive and negative economic effects of tourism on rural settlements

<b>Positive economic effects of tourism</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Strengthening the local market and increasing consumption of local-regional products
<input type="checkbox"/> An index for the development and improvement of social and physical infrastructures
<input type="checkbox"/> The flow of capital and money from urban centers to the suburbs and rural areas to support the local economy
<input type="checkbox"/> Creation of new jobs such as preparing rooms for tourists, food preparation, retail, transportation, creating entertainment and reducing unemployment.
<input type="checkbox"/> A supplement for the main functions of the rural space to organize and distribute the facilities and services in the target villages of tourism.
<input type="checkbox"/> Creating opportunities for community entrepreneurs
<input type="checkbox"/> Optimum use of available resources such as land, labor, capital
<input type="checkbox"/> Improving the quality of agricultural and handicraft products
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting the transportation system, medical care, hospitality,
<input type="checkbox"/> Health services, traditional rural industries and professions
<input type="checkbox"/> Transferring income from savings to investment
<input type="checkbox"/> Improving the standard of living of the people of the society
<b>Adverse economic effects of tourism</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Increasing seasonal demand for public services such as health, security, police, and law enforcement
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase in food prices during tourist seasons
<input type="checkbox"/> False increase in the price of land and housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Conflict between the supply and demand of land and injustice in its distribution
<input type="checkbox"/> Seasonality of job opportunities created by the tourism industry
<input type="checkbox"/> Removing economic benefits from rural areas

Source: Abedi (2016)

### *3.2. Social and cultural effects*

The positive and negative socio-cultural effects of tourism on rural settlements are given in Table (2).

**Table 2.** The positive and negative socio-cultural effects of tourism on rural settlements

<b>Positive socio-cultural effects of tourism</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Promotion of cultural exchange and awareness of the values and actions of the national traditions of various ethnic groups</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improving the level of culture and social insight and getting familiar with history and civilization</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improving the quality of life index, such as increasing welfare services, changing the quality of life</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increasing comfort facilities and changing the consumption pattern</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Expansion of cultural exchanges between tourists and local people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Development of personality and flourishing of talents and improvement of the level of knowledge and awareness of residents</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improving justice between men and women to access job opportunities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Development of intellectual, cultural, and social relations between host and guest society</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creation of transformation, modernization, and introduction of local culture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Renewing the life of attachments and strengthening the adherence of the residents of the areas to the local customs.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establishment or strengthening of administrative and management institutions in the villages</li> </ul>
<b>Adverse socio-cultural effects of tourism</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The possibility of increasing crime</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cultural invasion and destruction of belief and value foundations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The possibility of the spread of behavioral contaminations that conflict with the norms of society</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The possibility of usurping behavior of people towards tourists</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The possibility of losing the originality of arts and crafts, increasing traffic, and the occurrence of nervous and mental problems resulting from it.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Destruction and damage to historical and cultural heritage, imposition of cultural changes without the readiness of Mizan society.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Imitation of rural youth from tourists and increase in urban luxury goods</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Changing the way of life and behavior of the villagers</li> </ul>

Source: Shahipour and Mojtabizadeh (2015); Abedi (2016)

### 3.3. Environmental effects

The positive and negative environmental effects of tourism on rural settlements are given in Table (3).

**Table 3.** The positive and negative environmental effects of tourism on rural settlements

<b>Positive environmental effects of tourism</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance of natural areas including national and protected parks, ancient and historical places, and architectural features.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improving the quality of the environment and developing tourism infrastructure</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Raising the level of awareness of the obligation to maintain and protect the environment and promote environmental culture in the direction of environmental protection and improvement;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improving rural infrastructure and communication axes with environmental protection</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of mineral and therapeutic waters, recreation, forests</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creating an incentive to apply the management of the natural environment and its permanent and continuous protection</li> </ul>
<b>Adverse environmental effects of tourism</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Changing perspectives and vast changes of users</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creating duality in the built environment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Their hunting and hunting and the extinction of animals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Loss of trees and vegetation and its destructive effects, such as increased flooding</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Changes in the use of agricultural lands and farms</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fragmentation of agricultural lands and changes in their use</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Soil erosion, destruction of the environment, and pollution of water and soil resources</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Destruction of pastures (burning and inappropriate behaviors with the environment)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Damage to attractions due to the increase in tourists</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Density and accumulation of garbage and garbage next to attractions</li> </ul>

Source: Abedi (2016)

#### *3.4. Physical effects*

Another one of the effects of the expansion of tourism in rural areas is its spatial and physical effects, which can have both positive and negative aspects. One of the adverse effects of unplanned expansion of tourism, especially second-home tourism, is the negative consequences of land use changes. So, the tourism facilities, the development of new neighborhoods on the edge of the village, and the construction of new villas may intensify the competition for occupying land and changes in use. In addition to this, the review of sources related to the effects of tourism second homes, in rural areas, indicates cases such as restoration, recovery, and repair of existing houses (Gallant and Mays, 2005), housing renovation, and improvement of the visual character of settlements, improvement of standards Housing,

following the example of second houses in the construction of housing, developing the construction of villas in the slopes and outskirts of the village, organizing and improving roads and respecting the privacy of rivers and crossings, improving roads, developing road communication infrastructure, etc. (Abadi, 2016). In general, every phenomenon that takes place in this world includes many positive and negative effects. Among the positive effects of rural tourism, we can mention the development of villages, improving the lives of rural people, employment in tourism-related jobs, and increasing income. However, one should be careful about the adverse effects of this phenomenon, such as cultural and social damage, environmental destruction, and, in general, the damage caused by the accumulation of tourists (Tourism Management Studies, 2015).

### *3.5. Challenges of rural tourism*

Tourism is a cultural-social and economic phenomenon with extensive spatial, physical, and environmental consequences (Wang and Stewart, 2011). Until the late 1970s, tourism was introduced as a golden activity without smoke and pollution, and its favorable consequences and benefits, especially its economic benefits, were always emphasized (Ghanyan et al., 2014). Since the 1980s, numerous research findings and reports confirmed the adverse environmental, social and cultural consequences of tourism (Samuel, 2020). Rural tourism is considered a way to rebuild rural areas. Developing countries are facing significant challenges in developing tourism in rural areas. All these factors have caused them not to be able to take a step in this profitable path despite having villages with tourist attractions. In the following, the fundamental challenges of rural tourism development have been categorized (Abbasi, 2016).

#### *3.5.1. Economic challenge*

Garud et al. (2006) believe that economic problems are one of the most critical obstacles to the development of rural tourism, including insufficient financial support. About the social challenge, the following are mentioned (Garod et al., 2006): Investment challenge, Marketing challenge, The challenge of limiting tourism seasons, The challenge of competition.

#### *3.5.2. Social challenge*

Tourism, with its multidimensional nature, in addition to meeting the needs of tourists, causes significant changes in the host society (Dwyer, 2009). Accelerating social inequalities within rural communities, the feeling of concern of rural residents about the condition of inappropriate clothing or inappropriate behavior of tourists, representing new ideas, styles and ways of behavior that challenge traditional culture and values. Draws about the social

challenge, the following are mentioned (Garod et al., 2006): The challenge of increasing crime, The challenge of the response of the host community.

### *3.5.3. Cultural challenge*

In the 1980s, the need to pay attention to culture became apparent, and in the 1990s, its importance became undeniable. As far as some people believe, perhaps the reason for many disturbances and misguided development plans in general and rural development in a specific sense in the world should be traced to disregard for culture. The importance of culture can be summarized in two aspects, the first is the place it has in the identity and existence of the society and the second is the role it plays in the development of societies. Culture determines how people in a society think and feel; Culture guides their actions and defines their vision of life (Portahari et al., 2019). Culture means learned behavior patterns that are transferred from one generation to another or group to another and are formed based on mental and social realities. Taylor believes; Culture is a complex collection that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, industries, techniques, ethics, laws, traditions, and all the habits, behaviors and rules that a person as a member of society learns from his society. Giddens believes that culture consists of two types, material and spiritual, and believes that it consists of three essential elements that are formed in the context of time. 1- Single values and ideals that the members of the social group believe in; 2- definite social norms and principles that members must observe and follow; 3- Material goods with unique features produced by group members are related to the cultural challenge of the following (Abbasi, 2016): The challenge of cultural conflict, The challenge of lack of awareness.

### *3.5.4. Environmental challenge*

With the ever-increasing population and human need for travel and recreation, the development of tourist areas is one of the necessities of today's societies. The development of these areas and the presence of humans in the bed of nature will also have effects (Qorbaniya et al., 2014). it includes positive or negative effects for the human and natural environment. In the mentioned decade, the environmental consequences of tourism became the only concern of researchers in this field. In connection with the bio-environmental challenge, the following are discussed (Abbasi, 2016): The challenge of environmental pollution, The challenge of environmental destruction



#### *3.5.5. Physical challenge*

The concept of the body includes all facilities and services located in the village environment. About the physical challenge, the following are mentioned (Karmi Dehkordi et al., 2014): The challenge of service infrastructure, The challenge of the quantitative level of service, The challenge of service quality level.

#### *3.5.6. Policy-making challenge*

Policy-making is a dynamic process that includes a complex pattern of decisions, actions, interactions and feedbacks that take place in the context of a set of economic, social, physical and political variables. Considering the importance of tourism and its role in the economic, social and cultural development of countries, policy-making and the formulation of macro-policies in this field has a special place. In this research, the concept of policy-making includes management skills, legislation, and planning in the field of tourism (Abbasi, 2016). About the policy-making challenge, the following points are mentioned (Rizvani and Bayat, 2013): The challenge of lack of managerial-organizational skills, The challenge of lack of government support: Legislative challenge, Planning challenge. Meanwhile, one of the aspects that can be the source of many changes for the sustainable development of the rural tourism industry is the accurate identification of the current situation through tourism marketing. In this direction and for the expansion of rural tourism, tourism marketing is particularly importance and marketing is an important pillar to attract rural tourists. In the following, the discussion about marketing and concepts related to rural tourism marketing has been thoroughly discussed.

### **4. Conclusion**

According to the mentioned materials related to rural tourism, it can be said that rural tourism is an essential strategy for developing rural areas, as well as a complementary and diversifying resource in the rural economy, especially in deprived areas. According to national and international experiences and studies, this industry can play an essential role in generating new job opportunities, generating income, maintaining biodiversity, environmental health, and local culture, and population stability. Therefore, a detailed understanding of the capabilities and limitations of tourism in the target villages can provide constructive assistance in planning and policy-making, so rural tourism can contribute to economic diversification and sustainable development by creating employment and income, it will lead to the development of undeveloped areas. Although the jobs related to this industry are not very specialized and lucrative, it will bring many benefits to the villagers. Tourists pay money for staying, buying local goods and

services, this money flows in local activities and makes the villagers more active in meeting visitor's needs. By creating employment, increasing income levels, diversifying economic activities, increasing the level of social awareness, and creating broad social relations between the host and guest communities, rural tourism has helped to protect the cultural heritage and natural environment, and by preventing illegal migration. The procedure and optimization of land use helps in sustainable rural development; In this regard, rural tourism will not go anywhere without comprehensive management and supervision in the rural environment and needs proper attention and recognition in the structure of rural management. Otherwise, accidental and unplanned tourism will bring many social and environmental problems for rural areas and the country.

### **References**

- Abbasi, F. (2016). Analyzing the challenges of tourism development in rural areas from the point of view of local managers, a case study: tourism target villages in Zanjan province. Dissertation for receiving a master's degree, Department of Geography, Zanjan University.
- Abedi, S. (2016). Evaluation of the role of tourism in the physical changes of rural settlements, a case study: Shiraz-Sepidan axis. Dissertation for receiving a master's degree, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Geography, Zanjan University.
- Amiri, F., Mohebi, S., Ranjber, M.H. and Bagheri, M. (1401). The effect of structural, behavioral, and contextual factors on rural tourism marketing in Hormozgan province. *Scientific-Research Quarterly of Geography and Regional Planning*, 12(3): 186-199.
- Billore, S. (2018). "Enriching cultural experiences from rural tourism: Case studies from Japan in tourism planning and destination marketing". Published online, 141-159.
- Dwyer, L., Edwards, D., Mistilis, N., Roman, C., and Scott, N. (2009). Destination and enterprise management for a tourism future. *Tourism management*, (30): 63-74.
- Gallent, N., Mace, A., Tewdwr-Jones, M. (2005). *Second Homes— European perspectives and UK Policies*, Ashgate, London.
- Garrod, B., Wornell, R., Youell, R. (2006). Reconceptualising rural recourse as countryside capital. The case of rural tourism, *Journal of rural studies*, [www.elsevier.com](http://www.elsevier.com).
- Ghanian, M., Ghoochani, O.M., and Crotts, J.C. (2014). An application of European performance satisfaction index towards rural tourism: The case of western Iran. *Tourism management perspectives* 11 (2014): 77–82.

- Ghorbania, Z., Nikzad, V. and Salehi, A. (2014). Evaluating the environmental effects of tourism projects (case study: Avan tourism area). *Journal of Tourism Planning and Development*, 4(13): 147-167.
- Hall, N., and Testoni, L. (2004). Steps to sustainable tourism. Heritage and tourism section of the Australian government department of the environment and heritage. Canberra. 76p.
- Hatami, P. (2014). The position of the target villages in the development of North Khorasan tourism. Master's thesis. Hakim Jurjani Institute of Higher Education, Department of Tourism Sciences.
- Karmi Dehkordi, M., Kohestani Ainuddin, H. and Kerbation, M. (2014). Qualitative analysis of the problems of rural tourism using the basic theory of the study of the wonderful village of Sar Aghasid-Kohrang city. *Regional Planning Quarterly*, 5(18): 156-141.
- López-Sanz, J. M., Penelas-Leguía, A., Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, P., and Cuesta-Valiño, P. (2021). "Sustainable development and consumer behavior in rural tourism the Importance of Image and Loyalty for Host communities" *sustainability*, 13(9): 4763.
- Mahdavi, D. (1390). Assessing the sustainability of tourism development in Iran. Ph.D. Thesis. Tarbiat Modares University.
- Norris, M., and Winston, N. (2007). Second homes in scenic rural areas of Ireland: Preliminary results from a study of social, economic and environmental impacts. In European Network for Housing Research (ENHR) international conference on sustainable urban areas pp: 25-28.
- Portahari, M., Ruknuddin Eftekhari, A.R. and Hosseini, N.A. (1390). The role of cultural heritage in the quality of life of rural residents, case study: Marmzi section of Lamard city. *Geographical Space Quarterly*, 11(33): 83-100.
- Rizvani, M.R. and Bayat, N. (2013). Analysis of the place of rural tourism in the country's development plans (with an emphasis on five-year national development plans). *Journal of Tourism Planning and Development*, 3(9): 11-30.
- Saarinen, J. (2007). Contradictions of rural tourism initiatives in rural development contexts case finish rural tourism strategy. *Current issues in tourism*, 10(1): 96-105.
- Safari al-Muti, P. and Shams, A. (2018). Analysis of the consequences of rural tourism in the Alamut River area of Qazvin province: case study: Avan village. *Village and Development*, 22(88): 25-49.
- Samuel, A. (2020). "Developing a rural tourism destination brand framework from the perspective of a relationship-based approach", *tourism*.
- Shahipour, S. and Mojtabizadeh, H. (2015). Analysis of the consequences of rural tourism on development (case study: Kandavan). *Environment*, 42(3): 668-637.

- Shams al-Dini, A. (1389). Rural tourism is a constructive solution for rural development, case example: Fahlian village. *Housing and Village Environment*, (95): 131-103.
- Sidjani, A. (2016). Evaluating the effects of rural tourism on the development of selected target villages in East Azarbaijan province. Dissertation for receiving a master's degree, Faculty of Agriculture, Zanjan University.
- Tourism management studies. (2015). *Tourism Studies Quarterly*.
- Wang, D., Stewart, W. P., KO, D. (2011). Community behavior and sustainable rural tourism development, *journal of travel research*, pp: 1-14.
- Ziaei, M. and Tarabian, P. (1389). Assessing the acceptable level of the negative social effects of tourism on local communities in Iran under the study of rural settlements in the disturbed wetland area. *Geography (scientific-research quarterly of the Iranian Geography Association)*, (29): 205-225.