

## **Sustainable Development of Ecotourism in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, Iran, a Scenario Study**

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### **Abstract**

Due to people's searching for a unique new destination to pass their holidays and release for a while, the province of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari in Iran is one of the top touristic destinations in which a combination of huge natural beauty and rich history due to the nomadic lifestyle has made this province as a potential region for eco-tourism development. In this study based on the current situation of the area, four scenarios' development has been provided for the future development of eco-tourism market in this region. These scenarios have been provided based on 22 in-depth interviews with main stakeholders of ecotourism market of the region. International resort, nomadic resort, eco-cultural resort and exclusive resort are four different future scenarios for the region as a result of the research. Each has separate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Consequently, it has been discussed that a combination of all four scenarios and using the best future action plans of all the scenarios will be a suitable plan for the eco-tourism sustainable development of this province in future.

***Keywords: Current situation, Scenarios' development, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari***

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## **Introduction**

In the present industrial world in Iran in which people are busy with stressful jobs, their need to relaxation and traveling to the natural environment has increased the attention to the phenomenon called 'Eco-tourism'. Due to their searching for a destination to meet their spiritual requirements Iran as most countries in the Middle East has a lot of natural competitive advantages in the global tourism industry. However, the potentials of this competitive advantage has not been reached. Few foreign and even not many domestic travelers are aware of such vast potentials in Iran. Iran's true natural appeals have never been introduced properly to the world's people. The publicity is insufficient and even almost absent. Specifically, in this regard there is a unique destination in Iran, the province of Chaharmahal & Bakhtiari (Ch.M.B.), for eco-tourists with both natural and cultural attractions.

The province of Ch.M.B with 16533 km<sup>2</sup> extent and the population of 803687 persons (The General Housing and Population Census, 2001) is located in the south-west of Iran and in the centre of Zagros Mountains range.

The geographical situation of Ch.M.B, its appropriate climate, its mountains full of snow on the summits even in summers, the bushy forests as well as juicy Karun and Zayanderud rivers as long as the national and international wetlands has made this province a unique attraction for both domestic and foreign tourists. Mountaineering, hunting, skiing and different kinds of water sports in this province besides its pleasant weather has made it different from other provinces in Iran to be a market for the ecotourism activities. In addition, existence of vast pastures and plains with the variety of plant and zodiac covering has astonished the foreign researchers and botanists in this region.

On the other hand, as the main communities inhabited in this province are Bakhtiari tribe (98%), with an old rich history and mostly typical nomadic lifestyle, this region has become a very interesting cultural nomadic attraction for tourists and foreign anthropologists.

Moreover, by analysing incremental cost in different economic sectors in this province, it is represented that this value in agriculture has been 24.1%, in industry 23.6% and in service 52.3% of GNP (Statistical

Year Book, 2004). High amount in the service sector represent the potential of services and equipments for the tourism segment in this region.

Despite all the attractions for different types of tourists there is a low volume of the tourism demand to this region. Unfortunately, this region has been kept deprived, isolated and unknown so far. This has been happened as a result of lack of enough attention to this province and lack of a strategic policy toward the tourism industry. Therefore, considering the high potentials in this area, development the tourism industry in this region in order to its identity enhancement seems necessary.

It is obvious that without any knowledge of the existent economical, ecological and human potentials and pitfalls in each region, it will be impossible to make a development plan for the future of that region. In fact, being aware of the status quo in the region will provide this opportunity for the researchers to distinguish the development ways on the basis of the existent potentials in the region.

In this study, the research hypothesis will be the current situation of the province of Ch.M.B. which has been analysed by Ebrahimi, F. (2006). Afterwards, four development scenarios for the future of ecotourism market in the province of CH.M.B. have been provided. In fact, this study will be able to provide an opportunity for policy makers to initiate further large-scale strategies all over the other similar destinations in Iran.

#### ***Future research and scenario technique***

In our days the ability to forecast the future is becoming more and more difficult. As actions or facts that take place in one continent can influence the development occurring on a small village or island on another continent, it is clear that the future of an area is exposed to many influential tendencies that can be internal or external. The techniques dealing with future that have gained room in recent years are those that help planners cope with uncertainties and risks inherent in such dynamic environment and the technique of scenarios perceive much uncertainty in this case (Dammers, 2000). Besides, they can effectively organize a variety of information related to those many different disciplines such as economy, politics, technology, and sociology that apparently are not interconnected but are mutual

influenced (Wack, 1985). For Wack, scenarios deal with two worlds: facts and perceptions. They explore facts but they aim at perceptions inside the heads of decision makers. Their purpose is to gather and transform information of strategic significance into fresh perceptions so that no model could do that.

Engar, *et al* (2014) used the scenario technique for the Norwegian travel industry in 2025 and identified six drivers which are significant for the Norwegian tourism industry. This resulted in four scenarios which are used to identify implications and risks for different parts of the industry. Lanquar, R. (2011) did a research on providing four future scenarios in the Mediterranean up to 2030. In all cases, international and domestic tourist arrivals will increase. However, three main factors will strongly influence the development of the tourism sector in the area: security, competitiveness linked to the efficient use of ICT, and adjustment to climate change. In Iran, Taghvaei, *et al* (2018) planned scenarios development for Yasouj tourism market. They finally proposed one of the scenarios as the most desirable scenario, which will be based on maintaining, compiling, rising, interacting, developing, growth quantitatively and qualitatively, and improving security.

By working with scenarios, planners can envisage possible futures with the gain of insights in fundamental uncertainties at the local and global levels. In the present study it is attempting to find the fundamental issues at stake at the national and global levels and develop possible futures for the region.

#### ***Scenarios' development in eco-tourism***

Van Doorn (1986) believes "A tourism scenario gives a description of the present situation, of one or more possible and/or desired situation (s) and of one or more sequence (s) of events, which can connect the present and future situation(s)." From this point of view, it is evident that a tourism scenario contains minimum of three components (Figure 2);

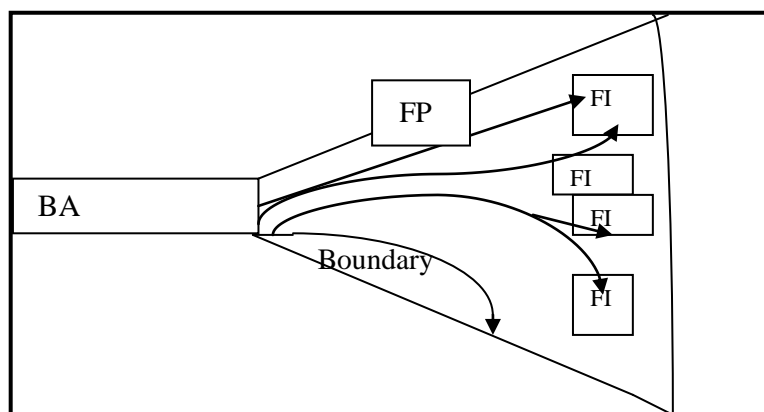


Figure 2: Components of the scenario, Van Doorn (1986)

- A (dynamic) description and analysis of an existing situation which acts as the starting point for the framing of the two components listed below; this is termed original situation or baseline analysis (BA).
- One or more eventual images of a desired and/or considered possible situation at a future moment; future images (FI).
- One or more development processes containing a description of the existing situation into an eventual image in the future; future paths (FP).

Although there is a lack of consensus in the use of the scenario technique in different concepts of the tourism, it seems to be fair to judge the existing literature on the tourism-related scenarios with the three-component definition by Van Doorn (1986). From this standpoint it is clear that most scenarios are handicapped, lacking at least one, but more often two, of the constituent components;

- *One-component scenarios*: that only consists of one component of future image (FI) and reviewing its advantages and disadvantages. The researcher provides information on another component (FP) but on a much less detailed (embryonic) level.
- *Two-component scenarios*: look for alternative future images (FI). On the basis of the alternative assumptions and strategies (FP), the researcher arrives at a range of forecasts. But still the scenario lacks a visible link from the past to the present (BA).
- *Three-component scenarios*: the scenarios are constructed using the baseline analysis and future paths together, in order to arrive at a set of future images (BA, FP, and FI).

The scenarios in the actual study have been raised as comprehensive **three- component scenarios**. The baseline analysis has been carried on through a detailed SWOT analysis of the province of Ch.M.B by Ebrahimi, F. (2006). Four different futures for the region have been provided based on the status quo. Meanwhile the necessary steps to be taken to reach those futures have been mentioned as the future paths. It will help the local tourism authorities manage this market with the global standards and also will guide the national authorities to generalize the standards of tourism market in Ch.M.B. all over the potential districts in the country of Iran.

### **Methodology**

In addition using secondary data and reviewing literature in both national and local documents, the primary technique for data collection was in-depth semi-structure interviews which were conducted through the snowball sampling in order to identify the most important stakeholders concerning the tourism industry in the area. This method was preceded by a reconnaissance trip to map out the area, a general assessment to determine the first organizations and persons who are already involved in the area. The involved sampled stakeholders in the tourism sector are including; the tourism business owners (tour operators and travel agencies, hotel owners), academicians, the tourism planners and professionals of the public sector, third sector representatives (associations, NGOs), tourists and local people in the province of Ch.M.B as well as the local ecotourism authorities. A total number of 22 open interviews selected from the mentioned stakeholders out of which 12 interviews were carried out in Ch.M.B. The main questions asked in the interviews were regarding the stakeholders' comments on future scenarios for tourism and ecotourism development in this region and identifying the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the stakeholders' views.

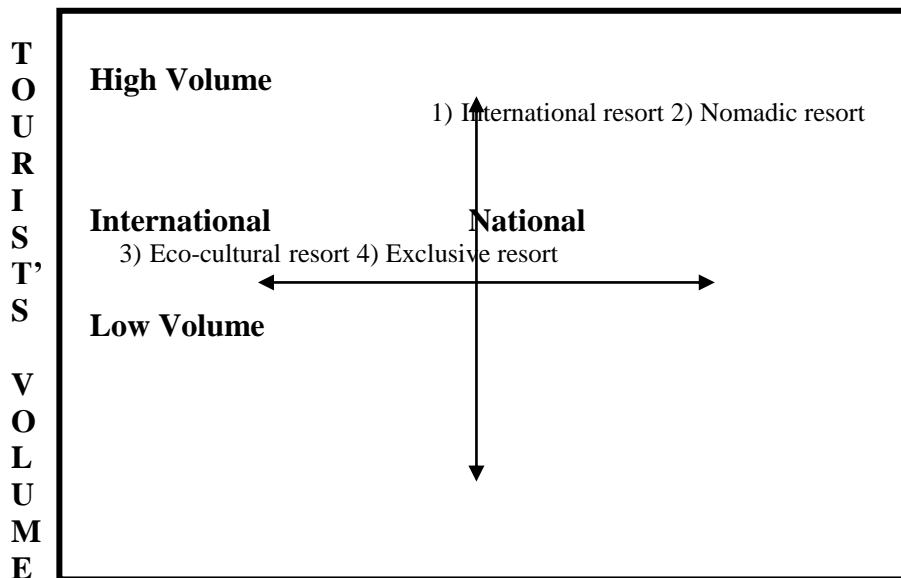
### **Creation of scenarios**

Scenarios address the main issues at stake in the contextual environment. It is essential that external issues are expressed and developed in scenarios separately from internal issues (Becker, 1987). As mentioned before, one of the most well known taxonomies of internal and external issues is called SWOT analysis which

categorizes the environment of Ch.M.B into political, economical, socio- cultural, technological and environmental (PESTE) issues. The next step for creating the scenario is putting the main issues at stake as the two axis of a matrix where the interrelations between them are interconnected (Becker, 1987). From this matrix, four scenarios were built in which the future insights could be reflected.

Reviewing the elements analysed by Ebrahimi, F. (2006), it is clear that all the weaknesses and threats in the area will result to the low volume of tourists and eco-tourists visiting this region. Therefore, all the existent strengths and opportunities are going to be used in order to block this problem. The critical volume of both national and international eco-tourists is the main problem underlying the eco-tourism development in the region. So, in order to provide two main issues at stake for eco-tourism development in the area, the two-axis matrix was created as “Tourist’s Type” whether national or international and “Tourist’s Volume” whether high or low volume. Through crisscrossing four strategic choices out of these issues at stake (national, international & high, low), it is possible to raise four different scenarios as is shown in figure 3.

**T O U R I S T ’ S T Y P E**



**Figure 3: Main issues at stake and scenarios**

In each scenario the following elements are discussed in details; extreme, central theme, target group, future paths (FP) to reach the imaged futures and reviewing SWOT elements of the scenarios. (table 3)

**Table 3: Overview of the scenarios**

Scenarios Elements	1) International resort	2) Nomadic resort	3) Eco-cultural resort	4) Exclusive resort
Extreme	International tourism- High volume	National tourism- High volume	International tourism- Low volume	National tourism- Low volume
Central theme	An international renowned high-demanded destination	A national holiday destination with specific nomadic attractions	A religious eco-destination with a few religious/cultural sites combined with the natural beauty	High potential but exclusive tourism destination with low tourism impacts
Target group	Large volume of global tourists from all over the world	Large volume of rich class Iranian tourists from all over the country	Low volume of Muslim tourists from all Muslim countries	Low volume of; -Middle-class people from inside the province and/or neighbouring and/or -Rich-class adventure tourists -Students and researchers
Future paths	-Global advertisement -Cooperation with EU and international tourism organizations -Increasing flight numbers of the region's airport	-National advertisement; introducing nomadic attractions -Private sector's involvement	-Advertising through Muslim media -Cooperation with Muslim tour operators and financial bodies	-Regional and local advertisement, snowball method - Providing eco-cultural tourism chain between neighbouring provinces
<b>SWOT analysis</b>				
Strengths	-Promoting international identity -Positive international competition -Economic benefits	-Homo-religious region -Thinking to sustainability	-Religious proximity -Appreciation of the government's cultural authorities	-Preservation nomads' traditions and norms
Weaknesses	Negative impacts on the religious values and local norms	-Commercialization of nomads -Lack of international tourists/ dependency on the agriculture and animal husbandry	-Not too much economic benefits -Lack of international financial attention	-Low economic benefits/ dependency on the agriculture and animal husbandry -Too slow tourism development
Opportunities	Growth of international demand for tourism	Increasing demand of different types of tourism among Iranians	Spreading Islam and Muslims all over the world	-Overcoming stress through travelling -Huge gap between rich and middle class in Iran
Threats	Possible sanctions	-Optimal use of the region's potentials -Nomads' extinction	Possible sanctions	Natural dynamics

### International Resort

Ch.M.B. is an internationally renowned tourism destination attracting high volume of eco-tourists from all over the world. All the tourism policies and activities are designed on the basis of the international tourism standards.

*Demand market:* The main tourism market in the 'international resort' is interested eco-tourists from all over the world who come to this region visiting natural attractions and at the same time, they are aware of the cultural attractions in the region mainly nomadic immigration and their lifestyle.



*Future paths:* To reach such a future, advertisement is the first step; having contact with the global media such as CNN, BBC, etc. in order to advertise Iran and this particular province as a memorial destination, printing special brochures and booklets to introduce the existent attractions, inviting foreign reporters to closely view the region's attractions and tourist facilities and reflect them worldwide, organizing the tourism international fairs and conferences in the province in cooperation with world tourism organisation (WTO), conducting publicity with the help of the Iranian embassies all over the world and even national and international airlines (Gholipour (2000); in: Fallahi, 2005). In this case, many people all over the world will be informed of the existent potentials in this area.

As partnership is regarded another strategy to reach this future (Maurites, 2016), Iranian government initiates extensive exchange of the tourism with EU countries so that EU will facilitate visas for Iranians visiting EU and Iran will do the same for EU tourists visiting Iran. On the other hand, cooperation with the international tourism organizations such as WTO, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and even International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) will result to run training programs including; guide training, training the ecotourism personnel, capacity building programs, etc. based on the global tourism standards. Cooperation with such organizations due to their financial aids in order to develop the international flight numbers of Shahrekord airport will also accelerate the development of the tourism in the area.

*SWOT analysis:* The main **strength** of this future scenario is related to the political situation and the international identity of the country and the region of Ch.M.B. In the international level, opening the doors and easing restrictions on international tourists will enhance Iran's image of being less intense and prove its desire to fully integrate itself into the world community. Besides, the global tourism will turn Iran into a competitor for the international tourist arrivals in the Middle East and especially compare to the similar countries such as Turkey, Armenia and Dubai.

In the regional level, the economic situation of local residents improve as the big flow of foreign currency is exchanged in the area and

therefore the tourism industry will be considered as one of the main income generation sources in the province (Samirkas, 2016).

With respect to the **weaknesses** of the 'international resort', it may come to mind that international tourists will degrade the religious values and local norms. The main reason for the opposition of the current government with this scenario could be referred to their perspective towards this future scenario as a cultural and religious attacker for the country.

The **opportunity** of this scenario is growing international demand for all types of tourism all over the world.

The **threat** which can hamper the development of this scenario is the same threat mentioned for the current situation. That is the political climate due to the sanctions of Iran by U.S.A. as long as strict religious image of Iran in westerners' views.

#### **Nomadic Resort**

Ch.M.B. is a national holiday destination which attracts interested Iranian eco-tourists to visit the socio-cultural characteristics of the region especially nomadic culture and their unique lifestyle and immigration.

*Demand market:* The available market in this future is the national nomads' tourists (Badarch, 2015) who visit the rich potentials of nomads' community as the main attraction in the region. In this scenario, rich class of Iranian people and elites include the main target group as they have enough time and money to be able to pay attention to this specific type of tourism.

*Future paths:* As the main step to be taken to reach this future, the role of advertising the regions' nomadic attractions through national media (TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, booklets, etc...) is crucial. In addition, establishing bulletin boards in the main streets of the big cities in Iran will introduce the specific attractions existent in this destination.

Regarding to the partnership strategies (Maurites, 2016), in this scenario, private sector's interest in the investment in new destinations can cause cooperation with the public sector in order to invest in the nomadic destinations in Ch.M.B.

*SWOT analysis:* The main **strength** in this future is the religious acceptance of national tourists (98% of Iranians are Muslims). Since religious issues have been the topic of much debate among

government officials, in this scenario these issues have been solved and there is much time and energy to focus on other important issues such as sustainability.

The commercialisation of nomads and degradation of their local culture is regarded as the main **weakness** in this scenario. There is population of wealthy eco-tourists with a so-called urban lifestyle which is regarded strange for nomads. Therefore, we can sometimes see that nomads' youth are willing to imitate their culture inappropriately. Besides, some of these false eco-tourists come to this area to see nomads' tents, taste their food, take photos with them and buy their souvenirs and then leave them without any attention to their unique history and culture. This will gradually lead to the commercialization of this community and their extinction. Still the problem of cultural degradation and nomads' extinction mentioned in the current situation analysis would remain in this scenario.

Lack of the international tourists is regarded as another disadvantage in this region which will lead to economical dependency on agriculture and/or animal husbandry among Bakhtiyari and nomads.

The **opportunity** of this scenario is increasing demand of different types of travelling among Iranians which can create nomads' tourism as an alternative tourism.

The main **threat** existent in this scenario is referred to making optimal use of the region's potentials. In spite of a lot of potentials for the different types of tourism in the region only nomads' tourism is developed through this scenario.

Another issue which threatens the future of this scenario is related to the nomads' extinction (Badarch, 2015). Growing nomads' settlement and their immigration to the urban areas will be slightly resulted into their extinction. Without any nomads there would not be any nomads' tourism and therefore implementation of this scenario will be impossible.

### **Eco-cultural Resort**

Ch.M.B. is a cultural eco-destination for Muslim tourists from Muslim countries who are preferably attracted to the religious and historical sites in the region in which there are established natural attractions as well.

*Demand market:* The top tourism market in this scenario is the religious ecotourism from Muslim countries. As most of the Muslim

tourists prefer to be regarded as cultural and/or religious tourists in the form of pilgrimage (Sanchez, 2018), they would like to visit religious attractions in this province. However, a few sanctuaries and archaeological mosques in the province can not meet their travelling desires. Therefore, we will see that in this scenario there would be a low volume of the international Muslim tourists. In addition, as they would prefer to visit cultural/religious sites near which there are also some natural attractions like waterfronts, mountain skirts, rivers, green spaces, parks and promenades, we call the main market in the scenario as religious ecotourism.

*Future paths:* One of the main steps to have religious eco-destination in the future is related to the advertisement which is done through the media in Muslim countries such as Al-Jazeera and making contracts with the Muslim tour operators in order to introduce the region as cultural and/or religious eco-resort.

Following with the strategies to partnership (Maurites, 2016), the withdrawal of international financial bodies such as WTO, UNDP in this scenario as a result of Iran's religious image will force the ecotourism managers to make contact with only Islamic organizations (e.g. Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), The Islamic Financial Services Group (IFSG)) in order to be supported financially.

*SWOT analysis:* The socio-cultural **strength** of the religious tourism is defined by the cultural similarity and religious proximity (Sanchez, 2018). There would be uniformity due to the codes of dressing, separation of men and women population in certain places, special respect to specific religious occasions such as Ramadan, Moharram, etc. This scenario would be highly appreciated by the cultural authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran who have a seat in tourism decision making process.

The main **weaknesses** however are related to the lack of enough economic benefits from Muslim eco-tourists as they are not too many due to their prior travelling to the main religious destinations in Iran (e.g. Mashhad). In addition, lack of attention to the western tourists will contribute to the economic shortcomings in the country. Creating an image of a religious fantasy in western countries' view will also diminish the western financial tourism bodies to cooperate with Iran.

The main **opportunity** of the region is spreading Muslims throughout the world. Therefore, there would be more religious tourism not from only Muslim countries but also from different western countries that could imply more economic benefits due to their foreign currencies. And the main prospected **threat** for this scenario is referred to the main threat mentioned in the SWOT table of the current situation which is anticipated imposed sanctions which may lead to any type of tourists to this country even for Muslim eco-tourists.

### **Exclusive Resort**

Ch.M.B. is a high potential region with vast natural and cultural attractions visited by a low amount of specific domestic tourists that makes this region as an exclusive destination with low tourism impacts.

*Demand market:* The dominant tourism market in this scenario is mainly middle- class tourists from neighbouring regions and also from inside the province. As a result of working hard and having not enough time and money, middle-class Iranians are able to have only short travel in their residential surroundings in order to fulfil their spiritual requirements and throw the daily stress away for a while. Therefore, the people of only neighbouring and inside the province of Ch.M.B. visit the nearest touristic sites to their residential place.

Afterwards, the adventure tourism is regarded the second tourism market in this scenario. There are some youth mainly from wealthy class who are highly interested in experiencing the adventure/sport tourism and performing natural activities such as; rock climbing, wind surfing, skiing, horse riding, paragliding, etc. which can be potentially experienced in this region through the scenario of 'exclusive resort'. The number of tourist in this market is not too many as there are more other attractions in which rich class Iranians are interested in.

Moreover, interested Iranian students can pass their internship or thesis period by working on this region's potentials. The potentials of the rich biodiversity and landscape as well as its climate variation could be interesting topics for the students and researchers of botanic, animal sciences, tourism, environment, meteorology, etc. It is always noticeable that the volume of such tourists can not be high in the country like Iran due to the fact that having internship has not been defined in many academic courses. On the other hand, Iran is such a big country with different potential regions therefore the students and

researchers will be scattered all over Iran to do their educational field works.

*Future paths:* In order to have such a future scenario, the advertisement process should be centralized on the regional and local level. The introduction through local media (local TV and radio channels & local newspapers) is regarded such a useful tool as most of the residents of Ch.M.B. may not totally aware of the whole existent potentials in their own region. This advertisement should be also done through the provincial media in the neighbouring provinces of Esfahan and Khuzestan which have relatively high volume of tourists. In addition, people who come to the area and see the existent potentials and infrastructures will confirm or reject it for their countrymen and provide a sort of snowball advertisement.

Providing favourite infrastructures for different target groups are needed in this scenario. For instance, providing an eco-cultural tourism chain between three neighbouring provinces of Esfahan, Ch.M.B and Khuzestan can transfer a huge flow of cultural and natural tourists from these two neighbouring to Ch.M.B.

*SWOT analysis:* The **strength** for this scenario is related to its low cultural and environmental impacts. Due to the socio-cultural impacts, the main benefit raised from this scenario is referred to the preservation of nomads' norms and values (Badarch, 2015). As a result of no western tourists and not too many urban domestic tourists who would be interested in the nomadic attractions, their lifestyle will be remained without any change. Therefore, we understand that the fundamental weakness of the environmental and cultural degradations mentioned in the current region will not be observed in this future scenario.

The main **weakness** on the other hand, is referred to the lack of international tourists and non-satisfactory economic benefits (Samirkas, 2016) from the tourism industry. Therefore, Bakhtiyaris' livelihood will be again highly dependant on the agriculture and animal husbandry which will eventually lead to the natural degradation in this scenario. In addition, due to the lack of international attention as well as not enough national interests, the tourism development process in this region will be too slow.

The **opportunity** for this scenario is increasing national and regional interests to experience nature due to overcoming stress caused by the urban life in Iran. In addition, existent huge gap between rich and middle class people in Iran will result to create the adventure/sport tourism in this scenario for which eco-tourists have to pay a lot.

The main **threat** is considered the image of the natural dynamics such as; previous earthquakes (Statistical Year Book, Ch.M.B, 2004), the danger of avalanche in winter which could be a high season for skiers.

#### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The present research provided four future scenarios for the development of the province of Ch.M.B. The scenarios were provided based on the SWOT analysis of the tourism industry in the area (Ebrahimi, 2006). Both SWOT analysis and scenario designing were originated by adopting a qualitative approach through interviewing with 22 main involved stakeholders.

The first scenario was an '**international resort**' in which the region attracts a large volume of international tourists interested in both natural and cultural attractions in the area. In the second scenario of '**nomadic resort**', the province attracts a large volume of national tourists specifically interested in the unique nomadic lifestyle. In the scenario of '**eco-cultural resort**', the province will be the host for a low amount of Muslim eco-tourists visiting the religious sites near which there are also natural attractions. Finally, in the scenario of '**exclusive resort**', a low amount of certain groups of national eco-tourists visit the region and its attractions. But through which future scenario the main problem of eco-tourism industry in the area will eventually be solved?

Each of these scenarios focuses on one or two markets and target groups in the area. Two of them focus on a high volume of tourists and two others pay attention to a low volume of tourists. The last two scenarios, with attention to a low amount of tourists, can not be good solutions for the main problem statement in the area since the area is going to be developed in order to attract more tourists. We can not easily talk about the selected tourists like Muslims in such unknown destination and/or make the region as an exclusive destination for the specific tourists. The main pitfall in 'eco-cultural resort' is opening the doors for only Muslim tourists, which has been rooted in the

political-religious perspective of the tourism authorities. By looking at the tourism from merely the political angle, every gate to develop this process will be closed. In the 'exclusive resort' scenario, a few specific numbers of domestic tourists will not cause any economic benefits however and positively there will not be many environmental and cultural damages as well. Therefore, this scenario will create a region for which there is no developmental trend in any respect. On the other hand, the first two scenarios are considered more reliable to solve the main problem in the region and creating a renowned public destination for the flows of tourism and especially eco-tourism in the future. However, there are some pitfalls of these scenarios as well because both of them focus on only one target group. The 'international resort' scenario pays attention to a huge flow of only international tourists which seems more economic beneficial than others while it is confronted with serious political obstacles. On the other hand, the main focus in 'nomadic resort' is a huge flow of domestic eco-tourists which will pay full attention to the rich culture in the province while it may also follow many cultural degradations. Mentioning all the above, it seems that none of the raised scenarios in this study can fully address the main problem in the area which is the critical volume of the tourists in this unknown but unique region. According to Tribe (1997), since the tourism as a multi-disciplinary phenomenon is the most appropriate approach in the future development of one area, therefore the tourism authorities have to consider a combination of all the interventions suggested in the scenarios and implement the most feasible action plans in future paying attention to the whole aspects of the tourism to solve this problem.

Considering the main advantages and disadvantages of each scenario, we believe that attention to both national and international tourists will contribute to solve the region's problem more than focusing on only one target group. The national tourists will always cause the initial development of tourism facilities in the area. At the same time, more attention to the international tourists and facilitating their entry to the area will have more economic benefits for the local community. For instance, increasing flight numbers in the airport of Shahrekord, as suggested in the scenario of 'international resort', will facilitate both



national and international tourists' arrivals to the area; developing the tourism facilities and accessibility in the far touristic destinations will attract more interested tourists to these unknown regions. This will be more possible through the private sector's involvement the same as what has been done in 'nomadic resort'. In addition, in the combined solution for the future the involvement of the international financial bodies will contribute to the infrastructure development very much. Following attracting more tourists visiting the area, the tourism authorities will be able to think to the sustainability issues and making a balance between the tourism arrivals and their impacts.

Reaching to such developed region in future is not a too far goal. But also through a multi-disciplinary view to the tourism market and considering a combination of all the scenarios' strategies, the development process will be not only easily accessible but carried out very fast in the area.

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