

## **Study of Sustainable tourism in coasts of Persian Gulf**

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### ***Abstract***

*Today tourism has become so important that it is regarded as the biggest industry and annually millions of tourists travel throughout the world with different motivations. Basically, it is necessary to have a clear picture of perceptions, expectations and requirements of visitors in order to stabilize the markets and provide the most effective goods and services. Therefore, those who are engaged in tourism management and planning have to be informed of these factors in order to be able to make connection between tThe destination management would either promote attributes that best match meet tourists' motivations, or concentrate on a different market where tourists motivations and destination resources match each otherourism products and tourists.In this research, the basis of the establishment of tourism genuineness in the development of geographically effective areas, the northern Persian Gulf region and its valuable Iranian islands, the issue of the long-term role and long-term effectiveness of regional development with the priority of the tourism industry in various dimensions has been studied.*

***Keywords:*** *Tourism, Persian Gulf, Tourism management, Tourism Planning*

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### **Introduction**

Tourism means what is related to tourists and services provided for them. Therefore local communities can be hopeful to its benefits and keep tourism fans, particularly those who stay for short and long term holidays in their communities (Sahrply, 2001:165). Sustainable development entails three dimensions: economic, social and ecologic that all of them have certain structure and a hierarchical system (Figure 2). Moreover, each dimension has its own weight in sustainable development. Weighting these dimensions depends on what is being studied (Birkaman, 2000:168).

As ecotourism reflects human interest to natural manifestations and its inherent attractions which has witnessed unprecedented welcome in recent years due to industrialization of communities, industries advancement, transportation and the need to spend free time in order to relieve psychological stresses, taking advantage of this need in susceptible regions having natural attractions has led to creation of tourism industry based on nature or what is called ecotourism, and this issue has improved situation of these regions remarkably. Iran is a country with diverse climate and unique, beautiful and intact natural prospects and thus this country is among the world's top 10 countries in terms of natural resources. It is a good opportunity for this country to take advantage of tourism to reduce unemployment and earn economic revenues; however, the statistics show that it has not exploited this opportunity so that it ranks 10 among Islamic states only (Abolhasani nejad, 2003:2).

### **Methodology**

This study is a descriptive – analytical research and is conducted using up-to-date sources and precise translation of foreign references as well as extracting statistics from reliable websites. This study aims to show that Persian Gulf coasts can earn high revenue with regard to their capacities.

### **Theoretical framework**

### **Classical and neoclassical schools relevant to competition in tourism**

According to subject of this study, the theoretical framework of classical and neoclassical schools was selected in which competition is under control of private sector and the government regulation is minimal. Classical and neoclassical theory relevant to tourism will be a single approach considering the unity of principles and foundations of both theories and given the beliefs of both theory to nonintervention of government and stance of these schools of thought regarding tourism industry and its mechanisms. Indeed in tourism industry, followers of these schools considering their philosophy believe to nonintervention of government, privatization, free market principle and perfect competition because free market forces act independently and the equilibrium occurs automatically. They focus on harmony of interests and believe that although everybody is seeking its own interests, at the end, sum of these interests will bring the best benefits for the society. Therefore the government regulation and its guidance will not be needed. Based on principles of these schools, it is concluded that the government is not allowed to intervene in tourism industry and its relevant matters. Of course it should be noted that these schools are not against regulative role of government and private sectors are allowed to make equilibrium in this industry considering maximum profit principle, rational behavior, optimal decision, and unlimited freedom in supply and demand system (Seyed Taghi Dizaj et al, 2016:604).

### **Tourism**

In recent decades, tourism has been one the basic elements of sustainable development and achievement of sustainable urban development (Fanni, 2014:115). Ecotourism is not only a trick or marketing advertisement, but also a tool to achieve sustainable development. It is challenging but a valuable work to achieve true ecotourism with its real criteria, because when it is realized, both of the society and environment enjoy it. Although 'ecotourism' is a neologism which has been coined in recent years, it refers to the goal for which institutions, public agencies, nongovernmental organizations and different communities have been seeking more than two decades. Ecotourism is an expanding part in vast market of

tourism and it is based on nature. How tourists behave has a decisive role in quality of communities and natural environments such as rural indigenous communities and intact ecosystems like coral reefs and rainforests which many ecotourists are interested to visit them (Shahande, 2001:49). Sustainable development is occurred temporally according to human needs and proportional to environmental capacities. Its sustainability is not in robustness of scaffolding but it is based on flexibility and incorporating it with ecosystem that requires attention to human ecosystems in parallel and finally this coordination will lead to sustainability and persistence. Then, ecotourism have the capacity for planning (Hashemi, 2001:5).

Ecotourism involves different activities in natural – cultural environments so that in context of geography travelers can visit the regions having attractions such as mountains, desert, coasts, islands etc and for a while live with the residents of tourism areas in order to make familiar with their traditions and cultures. Ecotourism, by attracting tourists, is able to provide the situation for economic, social and cultural development and to increase public well being without any destruction in environment. To achieve sustainability in ecotourism, it is inevitable to engage indigenous population in ecotourism managements and protection of natural – cultural resources. In ecotourism, the attention must be paid to environmental standards, this issue should be considered not only in protected areas but also in planning all activities and managerial programs related to development. Development of ecotourism in a planned rational framework which guarantees participation of host communities and preservation of the resources related to ecotourism is deemed necessary and ‘dense tourism destinations’ may reduce environmental pollutions and decrease infrastructure per capita. Local participation plays undeniable role in ecotourism’s sustainable development. Moreover, intervention of other players including local, regional and national governments, tour leaders and research – training centers should not be ignored (international conference of ecotourism, 2001:16).

### **Strategic planning**

Strategic planning includes targeting and executing the plan. It may extend to control unexpected events such as natural disasters including

flood, avalanche, earthquake, and volcano, epidemic like tuberculosis, cholera, AIDS, SARS..., insecurities and political tensions like war, terror and tribal conflicts. This planning is focused on solving ad hoc problems and lacks comprehensiveness. In strategic planning, the most important issue is to identify and develop inflexible goals (Ghaderi, 2004:41). However in process planning there is a continuous flow and control acts as an exponential index which shows the correct direction and it is modified if the process doesn't proceed in accordance with the principles. In process planning system, in different rounds, executing the program, control and degree of progress or delay in activities together with their reasons are examined. If ecotourism is not organized and continue to progress without cohesive planning, it may bring irreparable problems in environmental, social, economic and even psychological aspects. Therefore the association and organization of ecotourism resources is needed to guide ecotourism flows in appropriate way (Ibid: 27).

#### **Characteristics of study area**

Persian Gulf or Gulf of Fars is a body of water extended from Oman Sea and lies between Iran and Arab Peninsula. Its surface area is 232,000 square kilometers and ranks 3 in the world's biggest gulf list after Gulf of Mexico and Hudson Bay. Persian Gulf is connected to Indian Ocean and Arab Sea in eastern part through Strait of Hormuz and Oman Sea; in west it extends to Arvand Rud river delta, formed by confluence of the Euphrates and the Tigris in Iraq and joining the Karun River in Iran (Persian Gulf Research Center, 2013).



**Map 1. Location of Persian Gulf coasts** Source: [www.irancaves.com](http://www.irancaves.com)

## **Results**

### Competition in tourism

Competition is seen in every aspect of life from sub national to transnational level. In this study, it could be claimed that competition in urban tourism and competition of every province to attract tourists contributes in economic enhancement of each province and finally leads to empowerment in national to international level.

The classical and neoclassical competitions are compared in the following table. Here, the classical competition is assumed dynamic and neoclassical competition is considered a static competition.

**Table 1: the common ideas about competition**

Type of competition	Author	Definition	Obstacles	Perspective
Classical competition	Adam Smith	Competition is a process which occurs due to lack of equilibrium between supply and demand, and thus it is a movement which is created in imbalance conditions.	Regulation	Dynamic
Neoclassical competition	Korno, Jones, Edgeworth, Bates, Clark, Knight	The market is competitive where includes many enterprises all of which produce the same products, in this market there are information and mobility of production factors, these enterprises are so small in comparison to size of the market that cannot influence on market price individually.	Information asymmetry, limited competitors, heterogeneity of products and entrance obstacles	Static

Source: Shahiki Tash, 2013:13.

### Coastal tourism

Environment is the main context for tourism activities. Therefore the tourism for survival is obliged to protect environment and natural resources. This has caused tourism affects environment, the most important positive effects include: contribute to protect natural resources and wild life such as marine ecosystems, building national and regional parks and reserves, increase public awareness about environmental values, improving the environment and natural landscapes, developing the urban green space. Negative effects of tourism include: destruction of natural resources, air, water and noise pollution, destruction of ancient monuments, increase the litter in the region (Hashempour et al, 2012:55).

Natural – cultural resources that establish basics of tourism and excursion in the coast are as follow: 1. Water and aquatic animals, 2. Vegetation, 3. Topography, 4. Geology and soil, 5. Climate, 6. Historical features, 7. Racial characteristics, information and leaders, 8. Construction, and 9. Industry and facilities.

Coastal tourism and excursion is examined in four subregions in parallel to the coast:

1. Coastal waters: this ecologic marine region near to the coast starts from continental shelf and extends to the coast. It is the richest region for fishery and often includes rocks and prominent stone columns. This region is used for travel to near islands.
2. Coastline: it covers areas in the sea and the land. It can support many group water sports particularly if it is extensive and sandy.
3. Coastal zone: it is the area behind the coastline and supports many marine recreations including camping, picnic and outing. In some places, this zone includes hotels and some jobs. The important characteristic of this region is seascape.
4. Hinterland: it is the land behind coastal zone where involves many regions for recreational activities. Hinterland is constructed by reliefs and vegetation (Mahdi Saghaei, 2010).

**Economic impacts**

In most of the countries in the world, tourism is considered a key sector in economic development whose main influence is job creation and revenue. Effectiveness of this influence depends on investment type and place of this industry in national economy (Nourbakhsh et al, 2010:30). Overall, direct and indirect impacts of tourism on urban development are summarized as: 1. Job creation and increase of public revenue in society, 2. Introduction of investments and foreign investors into the cities, 3. Representation of the city as a tourism pole, 4. Increase of jobs related to tourism, 5. Growth of construction and renovation of the cities, 6. Applying local capacities. These impacts could be evaluated in national, regional and local level. According to Pearson (1989) and Dyson (1995), tourism has negative effects, including: 1. Inflation, rising general level of prices, 2. Seasonal jobs and unemployment, 3. Rising land price, 4. Development of service sector and decrease of production, 5. Decrease of public services, 6. Unbalance development in the region (Ibid, 31).

**Table 2: supply and demand system of tourism in Gun's view**

Demand factors	Supply factors
International markets of tourism	Attractions and activities
Domestic markets of tourism	Residence
Domestic markets of tourism	Other facilities and services
Use of local residents from attractions, facilities and services	Transportation, infrastructure and organizational components

Source: Zargham, 2002

Evaluating economic impacts of tourism leads to provide information required for policy making in tourism development. Tourism is the most useful part of the world's industry and impacts on different economic activities including: human resources, development, international trade and balance of payments.

### **Conclusion**

Given the fact that this study was conducted in context of political geography regarding competition in tourism sector, classical and neoclassical theories were chosen as theoretical framework in which competition is under control of private sectors and the government regulation is minimal. Economic competition between coasts of Persian Gulf and Oman Sea in south and coasts of Caspian Sea in the north may contribute in progress of the country. According to the classical and neoclassical theory, the competition in tourism sector with minimal regulation of the government and empowerment of the private sectors will enhance tourism significantly and finally will increase tourism power in national level. Based on the data published by World Tourism Organization and Tourism Council in 2013, the total share of travel and tourism in world economy was increased and reached to 9.5 percent of the world GDP, growing more than other sectors like finance and service sector.

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Iran due to existence of Persian Gulf and Oman Sea in the south and Caspian Sea in the north can take advantage of coastal tourism benefits, the issue can even increase coastal tourism based revenue as far as possible.

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