

## **The Impact of Tourism on Employment in Rural Areas: Case Study of Chaboksar Section of Rudsar City Villages**

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**Abstract** Nowadays, the tourism industry is considered as a dynamic economic activity, as it requires less investment than other industries, which can play an important role in job creation and economic development of human societies. Accordingly, the main purpose of the present study is to investigate the effect of tourism on job creation in studies villages by scaling method. The statistical population of the research was residents of 7 selected villages of over 100 households from 2 counties of Siyahkalrud and Oshian in Chaboksar district of Rudsar. Based on the Cochran formula, 331 people were selected using stratified sampling method according to volume. In

this research, questionnaire is the most important tool for collecting information. Validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts and reliability of the research tool was confirmed by using Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 94% that is acceptable. The results explained the increase in the employment opportunities of the villagers with a mean of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 0.51.

**Keywords** Rural tourism, Job creation, Chaboksar, Rudsar city.

### **Introduction**

Today world deals with many concerns such as economy diversification, increasing of human development indicators, industrialization problems and excessive pollution of cities, especially large cities, rural migrations, increasing of manpower productivity, job creation, interaction of cultures and discourses, environment conservation and in general, sustainable development (Soleymani et al. 2010). Rural tourism development is one of the economic sectors that have not been seriously considered in rural development (Motiee 2006). At first place, tourism is an economic issue. Economic experts consider an important role

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for tourism in economic dynamism emphasizing on its various aspects (Papeli and Saghaei 2013). Tourism brings money and population from industrial concentration centers to villages and natural places (Yasouri 2015). This is a sort of deconstruction (Papeli and Saghaei 2013). Hence, tourism produces its own spatial text in rural areas as a geographic phenomenon and it forms development post-structural attitude in tourism flow framework in rural areas (Saghaei and Javanbakht 2012). This activity can bring evolution and development for destination place as a promoter, or it can also be accompanied with a mixture of desirable and undesirable consequences as a pressure factor (Ghadami and Gholmian 2014). Economic activities related to the tourism are so entangled with other economic indicators that, for example, the economic growth leads to tourism fulfillment and the economic decline leads to tourism downturn (Pourmohammadi et al. 2015). Obviously, in order to achieve the benefits of rural tourism and increase of tourists to the desired extent, tourism development activity should be accompanied by the support of local residents of touristic areas. Economic sustainability results from profitability of the services supply of local community to tourists, because economic benefit and employment in tourism activities play an important role in participation and satisfaction of local people (Motiee and Rezaiyeh 2013).

#### Theoretical bases

The most common approach to tourism in the world is an economy-oriented one (Homayoun 2005). Pearson believes that economists have done major tourism research and they have focused on the impact of tourism income and employment (Cavandi 2013). The comprehensive nature of the tourism industry leads to direct employment in the industry subdivisions and indirect employment in many activities such as financial advertising, technical, legal, transportation, food, administrative, sales, medical and sanitary, hoteling (Papeli and Saghaei 2013). The rural area structure as a wealth of the rural tourism industry has 3 main advantages : First , it focuses on the vital role of rural areas at each level of the rural tourism value chain. Another advantage is the need for rural tourism business to establish more sustainable interrelationships with rural areas. The 3<sup>rd</sup> advantage

is the attention to rural resources (Rezvani 2008). Tourism is a user industry that as an active economic sector can use the labor factor more than other factors and it increases employment level. Hence, tourism development in different places provides permanent, seasonal and part-time employment opportunities for manpower with moderate skills and education and it will decrease the unemployment rate (Arbajian et al. 2014). The small size of majority of active units in tourism that need less capital resources, as well as the importance of the women role are 2 most important attributes of tourism industry. Landberg writes about the tourism role in employment : If studied area for tourism development has high unemployment, tourism benefits will become more obvious. Tourism revenue may be less than income from other sources, but it will be the best available option in the current situation as it will increase tax revenues and reduce unemployment and improve the life quality of the citizens (Nasrollahi et al. 2014). Reducing the ability of agriculture to generate enough income has forced many farmers to seek alternative economic strategies and new revenue sources and local economy diversification (Karimi 2014). Rural tourism has the potential to be effective as a tool for economic growth when agriculture cannot be the only livelihood for a long time (Mansfeld and Jonas 2006). In the meantime, rural tourism development is 1 of the economic sectors that is less popular in rural development (Ruknoddin and Ghaderi 2002). Labor market flexibility and production structures are important factors contributing to the development of employment (Farahani et al. 2014). In general, the diversification of occupational contexts can be considered as an indirect insurance for the income of villagers who have low productivity or damaged due to unexpected natural disasters. As a result, the development of non-agricultural businesses is a deterrent to increased poverty caused by decrease in per capita production and rising unemployment in rural areas (Nasseri et al. 2009). The main factors for the rural economy sustainability are the empowerment of villagers and rural production system, the production variety and the price stability of products, the continuous growth of production, control and resistance to natural destructive factors (Karimzadeh et al. 2016). Spangerburg believes that the creation and maintenance of a permanent and stable income for the people of the community without diminishing

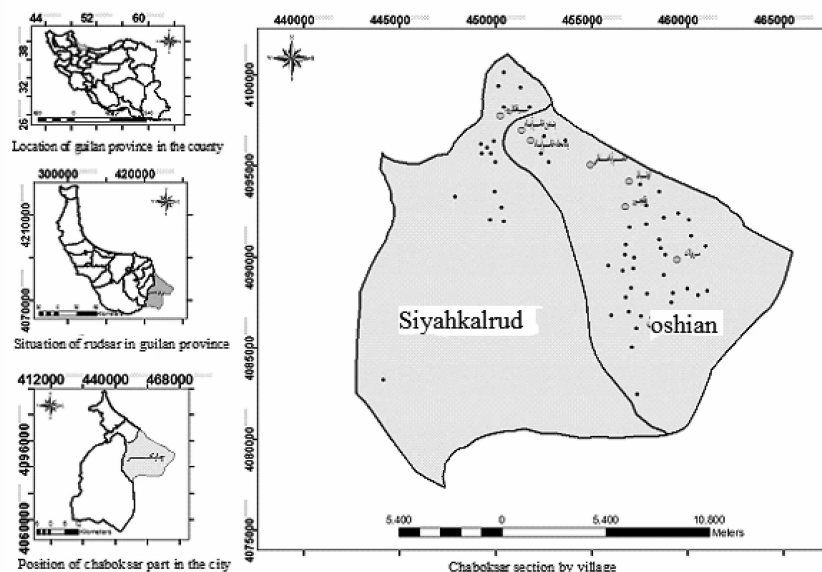


Fig. 1. Location of the study area. Source : The author, based on the information of the country mapping organization, 2013.

the decline of capital and reserves will lead to economic sustainability (Radi 2008). Rural tourism is a part of tourism market and a source of employment and income and it can be considered as an important tool for socio-economic and ecological development of rural communities (Ruknoddin and Ghaderi 2002). Rural tourism can be effective in eliminating these problems and it will lead to revitalization of the villages (Popzen et al. 2010). Relying on agricultural activities in villages is not only available solution and creation of different jobs and diversification of activities are known as a norm. Therefore, rural tourism can play an important role in diversification of rural economy of communities in tourism industry and it could be considered as an encouraging tool to national economic growth (through overcoming underdevelopment notions and improving the living standard of local people). In addition, this industry can play a major role in local people empowerment, human resources development, diversification, economic growth, and creation of new job opportunities in close cooperation with other economic and social sectors. Certainly, tourism industry is a complementary economic activity along with other production and service activities in the rural and local areas and

can play a role as an economic development tool in local communities (Sharifzadeh and Moradnezhad et al. 2002).

Chaboksar district is located in the eastern part of Rudsar in Gilan province and it has a variety of tourism attractions due to the geographical characteristics of this region, the Alborz mountain range and the Caspian Sea. In recent decades, regarding to arrival of tourists to this region and increasing of economic power and job creation, the region has undergone some changes. Therefore, due to the decline of the agricultural sector, residents are seeking an economically viable alternative in order to create a flourishing sustainable development. As a result, tourism has been considered as an appropriate option by the villagers. Therefore, regarding to abovementioned items, the present research tries to answer this question : Does tourism performance increase the employment opportunities of the villagers in the studied area ?

#### Research background

Aram et al. (2012) studied the increasing number

of international tourists and their relationship with economic and regional activities in an article titled *The Role of the Tourism Industry in Growth and Development of resistance economy relying on income generation, Infrastructure Development, Job creation and Poverty alleviation*. Their findings indicated that tourism industry is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest source of jobs and capital industry after the oil and automobile industry. Badri et al. (2009) examined the economic consequences of tourism in an article titled *Tourism Economic Effects on Rural Areas*. The results showed that tourism has led to positive effects and outcomes such as job creation especially for young people and rising incomes of rural residents. Heydari (2013) examined the relationship between tourism and the level of satisfaction of villagers in an article titled *Rural Tourism role in the Economic Development of Villages*. The results showed that rural tourism has eroded stagnation and isolation and increased income generation and job creation in these areas. Hassanwand and Khodapanah (2014) investigated the relationship between tourism development and economic growth in developing countries in a paper titled *Tourism Impact on Economic Growth of Developing Countries*. The results indicated that the tourism industry is very important for developing countries dealing with problems such as high unemployment, currency resource constraints and the single product economy. Rostami and Zarei (2011) studied the impact of tourism in rural economy in a paper titled *Rural Tourism : Missing Ring of Rural Development*. The results showed that this activity plays a valuable role in rural economic growth and it is associated with job creation, diversification of household economics, social participation and the local perspectives and resources usage as a complement to agricultural activities.

Lulia and Camelia (2016) studied the job diversification and the public infrastructure improvement in the village with the effect of tourism development or expansion in a paper entitled *The Attitude of Local Residents on the Development of Rural Sustainable Tourism*. The results showed that the positive effects of tourism as employment opportunity and increasing of welfare have contributed to infrastructure improvement. Abha and Kumar (2015) studied the role of tourism in economic development, job creation and

poverty reduction in a paper titled *Tourism as a development tool*. The results indicated that tourism does not directly result in poverty reduction and economic development, but in fact, it accelerates public growth (infrastructure) and improvement of the financial facilities provision by creation of job opportunities that ultimately leads to great economic benefits. Joseph (2008) studied the changes before and after rural tourism development in a paper titled *development of the Tourism Industry, Rural Livelihood*. The results showed that tourism as a livelihood improvement tool is effective along with other activities. Kundu (2012) studied the impact of rural tourism in developing countries in a paper entitled *Economic Empowerment through Rural Tourism*. The results indicated that tourism boosts economic development process of the region by creating employment opportunities for skilled and unskilled people. JeaHee and Seong-Woo (2015) studied the revival of rural communities through rural tourism in a paper titled *The effect of Rural Tourism Policy on Non-Agricultural Income*. The results showed that tourism leads to instability reduction through the villagers activities diversification and endogenous rural development will be achieved through activation of farmer households in the non-agricultural sector.

### **Materials and Methods**

The present study is practical in terms of purpose with descriptive-analytical method. The statistical population is all households of 61 villages in Chaboksar district (Fig. 1). According to officials and experts only 7 villages selected that have a population of more than 100 people and considered as tourism destination. Both of field and non-tracking methods were used to obtain information. In non-tracking method, information will be collected referring to libraries, organizations, academic and related research centers. In field method, scaling and interviews with experts and local residents will be used to collect information. The research tool will be a questionnaire to test the research hypotheses. In order to operationalize the components of this research, a number of clauses were used. These clauses were ultimately set up based on the five-point Likert spectrum (very low, low, moderate, high, very high). In this study, stratified sampling method fit to volume was chosen according

**Table 1.** A brief description of studied villages.

Row	Village name	Description
1	Oshian	It is located in 3 kilometers of Chaboksar. This village is limited to the Alborz mountains from the south and to the Caspian Sea coast from the north. This village is famous for the flower and plant production in the province. It has beautiful landscapes with gardens and greenery as well as it has located next to the beautiful beach of the Caspian Sea that is the main advantage of this village.
2	Fakajvar	One the famous and spectacular places of this village is a spring that is known as the Damkesh and it is located in 3 kilometers of west of Chaboksar in the northern foothills of northern Alborz, the water flows out continuously as a vortex.
3	Sarvelat and Javaherdasht	The village is located in a high-rise area that by crossing the forset road, the view of the 2 sides of the road is spectacular. It is surrounded among the 2 rivers of Achirud and Semamus Mount into the vally and it is the entrance to the mountain villages. The Achirud Waterfall is also very beautiful and attractive.
4-5-6	Ghasem Abad Complex (GhasemAbad Sophla, Bandban GhasemAbad, GhasemAbad High)	The main products of GhasemAbad are rice, citrus and tea, handicrafts and silk fabrics known as Chadorshab and has a special reputation, bamboo and mat handicrafts. One of the most beautiful beaches of Chaboksar is the golden coast of GhasemAbad. Gishar Abandan Pool, Bandiban Historic Tower and Castle and Ghasem Abad Clothes, which are nowadays introduced as the top dress in many parts of the world.
7	Siyahkalrud	High mountain full of citrus and tea, lands full of shallie and snowy Samam mountain, and Khoshkrud river create attractive place for tourists. The Duab tourist pool is set up every year after the Kharman Festival crop.

to statistical population characteristics. In this method, each village was one floor and each household was considered as one sample unit. In this research, descriptive and inferential statistics methods and re-

sponses mean statistical test were used to analyze the data. Frequency tables and percentages, means and standard deviations were used in descriptive statistics. In inferential statistics, the Kolmogorov Smirnov test

**Table 2.** Analysis of research indicator.

Indicator	Items percentage					Items weight	Items weight standard deviation	Rank
	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high			
Tourism impact on the job creation for the youth of the village	2.1	1.8	27.8	51.7	16.6	3.78	0.81	3
The impact of tourism on womens employment	0.3	4.8	32	53.5	9.4	3.66	0.72	7
The impact of tourism on the absorption of agricultural surplus	2.4	5.4	31.8	48	12.4	3.62	0.85	9
The impact of tourism on reducing unemployment	0.3	2.4	31.5	51	14.8	3.77	0.73	4
Tourism impact on rural job creation	0.3	2.1	25.1	55.6	16.9	3.86	0.72	1
Tourism impact on increasing demand for local services and goods	0.3	2.1	22.4	62.8	12.4	3.84	0.66	2
Tourism impact on creation of new markets for production	0.6	5.7	36.3	44.7	12.7	3.63	0.79	8
Tourism impact on the development of indigenous and local handicrafts	0.3	3	31.8	55.2	9.7	3.70	0.69	6
Tourism impact on creating new business opportunities	1.5	2.1	23.6	56.2	16.6	3.84	0.77	2
Tourism impact on lower risk of income compared to other jobs	2.7	9.7	32.9	44.7	10	3.49	0.77	10
Tourism impact on the variety of economic activities	0.3	4.2	30.8	50.5	14.2	3.74	0.76	5

**Table 3.** One-sample sign test, tourism creates new job opportunities in the studied villages.

Hypothesis	Mean	Standard deviation	Median	Less than median	Equal to median	More than the median	Significant level
Tourism has created new job opportunities in the studied villages	3.73	0.51	3.73	19	5	307	0.0001

was used to determine normal variables. Based on the results of this test, the significance level in all cases was less than 0.05. So they are all abnormal, which leads to the selection of one sample test to answer the research hypotheses. Mean while, Spss/pc++ software pack were used to compute calculations. According to the statistics and census of 1390, this district has 18293 inhabitants and 5906 households, which by replacing in the Cochran formula 331 individuals was estimated as sample size.

### Results and Discussion

The responses mean statistical test and one-sample mark test were used to analyze the views of rural residents about the indicators. Also, a five-point Likert spectrum was used to collect data and ratings from 1 to 5 were assigned to responses. Number 1 and 5 represents very low and the highest respectively. Accordingly, 2.5 can be considered as the mean of responses and the mean of selected weighting indicators could be compared with 2.5.

Based on the information of Tables 1 and 2 tourism impact indicator on the job creation of villagers is ranked first with an average weight of 3.86. The average weight of all indicators is higher than average, which means that all residents approved change of employment status with the arrival of tourists in the region. Also, the indicator of tourism impact on lower risk of income compared to other jobs is ranked lowest with an average weight of 3.49. This indicates that due to the seasonal nature of tourism in the study area, villagers have accepted tourism as a complementary activity along with other rural activities and businesses.

Given that the tourism variable has created new job opportunities in the studied villages, it has an abnormal distribution. So, a one-sample sign para-

metric test will be used to answer the hypothesis. Now, if we suppose that M is the real mediator of the tourism variable, it creates new job opportunities in the studied villages, so we have to test the following assumptions : Zero hypothesis : Tourism has not created new job opportunities in the studied villages. Hypothesis 1 : Tourism has created new job opportunities in the studied villages.

According to the results of Table 3, the average of tourism variable that has created new job opportunities in the studied villages is 3.73 with a standard deviation of 0.51 and a median of 3.73. Also, the significance level of one-sample sign test is equal to 0.0001 and is less than 0.05, therefore, we reject the zero Hypothesis and accept the opposite Hypothesis that tourism has created new job opportunities in the studied villages.

### Conclusion

Due to the nature of tourism, it is a complex activity that involves the participation of various and diverse sectors of society and equally encompasses extensive impacts. Since rural empowerment through the creation of complementary agricultural activities can increase the income of rural households, create employment and encourage the production of agricultural products and handicrafts as a way to improve economic and social growth in the village, it should be considered in the rural development planning process.

Given that Chaboksar county is attracting many tourists during the holidays, especially during summer holiday, it can provide employment opportunities for many people. It can also be considered as an attraction for tourists by natural, historical, cultural and economic attractions such as weekly and local markets where local products, including food, gardening, agriculture and crafts, presented to sale and also it

will be effective in the livelihoods of the villages. In the present study, the role of tourism in the rural economy of Chaboksar county of Rudsar city was studied based on the employment component. In order to achieve the research objectives, the mean of the responses and the one-sample mark of this component were measured by means of statistical tests. The results of these tests show the positive role of tourism activities in the economic situation in the study area. This means that the activation of rural tourism in the study area through the diversification of the economy and the new business has improved the rural economy and the longevity of tourists in the region, but there is still a large gap with international standards. It requires Coherent programs to provide growth and economic sustainability in Chaboksar district more than ever with the help of financiers and the provision of facilities from government.

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