

Investigating the Impact of Tourism on the Rural Economy of the Host Community : A Case Study of Fouman County in Gilan Province

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ABSTRACT

The present research was conducted with the aim of investigating rural tourism and sustainable economic development (a case study of Fouman County). According to the results of the 2006–2011 censuses in Iran, job migration (job search ; better job search and job transfer) plays a crucial role in spatial displacement and mobility of Fouman County population. The research statistical population consists of all heads of household in 12 villages of Fouman County that are tourist destinations. Based on the information obtained from the Iranian Statistics Center in the 2016 census, the number of households in 12 villages under study was 2059 and their population included 6123 people. In this research, given the characteristics

of the statistical population, stratified sampling proportional to the size of 324 households was selected and using Cochran formula, the sample size was determined to be 324 heads of household. To measure the variables under investigation, a researcher-made questionnaire was applied. Construct validity was obtained using face validity and the reliability was estimated to be 0.73 using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient tests. The results demonstrated that rural tourism in Fouman County has had a relatively significant impact on creation of the jobs related to the provision of the supplies of the residential centers, handicrafts, production of agricultural summer crops and the boom of simple and low-capital businesses, sales of dairy products and creation of new jobs, home-based jobs and tourism guidance. Further, in economic terms, rural tourism, from the viewpoint of the local community, can have important economic effects on the sustainability of the rural areas of Fouman County, which include the development of native and specific solutions with respect to environmental management, the development of local partnership and the use of existing comparative advantages. Tourism planning can, in this area, lead to the diversity of local economy and the prosperity of the economic activities of handicrafts in an organized manner in the field of tourism and prepare the ground for sustainable rural development.

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INTRODUCTION

With the increasing expansion of rural migrations, reduced rural household income and the decline of agriculture, there is a growing need for an alternative but complementary activity for agriculture in rural areas so that in line with sustainable rural development, the possibility of enjoying sustainable livelihoods which is associated with improved quality of life and satisfaction is provided for the villagers. On the other hand, rural development planning requires a process of evaluation and review in the field of critical thinking of rural development in order to provide the best intervention strategies in rural areas for the efficiency of the results of the development planning process (Shahidi et al. 2009, Ali 2014, Baratpour et al. 2013, Mahdavi et al. 2008).

Today, despite the fact that the twentieth century has come to an end, rural development still faces multiple issues and challenges because past strategies for rural development have not been successful. One of these strategies, recently implemented in most countries with a greater emphasis, is the development of tourism in rural areas (Eftekhari and Mahdavi 2005). Among the strategies that have been considered recently in most countries of the world and have been even implemented in these countries and have brought positive outcomes is the development of tourism in rural areas that possess the necessary potentials for tourism development (Sharpley 2001, Pour et al. 2012). According to the report by the World Tourism Organization, Iran is ranked tenth in the ancient and historical attractions and is ranked fifth in natural tourism ; but in terms of utilizing these resources, it is not in a desirable place since Iran's share from the world's tourism revenue does not even reach one percent despite its privileged rank in tourist attractions and unfortunately in the last few years, lack of attention to tourism in Iran has caused that our country loses the huge income obtained in this way. According to UNESCO reports, Iran, with more than 4000 tourist attractions, is among the 10 countries with ancient civilizations in the world, which have the greatest tourist attractions with a high potential (Shakouri et al. 2017). Rural tourism causes economic growth, the creation of diversity and stability in employment, the dynamism of trade and industry, the expansion of

opportunities for income growth as separate activities, the creation of new markets for agricultural products and the development of a basis for a regional economy (Papeli and Saqqaei 2006).

The literature review shows that among the key indicators in assessing the tolerance threshold of tourist destinations is the attitude of the host societies to tourism (and the effects they perceive) (Rahnamaei et al. 2008, Qarakhlou 2007). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council statistics, in 2018 travel and tourism, Iran has accounted for a share of 7.3% of the gross domestic product (GDP) with an added value of 30.7 billion dollars. It is predicted that over the next 10 years—from 2018 to 2028—average annual growth of travel and tourism impact on GDP is equal to 2.8%. The amount of employment generated by travel and tourism in 2017 was about 1.6 million jobs in Iran (Saqqaei 2003). This figure forms a share of more than 6% of the total employment in Iran. According to the forecasts, the rate of employment created by travel and tourism in Iran in 2018 will have a growth rate of 4.9% compared to 2017 and over the next ten years, the average annual growth rate will become 1.6%. The direct effect of travel and tourism on Iran's GDP in 2017 was about \$ 11.8 billion (equivalent to 2.8% of GDP). In 2017, travel and tourism directly created 552,500 jobs in Iran ; this amount of employment constitutes a share of 2.1% of the total employment in the country. It is predicted that this will reach 663,000 jobs in 2018. The number of indirect jobs of this industry was 1,557,500 in 2017 which is predicted to reach 1,914,000 indirect jobs in 2028. It can be mentioned that in 2017, tourism has had a great direct impact on employment. In 2028, this rate equivalent to the export of visitors is one of the key components of the direct effect of travel and tourism.

According to the results of the 2006-2011 censuses in Iran, job migrations (job search ; better job search and job transfer) play a significant role in spatial displacement and mobility of the population of Fouman County. Study of the net migration in the period 1996-2006 indicates that in Fouman County, population balance is negative and this county is more migrant-sending than immigrant-accepting. In the period 1996-2006, relative to the former ten-year

period, Fouman County has had the highest negative migration balance in the age group of 0–14 years. In this period, in the age group of 15–29 years, Fouman County has witnessed migrant-sending in the young population and subsequently negative impact on young population ratio. Additionally, in the age group of 30–64 years, population balance is negative in Fouman County. With regard to the aged population structure, it can be stated that this issue can aggravate the challenge of aging. According to the 2011 census, it can be concluded that during the years 2006–2011, consequential migrations (following the household) account for a high percentage. But in the 2011 census, migrations due to achieving adequate housing have taken the lead compared to other causes. Overall, based on the results of the 2006–2011 censuses, it can be said that job migrations (job search ; better job search and job transfer) have a crucial role in spatial displacement and mobility of population (Plan and Budget Organization of Gilan Province 2017).

With increased population of Fouman County located in Gilan province of Iran and subsequently migrant-sending of population and creation of increasing problems for the inhabitants of this region, there is a need to reduce the population burden of cities followed by the reduction of issues and problems caused by increased population. On the other hand, an appropriate solution is required to prevent uncontrolled rural migrations because of the lack of job opportunities, especially non-agricultural businesses, low income and unbalanced distribution of services, facilities, utilities and capital. Destruction of forests and pastures for rural development, regardless of talent and potential, has led to land degradation, vegetation cover decline and water permeability in the soil, the overflow of rivers and floodways and increased frequency of floods, widespread occurrence of landslides and soil erosion, decreased land fertility, reduced production and increased production costs and ultimately food security threats, subsequently resulting in reduced income and increased unemployment in villages ; all of these finally prepare the ground for rural migration. In this context, one of the proposed strategies is rural tourism. Nevertheless, historical villages of Fouman County are currently faced with major social, economic and environmental problems in the development of their tourism,

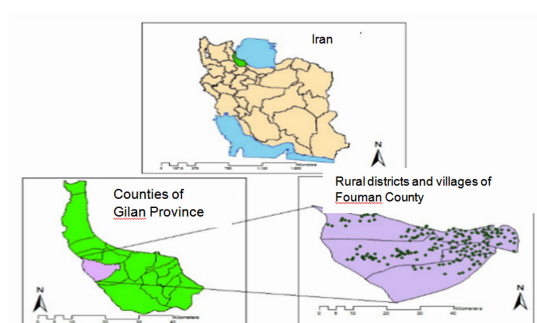


Fig. 1. Fouman County location.

whose objective manifestations can be seen in the destruction of the historical and cultural heritage of villages, pollution and depletion of tourism resources and attractions, overcrowding, lack of security, migration and evacuation of many historical-cultural villages of the country, leading to the creation of the current unfavorable and relatively unstable situation. Based on the foregoing, the necessity of assessing the sustainability of socio-cultural, economic and environmental factors in order to find solutions to stabilize the development and protection of historical and cultural villages has been doubled. In order for Iran's rural areas to benefit from natural resources and potentials and also to prevent the decline of the agricultural sector in the rural economy, which has led to increased rural migrations and reduced motivations to stay in the village, the process of rural tourism development in Iran should be planned in the form of a comprehensive perspective and a strategic approach. In strategic approaches to rural tourism, by identifying the strengths and weaknesses, attempt is made to provide, from the existing threats, the opportunities to improve the economic structure of the village, which causes sustainable rural development.

The present study was designed and implemented with the general purpose of the analysis of villagers views on the economic effects of tourism on rural development in Fouman County. Hence, this research is intended to answer the question as to whether there is a relationship between the effects of rural tourism and increased employment of residents of rural areas in Fouman County. The research hypothesis is as follows: There is a significant relationship between the effects of rural tourism and increased employment in

studied villages in Fouman County. The spatial scope of this research includes the rural areas of Fouman County (Fig. 1). This county is located at a latitude of 37° 1' 18'' to 37° 17' 19'' N and a longitude of 48° 52' 29'' to 49° 26' 7'' E. It is also located in the geographic coordinates of a latitude of 37° 1' to 37° 17' N from the equator and a longitude of 48° 51' to 49° 26' E from the prime meridian (Greenwich). According to the Population and Housing Census in 2016, the population of Fouman County includes 92,310 people. This county has great potential for tourism development because of being located in the northwest of Talysh Mountains and near the provincial capital and having numerous natural, historical and cultural attractions. But despite its great capabilities, the villages of this county face uncontrolled emigration and its young workforce has migrated to Rasht and Tehran. The seasonality of agricultural activity has also aggravated the situation. Considering what has been said, attention to tourism capabilities and planning in this area is essential and finally leads to job creation and income generation for sustainable rural development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Considering the research question and hypothesis, the current study is an applied research in terms of purpose and a descriptive-analytical study in terms of method. The data have been collected through questionnaire and field method. In this study, the researcher seeks to analyze villagers views on the economic effects of tourism on rural development in Fouman County. The research statistical population consists of all heads of household in 12 villages with a population of more than 100 people in Fouman County, totally including 2059 households (Statistical Center of Iran, 2016) (Table 1).

In the present study, to select the sample out of the statistical population of heads of household (local people), randomized stratified sampling proportional to size is used. The great advantage of this sampling over other sampling methods is that the ratio of strata among the sample subjects corresponds to the ratio of strata in the statistical population and all members of the population have an equal chance to be selected. Since the researcher is supposed to refer to all target

Table 1. Research statistical population and sample.

No.	Village name	Number of households	Population
1	Teymur Kuh	67	193
2	Gasht-e Gurab	116	334
3	Palang Darreh	78	227
4	Gasht-e Rudkhan	211	657
5	Qal'e Kal	186	687
6	Gasgareh	184	477
7	Emamzadeh Taqi	127	378
8	Zeide Bala	261	769
9	Kalarm	266	789
10	Qal'e Rudkhan	195	538
11	Siah Rud	170	478
12	Fusheh	198	597
	Total	2059	6123

villages to collect information and given that the number of heads of household varies from one village to another, sampling should be done in proportion to the population of each village. Thus, stratified sampling proportional to size was chosen. In this study, with respect to the second method (Cochran formula), of 2019 households, 324 heads of household were selected as the sample and questionnaires were distributed and collected in the sample villages.

The research variables are as follows : Independent (predictor) variable : It is the variable whose effect on other variables is measured by the researcher. In this research, the independent variable is the effects of rural tourism. Dependent (criterion) variable : It is the variable on which the independent variable makes an effect. In the present research, the dependent variable is villagers employment. In this study, documentary, field and library methods have been employed for data collection. Spatial and descriptive data were obtained by directly referring to statistical centers and using county letters of statistics and provincial land preparation. Also, comprehensive information was gained from the Cultural Heritage Organization, handicrafts and tourism (strategic committee of rural and nomadic tourism and tourism research center), organization of rural and urban municipalities of the country, Agriculture Jihad and Housing Foundation of Islamic Revolution to do the research. Then, the data related to the research

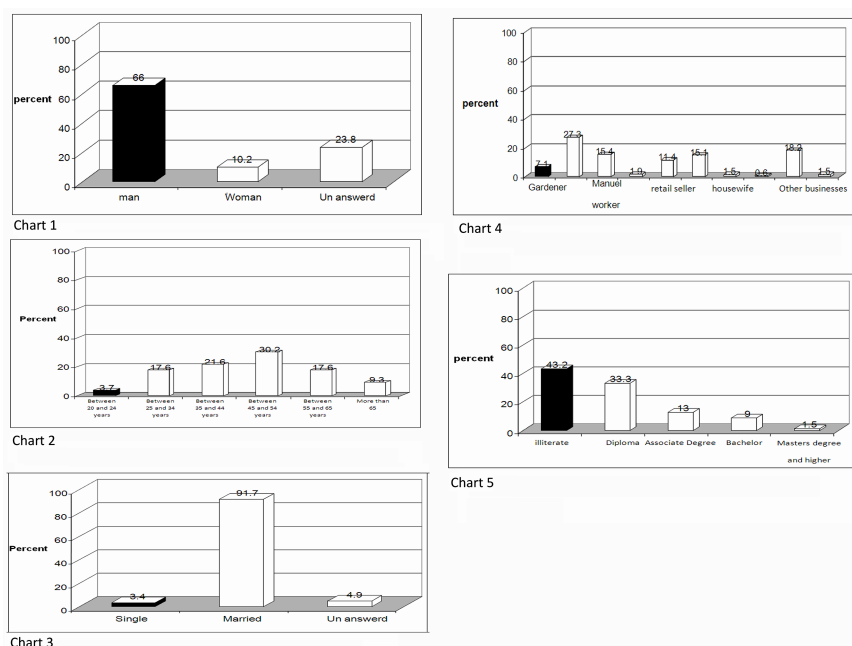


Fig. 2. Chart 1. Frequency percentage of respondents in terms of gender. Chart 2. Frequency percentage of respondents in terms of age. Chart 3. Frequency percentage of respondents in terms of marital status. Chart 4. Frequency percentage of respondents in terms of job type. Chart 5. Frequency percentage of respondents in terms of education..

variables were completed through field studies. In the present article, questionnaire is applied as an appropriate tool for the research question and hypothesis testing. For the questionnaire validity and reliability, face validity was used. Overall, desirability index of reliability in this study was determined to be 0.7279, which is appropriate. Considering the suitability of Cronbach's alpha coefficients, the internal validity of the research tool is confirmed.

RESULTS

In the descriptive study section, demographic variables and key variables have been described as follows : As can be observed in Fig. 2 : Chart (1), the respondents include 66% male and 10.2% female and 23.8% did not respond to this question. As shown in Chart (2), in terms of age, the respondents include 3.7% aged between 15–24, 17.6% aged between 25–34, 21.6% aged between 35–44, 30.2% aged between 45–54, 17.6% aged between 55–65 and 9.3% above 65 years of age. Chart (3) shows that in terms of marital status, the respondents consist of 3.4%

single and 91.7% married and 4.9% did not respond to this question. As can be observed in Chart (4), the respondents include 7.1% gardener, 27.3% farmer, 15.4% worker, 1.9% military jobs, 11.4% retailer, 15.1% service jobs, 1.5% housekeeper, 0.6% unemployed and 18.2% other jobs. 1.5% did not respond to this question. As shown in Chart (5), in terms of education, the respondents comprise 43.2% illiterate, 33.3% diploma, 13% associate degrees, 9% bachelor's degrees and 1.5% master's degrees and above.

According to the results of Fig. 3: Chart (6), totally 69.2% of the respondents selected the options of high and very high for the effect of tourism on creation of handicraft - related jobs. The results of Chart (7) show that 85.8% of the respondents selected the options of high and very high for the effect of tourism on creation of the jobs related to the provision of the supplies of the residential centers. Also, according to the results of Chart (8), 25% of the respondents selected the options of high and very high for the effect of tourism on the prosperity of recreational activities such as aquatic activities, fishing, swimming and

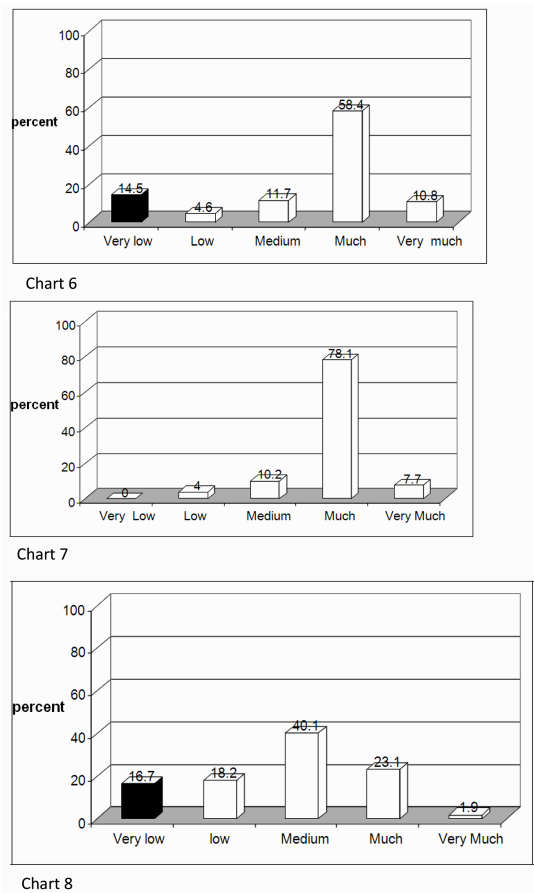


Fig. 3. Chart 6. Frequency percentage of respondents about the effect of tourism on creation of handicraft-related jobs. Chart 7. Frequency percentage of respondents about the effect of tourism on creation of the jobs related to the provision of the supplies of the residential centers. Chart 8. Frequency percentage of respondents about the effect of tourism on the prosperity of recreational activities such as aquatic activities, fishing, swimming and sailing in the region.

sailing in the region. Based on Fig. 4. Chart (9), 84% of the respondents selected the options of high and very high for the effect of tourism on the production of summer crops. According to Chart (10), 84% of the respondents selected the options of average, high and very high for the effect of tourism on the sales of dairy products.

Considering the results of Fig. 5: Chart (11), 89.2% of the respondents selected the options of high and very high for the effect of tourism on creation

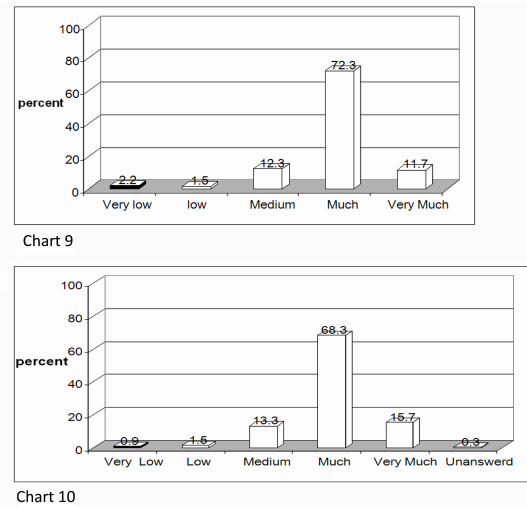


Fig. 4. Chart 9. Frequency percentage of respondents about the effect of tourism on the production of agricultural summer crops. Chart 10. Frequency percentage of respondents about the effect of tourism on the sales of dairy products.

of new jobs. According to the results of Chart (12), 53.1% of the respondents selected the options of high and very high for the effect of tourism on creation of home - based jobs. Also, given the results of Chart (13), 4.6% of the respondents selected the options of high and very high for the effect of tourism on creation of tourism guidance job.

Research hypothesis testing

Research hypothesis : There is a significant relationship between the effects of rural tourism and increased employment in the studied villages. To analyze this hypothesis, Pearson correlation coefficient test was applied. **Null hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship between the effects of rural tourism and increased employment in the studied villages. **Hypothesis 1 :** There is a significant relationship between the effects of rural tourism and increased employment in the studied villages.

Information provided in Table 2, suggested that the correlation coefficient between rural tourism and increased employment in the studied villages of Fouman County is equal to 0.537, which is statistically positive and significant ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and hypothesis 1 indi-

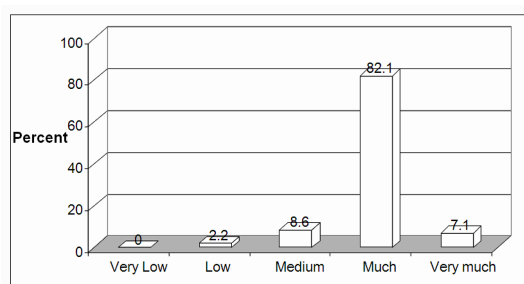


Chart 11

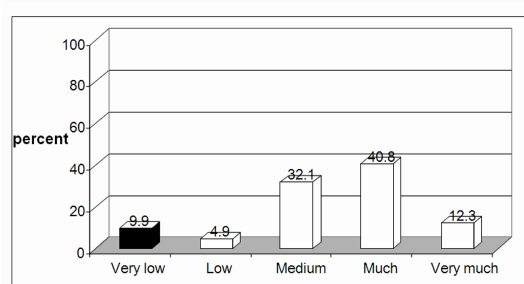


Chart 12

Fig. 5. Chart 11. Frequency percentage of respondents about the effect of tourism on creation of new jobs. Chart 12. Frequency percentage of respondents about the effect of tourism on creation of home-based jobs. Chart 13. Frequency percentage of respondents about the effect of tourism on creation of tourism guidance.

cating the significant relationship between tourism and increased employment in the studied villages of Fouman County is accepted.

Inferential-analytical findings

In total, 69.2% of the respondents selected the options of high and very high for the effect of tourism on creation of handicraft-related jobs. 85.8% of the respondents selected the options of high and very high for the effect of tourism on creation of the jobs related to the provision of the supplies of the residential centers. 25% of the respondents selected the options of high and very high for the effect of tourism on the prosperity of recreational activities such as aquatic activities, fishing, swimming and sailing in the region. 54.6% of the respondents selected the options of average, high and very high for the effect of tourism on increased sports facilities in the region. 84% of the respondents selected the options of high and very

Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficient test ; the relationship between tourism and employment in the studied villages of Fouman County. **p < 0.01.

Variable	Employment in the studied villages
Tourism, correlation coefficient (R)	0.537**
Significance level (p)	0.001

high for the effect of tourism on the production of summer crops. 80.8% of the respondents selected the options of high and very high for the effect of tourism on the prosperity of simple and low-capital jobs such as peddling. 53.1% of the respondents selected the options of high and very high for the effect of tourism on creation of home-based jobs. 68.1% of the respondents selected the options of average, high and very high for the effect of tourism on reduced seasonal unemployment. 84% of the respondents selected the options of average, high and very high for the effect of tourism on the sales of dairy products.

DISCUSSION

The development of rural tourism provides the opportunity for economic activities and the creation of various jobs in rural areas. Therefore, job opportunities of rural tourism that are mostly service jobs are created directly or indirectly and lead to employment. The diversity of economic activity creates jobs for rural inhabitants. Tourism development in rural areas can play a key role in empowering local people and developing human resources, providing economic diversification and its growth, creating job opportunities, solving the problem of unemployment, promoting standards of living through the provision of social services, filling the gap between urban and rural areas in different fields and reducing rural migration to metropolitan areas. The use of rural tourism attractions, such as tourists visiting of the sample organic farms of the region, can affect the economic diversification of villages in Fouman County.

Considering the findings of the current research, the impact of rural tourism of Fouman County on creation of the jobs related to the provision of the supplies of the residential centers and handicraft-related

jobs has been significant. This means that the tourism boom in the county automatically enhances the catering and residential activities and transportation services and plays an important role in the development of handicrafts and conversion and complementary industries. With the development of tourism in villages, various units such as rental houses, lodgings and guest houses are created to accommodate tourists plus the spaces for catering the tourists and service units for transportation and information needs of tourist and also units for rural industries and places to supply agricultural and industrial products. Naturally, the role of tourism in creating non-agricultural units is more important since it is more effective in reconstruction and economic diversification of villages. In the meantime, the role of tourism in the development of handicrafts and indigenous arts is further considered. Currently, given that Fouman handicrafts generally include Chamoush weaving, woolen doll weaving, pottery, woolen handmade products, shawl weaving and carpet weaving, priorities require that in the field of production, greater emphasis is put on labor-intensive or user-centered projects rather than capital-intensive or currency-intensive projects. By the same token, handicrafts, with respect to their features, may comply with the current conditions of Fouman villages more than any other productive activity. Villagers in Fouman County, including rural women, have a highly effective role in the common handicraft activities of the village and improvement of their own and their families economy. After the rice harvesting, women in the villages of this county spend their leisure time on handicraft products (handmade products, socks weaving, knitting) in autumn and winter. These products are used by these women and their families and are also supplied to the market (Fouman Tuesday market) and thus are used by people of Fouman County, bringing income for the family. In villages, due to the abundance of raw materials, the history of artificial arts and their diversity and beauty in attracting the tourists, handicrafts have been able to play an important role in job creation and workforce recruitment. Other rural side jobs include industries like mat weaving, knitting and carpet weaving. Handicraft products are, in fact, complementary to agricultural and livestock activities of the villagers that bring a lot of added value and cause to reduce the seasonal unemployment of villagers.

Rural tourism in the rural areas of Fouman has partly managed to shift the focus of economic activities from the agricultural field to other sectors of the economy, such as service activities. The main reason for the lack of service activities in the villages of Fouman can be found in the domination of the activity of the region in the sector of agriculture, farming, horticulture and livestock breeding and poultry breeding and also some villages non-enjoyment of a variety of infrastructure and superstructure services, which is a factor in the low number of employees in the service sector. The impact of tourism on the boom of recreational activities such as aquatic activities, fishing, swimming and sailing and enhanced sports facilities has been significant (high and very high). If the villages economic activities are expanding in the service sector, especially tourism, along with agriculture, more desirable outcomes will be achieved. When it comes to diversity, it means the preservation of agriculture along with agricultural activities and if tourism leads to the loss or decline of agricultural employment, its value will be reduced. In this state, tourism generates income from outside of agricultural products for the villagers and prevents them from relying solely on agriculture.

Moreover, the impact of Fouman tourism on the production of agricultural summer crops has been high and very high, meaning that agricultural tourism can bring about diversification of agricultural products. After harvesting garden products, generally including local vegetables (peppermint, bineh) and local fruits (raspberries, medlar, figs), villagers sell them on weekly markets in Fouman County (Fouman Tuesday market). The economy of Fouman County villages is largely based on agriculture. Although this is most common in the plain villages of the county and villages in mountainous areas are more engaged in livestock farming, one can consider agriculture as the dominant activity in this county because some livestock breeders are also engaged in agriculture. Agricultural activity is regarded as the most important talent and ability for development in the studied area. Hence, tourists group visits from weekly Tuesday markets and food festivals of Fouman will increase the employment of villagers.

The impact of tourism on the sales of dairy

products has also been significant in Fouman County. Suitable climatic conditions and the presence of suitable pasture in mountainous regions of Fouman and traditional culture, tendency to livestock breeding and activity in related fields together have created a significant potential for the development of livestock and dairy products in the villages of Fouman County. Through land grading, the agricultural lands are not small anymore and have almost been evened out and planting and harvesting operations of crops are carried out by machines such as combines and tractors. Besides, concerning livestock farming, it should be noted that much of the traditional livestock farming has given way to industrial livestock farming, which requires the use of special devices for milking and cleaning and giving forage to the livestock. Considering the relative concentration of a variety of livestock in Fouman County, the creation of livestock conversion and complementary industries of rural areas can lead to the organization of agricultural cooperatives in the county. The markets for selling dairy products at the farm or garden or, in general, in the agricultural area and local ecotourism lead to the concentration of these products in local markets and in the best state, they can be systematically sold by large cooperatives or markets, resulting in increased employment of villagers.

In Fouman County, the effect of tourism on the creation of new jobs and home - based jobs and the creation of tourism guidance has been relatively significant. Natural and morphological conditions, climatic factors and elements along with the economic, social and cultural structure of environments physically and in terms of the architecture and village type, such as eco-tourism and the construction of native place of residence and various forms of their side attractions are exclusive features attractive to the tourists. The construction of tourist guidance and eco-tourism units, in addition to job creation for the villagers, provides an appropriate employment opportunity for those villagers who have migrated and now want to return to their own village. This, in line with population stabilization, the introduction of native products and local souvenirs of the rural community of Fouman to the tourists and the introduction of attractions and places of interest in the villages,

will increase the employment of villagers. Manufacturing cooperatives related to home-based jobs and their establishment in rural areas cause to develop the villages and highlight their role. In the villages under investigation, organizations and cooperatives have been established and have created new jobs for villagers with the aim of villagers working in these cooperatives and the establishment of production cooperatives, particularly in the field of handicrafts, clothing and conversion and processing of products.

This means that the diversity of products generated by rural tourism, if not coupled with diversity of employment, cannot guarantee the internal development of villages. Considering the relatively high responses regarding the impact of tourism on the creation of new jobs in Fouman County, this diversity can guarantee sustainable development in Fouman villages in terms of the groups involved in rural economy. Normally, middle-aged people and a few young people are engaged in agriculture while many young people as well as women and unemployed people can be involved in agricultural activities. Given that this economic activity has replaced non-agricultural activities in the service sector, this indicates the further effects of tourism to replace these activities in Fouman County. However, it should be remembered that agriculture in a village, strengthened at any rate, cannot alone meet the economic needs of the village. Thus, it is necessary to develop industrial and service activities such as tourism. Further, the role of conversion and complementary industries should be emphasized, which can play a crucial role in creating new jobs related to tourism and diversifying agricultural commodities and bring positive economic outcomes in the employment of villages through agricultural diversification due to tourism and the development of sales market, such as visiting sample organic farms. The effects of tourism on rural sustainability and the involvement of people in economic activities such as tourism are more important than the short-term effects of tourism on agriculture and other rural economic activities. This issue originates from the fact that the development of tourism activities may boost employment in a village, but these benefits may be concentrated in a specific group and do not result in the internal development

and sustainability of villages.

In this section, the results obtained from questions are discussed and another research hypothesis is stated. To this end, the research hypothesis has been raised. Afterwards, with regard to the evidence of statistical analysis, the results and possible arguments for its confirmation or rejection have been addressed. In the section on the consistency of past studies, researchers concluded that tourism in each region can create and increase employment, which is important for the economic and social development of the area and is consistent with the present research findings. The most important reason for consistency is that in recent years, employment is one of the most important concerns of the statesmen of the country and migration to cities and marginalization have become widespread due to lack of jobs in villages. The development of rural tourism causes sustainability and plays a positive role in the lives of rural people and requires the determination and development of native and specific solutions with respect to environmental management, local partnership development, explicit and strong rules, sustainable marketing and realistic planning. Additionally, an appropriate link between national, regional and local projects and plans in the field of rural tourism development with a bottom-up participatory planning approach is essential. The most important reason for inconsistency is that in addition to economic benefits, other benefits are also important for the local communities and residents.

CONCLUSION

The findings obtained by Zahedi (2006) suggest that despite providing employment and other economic benefits to the livelihood of society, tourism has negative impacts on the economic livelihood of society. The most important reason for inconsistency is that the capabilities of the region have not been used so far to direct natural, social and economic processes for the sustainable development of the regions tourism economy. The negative economic effects of rural tourism on cultural and natural works and revenue leakage outside the region are among these factors. Strengthening of employment requires the creation of efficient infrastructure and cultural platforms. Many economic activities have declined in recent

decades and the level of employment in traditional agriculture has decreased. Increased unemployment rate and withdrawal of the younger generation from rural communities have endangered the rural texture and structure. Economic and social benefits of tourism have a significant impact on life experience in the rural host community. The quality of life of the host community can act as an effective predictor in supporting tourism development.

According to the results of the research hypothesis, it was revealed that rural tourism has a significant effect on increased employment in the studied villages of Fouman County. Thus, the following cases are recommended: Establishment of social security insurance networks for villagers working in the agricultural sector so that they continuously remain in the manufacturing activities. Allocation of budget and credits to villagers who are interested in handicraft-related activities so that in addition to maintaining this type of products, they have a source to earn livelihood. Formation of rural production cooperatives. Developing small home-based and collective businesses, absorbing domestic and foreign investors, training tour guides and supporting revolutionary innovations and inventions in the tourism industry are among the ways to expand entrepreneurship in the tourism industry. Appropriate planning to reduce the actual costs for the tourists through creating group tours, offering special discounts via travel companies and providing exceptional discounts to the tourists to further attract them to the region. Implementing the eco-tourism plan.

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