

A Study on the Effect of Tourism on Rural Development using SWOT Model (A Case Study in Sistan's Qal'e Nou)

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Abstract- Nowadays, the tourism industry and especially rural tourism has its own special place in the economy of different countries. Especially, it plays an active and important role in economic, social, and cultural development of developing countries. Qal'e Nou is a village with a unique environment offering many natural, historical, and cultural attractions. The issue concerning this study was that whether Qal'e Nou has the necessary potentials for development in terms of rural tourism or not? Thus, the research aims at clarifying tourism attractions of Qal'e Nou and studying the role of tourism in development of rural tourism. The statistical society included a number of 60 people from the locals, entrepreneurs and beneficiaries, specialists, etc.

Using questionnaire, interviews, and the SWOT model, the effect of tourism on rural development of Qal'e Nou Village was studied. The results indicated that, because of having the necessary potentials for tourism development, Qal'e Nou can attract native and foreign tourists. Although it has tourism potentials, this village faces issues like not having enough facilities, no advertisement, and lack of infrastructures that hinder tourism development. The development of a center, therefore, named "The Office of Rural Tourism Development" in the village to survey and organize the tourism affairs as a long-term program and establishment of cheap rental village houses were suggested as a short-term program. Furthermore, based on the SWOT model, the competitive-offensive strategy for tourism development in this village will be presented.

Keywords- *Tourism, Development, SWOT model, Qal'e Nou, Strategy*

I. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Nowadays, the tourism and specially the domestic-tourism industry have its special place in the economy of different countries. Iran, although having very good potentials in terms of cultural, historical, and natural attractions and the stated promises, has not been able to find its place as a target country for tourists hence being left out of the universal tourism market and profiting but a bit from this industry (Sharifzade, Moradnejad, 2002:21). Also, this issue stands true for domestic and rural tourism since the rural development in Iran still faces many challenges and the old strategies regarding rural

development have not been successful thus not being able to alleviate problems like poverty, occupation, hygiene, food, and environment. These strategies have not been able to distribute the profits made of development too, thus resulting in many problems for the rural areas and this is all happening today that the rural tourism is one of the well-known types of tourism industry. Rural development is a process through which enables villagers to control their environment having an origin that provide for many more uses which guarantee such control (Shahidi et al., 2009: 102).

Although the growth of tourism has resulted in much revenue for the rural areas, the development that follows no plan has a high price to pay too. It was only the perfect planning that resulted in good outcomes in the developed countries.

Such issues persuaded the writer to study the growth and development of rural tourism in Qal'e Nou village, Sistan Region. This is the only village in all of Sistan and Baluchestan which has 100% old fashioned architecture of clay and has preserved its original form (Rural Development Office of Domicile Institution, 2009:15). Qal'e Nou is a well-known touristic village in Sistan and Baluchestan welcoming lots of visitors especially during Nouruz Holidays. The village is located 7 km from Zahak and some very important historical remnants are there (e.g. Dahaneye Qolaman of the Achaemenian Dynasty). Thus, the aim of this research is to study the effect of rural tourism in development of Qal'e Nou village.

II. THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES

Based on the universal knowledge, rural tourism can provide considerable economic and social benefits for the rural areas by increasing the income and improving the infrastructures specifically in the outskirts and underdeveloped parts. Also, by improving and renewing the economic and social structures, it can help the economic growth of rural areas. It is for this reason that in many countries, the development of rural tourism is working as a separate or integrated system in the overall framework of plans for tourism development.

Rural tourism is a branch of tourism industry which based on the existing natural and cultural potentials can play an important role in rejuvenation of the villages, providing job opportunities and income for the villagers, protection of natural, historical, and cultural heritages, and having a unified rural development.

On the whole, tourism importance is twofold; one aspect is in terms of being a worldwide business and the other being an emphasis on development of regional and local policies. Therefore it is logical to accept the idea that there is not an acceptable and general definition of the rural tourism (Rahimi, 2002:226). Furthermore, it should be understood that some discriminate characteristics (e.g. activities and opportunities) separates the rural tourism from other branches of tourism. But this is still noteworthy that there is no generally accepted definition or specification of rural tourism, although at first, it seems easy to define it. From another point of view, the rural tourism can be seen as including a domain of activities and recreation services for the visitors provided by the locals and/or farmers to attract visitors in order to make money (J. Sharpley & Richard, 1997. p 10).

If we accept this view, which is broader in a general sense, the rural tourism can include farming and agriculture tourism and thus the services like occupation, reception, facilities, recreation, local feasts and festivals, producing and selling the handmade products and agriculture products and... to the visitors. (Sharifzade & Moradnejad, 2002:54).

III. TYPES OF RURAL TOURISM

Rural tourism is not solely made of agriculture tourism but includes all the activities that visitors do in the rural areas. Thus, it can be stated that tourists visit the rural areas for different reasons and motives and they participate in many different activities hence all the different sorts of rural tourism which are dependent on the visitor himself, characteristics of the destination, and the motivation behind the visit. Based on the objectives the tourists have, therefore, the rural tourism can be divided into 5 types:

Natural Tourism: which is mostly in interaction with ecological attractions.

Cultural Tourism: which is related to culture, history, and ancient and cultural heritage of the people.

Ecotourism: a type of tourism that in addition to interaction with natural attractions (e.g. rivers, seasonal lakes, and mountains) has interaction with the life and norms of the locals who are in contact with the natural attractions there.

Village Tourism: in this type, the tourists live with the locals and take part in economic and social activities of the village.

Agri-tourism: or the agriculture tourism is a type in which the tourists interact with customary agricultural activities or even take part in them but take care to cause no negative outcome (Sharifzade & Moradnejad, 2002: 54). The same

classification has been used in Thailand in a study on the rural tourism by Vang Chai.

J. Holland et al. (2003) believed that rural tourism can replace farm tourism or agri-tourism but both of them are comprehensive components of tourism in rural areas thus, these concepts can be defined as follows:

Rural tourism or local-rural tourism: this type tourism can include both of the types mentioned earlier and also include camping, occupation in a rental house, hiking and hunting in the wild, marketing for the handmade products, cultural festivals, adventure exercises, walking, visiting historical places, music festivals, and in fact all sorts of recreational activities in rural areas (J. Holland et al., 2003. p 7). It is noteworthy that in Europe, the farm tourism plays an important role in rural tourism; for instance, there are rental houses and hotels in some rural areas of Germany and some farms have changed form to accommodate visitors and there are similar farms like these in Africa too accommodating visitors in traditional houses but still most of the visitors take residence in places specially built for recreational purposes (e.g. fancy houses built in camps) (J. Holland et al., 2003. p 7).

Sharpley (1997) believed that some products of tourism or types of tourism belong to rural tourism but not necessarily equal to it. For example, the agri-tourism is any kind of tourism that directly relates to agriculture (a farm) and includes occupation in a farm, rooms or camping, educational surveys, food, recreational activities and selling farm or handmade products (J. Sharpley & Richard, 1997. p 15).

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Holland et al. (2003) studied the tourism development in poor rural areas of Uganda and Czech Republic and Slovakia. They considered the tourism development and its different trends (Holland et al., 2003).

J. Sharpley and Richard (2003) in the book titled "An Introduction on Rural Tourism" stress the effect of tourism on economic-social development and remaking of the rural areas.

Sorush Gudarzi (2011) studied the effect of tourism on rural development of Varkane Village in Hamadan. According to him, rural tourism increases the rural families' incomes, provides them with job opportunities, and lessens the migration from villages by improving the quality of their lives.

Seydali et al. (2012) studied the effects of tourism on development of rural areas of Minudasht. The results showed that the tourism industry has provided kind of a job variety up to now especially in village service department. And it has also caused changes in economic-social activities especially on the part of agriculture and animal husbandry, society, and income.

Sharifzade and Moradnejad (2002) in their study on constant economic and social development of rural areas stressed that rural development can play an important role in diversifying the agriculture and economy and also provide job opportunities in other economic sections.

Taqvae and Shapurabadi (2002) in a research titled “Development of Barkhar Region in Isfahan by the Expansion of Rural Tourism” tried to study the advantages of tourism industry and its effect on providing job opportunities and development of handmade products.

Shahidi et al. (2009) studied the effects of tourism on rural area planning. According to their analysis, in order to have constant development in rural areas, thus providing villagers with a constant income, we can use complementary activities to agriculture in villages.

Saqae and Mafi (2010) studied the rural tourism in outskirts of Mashhad. They concluded that the effective range of tourism in megacity of Mashhad is 43.20 km.

Mahdavi Hajiluee et al. (2008) studied the effects of tourism in on rural development in DareKan and Sulqan. They found that in addition to some minor increase of income and a few more job opportunities, tourism has increased the prices regarding real state.

V. THE LOCATION OF STUDY AREA

According to the last administrative divisions of the country, Sistan Plain is located in latitude 25 degrees and 3 minutes to 31 degrees and 29 minutes north and the longitude 58 degrees and 49 minutes to 63 degrees and 20 minutes east. It covers an area of 15197 m² (Statistical information of Sistan and Baluchestan, 2006).

Qal’e Nou is village in Zahak County located in Sistan. The village is near the small town of Jazinak and according to the 2011 census, it has a total population of 1500 with 300 families (Statistical information of Sistan and Baluchestan, 2011).

The village is 26 km away from Zabol and 5 km to Zahak. Qal’e Nou is an important village in all of Sistan and Baluchestan and is considered as a touristic village welcoming many visitors especially in Nouruz. There is a very important remnant called “Dahaneye Qolaman” near the village which dates back to the Achaemenid Dynasty.

Planning and tourism development in this area can improve the local economy considerably.



Figure 1. The political map of Zahak County - Source: The Annual Statistical information of Sistan and Baluchestan (2011)

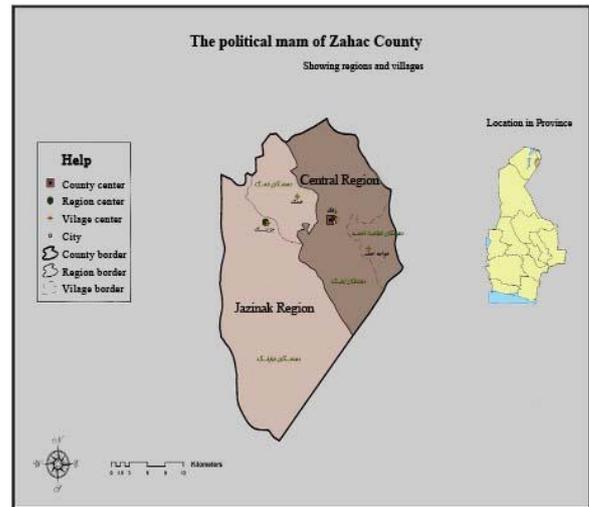


Figure 2. GIS map of the Study Area

VI. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The research is of descriptive-analytical type and the data was collected using questionnaire and interviews.

This step aims at assessing the internal condition of Qal’e Nou in order to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; in other words, it means finding factors that can facilitate or block the tourism development of Qal’e Nou. First, the data regarding the factors were collected asking different people from among locals, visitors, specialists, etc. Then, these factors were classified into two groups, Internal factors and External factors. It resulted in 10 strengths and 3 weaknesses. And, 10 opportunities with 4 threats. Based on this, there are 20 positive points (strengths & opportunities) against 7 negative points (weaknesses & threats) that limit the tourism development of Qal’e Nou.

4 questionnaires based on the 4 groups were developed and all of the SWOT factors mentioned above were considered in them in order to weigh them and determine their priority. The assessment was carried out using the likert scale (from very low to very high).

The developed questionnaires were handed over to specialists.

After collecting the questionnaires, all the data was entered in SPSS v19. Then, the primary, secondary, and final coefficients and rate for each internal and external factor was calculated separately. The acquired data is presented in the following tables for analysis and suggestion of strategies.

SWOT Model: it is one of the strategic tools for comparing internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats. Based on this model, a good strategy maximizes the strengths and opportunities while minimizing the weaknesses and threats. To this aim, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are compared in 4 general situations including: WT, ST, WO, and SO and then the strategies would be selected from among them (Hekmatnia, 2006).

VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As it was mentioned before, there were 10 strengths against 3 weaknesses and 10 opportunities against 4 threats in Qal'e Nou. Thus, there are 20 positive points (strengths and

opportunities) against 7 negative points (weaknesses and threats) which limited the tourism development the village. What follows analyzes the internal and external factors regarding the tourism development of Qal'e Nou.

TABLE I. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS AND POINTS

| Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
|---|--|--|---|
| Existence of primary infrastructures | Lack of enough facilities e.g. hotels, restaurants, and recreation parks | Job opportunities | Destruction of ancient ruins |
| Being close to the fourth Chahnime | No advertisement | Attracting native and foreign investors | Increase of real state prices |
| Village's traditional context | Limited local finance and no investor | Infrastructure improvement | Air pollution and endangerment of the environment |
| Existence of ancient ruins inside the village. | | Introducing local culture | Increase of social crimes |
| Being close to Dahaneye Qolaman | | Attracting investments for protection of ancient ruins and environment | |
| Existence of agricultural lands around the village | | Saving the village's traditional context | |
| Villager's tendency toward more visitors | | Introducing the village to visitors | |
| Authorities paying attention to tourism and development | | More income for the locals | |
| Existence of land for improving infrastructures | | Improving transportation | |
| | | Familiarizing the locals with the potential | |

TABLE II. TOURISM STRENGTHS OF QAL'E NOU

| | Strengths | Primary coefficient | Secondary coefficient | Rate | Final coefficient |
|----|---|---------------------|-----------------------|------|-------------------|
| S1 | Village's traditional architecture | 50 | 0.1222 | 4 | 0.488 |
| S2 | Being close to the fourth Chahnime | 50 | 0.1222 | 4 | 0.488 |
| S3 | Existence of primary infrastructures | 48 | 0.1173 | 4 | 0.469 |
| S4 | Existence of ancient ruins inside the village. | 49 | 0.1198 | 3 | 0.359 |
| S5 | Being close to Dahaneye Qolaman | 45 | 0.1100 | 3 | 0.330 |
| S6 | Authorities paying attention to tourism and development | 42 | 0.1026 | 3 | 0.307 |
| S7 | Existence of land for improving infrastructures | 41 | 0.1002 | 3 | 0.300 |
| S8 | Villager's tendency toward more visitors | 40 | 0.0977 | 3 | 0.293 |
| S9 | Existence of agricultural lands around the village | 44 | 0.1075 | 3 | 0.215 |
| | Total | 409 | 1 | 3.22 | 3.249 |

SWOT analysis regarding the tourism development in Qal'e Nou shows that the factor Village's traditional architecture (final coefficient: 0.488, rate: 4, and secondary coefficient: 0.1222) is the first most important internal strength and after that the factor Being close to the fourth Chahnime (final coefficient: 0.488, rate: 4, and secondary coefficient: 0.1222) is

the second most important factor regarding the tourism development. The factor Existence of agricultural lands around the village (final coefficient: 0.215, rate: 2, and secondary coefficient: 0.1075) was found to be the least important internal strength regarding the tourism development of Qal'e Nou.

TABLE III. TOURISM WEAKNESSES OF QAL'E NOU

| | Weaknesses | Primary coefficient | Secondary coefficient | Rate | Final coefficient |
|----|--|---------------------|-----------------------|------|-------------------|
| W1 | Lack of enough facilities e.g. hotels, restaurants, and recreation parks | 50 | 0.333 | 3 | 0.999 |
| W2 | Limited local finance and no investor | 50 | 0.333 | 3 | 0.999 |
| W3 | No advertisement | 50 | 0.333 | 2 | 0.666 |
| | Total | 150 | 1 | 2.67 | 2.664 |

SWOT analysis regarding the ecotourism activities in Qal'e Nou shows that the factor Lack of enough facilities e.g. hotels, restaurants, and recreation parks (final coefficient: 0.999, rate: 3, and secondary coefficient: 0.333) is the first most important internal weakness and after that the factor Limited local finance and no investor (final coefficient: 0.999, rate: 3, and

secondary coefficient: 0.333) is the second most important factor regarding the tourism development. The factor No advertisement (final coefficient: 0.666, rate: 2, and secondary coefficient: 0.333) was found to be the least important internal weakness regarding the tourism development of Qal'e Nou.

TABLE IV. TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES OF QAL'E NOU

| No | Opportunities | Primary coefficient | Secondary coefficient | Rate | Final coefficient |
|-----|--|---------------------|-----------------------|------|-------------------|
| O1 | More income for the locals | 50 | 0.1075 | 4 | 0.430 |
| O2 | Job opportunities | 50 | 0.1075 | 4 | 0.430 |
| O3 | Infrastructure improvement | 49 | 0.1053 | 4 | 0.421 |
| O4 | Saving the village's traditional context | 48 | 0.1032 | 4 | 0.412 |
| O5 | Attracting native and foreign investors | 40 | 0.0860 | 4 | 0.344 |
| O6 | Attracting investments for protection of ancient ruins and environment | 49 | 0.1053 | 3 | 0.315 |
| O7 | Introducing the village to visitors | 44 | 0.0946 | 3 | 0.283 |
| O8 | Introducing local culture | 44 | 0.0946 | 3 | 0.281 |
| O9 | Improving transportation | 48 | 0.1032 | 2 | 0.204 |
| O10 | Familiarizing the locals with the potential | 43 | 0.0924 | 2 | 0.184 |
| | Total | 465 | 1 | 3.3 | 3.304 |

SWOT analysis regarding the tourism development in Qal'e Nou shows that the factor More income for the locals (final coefficient: 0.430, rate: 4, and secondary coefficient: 0.1075) is the first most important external opportunity and the factor Job opportunities (final coefficient: 0.430, rate: 4, and secondary coefficient: 0.1075) is the second most important

factor regarding the tourism development. The factor Familiarizing the locals with the potential (final coefficient: 0.184, rate: 2, and secondary coefficient: 0.0924) was found to be the least important external opportunity regarding the tourism development of Qal'e Nou.

TABLE V. TOURISM THREATS OF QAL'E NOU

| No | Threats | Primary coefficient | Secondary coefficient | Rate | Final coefficient |
|----|---|---------------------|-----------------------|------|-------------------|
| T1 | Destruction of ancient ruins | 37 | 0.303 | 4 | 1.212 |
| T2 | Air pollution and endangerment of the environment | 29 | 0.237 | 3 | 0.711 |
| T3 | Increase of social crimes | 43 | 0.352 | 2 | 0.704 |
| T4 | Increase of real state prices | 13 | 0.106 | 1 | 0.106 |
| | Total | 122 | 1 | 2.5 | 2.733 |

SWOT analysis regarding the tourism development in Qal'e Nou shows that the factor Destruction of ancient ruins (final coefficient: 1.212, rate: 4, and secondary coefficient: 0.303) is the first most important external threat and the factor Air pollution and endangerment of the environment (final coefficient: 0.711, rate: 3, and secondary coefficient: 0.237) is the second most important factor regarding the tourism development. The factor Increase of real state prices (final coefficient: 0.106, rate: 1, and secondary coefficient: 0.106) was found to be the least important external threat regarding the tourism development of Qal'e Nou.

VIII. ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC FACTORS

TABLE VI. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS REGARDING QAL'E NOU TOURISM BASED ON SWOT MODEL FINAL COEFFICIENT

| | Primary coefficient | Secondary coefficient | Average rate | Final coefficient |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Strengths | 409 | 1 | 3.22 | 3.249 |
| Weaknesses | 150 | 1 | 2.67 | 2.664 |
| Opportunities | 465 | 1 | 3.3 | 3.304 |
| Threats | 122 | 1 | 2.5 | 2.733 |

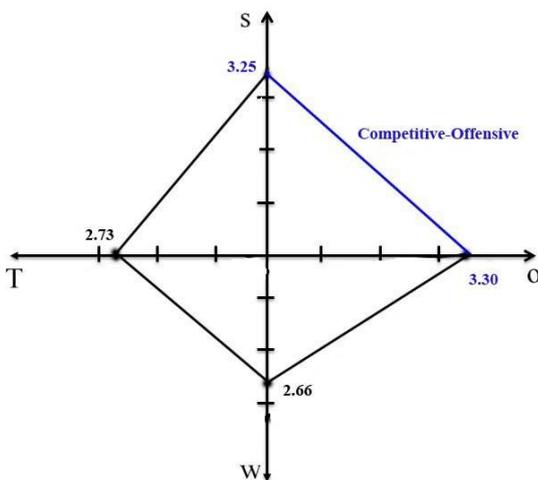


Figure 3. Internal and external factors regarding Mount Khajeh tourism

As it can be seen in the picture, the chart shows tendency toward strengths and opportunities (SO). Thus, our strategies should consider SO and maximized in terms of competitive-offensive. Hence the following strategies are suggested for tourism development of Qal'e Nou.

The following represents the most important strategic factors regarding tourism development of Qal'e Nou by combining the internal and external factors' analysis tables. In fact, by analysing the strategic factors, authorities who make plans and strategic decisions can reduce the number of effective strength, weakness, threat, and opportunity factors. This has been done by reweighing the factors in internal-external factors' analysis tables.

Codification of Strategies for Expansion of Qal'e Nou Tourism

Here, we will codify competitive-offensive strategies considering the high strengths and opportunities scores.

Strategy 1 – increasing the locals' income considering the traditional village context.

Strategy 2 – providing villagers with job opportunities (being close to the fourth Chahnime).

Strategy 3 – improving the infrastructures (considering the existence of primary infrastructures).

Strategy 4 – saving the village's traditional context considering the existence of historical ruins inside the village.

Strategy 5 – attracting native and foreign investors considering being close to ruins of Dahaneye Qolaman.

IX. CONCLUSION

Based on the history and trend of rural tourism development in Iran, it can be said that this type of tourism is still at the starting stages and underdeveloped and it is fair to say that in comparison with other tourism types, it has had not much of a considerable development at all. It is for this reason that from among thousands of villages, like Qal'e Nou, that have the tourism potentials, only a few like Abyane and Masule are known to the public.

According to the findings of this research, the following results were concluded:

- 1- Identification and introduction of tourism-potentials of villages plays an important role in tourism development as well as rural area development (e.g. Qal'e Nou).
 - The main reason for Qal'e Nou visitors is the village's architecture.
 - There is a significant relationship between tourist-happiness visiting the place and tourism development in the region.
 - There is a significant relationship between advertisement and tourism development in Qal'e Nou.
 - And in fact, there is a significant relationship between introducing the region, visitors' objectives, and visitor-happiness with tourism development.
- 2- Qal'e Nou has a very good potential for attracting visitors to Sistan Region.
- 3- Primary infrastructures for tourism development already exist in Qal'e Nou.
 - There is a significant relationship between the existence of facilities and choosing Qal'e Nou as the destination.
 - There is a significant relationship between the quality of roads and choosing Qal'e Nou as the destination.
- 4- Results of the SWOT model showed that factors like old historical background, existence of primary infrastructures, and the traditional context are some of

Qal'e Nou's internal strengths for rural tourism development.

- 5- Also, no advertisement and lack of enough necessary infrastructures (e.g. hotels, restaurants, recreation parks) are some of Qal'e Nou's internal weaknesses limiting its rural tourism development.
- 6- Results of the SWOT model shows that attracting native and foreign investors and providing job opportunities by establishing hotels, markets for handmade products, etc. are the most important external opportunities regarding rural tourism development.
- 7- And factors increase of real estate prices, destruction of historical ruins, and increase of social crimes are the most important external threats limiting the rural tourism development.
- 8- The village being located beside the Iran-Afghanistan transit road, village's architecture, rejuvenation and expansion of local handmade products, and expansion of transit services are activities which will help increase the locals' income. Thus, based on what was mentioned, efforts should be made to alleviate and improve the condition of the village so that better services by tourism and rural development would be provided.

What is obvious is that Iran is full of rural tourism attractions but they are not yet all introduced. Also, having plans for assessing the possibility of tourism development in rural areas is very fundamental. To this aim, some other actions and decisions seem essential like adding tourism development in all existing rural development plans including guiding plans, organizing and rural development plans, and rural economic and social plans.

X. SUGGESTIONS

A. Long-Term Plans

- Constitution of a center called "The Office of Rural Tourism Development" in the village to organize and constantly survey tourism affairs.
- Provision, improvement, and development of infrastructures like roads, IT services for visitors and others, telecommunication, etc.
- Administration of seminars (e.g. rural tourism development) in Zahak County by The Office of Islamic Guidance on introducing the latest rural tourism industry achievements.
- Provision of bank-facilities and special offers for investment in building hotels, recreation parks, museums, etc.

B. Short-Term Plans

- Establishment of rural cheap hotels and rental houses.
- Setting fees on entrances as an income source for the village to help invest on and preserve the attractions.
- Organization of a committee including the local authorities for enforcing the government's plans concerning the

prevention of agricultural land use change, and stopping the unauthorized building projects there.

- Demission of the Recreation Centers Office to the locals to improve their participation and provide job opportunities and income for them; and also exacting rules and regulation for surveillance.
- Provision of advertisement and teasers presenting the village's landscapes, especially during the tourism seasons, and also administering festivals, exhibition shows and if possible showing them in TV channels.
- Designing brochures to provide visitors with useful information on hotels, markets, landscapes, recreation parks, urgency phone numbers and addresses, hospitals, police, restaurants, etc.

Establishment of daily and weekly markets for the handmade and other local products, and also for cultural products especially at times when tourists are around.

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