

## **The Rural Tourism Anthropology (Case Study: Abyaneh Village)**

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### **Abstract**

*Expressions of Rural tourism, agro tourism, and village tourism are used many times as synonyms by experts and developers. This fact can be explained with the diverse activities of the area. Countryside hospitality is more or less connected to the agribusiness and this marketing product consists of accommodation services, catering and leisure time services. Rural tourism can be defined as a tourism product, which approach accentuates the importance of supply management and marketing activities. As against conventional tourism, rural tourism has certain typical characteristics like; it is experience oriented, the locations are sparsely populated, it is predominantly in natural environment, it meshes with seasonality and local events and is based on preservation of culture, heritage and traditions. Iran is world famous for kind hospitality, friendliness, and a beautiful Landscape and villages. Beautiful historical villages and rural areas, like Abyane have been visited by many foreign and domestic tourists. Definitely, Tourism industry in the villages has positive and negative consequences. Some experts focus on the positive aspects and vice versa. Some experts disagree with this industry and believe that must be prevented rural tourism. The main purpose in this paper is to investigate the aspects of tourism in Abyane village by anthropology view. The method in this paper is quantities and also action research and tools of data collection is documental.*

**Keywords:** *Rural Tourism, Anthropology, Abyaneh Village*

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### **Introduction**

Rural tourism is a type of tourism that be related with the other patterns of tourism, But the most important Characteristic of this tourism is in rural areas. This type of tourism has been expanded as a separated section in some countries. Many urban residents would prefer to escape from the modern and sophisticated environment and take refuge to rural areas or less developed areas. Moreover, tourists will be achieved many experiences and be familiar with the other cultures, tradition and other areas. There are a lot of these trips in western countries. In recent years, this type of tourism has been expanded in Iran too. Beautiful historical villages and rural areas, like Abyaneh have been visited by many foreign and domestic tourists. Definitely, Tourism industry in the villages has positive and negative consequences. Some experts focus on the positive aspects and vice versa. Some experts disagree with this industry and believe that must be prevented rural tourism.

The main purpose in this paper is to investigate the aspects of tourism in Abyaneh village by anthropology view.

### **Definition of tourism**

Tourism is travel for recreational, leisure, or business purposes, usually of a limited duration. Tourism is commonly associated with trans-national travel, but may also refer to travel to another location within the same country. The World Tourism Organization defines tourists as people "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes".

Tourism has become a popular global leisure activity. Tourism can be domestic or international, and international tourism has both incoming and outgoing implications on a country's balance of payments.

### **Aims and objectives of the study**

- To study the characteristic of rural tourism in abyanh in Iran.
- To understand and analyze the relation between anthropology, culture and tourism.
- To get data about the different form of tourism.
- To understand and analyze of positive and negative aspect of rural tourism.

### **Methodology of the study**

Researching in tourism industry means, to examine regularly, objectively and logically about travelling and every things related to which have been done during three steps (before, during and after) and also planning about the trip and its facilities(Kazemi, 2005: 222).

The method in this paper is quantities and also action research and tools of data collection is documental.

### **Location of the study**

#### **Abyaneh**

Abyaneh is a famous historic Iranian village near the city of Kashan in Isfahan Province. Being a village of great antiquity, Abyaneh is like a living architectural and anthropological museum. It affords an impressive exponent of adaptation of man with his environment. With a unique reddish hue, the village is one of the oldest in Iran, attracting numerous native and foreign tourists year-round, especially during traditional feasts and ceremonies. Considering the evidence found in Abyaneh, it dates back to antiquity, but its golden age was during the Safavid period. The word Abyaneh has been derived from the word "viona" meaning willow grove (In the local dialect "vey" means willow).

The village is expanded along the river, and its configuration indicates that in the past the people showed much consideration for security. Although the village itself is situated on high ground, there are three castles that protected the people when the enemy attacked. Furthermore, the configuration of Abyaneh protects it from strong winds and floods.

This is a village of living traditions, architectural styles (all in red clay), and probably the most interesting example of human adaptation to nature, wherein one can transcend the boundaries of time and space and experience the ancient civilization and culture of Iran.



The village is compact, with narrow and sloped lanes, and houses located on the slope as if placed on a stairway. Here, the roofs of some houses are used to serve as the courtyard for other houses higher up on the slope. The language spoken by the literate people of Abyaneh is Parthian Pahlavi. They are deeply committed to honoring their traditions. No matter how well educated a person from Abyaneh might be, he or she puts on the traditional Abyaneh costume on coming back to the village from anywhere in Iran. The women's traditional costume consisting of a scarf with floral motifs and pleated pants is particularly attractive. The Abyaneh woman is inseparably attached to her wedding gown inherited from her mother, and is expected to pass it on to her daughter. It bears such an intrinsic value of her that she wouldn't sell it at any price. Abyaneh has a compact fabrication with narrow and steep alleys. Set on the slope of the mountain, the houses are arranged in a stair-step shape, so that the mountain, the houses are the yards of the others. The materials used for building the roofs are timbers, straw and clay. The materials use for building the roofs are timbers, straw and clay. The walls, built by red mud bricks are impressive. The mud bricks are of quality that becomes harder when they are exposed to the rain. To use the sun as much as possible, the houses face the east. An impressive aspect of Abyaneh's architectures is that the houses are uniform in appearance. The doors, most of which have two knockers, are wooden and built in traditional styles. There are beautiful patterns, poems and the names of the owner and mason carved on some doors. These poems afford a good picture of the old Iranian culture. Many facades date back to the Safavid period. Beside the door of many houses there are small platforms providing place for passers-by or local residents to rest for a while. The simplicity found in Abyaneh's houses affords a picture of life in rural Iran. Each room

is used for various purposes. For example, a single room may be used as a dining-room, a sitting-room, a bed-room and a guest-room.



In addition to natural beauties, there are several historical monuments in Abyaneh, of which the following are of more significance. On top of the village sits the ruins of a Sassanid era fort. The Castle of Haman, two houses of Dervishes dating back to Safavid era, and the remains of two fire-temples dating back to Sassanid epoch (built in an architectural style called Chahar Taqi (four-arch style) (Tehran Times, 2011). Among the attractions of Abyaneh the Jam'e Mosque, Yarzaleh, Hajatgh Mosque, and Zeyaratgah are notable. Since June 2005, the village has been undergoing archaeological excavations for the first time ever, as a result of an agreement between Abyaneh Research Center and the Archaeology Research Center of the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization.

### **Types of Tourism**

Tourism can be classified into the following types:

- Inbound International tourism: Non-residents traveling in the given country.
- Outbound International tourism: Residents traveling in another country.
- Domestic tourism: Residents of the given country traveling only within this country.

### **Most popular categories of tourism**

The Tourism industry has developed through the years and presently is one of the most diversified, customized and specialized industries. We would like to introduce some of the most popular types of tourism worldwide where tourists are categorized by the purpose of their visit.

### **Leisure Tourism**

Leisure time can be defined as “*free time*”, not doing any work. It is that time to do things that you normally have no time for in your daily life. Leisure tourism includes a holiday with the following:

- Leisure activities
  - Relaxation: Sleep, relax, reading, walk on the beach, taking a scenic drive
  - Sport activities: swimming, surfing, running
  - Visit places of interest and local attractions
  - Visiting friends and relatives
  - Shopping for goods that will be used by the tourist.

### **Business Tourism**

Business tourism or business travel is a more limited and focused subset of regular tourism. During business tourism (traveling), individuals are still working and being paid, but they are doing so away from both their workplace and home.

Some definitions of tourism tend to exclude business travel (Lennon, 2003). However, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines tourists as people "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes".

Primary business tourism activities include meetings, and attending conferences and exhibitions (Garrod, 2012).

Despite the term business in business tourism, when individuals from government or non-profit organizations engage in similar activities, this is still categorized as business tourism.

### **Cultural Tourism**

Cultural tourism is the subset of tourism concerned with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion(s), and other elements that helped shape their way of life. Cultural tourism includes tourism in urban areas, particularly historic or large cities and their cultural facilities such as museums and theatres. It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (i.e. festivals, rituals), and their values and lifestyle. It is generally agreed that cultural

tourists spend substantially more than standard tourists do. This form of tourism is also becoming generally more popular throughout the world, and a recent OECD report has highlighted the role that cultural tourism can play in regional development in different world regions (OECD, 2009).

### **Adventure Tourism**

Adventure tourism is an outdoor activity that generally takes place in an unusual, remote or a wilderness area. This adventurous activity can take place in the sea, in rivers, in the air, in mountains and is associated with low or high levels of physical activity. There are many types of products and services that fall within the Adventure Tourism category such as: bungee jumping, mountaineering expeditions, rafting, rock climbing, diving, wind surfing and many more.

### **Wellness Tourism**

Wellness tourism is one of the fastest growing forms of international and domestic tourism. This form of tourism involves people who travel to a different place to pursue activities that maintain or enhance their personal health and wellness, and who are seeking unique, authentic or location-based experiences. Wellness tourism include massages, body treatments, facial treatments, exercise facilities & programs, weight loss programs, nutrition programs, pre- and post-operative Spa treatments and mind/body programs.

### **Eco Tourism**

Ecotourism, also known as ecological tourism, is responsible travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strives to be low impact and (often) small scale. It helps educate the traveler; provides funds for conservation; directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities; and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights. *Take only memories and leave only footprints* are a very common slogan in protected areas. (Soifer , 2008).

### **Sports Tourism**

Sports tourism refers to international travel either for viewing or participating in a sporting event. Examples include international

sporting events such as the Olympics, world cup (soccer, rugby, and cricket).

There are several classifications on sport tourism. Gammon and Robinson suggested that the sports tourism are defined as *Hard Sports Tourism* and *Soft Sports Tourism*, while Gibson suggested that there are three types of sports tourism included *Sports Event Tourism*, *Celebrity and Nostalgia Sport Tourism* and *Active Sport Tourism* (Heather, 1998).

### **Religious Tourism**

Religious Tourism or faith tourism are people of faith who travel on their own or in groups to holy cities or holy sites for pilgrimages, crusades, conventions, retreats, religious tourist attractions or missionary work.

### **Wildlife Tourism**

Wildlife tourism is the observation of wild (non-domestic) animals in their natural environment or in captivity. It includes activities such as photography, viewing and feeding of animals. This form of tourism offer tourists customized tour packages and safaris and is closely associated with eco-tourism and sustainable-tourism.

### **Medical Tourism**

Medical tourism or health tourism is the travel of people to another country for the purpose of obtaining medical treatment in that country. Traditionally, people would travel from less developed countries to major medical centers in highly developed countries for medical treatment that was unavailable in their own communities, The recent trend is for people to travel from developed countries to third world countries for medical treatments because of cost consideration, though the traditional pattern still continues. Another reason for travel for medical treatment is because some treatments may not be legal in the home country, such as some fertility procedures.

Some people travel to obtain medical surgeries or other treatments. Some people go abroad for dental tourism or fertility tourism (McFedries, 2006). People with rare genetic disorders may travel to another country where treatment of these conditions is better understood. However, virtually every type of health care, including



psychiatry, alternative treatments, convalescent care and even burial services are available.

### **Rural Tourism**

Tourism growth potential can be harnessed as a strategy for Rural Development. The development of a strong platform around the concept of Rural Tourism is definitely useful for a country like India, where almost 74% of the population resides in its 7 million villages. Across the world the trends of industrialization and development have had an urban centric approach.

Alongside, the stresses of urban lifestyles have led to a “counter urbanization” syndrome. This has led to growing interest in the rural areas. At the same time this trend of urbanization has led to falling income levels, lesser job opportunities in the total areas leading to an urbanization syndrome in the rural areas. Rural Tourism is one of the few activities which can provide a solution to these problems. Besides, there are other factors which are shifting the trend towards rural tourism like increasing levels of awareness, growing interest in heritage and culture and improved accessibility, and environmental consciousness. In the developed countries, this has resulted in a new style of tourism of visiting village settings to experience and live a relaxed and healthy lifestyle. This concept has taken the shape of a formal kind of Rural Tourism.

Under this Scheme, thrust will be to promote village tourism as the primary tourism product to spread tourism and its socio-economic benefits to rural and its new geographic regions. Key geographic regions would be identified for development and promotion of Rural Tourism. The

Implementation would be done through a Convergence Committee headed by the District Collector. Activities like improving the environment, hygiene, infrastructure etc. would be eligible for assistance.



### **Definition of Rural Tourism**

Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism. Rural tourism is essentially an activity which takes place in the countryside.

It is multi-faceted and may entail farm/agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. As against conventional tourism, rural tourism has certain typical characteristics like; it is experience oriented, the locations are sparsely populated, it is predominantly in natural environment, it meshes with seasonality and local events and is based on preservation of culture, heritage and traditions (<http://tourism.gov.in/writereaddata>).

### **Anthropology and Tourism**

As in any emerging academic sub-discipline, scholars of the anthropology of tourism disagree about how to best define the basic concepts they seek to describe. Tourists have been classified by the longevity of their travel experiences, their impact on the communities they visit, their choice of activities, and the level of institutionalization of their movements. Basic questions, however, such as whether physical displacement is necessary to qualify as a tourist and, more contentiously, what the difference is between a tourist and an ethnographer, are still matters of discussion. Of course, it is exactly these sorts of debate that are likely to yield the most intriguing anthropological research.

The overall aim of anthropological tourism studies is to understand the tourist experience and tourism industry from the perspective of both tourists themselves and those whose worlds, or constructed versions of them, are being displayed. Although impressive work has been accomplished over the past four decades, tourism is still a comparatively unexplored topic for anthropologists. With its connections to issues of acculturation, authenticity, identity construction, and consumption theory, tourism studies is a sub-discipline full of potential and, in the words of theorist Dennison Nash, still free of “creeping pessimism”. (Hathaway, 2007). The anthropology of tourism has strong connections to sociology, development studies, and behavioral psychology. Field techniques borrowed from geography have also proved useful. Marketing theory from business and economics, particularly with regards to the phenomenon of destination branding, would be another excellent complement to tourism studies in the social sciences, but has yet to be widely utilized by anthropologists.

#### **Why Anthropologists Were Hesitant About Studying Tourism**

The lingering reluctance of anthropologists to acknowledge tourism as a subject worthy of scientific scrutiny was likely rooted in anxieties stemming from the strong similarities between tourism and ethnography. As has been articulated by Crick (1995) and others, anthropologists have often been defensive about the seriousness of their work. In order to more securely establish themselves as legitimate academics, anthropologists tended until recently to dismiss tourists as superficial pleasure-seekers, individuals whose actions are unconstrained by ethical obligations and who are neither interested in nor taken seriously by the people they encounter in their travels. A researcher back-pedaling on the cultivated perception of distance between anthropologist and tourist may be seen as risking the contamination of themselves and their discipline with associations of frivolity and human exploitation (Nash, 1996). The rising prominence of anthropologists in tourism studies is a testament to the discipline’s increased maturity in negotiating this identity crisis.

### **Positive and Negative tourism effects**

Tourism can bring many economic and social benefits, particularly in rural areas and developing countries, but mass tourism is also associated with negative effects. Tourism can only be sustainable if it is carefully managed so that potential negative effects on the host community and the environment are not permitted to outweigh the financial benefits.

### **Economic effects**

**Positive effects:** Tourism creates jobs, both through direct employment within the tourism industry and indirectly in sectors such as retail and transportation. When these people spend their wages on goods and services, it leads to what is known as the "multiplier effect," creating more jobs. The tourism industry also provides opportunities for small-scale business enterprises, which is especially important in rural communities, and generates extra tax revenues, such as airport and hotel taxes, which can be used for schools, housing and hospitals.

**Negative effects:** Successful tourism relies on establishing a basic infrastructure, such as roads, visitor centers and hotels. The cost of this usually falls on the government, so it has to come out of tax revenues. Jobs created by tourism are often seasonal and poorly paid, yet tourism can push up local property prices and the cost of goods and services. Money generated by tourism does not always benefit the local community, as some of it leaks out to huge international companies, such as hotel chains. Destinations dependent on tourism can be adversely affected by events such as terrorism, natural disasters and economic recession.

### **Environmental effects**

**Positive effects:** Tourism, particularly nature and ecotourism, helps promote conservation of wildlife and natural resources such as rain forests, as these are now regarded as tourism assets. It also helps generate funding for maintaining animal preserves and marine parks through entrance charges and guide fees. By creating alternative sources of employment, tourism reduces problems such as over-fishing and deforestation in developing nations.

Negative effects: Tourism poses a threat to a region's natural and cultural resources, such as water supply, beaches, coral reefs and heritage sites, through overuse. It also causes increased pollution through traffic emissions, littering, increased sewage production and noise.

**Socio-cultural Impact:**

Since the income from tourism is much higher than what rural people can earn from agriculture Tourism has been accepted willingly in many rural areas in spite of its negative effects. It is Widely recognized that such negative impacts on rural communities have become stronger, and That rural tourism must be modified to give rural people its benefits.

Poorly planned tourism can mean that villages are invaded by foreign visitors with different Values, disrupting rural culture. The higher standards of living in urban tourist destinations have Caused emigration from nearby rural neighbors, resulting in changes in the demographic Structure and possible culture shock. Furthermore, employment and education can have a negative social impact.

The younger generation may gain better prestige than their elders as they gain experience, jobs and money from tourism.

**Positive Socio-cultural Impact:** The rural people will learn the modern culture. They will learn to come out of their traditional values and beliefs. They will adopt different practice of modern Society. Since the income from tourism is much higher than what rural people can earn from Agriculture and other allied services.

- Education and health of the rural community will improve
- Provide higher standard of living or the rural people
- Cultural understanding through fairs and festivals
- Exchange of cultural beneficial for both
- Foreign tourist will bring cultural change faster
- Demand for education will increase
- Reduce migration of rural people to urban areas

**Negative Socio-cultural Impact:** Poorly planned tourism can affect the villagers. It cans disrupt

- The rural culture. It may affect the traditional and cultural practices, agriculture and other allied Activities.

- Can create disharmony in development
- Modernization can affect their traditional values and cultural practices
- Traditional products will be replaced by modern products
- Traditional houses are replaced by modern buildings
- Overcrowding in schools-
- Can increase the rate of crime -
- Rural people may shift from traditional business to tourism activities
- Rural people try to copy tourist can affect their daily life -
- Decline in participation in rural traditional and cultural practices follows

### **Conclusion and suggestions**

Rural tourism will be an important role in the existence of the Iranian Villages, because it offers several advantages, among which we mention: rural tourism can be a way for Iranian rural community development; rural tourism is a complementary activity to agriculture, and the economic development in the Iranian village. Rural tourism is a source of income for villagers. It is necessary for rural tourism development strategies developed to take into account nature conservation and local community, and creating diversified jobs. Hence Tourism in the Iran countryside is expected to play an important role in rural development as an activity leading to sustainability. It can be based on traditional farm resources, attractiveness of natural environment and rural landscape, as well as the richness of cultural values, including colorful folklore,

Although tourists may be cause pollution and can damage the environment especially from the point of anthropology cause cultural destruction, such as modernization (world mono-culture), freezes culture as performers, loss: language, religion, rituals, material culture.

Iran is world famous for kind hospitality, friendliness, and a beautiful Landscape and Beautiful historical villages like Abyaneh. Therefore, in order to attract larger number of tourists to rural destinations and also, their unique values, it is essential to develop:

- High standard accommodation, self-catering homes and campsites;

- Attractive food outlets, particularly traditional restaurants and rural inns;
- tourist and recreation sites and facilities in villages, package tours and leisure activities;
- System of promoting tourist services, including reservation, tours and general information;
- legal protection of ecologically sensitive parts of destination areas and historic architecture;
- Credit facilities and availability of funds for environmental investments and agri-tourism business,
- Professional education to increase benefits awareness of maintaining rural heritage. These changes should initiate further actions towards harmonic development of rural areas. It is worth keeping in mind that as we care for natural environment, culture and people we continue to sustain our life.

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