

**Assessment of the Tourism Opportunities Role in Developing
Sources of Municipal Sustainable Income
(Case Study: Sarakhs City)**

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Abstract

In addition to its positive effects on the economy of the city, the livelihood of the citizens, developing the micro businesses and improving the condition of the urban infrastructures, the urban tourism can play a major role as one of the municipal income resources in the economy of the city. To earn money in the municipalities is one of the things that has a major effect on providing services to the citizens. Municipality's more reliance on unsustainable income causes the city to confront with the basic problems in all its dimensions, including the urban body and landscape and, consequently, the reduction of the quality in the urban life will be seen. According to the surveys conducted by Sarakhs' municipality, it relies on the sources of the unsustainable income. Among the most important unsustainable sources of Sarakhs' municipality, the construction tolls and the illegal income such as the income from urban crimes, construction violations and the transfer of density surplus can be pointed, which a major share of municipal income is earned by this way. To make a sustainable income system, the use of the potential tourism capacities in Sarakhs can play a significant role in providing the sustainable income for the municipality. The method of the present research is descriptive-analytic and in this article, we try to offer some solutions in order to achieve the sustainable income of the municipality in addition to examine the capacities and the tourism potential capabilities in Sarakhs.

Keywords: Urban Tourism, Sustainable Income, Municipality of Sarakhs, Sarakhs City

Introduction

Today, the tourism industry is regarded as one of the largest and most diverse industries in the world. In terms of dispersion, it is considered as the industry number 1 in the world; on the other hand, it is the largest generator of employment and wealth in the world and the economic engine for the developed and developing nations. Tourism is a relatively complex activity involving several sections of the community and the economy. Without planning, this may cause unwanted and unexpected damages. In the countries where the tourism is not more profitable, the planning can provide a necessary guidance to develop it. In the areas that attract the tourists, the planning is often to re-energize this sector and protect the future performance (Liaghati et al., 2010); on the other hand, one of the tools that can be effective in order to achieve the goals and the programs related to the urban tourism affairs in the best manner is the sustainable cost and income management, which has not damaged the environmental, physical, social and economic structures of the city; at the same time, it is continuous and stable. Moreover, it has no undesirable effect on the price of the related goods, it is calculable easily and transparently and its collection cost is logical. Meanwhile, it also pays attention to the social justice. In such circumstances, and with such management, the cities will never have a problem of lack of income and lack of urban tourism services.

In this regard, because today the cities and the urban management have been confronted with the problem of income unsustainability in the municipalities in our country, and because the cities are both the origin and the destination of tourism, the share of urban tourism can be increased by a comprehensive and scientific planning in Iran and finally, it helps the urban economy and the sustainable income of the municipalities significantly. Therefore, in this research, we are going to describe the concepts and introduce the urban tourism, urban sustainable income, the role of the tourism opportunities in gaining the

municipal sustainable income, and ultimately, the effective strategies in the field of the urban tourism development in order to gain the sustainable income of the municipality.

Theoretical Foundations

- Tourism

The term of the tourism was used for the first time in Sporting magazine in 1811. At that time, this word meant to travel in order to visit the historical monuments and landscapes and enjoy them (Zaker Haghighi & Razmi, 2011). Tourism has been applied to move people to a place outside their residences and work place temporarily, so that the passengers did some activities during their stay in the destination and the special facilities were provided to meet their needs (Namdari and Pashazadeh, 2013).

- Urban Tourism

The term of the urban tourism describes the tourism activities that occur in the urban areas and include the interaction of the tourists with the urban environments. Tourist objectives of the urban areas include a wide range of leisure activities and special incentives such as sport, education or culture (King, 2003). The urban tourism is simply indicative of walking along the urban areas and searching for the specific performance at that point of the city (Low, 1996). In other words, the urban tourism is a part of the leisure time that is spent in the residential area of the citizens and in the outdoors within the city and the suburbs. In this regard, the urban tourism is distinguished from spending the leisure time in homes and closed spaces, and the tourism on a national and global scale (Papeli Yazdi and Saghaei, 2006).

- Sustainable Income

The sustainable income is applied to income that is continuous, healthy, and desirable. Being continuous means that social and economic fluctuations do not have an effect on its receipt and amount. It is healthy because it guarantees the urban health and has no negative environmental effects. Being desirable means that it has the positive social effects, observes economic and social justice, is easy to obtain and guarantees the sustainable urban development (Danesh Jafari et al., 2013). In this regard, the Australian Local Government Association has offered the simplest and most comprehensive

definition for sustainable financing of the municipalities. According to this definition, the sustainable financing occurs when the ability of the government to manage financial resources is such that it can meet its current and future obligations to provide the services by an unplanned change of the taxes, and assures the taxpayers that the future generations will not be confronted with unmanaged bills vice versa today's generations and today's generations will not also bear all the financial burden that future generations will benefit it. In other words, the future generations will not be confronted with higher reduction of services or an unreasonable rise in property tax rates arising from deferred debts of today's generation [8].

Urban Tourism and Its Role in Gaining Sustainable Income of Municipality

The direct benefits and income of tourism activity are the money that the tourists and the travelers spend on buying the goods and services directly, and the organizations providing the products and services receive it. The indirect benefits are also obtained by the circulation of money spent by the traveler on the destination. This money is circulated into the economic system of the city, provokes the economy of the city several times and increases the income level of the people; it is the same multiplier effect (Movahed, 2007). The development of urban economy and the creation of sustainable income sources have always been one of the concerns of the urban managers that achieving many expectations and demands of the citizens depends on them. Today, the successful cities that are mentioned as a tourism destination, run an important part of their economy through the income from the employment opportunities, job organizing and the issues related to the tourism. Since the traditional methods of the income generation in the cities cannot provide the increasing costs of managing the city, the urban tourism has been taken into consideration by the urban managers as a job creating and income generating industry and a source of sustainable income. The urban managers can play a significant role in the growth and the development of the urban tourism through planning for the development of the urban infrastructures such as communication and transportation networks, urban facilities and installations, developing the urban open spaces, the recreational leisure areas and planning for the service

infrastructures. In many successful countries in the tourism industry, the city is the basis for the development of this industry regarding its special position. The construction and the development of the suitable urban spaces, and the reconstruction of the abandoned and dead spaces in order to revive the ancient aspects of society are one of the most important effects of the urban tourism development. For this purpose, many cities seek to benefit from their specific features and capabilities and utilize the urban tourism advantages. These are some cities that have or have not had the natural historical monuments but in any case, they have been successful in the tourism. These cities achieve some distinctions and features to increase the passenger arrivals. The cities that are going to increase the tourist's interest towards them also need to act on the basis of the criteria and the technical and specialty knowledge of the urban managers, and their priorities should be reviewed.

Methodology

This is an applied research in terms of the purpose and a descriptive-analytic research in terms of method. The data and information are also collected by a library method and studying the information of Sarakhs Municipality. The main objective of this paper is to investigate the role of the tourism in creating the income generation opportunities for the Sarakhs municipality. To achieve this goal, the capabilities and the actual and potential capacities of Sarakhs and its suburbs have been identified and analyzed, and then some solutions have been offered in order to gain the sustainable income of the municipality through the urban tourism.

To Introduce the Area under Study

Sarakhs is one of the cities of Khorasan Razavi and one of the oldest cities in the country with a history of 5000 BC. According to 2011 Iranian Population and Housing Census, Sarakhs has 38721 inhabitants, of which 19801 are male and 18920 are women. The number of households in Sarakhs is 10276, where the population distribution around 960 hectares of this city is asymmetrical and often in the central context of the city. This city has always been taken into consideration due to the good weather, fertile agricultural lands and most importantly as a strategic transit area in the ancient way of Silk Road.



Fig 1: The Position of Sarakhs city

In this regard, the tourism sources and potential in Sarakhs and its suburbs are identified and their effects on increasing the sustainable income of the municipality are studied in this part of the research. The tourist attractions of Sarakhs are among the historical and cultural attractions, man-made attractions and the rest of the natural attractions.

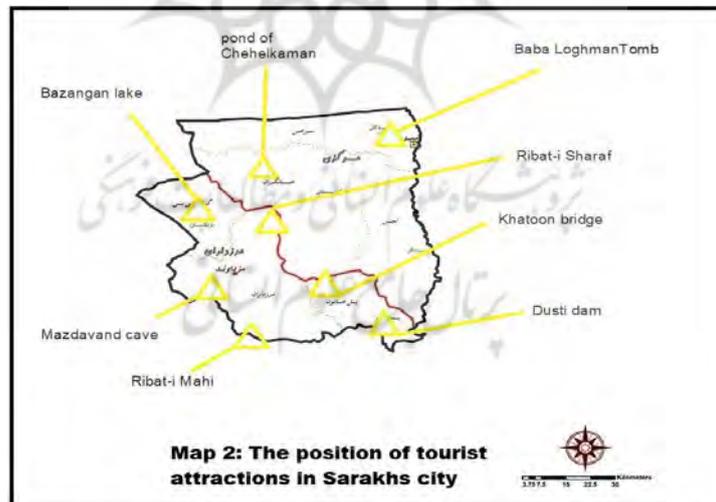


Fig 2: The position of Tourist attractions in Sarakhs city

Historical and cultural attractions are related to the material institutions of culture and civilization and its spiritual institutions,

which the most important ones include Baba Loghman's tomb, Rabat Sharaf, Rabat Mahi, Jame Mosque and Marzdaran Cave.

The historic attractions of Sarakhs city include Baba Loghman Tomb, Ribat-i Sharaf, Khatoon bridge, Mazdavand cave and the Ribat-i Mahi. Its natural attractions include Bazangan Lake, pond of Dusti dam and Chehelkaman Lake. There are also other attractions that are not mentioned because of the lower importance.

Rivers, Chehel Kaman Lake, Seasonal River of Sarakhs Plain

According to the studies, the most important sustainable income sources of Sarakhs municipality are the income from the tolls of renovation, waste, city, business, property taxes, annual car tolls, telephone and gas tolls, land value tax and the cost of services resulting from utilizing the public urban services. Unsustainable income is the income that is allocated to a municipality sometimes and based on the specific activities, which will also be lost by eliminating that activity. Even the profits of this income may be very high. Non-continuous or unsustainable income of Sarakhs municipality may also include the income from the density surplus tolls, the construction violations, tolls of official documents, construction permits, uncultivated lands, selling the factories and so on.

Conclusion

The development of tourism industry in the different parts of the world has an effective role in reducing the unemployment and improving the income distribution, so that in the urban planning and management of the world, the investment in the tourism sector has the first priority and has replaced the income from the construction and the density sales. This principle has accepted that the tourism is an important factor in sustainable economic development and job creation, and is one of the industries that is more remarkable in terms of income and job creation.

In this regard, considering the location of Sarakhs in the border region and despite having many historical, cultural and natural monuments, it has not been taken into consideration by the domestic and foreign tourists, indicating the lack of enough concentration and attention to the potential capacities and capabilities of the region by the urban officials and managers. Sarakhs can be turned into a powerful tourism

center if the quality of planning is improved and the potential capacities and capabilities are turned into the actual ones.

Strategies for Gaining Municipal Sustainable Income through Urban Tourism

- To emphasize the social, economic, cultural, and service planning for the urban tourists continuously in collaboration with the various parts of executive management and cultural heritage of Sarakhs not only at specific times of the year.
- To establish and reconstruct the tourism recreational complexes in the city and the suburbs with the participation of the private and public sectors.
- To develop the tourism by effective advertising.
- To create the necessary facilities to meet the recreational and leisure needs of the urban tourists (green spaces, gardens, parks, traditional and modern amusement parks, well equipped and modern centers in different parts of Sarakhs)
- To rehabilitate and reconstruct the historical and cultural attractions of the city and develop the urban heritage multilaterally.
- To create the recreational, leisure, exciting, dynamic and flexible activities, or the modern and mechanical planning by the urban management to attract the urban tourists.

To strengthen the participation of the private sector and the citizens in order to develop the various sections of the urban tourism and prevent these sectors from restricting by the state institutions.

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