



Ecotourism Development with an Emphasis on Local Communities' Participation

(Case Study: The Village of Janat Rudbar, Ramsar County)

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Abstract

Purpose: Janat Rudbar is one of the important tourist destinations in rural areas of Ramsar in Mazandaran. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitude of the local community towards the development of ecotourism, its effects and consequences, their level of support, and the factors affecting it.

Method: The method is survey and cross-sectional. The sample of the study consists of households of Janat Rudbar in Ramsar, Mazandaran. Research data was collected by applying census method.

Findings: The results of the research showed that, firstly, the attitude of the local community towards ecotourism is positive; secondly, the local community is aware of the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental impacts of the rural development projects; and, finally, the level of support of the local community of ecotourism development is relatively high. Moreover, the results of the research have shown that there is a relationship between local community supports from ecotourism development projects and socioeconomic components.

Practical Solutions: The approach towards ecotourism is effective in its success in terms of improving the quality of life both for local people and their environment. For this reason, alternative ecotourism, which aims to empower (e.g., economic, psychological, social, and political empowerment) people is utilized. The process of local augmentation is a gradual process starting from small experiences.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Residents' attitudes, Impacts and consequences of ecotourism development, Supporting ecotourism, Jannat Rudbar.

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1. Introduction

1.1. statement of the Problem

Fiorello and Bo (2012) write that tourism is destructive to host societies and acts as a natural degrader. However, the new tourism developed in the form of ecotourism is sensitive to environmental issues as well as to local culture and pays particular attention to the attitudes of host communities. As a result, the behavior of host societies becomes a major tourist capital. One of the disadvantages of tourism development plans in traditional formats is the fact that it always creates a fear of losing control of the environment or its identity among the host community. This is one of the reasons why local and host communities are dissatisfied with the tourism development projects. To counteract this hostile position of the local community in relation to tourism, societal tourism and ecotourism seem to be a good way to meet the new expectations of tourists, and overcome the concerns of local communities about the adverse and catastrophic consequences of development of tourism. In order to achieve ecotourism, it is necessary to take the role of the local communities and their supporting mechanisms and participation into account. In fact, the prerequisite for realization of community-based ecotourism is to ensure local community support. The development of tourism over the past years in many northern areas of the country has had unintended and inappropriate consequences from which even distant and rural areas have not been protected. Ramsar is one of the destinations in the north that has been growing in the direction of tourism development. As one of the villages in this area, Jannat Rudbar is one of the most populated villages for ecotourism. The present study seeks to study the development of ecotourism in this village, emphasizing the participation of local communities. In this regard, the present research seeks to answer the following four basic questions:

1. What is the attitude of the local community towards the ecotourism development plan of the village?
2. What are the social, economic, and environmental impacts of ecotourism for local communities?

3. What is the level of support of the local community from ecotourism development plan?

4. What are the factors influencing the local community support from ecotourism development plan?

2.1. Empirical Research

Studies conducted on ecotourism can be divided into two general categories. The first group is the research carried out by domestic and international researchers in Iran. The second category is the research carried out by researchers in other countries, or the so-called foreign research. Below we will introduce both domestic and foreign research categories.

Regarding studies conducted in Iran, we can mention some research in this field. For example, in a paper titled *Ecotourism with an Emphasis on Tourist Attractions in Golestan*, Tolaei (2006) was seeking to provide a model for the realization of sustainable ecotourism. Similarly, Faraji Rad and Ehsani (2011) conducted a study entitled *The Impact of Residencies (Khooshezar ecotourism) on the Promotion of the Living Standards of the Local Community* (with emphasis on the two villages of Ganeh and Shibderaz).

In his paper entitled *Examining Attitudes of the Host Society on Tourism and its Implications in a Historical Living Context*, Adeli (2012) investigated the current status of tourism tolerance in a host society as well as its implications, the assessment of the host society towards tourism, and the relation of this assessment with its consequences. In their article titled *Examining the Impact of Tourism of Secondary Homes on Social Capital: A Case Study of Lairesar and Siverz Villages of Tonekabon*, Khoshfar, Abdollahpour and Karimzadeh (2012) measured the impact of second home tourism on social capital changes in two villages. Niknejad, Mahdavi and Karami (2013) examined both negative and positive environmental impacts of natural tourism or ecotourism. Finally, in their paper entitled *Understanding the Strengths and Weaknesses of Rural Tourism Development: A Case Study of Eco-Museum of Abyaniyeh in Isfahan*, Hejazizadeh, Rajairizi and Hosseini Amini (2013) focused on these strengths and weaknesses using Swat analytical model. In their paper entitled *the Study of Tourism and Ecotourism Status in Varzaneh*, using field studies and SWOT

techniques, [Saraei and Ghasemi \(2014\)](#) found that this region could be transformed into one of the hubs of ecotourism and important poles in the market by making use of integrated management as well as natural, environmental, social, and economic potentials that it has. In a paper titled *the Role of Ecotourism in Sustainable Ecological Development: A Case Study of a Canoe in Lavizan Forest Park*, [Masrori Janat and Masroori Janat and Falahat \(2015\)](#) in a paper titled *The Role of Ecotourism in the Permanent Ecological Development* (a case study of ecotourism in Lavizan Forest Park) get to recognize and investigate the ecotourism as an indicator with an orientation toward the ecological permanency and look at the development of the city. In a paper entitled *the Feasibility of Ecotourism Development in Aliabad Katoul using GIS and SWOT model*, [Ezatpanah, Nakhaei and Khodadad \(2015\)](#) tried to determine the proper strategy for ecotourism development in Aliabad Katoul, Golestan.

Other researchers in other countries have also conducted studies on this issue. [Trejos, Chiang and Huang \(2008\)](#) conducted a research entitled *Support Networks for Costa Rica's Rural Community-Based Tourism*. [Stone and Rogerson \(2011\)](#) also conducted a study entitled *Natural Resources Management and Community-Based Tourism: NATA Battle Sanctuary, Botswana*. An analysis of the conditions for becoming a successful community-based tourist firm is another study done by [Armstrong \(2012\)](#). *Tourism, Food, and Culture: Community-based Tourism, Local Food and Social Development in Pondoland* [Giampiccoli & Kalis \(2012\)](#), is the title of another research that has been done recently. [Suriya & Gruen \(2012\)](#) conducted another scientific research entitled "Souvenir Production in Community-based Tourism and Poverty Reduction in Thailand."

In addition, [Lee, Jan and Yang \(2013\)](#) conducted a research entitled *The Concept and Measurement of Environmental-Friendly Behavior from the Point of View of Community-Based Tourists*.

[Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen and Duangsaeng \(2014\)](#) conducted a research entitled *Success Factors in Community-Based Tourism in Thailand: the Role of Luck, Foreign Support, and Local Leadership*. Finally, [Jaafar, Bakri and Rasoolimanesh \(2015\)](#) conducted a study entitled

Local Community and Tourism Development: A Case Study of Rural Mountain Destinations in which they studied the effects of tourism development on scientific studies.

2. Research Methodology

1.2. Geographic Area of Research

The position and the boundaries of the Jannat Rudbar are between 36 degrees 36 minutes to 360 degrees and 49 minutes north latitude from the equator and 50 degrees and 35 minutes to 50 degrees and 44 minutes east of the meridian of the source. Today, Jannat Rudbar is considered as one of the summer highland pastures.

Dalkhani Forest and Sakhsar village are located on north of Janat Rudbar, Golijan village and Dohezar are on its east, Ashkur-Ramsar is on south of Janat Rudbar, and forest areas and pastures of Javaherdeh village are on its west.

Janat Rudbar village is one of the important tourist destinations in the rural parts of Ramsar, which is located in a mountainous location. The area has many attractions including numerous natural attractions (e.g., grasslands and pastures, forests, peaks, rivers, waterfalls, slopes, and mineral water springs), historical and native attractions such as an Imam Zadeh and 300-year-old buildings, cultural attractions such as local costumes called Chokha, hats and mittens, woolen jackets, woolen coats and wool socks, and especially the annual festival of Ox-tongue, which has made the village the capital of the ox-tongue of the country ([Figure 1](#)).

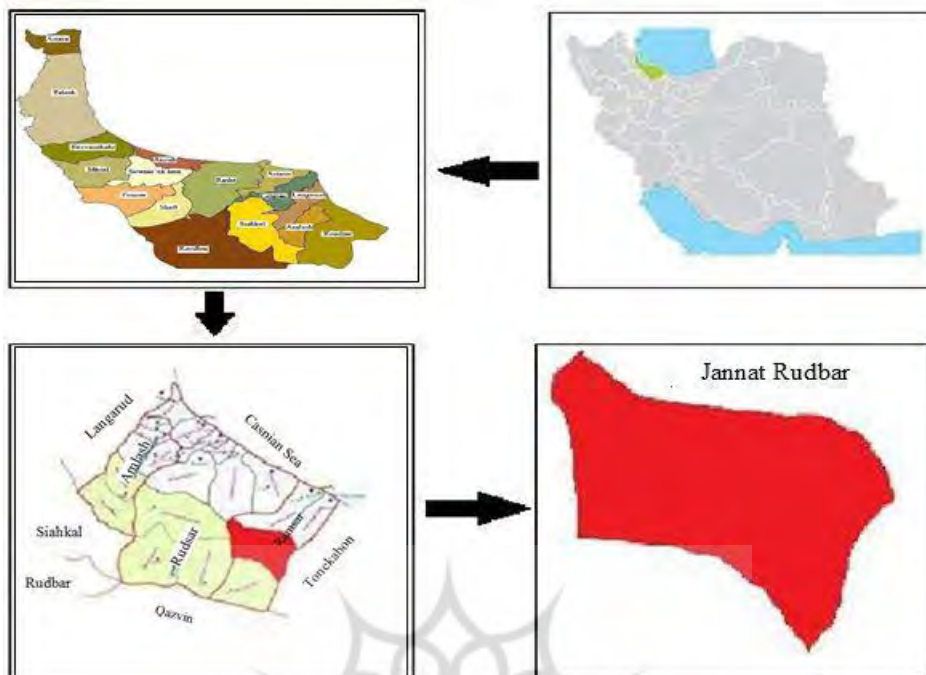


Figure 1: Geographical location of Jannat Rudbar

2.2. Methodology

Methodologically, the present study was conducted as a cross-sectional survey. The analytical units in this research are individuals (i.e., a rural person). The sample of the study was the whole households of Jannat Rudbar Village in 2016. Due to the small number of households in the village (102 households), in this research, a full-scale method has been used (due to the small number of respondents, there was no need for sampling or determining the sample size, and accordingly, all households in the village were selected as the sample). One person of each household was interviewed. To collect data, the

most widely used tool, a self-run questionnaire, was used.

In this study after compiling the questionnaire, the content validity was measured to determine the validity of the indices that were used to measure the variables. For this purpose, the initial questionnaire was evaluated and scrutinized by 10 experts in the field of tourism studies. They expressed their views on the questionnaire in terms of its form and content. Based on this evaluation, some questions were removed, and some others were changed. Finally, a questionnaire was prepared as the pretest. Cronbach's test was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, the results of which are reported in the following table.

Table 1. Reliability of the Questionnaire

(Source: Research findings, 2016)

Index	Number questions s	Cronbach's alpha
Attitudes towards ecotourism	13	0.676
Attitudes towards development ecotourism	7	0.965
people's support of ecotourism	7	0.965

As the information in the table above shows, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of all three major variables is relatively high. Data were collected in a month, from April to May 2016. After collecting

the data, the data were analyzed using the SPSS software. Data processing was done at both descriptive and inferential levels. In the descriptive section, frequency distribution, mean,

percentage of relative frequency, and cumulative distribution were calculated, and in the inferential part, data analysis was performed using statistical tests.

3. Theoretical Foundations

One of the most important features of science is its theoretical foundations. The correct and well-placed application of science is not possible without theories. A scientific research which does not have a theoretical framework, and which is not used to explain a phenomenon/problem is not considered academic (Imamgholi, 2011). Thus, the theoretical framework of any research is in fact the basis of any research work. The choice of the theoretical framework for research has two important functions; first, it allows the initial question of the research to be re-formulated or to be more precisely expressed. Second, the theoretical framework of the research is used as the basis for hypotheses by which the researcher can give a coherent answer to the initial question (Kiwi & Luc Van, 1991).

The importance of role of people's participation in tourism development cannot be ignored. Indeed, local community participation can be seen as a process by which residents of the local community are given the right to comment and can make choices about the effects of their lives. Thus, it can be stated that the participation of local community in the processes of tourism development can support the tradition and culture of the local community, and at the same time, can

increase their knowledge and skills to work according to their ability to inherit a community (Aref, 2010). Conversely, the lack of local community participation in decision-making for tourism development projects can lead to the failure of tourism development plans (Miranda, 2007). McLaughlin (2011) believes that the tourism industry encompasses a wide variety of activities, in particular, two main categories, namely, mass tourism, and alternative tourism.

According to Phenol (2009) to understand the alternative tourism completely, the mass tourism can be used as a criterion to determine exactly what the ecotourism does not mean.

Mass tourism is influenced and controlled by economic factors. From an economic perspective, and in the wake of mass tourism, little attention is paid to the local aspects of tourism. As this aspect is related to the quality of life of the local community, tourism-related income, cultural heritage, and local people's participation in decision-making processes with respect to the local tourism industry remain within the local community. In general, tourism activities are massive in relation to large tourist groups. Typically, in this type of tourism, the environment is of secondary importance, especially when development projects are discussed, and in this case, long-term effects are generally neglected.

In general, a number of different features as outlined in the table below characterize the mass tourism.

Table 2. Characteristics of Mass Tourism and Ecotourist Planning

(Source: Saghaei & Masoudi, 2014)

Planned mass tourism	Ecotourism
Large scale	Small scale
High numbers	Low numbers
Important cultural environment, such as food and language	Adoption of native culture by visitors: food, language
Commercial	Commercially relatively low
Artificial attractions are a major part of holiday experience	Reliance on the aspects of native and natural culture like attractions
Multinational companies governing industry	High native management and ownership
Foreign persons have the authority for decision making	Major decisions are made by host governments and private companies and sectors
Decline in management and planning	Relatively simple and intact environment and effective, accurate and efficient management and planning

3.1. Sustainable Development and Ecotourism

Phenol (2009) argues that the planning, development and management of ecotourism are

the management of sustainable resources and the conservation of natural areas. Sustainable development in the field of coastal engineering requires that natural resources, cultural and other resources be preserved so that they can provide everything for the local community without sacrificing future needs. Ecotourism properly develops based on the concept of sustainability. According to Phenol (2009) sustainable development is really needed because the activities of the coastal industry are related to the natural environment, historical heritage and cultural patterns of these areas. For this reason, the concepts and principles of sustainable development have been expanded sharply in the coastal areas of protected areas. These principles have been applied to the coastal industry because biomass is related to environmental management in protected areas.

2.3. Developmental Effects of Ecotourism

Ecotourism is one part of the tourism industry, which is of particular importance due to its ecological, social, cultural, and economic stability (Niknejad, Mahdavi & Karami, 2013). Like other tourism activities, it has different effects and consequences. The major impacts of ecotourism include environmental, economic, and social impacts. Based on the results of the studies carried out Mathews (2002) studied the effects of ecotourism from three dimensions. These dimensions are elaborated below.

1.2.3. Environmental Impacts of Ecotourism

Based on the results of the studies carried out Mathews (2002) shows the environmental effects of ecotourism as shown in the following table.

Table 3. Environmental Effects of Ecotourism

(Source: Mathews, 2002)

Negative effects	Positive Effects
Destruction of settlements	Creating the possibility of conservation for wildlife
Changing Wildlife Immigration Patterns	Justification for park protection
Water contamination as a result of drainage or chemical waste	Preservation of settlements
Negative visual effects (junk, facilities)	The option to use less resources
Soil erosion	Reducing the motivation for unnecessary use of resources
Excessive exploitation of ecological resources (hunting)	Environmental education
Changes in land use in primary production areas	Increased monitoring
Destruction of lush areas	Increasing motivation for private-sector protection efforts
	Increasing local capacity will increase protection

As the table above shows, according to Mathews (2002), the positive environmental impacts caused by ecotourism activities include the possibility of conservation for wildlife, justification for park protection, shelter conservation, less resource use, reducing incentives for less resource use, environmental education, increasing oversight, increasing motivation for private-sector protection efforts, and increasing local capacity to promote protection. In contrast, the adverse environmental effects of coastal areas include destruction of habitats, alteration of life patterns, water pollution as a result of drainage or chemical waste, negative visual effects, garbage, facilities, soil erosion,

extractive exploitation of ecological resources out of place, changes in land use in the primary production areas, and loss of livelihoods.

2.2.3. Economic Impact of Ecotourism

Mathews (2002) summarizes the economic effects of shingles in the following table.

Table 4. Economic Impact of Coastal Industries

(Source: Mathews, 2002)

Negative effects	Positive effects
Unfair income distribution	Increasing Job Opportunities
Unequal distribution of incomes	Increase household income
Reducing access to natural resources	Financing for infrastructure
Local people lose their income because of protected areas	Financing protected areas
External ownership of the companies	Partnering in Income
Increasing the price fluctuation of goods, services and land	

As can be seen, according to Mathews (2002), the economic effects of ecotourism can be seen in positive economic impacts (increasing household income, financing for improvement of infrastructures, financing for protected areas, income sharing), or negative impacts (e.g., unequal distribution of income, reduced access to natural resources, local

people's loss of income due to public protected areas, companies' external ownership, and fluctuations in the costs of goods, services and lands).

3.2.3. Social Impacts of Ecotourism

Mathews (2002) summarizes the social impacts of ecotourism in the following table:

Table 5. Social Impacts of Ecotourism

(Source: Mathews, 2002)

Negative effects	Positive effects
Abandoning the traditional ritual; losing indigenous knowledge	Increasing interest in traditional acts and ceremonies
Getting away from self-sufficiency and moving towards dependency	Protect of the Government from Cultural Values
Changing cultural perspectives such as housing and employment	Maintaining cultural identity and honor to the local community
Restricted access to natural resources	Promoting cultural exchanges
Changes in household economics	Development of local cooperation
Excessive exploitation of indigenous people	Education
Damage to residents, livelihoods, wildlife crops in protected areas	Financing to protect / preserve natural and cultural attractions
Local Obligation to Perform Dance of Traditional Activities	Reducing illegal activities
Growth of destruction of public property / prostitution, crime	Increasing the market for the development of local goods
Cultivating the culture	Increased use of workforce and local specialist
Changes in structures and family values	

As table above shows, according to Mathews (2002), positive social impacts include increasing interest in traditional practices, the government's protection of cultural values, preserving cultural identity and honoring the local community, promoting cultural exchanges, developing local co-operation training, financing the conservation/preservation of natural and cultural attractions, reducing illicit activities, expanding the market for the development of local goods, and increasing the use of local specialists and workers. In contrast, according to Mathews (2002), the negative social impacts of ecotourism are abandoning the traditional rituals, losing native and local knowledge, moving away

from self-sufficiency towards dependency, changing cultural perspectives such as housing and employment, restrictions on access to natural resources, changes in the household economy, extra exploitation of local people, causing damage to residents, livelihoods, and survival crops in the protected area, obliging locals to perform traditional activities like dancing, the growth of public property destruction, prostitution, crime, culturalization, and changes in family structures and values.

Anyway, many experts believe that among the various tourism options, ecotourism, the commitment to community development, and respect for cultural features are among the options that are mostly consistent with the concept of sustainability (Faramarz, 2012).

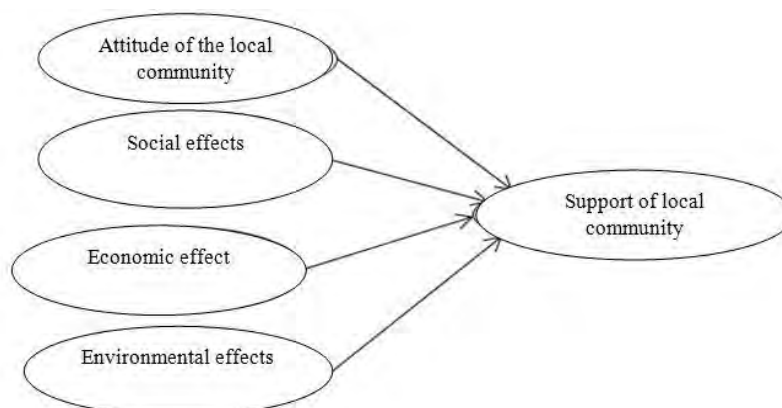


Figure 2: Conceptual model of research
(Source: Research findings, 2016)

4. Research Findings

4.1. Descriptive Findings

4.1.1. Demographic Characteristics

In order to understand the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the sample, the

respondents' status was examined according to the following table and the results were presented in [Table 6](#). These characteristics include gender, age, marital status, education, employment, job status, income and social class of respondents.

Table 6. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents
(Source: Research findings, 2016)

Feature		Frequency (%)	Feature		Frequency (%)	
Gender	Man	(84%) 84	Employment	Employed	(64%) 64	
	Female	(16%) 16		Unemployed (in search of work)	(7%) 7	
Age	Less than 30	(16%) 16		Retired	(4%) 4	
	30-34	(9%) 9		Student	(1%) 1	
	35-39	(12%) 12		University student	(1%) 1	
	40-45	(26%) 26		Unanswered	(23%) 23	
	More than 45	(37%) 37		Studies	Illiterate	(% 9) 9
Marital status	Single	(16%) 16			Under diploma	(34%) 34
	Married	(62%) 62			Diploma	(28%) 28
	No spouse (due to death)	-			Associate Degree	(9%) 9
	No spouse (due to divorce)	(1%) 1	Bachelor		(18%) 18	
	Unanswered	(21%) 21	Master's degree and higher		(2%) 2	
Income	Less than a million	(28.9%) 22	Social class	High class	-	
	One to two million	(67.1%) 51		Middle to up	6 (6%)	
	Two to three million	(% 9/3) 3		middle class	(22%) 22	
	Four Million and more	-		Lower than middle class	(11%) 11	
	unanswered	(24%) 24		Downstairs	(9%) 9	
Career status	Low	(%28.9) 22		Unanswered	(52%) 52	
	Average	(%67.1) 51	-	-		
	high	(%3.9) 3	-	-		

4.1.2. The Local Community's Attitude towards Ecotourism Development

Undoubtedly, the type of the attitude of the local community towards developmental plans, especially in tourism development plans, plays a huge role in the success or failure of these types

of projects. For this reason, here we have tried to examine the attitude of the local community towards the ecosystem plan. Table 7 shows the distribution of the frequency of attitudes of the local community towards ecotourism.

Table 7. Distribution of Frequencies of Attitude of the Local Community towards Ecotourism
(Source: Research findings, 2016)

Items	Frequency/ percent	Totally agree	agree	No idea	disagree	Totally disagree	Mean from 5
The ecotourism will make local people participate in decision making	Frequency	95	1	1	-	-	4.96
	Percent	97.9	1.0	1.0	-	-	
Ecotourism will make local people more involved in planning.	Frequency	95	1	1	-	-	4.96
	Percent	97.9	1.0	1.0	-	-	
The ecotourism will make strangers more respectful.	Frequency	95	1	1	1	-	4.93
	Percent	96.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	-	
The ecotourism will make ask the opinion of the young people, women, the elderly and the poor.	Frequency	95	1	1	-	-	4.96
	Percent	97.9	1.0	1.0	-	-	
Ecotourism will increase the rights of local people in managing natural resources.	Frequency	95	1	-	1	-	4.95
	Percent	97.9	1.0	-	1.0	-	

Based on the table above, the highest frequencies are related to ecotourism will engage the local people in decision making, ecotourism will make local people participate in planning, and ecotourism will ask the opinion of the young people, women, the elderly, and the poor. Hence, 97.9% of the respondents have totally agreed with these items. The comparison of the means shows that the first and the second items mentioned above have a mean of 4.96 out of 5, and the third item has the highest level with a mean of 4.93 out of 5. Ecotourism will make strangers be more

respectful is at the lowest level. In sum, the average of the total index is 2.96, which is moderately upward.

3.1.4. The Impacts and Consequences of Social-Oriented Ecotourism in Jannat Rudbar

The analysis of data presented in Table 8 shows that according to the majority of the surveyed villagers (i.e., about 97.9% of them), the effects of social-oriented ecotourism is high, while only two of the villagers believe that it is moderate or low.

Table 8. Consequences of Social-Oriented Ecotourism in Jannat Rudbar
(Source: Research findings, 2016)

Items	Frequency	Totally agree	agree	No idea	disagree	Totally disagree	Mean from 5
Ecotourism will develop local economies.	Frequency	99	1	-	-	-	4.99
	Percent	99.0	1.0	-	-	-	
Ecotourism will develop local industries.	Frequency	99	1	-	-	-	4.99
	Percent	99.0	1.0	-	-	-	
Ecotourism will increase the income of local residents.	Frequency	99	-	1	-	-	4.98
	Percent	99.0	-	1.0	-	-	

Items	Frequency	Totally agree	agree	No idea	disagree	Totally disagree	Mean from 5
Ecotourism will increase local solidarity.	Frequency	97	-	2	-	1	4.92
	Percent	97.0	-	2.0	-	1.0	
Ecotourism will boost local capabilities.	Frequency		-	2	-	-	4.96
	Percent	/	-	2.0	-	-	
Ecotourism will keep and improve the local natural environment.	Frequency	97	1	-	2	-	4.93
	Percent	97.0	1.0	-	2.0	-	
Ecotourism will increase their awareness of the environment.	Frequency	98	1	-	1	-	4.96
	Percent	98.0	1.0	-	1.0	-	
Ecotourism will protect native species and animals.	Frequency	98	-	-	2	-	4.94
	Percent	98.0	-	-	2.0	-	
Ecotourism will increase the natural attractions of the area.	Frequency	98	-	1	1	-	4.95
	Percent	98.0	-	1.0	1.0	-	
Ecotourism makes the natural texture of the village preserved.	Frequency	98	-	1	1	-	4.95
	Percent	98.0	-	1.0	1.0	-	
Ecotourism will make better waste management.	Frequency	98	1	1	-	-	4.97
	Percent	98.0	1.0	1.0	-	-	
Ecotourism will provide environmental education.	Frequency	98	1	-	1	-	4.99
	Percent	98.0	1.0	-	1.0	-	

Based on the table above, the most frequent items for ecotourism were *the development of the local economy* and *ecotourism will promote the development of local industries* with which 0.99% of the respondents *totally agreed* and 0.1% *agreed*. The comparison of the means shows that, in average, 4.99 out of 5 had chosen the *ecotourism will lead to the development of the local economy* and *ecotourism will promote the*

development of local industries showing that they are at the highest level while *ecotourism will destroy the local culture of Jannat Rudbar* is at the lowest level with an average of 0.15 out of 5. In sum, the total average is 2.91 out of 5, which is upward. Table 9 shows the distribution of the frequency of the local community attitudes towards the effects of ecotourism.

Table 9. Frequency Distribution of Local Community Attitudes toward the Consequences of Ecotourism
(Source: Research findings, 2016)

Valid percentage	Frequency	The attitude of the local community about the consequences of ecotourism
93.9	92	Top
4.1	4	Average
2.0	2	Down
100	100	Total

The data of the table above shows that the attitude of the local community towards ecotourism is 93.9% high (n=29) (Table 9).

4.1.4. Supporting Ecotourism Development Plan

Another research question was the extent to which the local community would support the plan. The results of the data obtained are reflected in the table below to provide an answer to this research question.

Table 10. Frequency Distribution of the Local Community's Support from Ecotourism
(Source: Research findings, 2016)

Row	Item	Local Community Support from Ecotourism					Mean from 5
		Totally agree	agree	No idea	disagree	Totally disagree	
		Frequency (percent)	Frequency (percent)	Frequency (percent)	Frequency (percent)	Frequency (percent)	
1	I am optimistic that ecotourism future is bright.	96 96.0	1 1.0	2 2.0	- -	- -	4.94
2	I would like to support the development of ecotourism in Jannat Rudbar.	97 97.0	2 2.0	- -	- -	- -	4.97
3	I would like to support local natural resources and the environment in the development process.	98 98.0	1 1.0	- -	- -	- -	4.98
4	I would like to participate in the development and planning of ecotourism.	97 97.0	1 1.0	1 1.0	- -	- -	4.96
5	I like to work in ecotourism projects (like renting a home, creating a restaurant, transporting).	97 97.0	- -	2 2.0	- -	- -	4.95
6	I like to work in the field of ecotourism (.....).	97 97.0	1 1.0	1 1.0	- -	- -	4.96
7	I would love to get ecotourism education.	97 97.0	1 1.0	1 1.0	- -	- -	4.96

According to the table above, the highest frequency belongs to I like to support local natural resources and the local environment in the process of development of ecotourism, with which 0.98% of respondents totally agreed and only 2.0% agreed. Comparison of means shows that the average of the item mentioned above is 4.98 out of 5 which shows this item is at the highest level while I am optimistic that ecotourism has a bright

future has an average of 4.94 out of 5 which indicates it is at the lowest level. In sum, the total average is 2.95 out of 5, which is moderately upward (Table 10).

The following table shows the distribution of the extent of local community support from ecotourism.

Table 11. Frequency Distribution Indicators of Local Community Support from Ecotourism
(Source: Research findings, 2016)

Local community support for ecotourism	Frequency	Reliable percent
Classes of response		
Top	96	98.0
Average	-	-
Down	2	2.0
Total	100	100

The data in the table above shows that the local community support from ecotourism is 97.9% .(Table11)

4.2. Inferential Findings

Inferential statistics were used to analyze the data and to fit the measurement level of the variables, the results of which are summarized below.

As can be seen from the results of Table 12, the average difference in the attitude of the local community towards the development of ecotourism is 9.480 and the average difference of the sample s support from ecotourism development plan of the

villages is 13.878, which means the mean difference is significant. Therefore, the local community's attitude towards the development of ecotourism and the level of public support from ecotourism development projects are in a good and proper condition.

According to Table 12, the socio-economic and environmental impacts of community-centered ecotourism in Jannat Rudbar is significant, which indicates that respondents see that the social, economic, and environmental outcomes of ecotourism are positive.

Table 12. Investigating the Status of Research Variables Using a Univariate t-test
(Source: Research findings, 2016)

Row	Index	Mean of items	Mean available	Mean difference	Sig.
1	The local community's attitude towards ecotourism development	15	24.804	9.804	0.000
2	Societal effects of social-oriented ecotourism in Jannat Rudbar	6	9.880	3.880	0.000
3	Economic effects of social-oriented ecotourism in Jannat Rudbar	9	14.960	5.960	0.000
4	Environmentaleffects of social-oriented ecotourism in Jannat Rudbar	21	34.660	13.660	0.000
5	Support of people for the development plan	21	34.787	13.787	0.000

According to Table 13, the correlation between all research variables was significant (at 0.01 level) and that the correlation among them is high. The highest degree of correlation is between the attitudes of the local community towards ecotourism, and economic and environmental

impacts, and local community support from ecotourism development. There is also a strong correlation between the economic impacts and the environmental impacts, and between local community support from ecotourism development and environmental impacts.

Table 13. Relationship between Research Variables
(Source: Research findings, 2016)

	Attitude of the local community	Economic effects	Social effects	Environmental effects	Local community support
Attitude of the local community	1				
Economic effects	0.912**	1			
Social effects	0.740**	0.571**	1		
Environmental effects	0.994**	0.686**	0.772**	1	
Local community support	0.943**	0.770**	0.806**	0.972**	1

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (two-tailed)

4.3. Path Analysis

Regression can only predict the direct effect of each of the independent variables on the

dependent variable, and it is not possible to identify the indirect effects of independent variables on the dependent variable. Therefore, it is not possible to test a research model that consists of relationships between independent variables.

Path analysis is a multivariate technique. In addition to examining the direct effects of independent variables on the dependent variable, the indirect effects of these variables are also examined and the relationship between the variables is introduced in this analysis. Accordingly, we evaluate the direct, indirect and

all of the independent variables' impacts on the dependent variable of local community support.

According to Table 14, while direct effect of the community attitudes on population was reported strong (coefficient. 0.776), its effect on society was reported weak (coefficient 0.238) (Figure 3).

The variables of the economic impacts and environmental impacts have a direct effect on the attitude toward the local community (regression coefficients of 0.200 and 0.820, respectively). Besides, they have indirectly influenced the support of the local community; the impact level is 0.153 and 0.628 respectively.

Table 14. Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Independent Variables on the Dependent Variable of Local Community Support
(Source: Research findings, 2016)

Variables	Type of impact		
	Direct	Indirect	Total
Attitude of the local community	0.767	-	0.767
Economic effects	-	0.153	0.153
Social effects	0.238	-	0.238
environmental effects	-	0.628	0.628

The results of the above table can be summarized as follows:



Figure 3. Empirical factors affecting local community support

1. Discussion and Conclusion

Ecotourism, as one of the major alternatives to mass tourism, seeks to develop tourism by taking environmental considerations into account to provide economic benefits and maintain local community culture. Local participation refers to the power of local communities to influence the outcomes of development projects such as the development of ecotourism. All of these types of

projects will have an impact on local people and individuals, and the important point in this process is that the participation of members of a community in development activities as well as the use and protection of certain dimensions (e.g., natural resources) will have steady benefits for people in the community (Phenol, 2009).

As observed, the results of this study showed that the local community's attitude towards development of ecotourism and the amount of

people's support from the development of ecotourism is in a good and proper situation.

Socio-economic and environmental impacts of community-based socio-economic impacts in Jannat Rudbar indicate that respondents believe the environmental, social, economic and environmental impacts are positive.

The correlation between all the variables in the research is significant and high. The highest degree of correlation is between the attitude of the local community towards economics and economic impacts, environmental impacts, and local community support from beach development. There is also a strong correlation between the economic effects and environmental impacts, and between the local community support from ecotourism development and environmental impacts. The extent of direct effects of the local community's attitudes towards ecotourism and social impacts are 0.767 and 0.238, respectively. The effect of social impacts on the support of the local community from ecotourism in this research is in line with the results of Adeli (2012). The economic impacts and environmental impacts have a direct impact on the attitude towards the local community with regression coefficients of 0.153 and 0.628, respectively. They also have had an indirect impact on the support of the local community. Adeli's (2012) research showed that social factors have a negative impact on the local community support from ecotourism developments, which is not consistent with the results of this research. What has been done in the previous research on ecotourism is mostly related to social-cultural effects (e.g., promoting cultural values of host societies, expanding people's horizons as a cultural encounter, promoting living standards and welfare of residents, etc.), economic

effects (e.g., job creation and new job opportunities, revenue increases, local economy development, rural economy development, etc.) and the environmental factors (e.g., conservation of protected areas, conservation of texture and historical buildings, ecological sustainability, etc.) in the studied area (Adeli, 2012; Faraji Rad & Ehsani, 2011; Saraei & Ghasemi, 2014; Tolaei, 2006). The previous study has paid less attention to the factors that examine local communities support from ecotourism development.

In general, it can be said that in the economic and the environmental fields, people have a positive outlook on the effect of these variables. For instance, people have a positive view towards the concept that ecotourism can increase residents' incomes, or that it has the capability to protect the native species and fauna. Overall, a positive attitude towards the future of ecotourism has been made among the inhabitants and causes them to indirectly support it. The remarkable point of this study is that the social effect of ecotourism, like the fact that ecotourism can cause solidarity among inhabitants, or that it can promote the local performance, directly influenced the variable of the ecotourism support and has encouraged people to favor ecotourism by considering its positive social impacts.

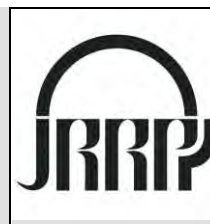
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The present study is the result of a research project entitled *Ecotourism Development in Jannat Abad, Rudbar with an Emphasis on Local Communities' Participation* and we would express our thanks to our honorable employer, the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

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توسعه بوم‌گردی با تأکید بر مشارکت جوامع محلی (مطالعه موردی: روستای جنت رودبار، شهرستان رامسر)

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چکیده مبسوط

۱. مقدمه

فایرلو و بو (۲۰۱۲)، معتقدند که گردشگری می‌تواند نقش مخرب در جوامع میزبان داشته و به عنوان تخریب‌گر محیط زیست طبیعی عمل نماید. در حالی که گردشگری جدید که در قالب بوم‌گردی مطرح می‌شود حساس به مسائل زیست‌محیطی و همچنین به فرهنگ محلی است و توجه ویژه‌ای به نگرش جوامع میزبان می‌دهد. برای دستیابی به بوم‌گردی محور، لازم است به نقش جامعه محلی و ساز و کارهای حمایت و مشارکت آنها توجه کافی صورت پذیرد. رشد و توسعه گردشگری طی سال‌های گذشته در بسیاری از مناطق شمالی کشور، پیامدهای نامطوب و نامناسبی را به همراه داشته است. روستای جنت رودبار به عنوان یکی از روستاهای شهرستان رامسر، از جمله مناطق مورد توجه برای طرح‌های بوم‌گردی است و تحقیق حاضر در صدد است تا به بررسی مساله توسعه بوم‌گردی در این روستا با تأکید بر مشارکت جوامع محلی بپردازد. در این راستا، تحقیق حاضر در صدد پاسخگویی به چهار سؤال اساسی ذیل می‌باشد:

۱- نگرش جامعه محلی نسبت به طرح توسعه بوم‌گردی چیست؟

۲- اثرات و پیامدهای اجتماعی، اقتصادی و زیست‌محیطی بوم‌گردی برای جامعه محلی چیست؟

۳- میزان حمایت جامعه محلی از طرح توسعه بوم‌گردی چقدر است؟

۴- عوامل موثر بر میزان حمایت جامعه محلی از طرح توسعه بوم‌گردی کدامند؟

۲. مبانی نظری

مشارکت جامعه محلی در فرایندهای توسعه گردشگری می‌تواند باعث حمایت از سنت و فرهنگ جامعه محلی شده اما در مقابل، فقدان مشارکت جامعه محلی در این امر می‌تواند باعث شکست طرح‌های توسعه گردشگری گردد. مک لافلین فعالیت‌های گردشگری را به دو دسته اصلی تقسیم می‌کند: الف. گردشگری انبوه؛ ب. گردشگری جایگزین.

بوم‌گردی همانند سایر فعالیت‌های گردشگری دارای آثار و پیامدهای مختلف زیست‌محیطی، اقتصادی و اجتماعی است. عمده‌ترین آثار و پیامدهای مثبت بوم‌گردی عبارتند از: ایجاد امکان حفاظت برای حیات وحش، توجیه برای حفاظت از پارک، گزینه استفاده کمتر از منابع، کاهش انگیزه برای استفاده بی‌رویه از منابع، افزایش رفت‌های شغلی، افزایش درآمد خانوار، حفظ هویت فرهنگی و افتخار نسبت به جامعه محلی، ارتقا مبادلات فرهنگی، توسعه همکاری‌های محلی، آموزش. در مقابل، اثرات زیست‌محیطی منفی بوم‌گردی عبارتند از: تخریب سکونتگاه‌ها، تغییر الگوهای مهاجرت حیات وحش، آلودگی آب، فرسایش خاک، تغییرات کاربری زمین در مناطق تولیدی اولیه، از بین رفتن مناطق سرسبز، توزیع ناعادلانه درآمد، توزیع نابرابر درآمدها، کاهش دسترسی به منابع طبیعی، از دست دادن دانش بومی، فاصله گرفتن از خود بسندگی و حرکت به سوی وابستگی، تغییر مناظر فرهنگی مثل مسکن و اشتغال.

ساکنین بشود یا اینکه بوم‌گردی می‌تواند توانمندی محلی را افزایش بدهد، به صورت مستقیم بر متغیر حمایت از بوم‌گردی اثر گذاشته است و باعث شده است مردم با توجه به در نظر گرفتن اثرات مثبت اجتماعی بوم‌گردی، از این امر استقبال کنند.

۵. نتیجه گیری

با اثرات اجتماعی، اقتصادی و زیست‌محیطی بوم‌گردی اجتماع-محور در جنت رودبار نشان از آن دارد که پاسخ‌دهندگان به اثرات اجتماعی و اقتصادی و زیست‌محیطی بوم‌گردی نگاه موافق و مثبتی را دارند. رابطه همبستگی در میان همه متغیرهای تحقیق معنادار بوده است و میزان همبستگی در میان آن‌ها در سطح بالایی قرار دارند. بیشترین میزان همبستگی میان نگرش جامعه محلی نسبت به بوم‌گردی و اثرات اقتصادی، اثرات زیست‌محیطی و حمایت جامعه محلی از توسعه بوم‌گردی است. همچنین بین اثرات اقتصادی و اثرات زیست‌محیطی و بین حمایت جامعه محلی از توسعه بوم‌گردی و اثرات زیست‌محیطی همبستگی قوی وجود دارد. تاثیر مستقیم متغیرهای نگرش جامعه محلی نسبت به بوم‌گردی و اثرات اجتماعی که به ترتیب ضریب تاثیر آن‌ها ۰/۷۶۷ و ۰/۲۳۸ می‌باشد اشاره کرد. متغیرهای اثرات اقتصادی و اثرات زیست‌محیطی با تاثیر مستقیمی که بر نگرش نسبت به جامعه محلی دارند (میزان ضریب رگرسیون به ترتیب ۰/۱۵۳ و ۰/۶۲۸) و توانسته‌اند از این طریق تاثیر غیر مستقیم بر حمایت جامعه محلی داشته باشند.

کلمات کلیدی: بوم‌گردی، نگرش ساکنان، اثرات و پیامدهای توسعه بوم‌گردی، حمایت از بوم‌گردی، جنت رودبار.

تشکر و قدرانی

بدین وسیله از سازمان میراث فرهنگی، صنایع دستی و گردشگری کشور که هزینه اجرای این طرح پژوهشی را تأمین کرد، قدرانی می‌کنیم.

در هر صورت، بسیاری از صاحب‌نظران معتقدند که در بین گزینه‌های مختلف گردشگری، بوم‌گردی با محیط زیست، التزام به توسعه جوامع و احترام به ویژگی‌های فرهنگی از جمله گزینه‌هایی است که بیشترین سازگاری با مفهوم پایداری دارد.

۳. روش تحقیق

از لحاظ روش‌شناختی، تحقیق حاضر به صورت پیمایشی و از نوع مقطعی انجام شده است. واحد تحلیل در این پژوهش، فرد روستایی بوده و جامعه آماری پژوهش حاضر را کلیه ساکنان روستای جنت رودبار در سال ۱۳۹۵ تشکیل دادند. با توجه به اندک بودن تعداد ساکنین روستا، در این تحقیق از روش تمام‌شماری برای انتخاب نمونه‌های استفاده شده است (با توجه معدود بودن تعداد پاسخگویان نیازی به نمونه‌گیری و یا تعیین حجم نمونه وجود نداشت و بر این اساس، همه ساکنان روستا به عنوان نمونه آماری تحقیق در نظر گرفته شدند). برای جمع‌آوری داده‌های تحقیق، از پرسشنامه خود-اجرا استفاده شده است.

در این تحقیق و پس از تدوین پرسشنامه، برای تعیین میزان اعتبار (روایی) شاخص‌هایی که جهت سنجش متغیرها تهیه شده است از اعتبار محتوا استفاده گردید. برای تعیین میزان پایایی (برآورد همسانی یا ثبات درونی) پرسشنامه نیز از آزمون کرونباخ استفاده شد.

۴. یافته های تحقیق

در زمینه‌های اقتصادی و زیست‌محیطی مردم دیدگاه مثبتی نسبت به اثرات این متغیرها داشته‌اند، به عنوان مثال مردم نگرش مثبتی راجع به اینکه بوم‌گردی می‌تواند باعث افزایش درآمد ساکنین شود یا اینکه، بوم‌گردی می‌تواند باعث حفظ گونه‌ها و جانوران بومی بشود، که این‌ها باعث بوجود آمدن نگرش مثبتی نسبت به آینده بوم‌گردی در میان ساکنین شده است و این امر توانسته است به صورت غیرمستقیم باعث حمایت جامعه محلی از بوم‌گردی بشود. همچنین نکته قابل ملاحظه این پژوهش این است که اثرات اجتماعی بوم‌گردی، به عنوان مثال، اینکه بوم‌گردی می‌تواند باعث همبستگی میان

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