

بوم گردی با تأکید بر جاذبه های گردشگری استان گلستان

سیمین تولایی* - دانشیار دانشگاه تربیت معلم تهران

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چکیده

بوم گردی به قصد بازدید از خاستگاهها و زیستگاههای طبیعی و با هدف حفاظت از میراث فرهنگی به مثابه گزینه سودمند اقتصادی تلقی می شود. این گونه از گردشگری نیز در برگیرنده آثار زیست محیطی، اقتصادی و اجتماعی می باشد. ترویج فرهنگ محیط زیست و تسهیل در اعمال تمهیدات مربوط به آن، درآمدزایی، ایجاد فرصت های شغلی و ارتقاء ارزشهای معنوی و فرهنگی جامعه میزبان از جمله ره آوردهای مثبت این نوع گردشگری تلقی می شود.

استان گلستان با در نظر گرفتن ویژگیهای طبیعی مانند بر پارک های ملی و مناطق حفاظت شده بی نظیر، زیستگاهها، آبشارها و تالابهای دیدنی و به موازات آن احراز نموده های فرهنگی ارزشمند از جمله مراکز عمده بوم گردی در ایران می باشد.

این مقاله سعی دارد ضمن معرفی جاذبه های مهم بوم گردی در این استان به ارایه مدلی برای تحقق بوم گردی پایدار دست یازد، چرا که هرگونه تلاش در این خصوص به ارتقاء وضعیت اقتصادی استان منجر می شود.

تفویض کنترل تالاب های گمیشان، آلاگل، آچی گل با توجه به میزان شکنندگی و آسیب پذیری آنها به سازمان حفاظت از محیط زیست، مسیریابی مجدد جاده اصلی تهران - مشهد با توجه به خسران های زیست محیطی که گردشگران در این گنجینه ملی ایجاد نموده اند و مجهز نمودن جاذبه های طبیعی استان به ویژه پارک جهان نما به امکانات و تأسیسات گردشگری از جمله پیشنهادات این مقاله است.

واژگان کلیدی: استان گلستان، بوم گردی، زیست گاه های طبیعی، جاذبه های بوم گردی، خسران زیست محیطی

* E-mail: simint@yahoo.com

Some Aspects of Eco-tourism with Particular Emphasis on Golestan Province Tourism Attractions

Simin Tavallei*

Associate professor, Teacher Training University

Abstract.

Eco-tourism as a purposive trip to natural settings and habitats and with the aims of cultural preservation and conservation is a viable economic alternative. Eco-tourism possesses some positive environmental, economic and social impacts among which conduction of environmental protection measures, income generation, creation of job opportunities, and promotion of host communities cultural values need considerable attention here.

Golestan province taking into consideration all of its physical peculiarities including the possession of outstanding national parks, spectacular scarps, gorges, trials, habitats, waterfalls, springs and marshes as well as its manifestation of vernacular cultures is being highly appreciated as the most viable and practical eco-tourism center. However, in order for eco-tourism to be beneficial in the province, sustainability issue needs to be included.

The major objective of this paper is first to introduce major Golestan ecotourism points of interest and second to propose a model in order to make it as a more sustainable form of development. It is argued that any efforts towards sustainability could greatly enhance the economic status of the province.

Introduction

Eco-tourism in comparison with tourism is a relatively new phenomena. In fact, the realization of sustainable development concept has led to the creation of eco-tourism. It is being considered as one of the appropriate measures regarding sustainable development (Jehad, ۲۰۰۳). It is argued that eco-tourism and development due to their close interaction with local communities could lead to sustainability.

Eco-tourism should be about ecosystems and ecosystems are about both wildlife and people. Indeed people are simply another form of animal life. In many eco-tourism destinations the landscape and the wildlife are a direct result of the interaction between humans and the rest of the wildlife. To eco-tourists, therefore, both people and wildlife should be of equal importance (Swarbrooke, ۱۹۹۹). Thus, eco-tourism not only encompasses cave surveying, mountain climbing, and hiking over natural trials, wave rolling, water skiing, canoeing, fishing activities, but also it includes life style, eating habitats and patterns, dress types, customs, value systems and other anthropological attractions.

Even though, eco-tourism is a relatively a vague term, but many specialists try to define it one-way or the other.

Diamatis defines it as a trip to natural settings and habitats with particular emphasis on physical, cultural preservation and conservation without any alteration in ecological integrity (Diamatis, ۱۹۹۹).

* E-mail: simint@yahoo.com

According to Ziffer eco-tourism focuses on planning approach with emphasis on natural history, vernacular culture, and environmental conservation (Ziffer, ۱۹۸۹, p. ۶).

Boo believes that eco-tourism not only encompasses conservation issue but also it is associated with educational and economic aspects (Boo, ۱۹۹۰, p. ۴). According to him, eco-tourists are nature proponents with the aim of income generation, creation of job opportunities, and provision of environmental training.

Eco-tourism constitutes between ۴-۶٪ of the total international tourists. Iran in general, received ۱۴۰۰۰۰ international tourists in ۲۰۰۱. This figure corresponds with ۱۹٪ of the world total tourist receipts (Akbari, ۲۰۰۴, ۹). Even-though, the exact number of eco-tourists has not been determined but over ۱ million have visited the eco-tourism attractions of the province between ۲۰۰۴-۲۰۰۵ out of which ۱۹,۳۷۵ were international tourists. World's average annual income out of each tourist including eco-tourists has been estimated up to US \$ ۶۸۵. The corresponding figure for Iran has been amounted to US \$ ۴۴۳ (Ibid). Eco-tourism contribution in terms of annual revenue is amounted up to US \$ ۲۵۰ millions (Jehad, ۲۰۰۳). It has been estimated that on average each foreign eco-tourist spends over Rls ۲,۵۰۰,۰۰۰ in order to cover its expenditure with regard to accommodation, food, fees and souvenirs in the province.

Eco-tourism provides direct, indirect and induced job opportunities as well. The total number of Iran's direct job opportunities out of this sector is ۵۴,۰۰۰ and total number of indirect and induced job opportunities has been reached to ۳۲۶,۰۰۰ (Ibid). It is been argued that the province is capable of creating ۴-۶ direct job opportunities per eco-tourist as well as ۱,۵ times indirect and induced opportunities.

Eco-tourism attractions of Golestan Province

Iran in general and Golestan province in particular offer great eco-tourism potentialities and attractions virtually in all seasons.

Golestan province is located in northeast of the country. It possesses an outstanding national park and forest reservations with many precious habitats and fascinating trials, waterfalls, caves, springs, and marshes (fig ۱ & ۲).

National and forest parks

Among one of the most amazing natural attractions, Golestan national park, as the first Iran's national park located in Minoodasht attracts the most.

This park was named Almeh reservation, Mohamad Reza shah, Wild Park and finally National park in ۱۹۶۱, ۶۳, ۶۵, and ۶۷ respectively. Its total area has been amounted up to ۹۱,۸۹۵ hectares. This park due to its peculiar topographic, climatic and hydrologic specifications possesses over ۵,۲۰۰ plant varieties that constitute ۱۹٪ of Iran's total plant communities (Niknejad, ۲۰۰۴, p. ۱۰۴).

Forest Reservations and Parks

Forest reservations due to their possession of natural peculiarities namely rivers, waterfalls, springs and habitats are being considered as natural heritage and may attract eco-tourists as well. However, some of them including chelchelee, Azizabad and to some extent jahannama have been recognized as forbidden hunting grounds.

Jahannama forest reservation is located in Gorgan southern ranges in kordroy. The name derived from a village with the very same name. Its total area is ۳۰,۶۵۰ hectares. It accommodates some precious habitats among which Tarakat is the most distinct one. Tajha

Oriental as well as pardus panthera, bear, forest wildcat, golden eagles, chukar and falcon are the most appreciated varieties. It encompasses not only some spectacular physical landscapes but also couple cultural points more specifically ancient cemeteries and Radekan tower.

Naharkhoran, Deland, and Ghorough are some of the forest parks of the province among which Naharkhoran is the most welcomed one both in terms of tourists and local communities. It accommodates considerable amount of tourist's facilities.

Miankale wild life reservation located in the vicinity of Ashoradeh encompasses both Gorgan bay and Miankaleh peninsula. Its total area is around ۷۰۰ hectares. This reservation is basically the nesting ground for scarce migrant birds and is being recognized as a global wild reservation by United Nation.

This province itself possesses many specialized plant communities as well as couple fascinating forest trails. Afratakhteh, Zarbin Ramian, sorkesh and Cheshme Bolbol are the most impressed plant reservations (Ghaemi, ۲۰۰۰). Almeh, Tange golara trails are being appreciated by eco-tourists as well.

Marshes

There exists some international marshes which are all located in Torkamansahara (Inche-Boroon district) adjacent to Iran-Turkmenistan border. They accommodate some scarce plant varieties and migrant birds.

Gomishan, Inche boroon and Alagol all have been known as international plant genetic reservations.

Gomishan marsh, which is located beside Gomishan plain, itself possesses ۲۰ scarce fish species as well as ۱۰۰ scarce birds' species (Ibid).

Its total area has been amounted up to ۱۰۰۰ hectares thanks to raising Caspian Sea water level. It has been surrounded by very rich grasslands in which provide a very hospitable milieu for wild migrant birds during winter.

Caves

This province houses couple amazing caves which might attract ecotourists as well. Shirabad cave known as white giant cave is the most spectacular one. It accommodates few waterfalls and springs. Its stalactite and stalagmite formations attract the most.

Water falls

Golestan province possesses some attractive waterfalls. Shirabad is located in the vicinity of Khan Bebin town. It possesses steep path that accommodates ۱۲ smaller paths. Its longest one has the elevation and depth of ۲۰ & ۸۰ respectively.

Lowve waterfall with its stepwise path is located next to a village with the very same name, which is lied ۳ km off the main Gorgan-Mashhad road. Its height is ۱۰ meters and it has terraced morphology. This waterfall due to its adjacency with Golestan national park possesses great value.

Kaboodwall waterfall carved out of kaboodwall forest, and Ziyarat waterfall with all of its green background are very attractive points as far as eco-tourists are concerned. Rango waterfall with its spectacular semi-circular basin is another point of attraction.

Springs

Last but not least are springs among which Ziyarat and Ramian are the most attractive ones. Mud spring geysers namely Gharniarough is another point of interest for eco-tourists.

Rural settlements

Cottage villages including Jahannama, Afratakhteh, and more specifically Derazno could attract eco-tourists if properly planned.

Rural folk culture With regard to different services and ceremonies (Georban bayram, Araz bayram, special ceremony for rain, and Aghghoeen, ceremony which held by men at the age of ٦٣) and native music as vernacular culture manifestations might attract eco-tourism as well (Zendedel, ٢٠٠٠).

Impacts of eco-tourism

Eco-tourism has both negative and positive ecological, economic and socio-cultural impacts.

Positive impacts

The direct environmental consequences are to motivate the conduction of environmental protection measures including rehabilitation and reclamation of modified ecological settings in order to improve the status of natural ecosystems. Eco-tourism provides suitable grounds for accomplishing conservation through charities and other relevant means. Charles & others further believe in facilitation of ecological training through eco-tourism (Charles, Goeldner & others, ٢٠٠٠).

The indirect environmental impacts of eco-tourism include encouraging of people to acknowledge the necessities of environmental conservation issues through Environmental educational training.

Direct economic impacts are associated with income generation, provision of job opportunities, and evolution of other sectors of local economy, rural economy as well as Peripheral regions.

Indirect economic impacts predominantly include the generation of indirect incomes pertaining to multiplier effects. Furthermore, preservation and sustaining cultural attractions may attract more ecotourists and could eventually lead to further subsequent economic returns.

Even though, most of the socio-cultural impacts have essentially negative nature, but there exists some positive socio-cultural impacts. Promotion of host communities' cultural value systems, improvement of artcrafts' status and its subsequent economic gains and broadening people's insight horizons as a result of cultural confrontation are among some of them.

Negative impacts

Negative impacts of eco-tourism include endangering carrying capacities as well as allocation of fragile ecosystems for construction of superstructures and infrastructures.

Negative economic impacts include leakage due to all needed imported items related to tourists, presence of foreign investors and subsequent capital transfers. Another negative economic impact is related to opportunity costs as a result of allocating investment to eco-tourism activities rather than other uses.

Direct negative socio-cultural impacts include the penetration of eco-tourism into host communities' local culture, and the processes of authenticity and comodification. Resentment toward foreign tourists could be considered as another antagonism impacts.

Eco-tourism and sustainability

Eco-tourism can be a sustainable form of tourism if properly managed. The aim should be to manage eco-tourism so that it is an enlightening nature travel experience that contributes to the conservation of the ecosystem with respecting the integrity of the host community.

Figgis is the first who introduced sustainability issue in tourism area. According to him tourism planning should be based on natural-centered planning syndrome. That is tourism ought to be compatible with environmental capabilities. Planning should be geared to supply-driven approach rather than demand-driven approach (Figgis, ۱۹۹۴, p.۱۳).

According to Richardson environmental conservation, natural bases, sustainability with regard to social and cultural aspects are the fundamental bases of eco-tourism (Richardson, ۱۹۹۳).

Blamey believes in some principle foundations including natural, educational, and sustainable concepts (Blamey, ۱۹۹۷ b). The first concept is basically associated with natural reserves. Its aims head towards maintaining natural species and other physical heritages related to natural reserves and parks. The education-training base of eco-tourism distinguishes this type of tourism from other natural-oriented tourism. This orientation stresses on promotion of tourists' knowledge and awareness with regard to fragile ecological settings. Therefore, the enhancement of tourists' behaviors and attitudes and local host communities' trainings with regard to conservation issues are highly recommended.

There exists a continuum with regard to holding an attitude towards viewing both wild life and indigenous people. Swarbrooke implies three distinctive attitudes toward viewing wildlife and indigenous people (fig ۳).

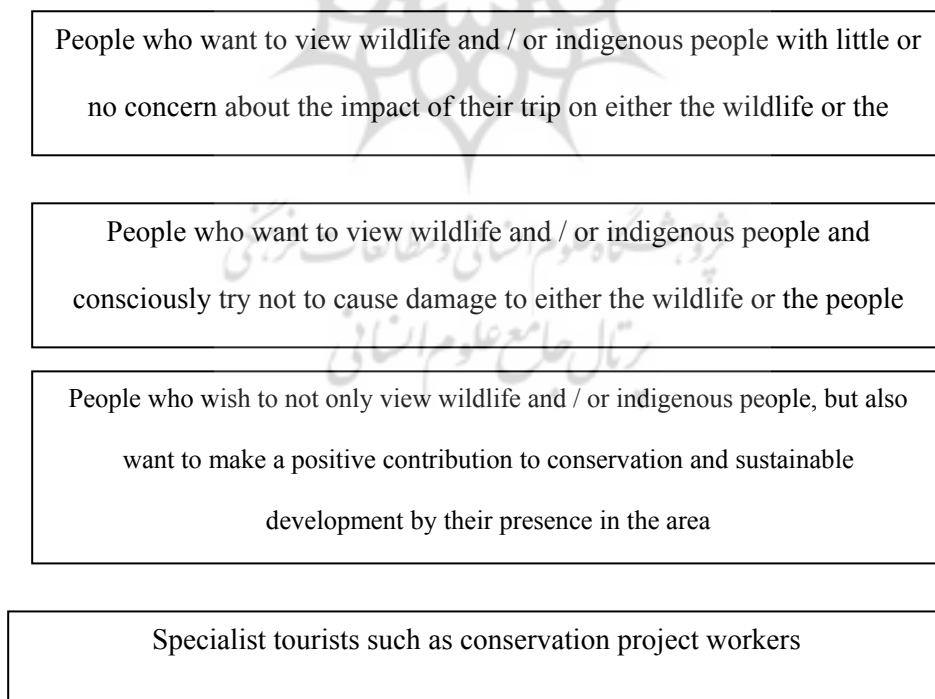


Fig ۳: The eco-tourist continuum.

Source: Modified from swarbrooke, ۱۹۹۹, p. ۳۲۰

According to this continuum, first group is predominately concern free people with little or no sympathy towards both wildlife and people.

Second group are anti environmental damage generation.

Groups that try to make positive contributions and accomplish sustainability fall into third category.

According to personal local interview, most of the internal Golestan eco-tourists will fall into the first continuum. However, international eco-tourists would fall into the third category.

Model of sustainable Tourism:

Based on positive environmental, economic and cultural advantages of eco-tourism from one hand, and the need for encompassing sustainable issue in this regard, the author tries to propose a possible ideal model. This model is predominately pursued some attainable goals. These goals have social, economic and environmental dimensions.

Community benefits, the level of host community's participation in planning context, educational aspects are among the most determinant social goals.

Economic goals are predominately composed of economic benefits through job creations and income-exchange generation by conduction of economically viable and sound industry. Resource benefits could be obtained through the reduction in resource degradation. That is tourism ought to be compatible with environmental capabilities. Thus the planning should be geared to supply driven approach (fig 4).

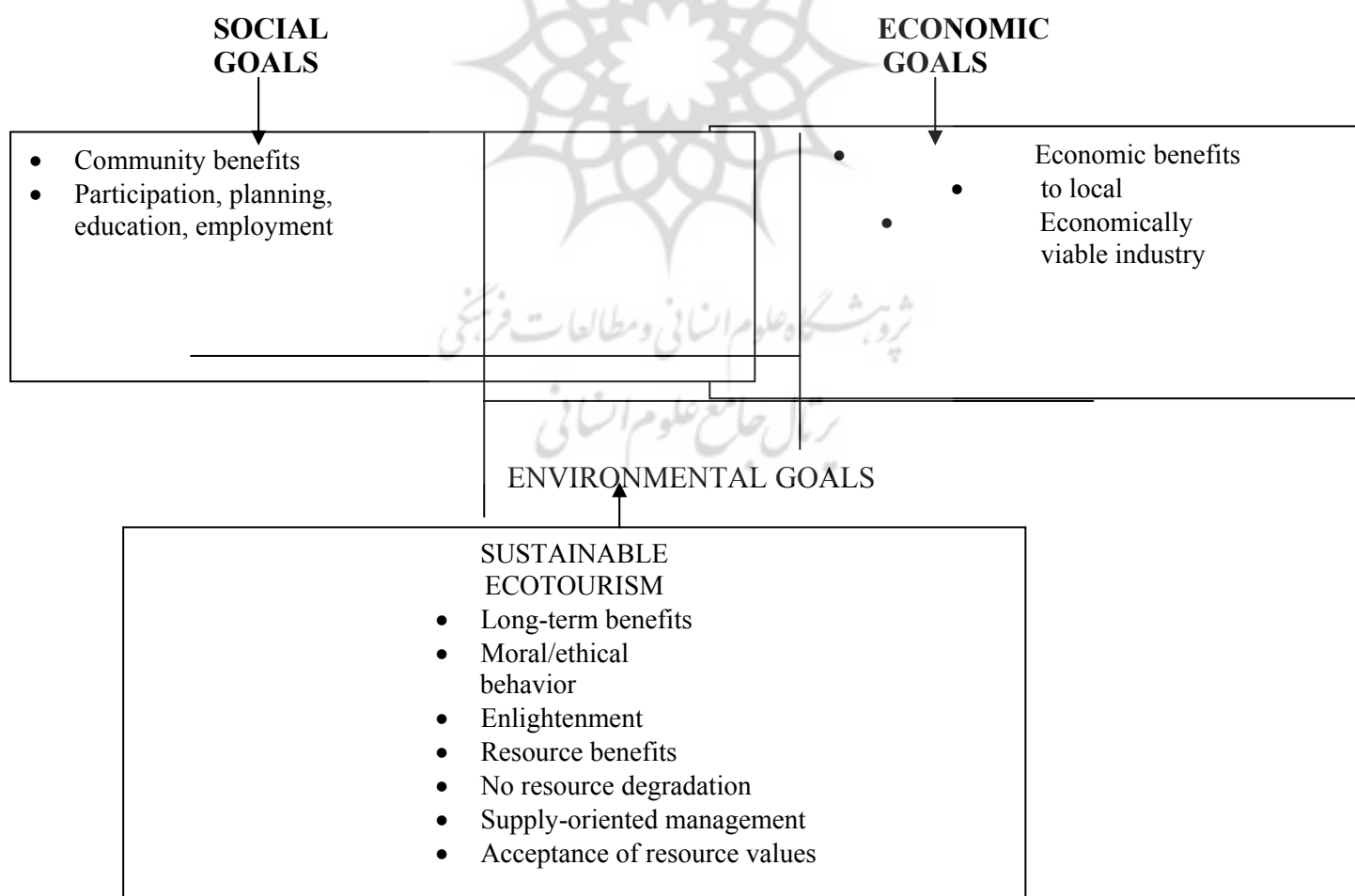


Fig 4: Model of sustainable eco-tourism

Concluding remarks and recommendations

Positive economic, environmental and socio-cultural consequences of eco-tourism from one hand, and Golestan's high eco-tourism potentialities including forest reserves, waterfalls, springs, marshes, and cultural point of interests, on the other hand demand moving towards sustainable eco-tourism with particular emphasis upon institutionalizing environmental culture among different Golestan tourism stakeholders.

In fact, the minimization of the negative environmental, socio-cultural, and economic impacts, the provision of ecological training and educational opportunities more specifically in reserved area, as well as local communities participation in tourism planning activities could constitute major eco-tourism's objective frame work.

However, based on fragility and vulnerability issue, a model stressing on social, economic and environmental goals is highly recommended. The main priorities of such a sustainable model are geared towards community's benefits, participation and education. Moreover, economic benefits as far as job creation and earning foreign exchanges are concerned should be highlighted as well. Prevention of resource degradation and move toward supply-oriented management are being considered as major environmental goals of the model.

In effect, emphasis upon long term benefits as well as moral and ethical behavior shape sustainable dimension of the model.

Based on Wight's points of view, and taking into consideration Golestan eco-tourism problems the followings are being considered as important recommendation regarding eco-tourism in general and Golestan province in particular. (Wight, ۱۹۹۳c)

- It should develop in an environmentally sound manner.
- It should prevent any degradation
- It should involve education among all involved parties
- It should gear to supply-oriented management rather on demand-oriented approach
- It should promote moral and ethical responsibilities and behaviors towards natural and cultural environments
- It should provide long-term conservation, scientifically, and sound, cultural, and economic benefits to host community

Special Golestan's environmental and sustainable recommendations:

As already mentioned the province itself offers great deal of eco-tourism attractions. However, four of them including Golestan National park, forest reservations, natural habitats, and natural historical points are recognized sites by Environment organization and are being affected by explicit powerful administrative policies and regulations. It is suggested that all of international marshes more specifically Gomishan, Alagole, Agi gole, Alma goal be included among those recognized sites by Environment organization and benefited from relevant administrative and executive regulations enacted by the organization.

Furthermore, environmentally speaking there exists some special problems with regard to Golestan National park. It is suggested that the main Gorgan-Mashhad road that goes through this park be relocated.

The existence of this road has made the park out of control. Visitors accommodate here and there. They trample the vegetation of the park and damage enormously. It is

suggested that this road be relocated out of the park. Instead, the present road just considers as a tourist road not a public road and is under the control of Environment organization.

In addition, National park was highly damaged through consecutive floods. Special rehabilitation care should be imposed by relevant organizations including Tourism and Environment organizations.

Furthermore, there exists a shortage of tourism facilities within this park as well as jahannama forest park.

Ziyarat tourist center is being under vast uncontrolled construction activities that in turn, might cause some visual pollution and degradation in its vernacular capabilities. It is suggested that Environment organization be responsible in this regard.

The coordination among involved parties including Environment organization, Tourism organization, and Budget and planning organization is highly recommended.

There is a lack of both expert work force and non-skilled labor. Tourism organization should provide those work forces.

Another problem is lack of fund in which planning and Budget organization should be responsible for. Lastly, there is a management gap in the province that needed to be taken care of.

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