

THE ROLE OF TOURISM IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COASTAL VILLAGES. A CASE STUDY IN NOOR TOWN, IRAN.

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Abstract

In this article we attempted to investigate the role of tourism in the development of the coastal villages in Noor town, Iran focusing on their economic, sociocultural and physical-environmental capabilities. Moreover, this study identified that planning for growth and development of tourism in this area should be managed by deliberating and analyzing all existing structures. Furthermore, tourism development and growth has a significant effect on land use changes on coastal villages. Thus results of this study indicate that this technique (Chi-square) is effective for tourism development on coastal villages. The required data for this study were collected through various questionnaires as well as documentary and research studies of 24 coastal villages that located in Noor town in Iran. To analyze tourism growth rate in the coastal villages a chi-square analysis test was conducted. The results showed significant growth rate in different dimensions of tourism including physical, economic and sociocultural perspective.

Keywords: *Tourism development, rural development, coastal villages, planning socio-economic growth.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Coastal lines are one of the tourist attractions all over the world. Considering the environmental conditions of coastal areas in the world leads us to the fact that tourism is one of the most compatible economic activities with these regions Northern coast regions of Iran especially in Mazandaran province have attracted many tourists for a very long time due to possessing beautiful landscapes and scenery. It is worth noting that major portion of resorts is located in the coastal area of Mazandaran. Out of 216 residential units in this province, 135 are located in coastal areas (Rahmani, 2007) and the other 90 units are located in areas far from the sea shore. Mazandaran coastal line is approximately 338 km. Location of the residential facilities in coastal villages is only on 248 km of Mazandaran coastal line. In other words, construction has covered 74% of the coastal line most of which is on the urban coastal line (Shid Far, 2003). This fact has made the tourists move along the road and therefore the

surrounding villages can benefit from the revenue sources and other advantages which lay the foundation for stable development. Thus, locations and villages around this line can take advantage of these beneficial features for a better operation in economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions of tourism. Noor town has 2 central districts called Chamanestan and Baladeh. These towns have been able to obtain its real status in coastal tourism due to possessing some required potentials such as narrow sea shore, short distance to Tehran, the capital city of Iran, and other heavily populated cities as well as historical and social features. Moreover, aggregation of these facilities around the bordering road has attracted most of the tourists to some specific areas of Noor town and its surrounding coastal settlements and resorts. These activities have played important roles in the development of coastal and deprived villages of this town. However, some problems such as environmental pollution, land speculation, unemployment, and economic pressure on rural families, destroying fundamental activities such as farming, migration of youths to big cities due to unemployment, centralizing activities and services in urban areas, dispersion and unbalanced distribution of population over the town are also noticeable. Based on the introduction and considering importance of tourism development in coastal villages, it seems that such studies can be regarded as a promising step to explore a suitable solution to develop tourism in the area under study.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the official predictions of world Tourism Organization, a number of tourists all over the world will reach 1.5 billion (Tayebi et al. 2008). Accordingly, tourism is a widespread activity which has noticeable economic, social, cultural and environmental effects (zarabi, 2011). Social and cultural effects of tourism are among the most important considerations of tourism development in any area. Tourism is about to change into one of the fastest-growing industries and it is considered an instrument to raise national revenue, one of the major economic element in the world and a concept in sustainable development (Rattanasuwongcha, 1998). Job creation, raising income for local residents, reducing poverty, investment growth and development of economic infrastructures as well as less migration are among the positive economic effects tourism development.

However, researchers have also pointed out some negative effects of tourism from the viewpoint of the host society such as a rise in the price of commodities, land and living cost. Alavi & Yasin (2000) believe that there is a direct relationship between the level of tourism development and negative attitudes of the host society towards economic, social and environmental effects. Tourism development has the following positive social and cultural effects:

1. Familiarization with lifestyle of other nations
2. Rise in level of welfare and quality of life to the members of society.
3. Enrichment of cultural business of members of the society
4. Making opportunities to introduce and transfer cultural values to the world
5. Protecting historical and cultural heritage of the country
6. Making opportunities for people of the society to use recreational and cultural facilities
7. Increasing public places mutual respect among people of different cultures (Zarrabi, 2011).

Tourism is a multipurpose activity happening in a place out of the tourist's usual and typical environment. The tourist's journey does not take longer than a year and can be

planned to achieve recreational, business goals or other ones (WTO*, 1997). Major consequences of tourism to coastal environment fall into 4 categories:

- Consequences to physical environment
- Consequences to ecological environment
- Consequences to resources used by human being
- Consequences to values of life quality

Negative environmental effects of tourism can include air and soil pollution, water contamination, traffic jam, damaging the historical monuments, destroying the plants and nature, destroying the wildlife (Altina & Hussain, 2005). Currently and in the wake of out break of environmental crises, destroying resources and to reach sustainable development, it is essential to plan based on the evaluated capabilities of the environment so that operation is done continuously and suitable to the environment and also the natural value of the environment is preserved (Zarrabi, 2011).

During the last decades, various studies have been done on surveying views and perceptions of the residents toward tourism effects on the host society. (Binns & Nel, 2002; Butler, 2001; Cohen, 2002; Dwyer & Faux, 2010; Knowd, 2001; Lukissas, 1982; Reid, 2001; Ratz, 2002). Likewise, some studies are related to the rural areas. (Monshizadeh, 2001; Sharpley, 2002; Weaver, 1986; Tepelus, 2010; Ritchie, 2003; Richards, 2000; Lntyre, 1993; Bontron, 1997; Carmichael, 2008). Henning (1996) has pointed out in a research on the rural area of Louisiana that the frequent entrance of tourists has had good and positive effects on big rural areas. In this research, it was also clarified that in most of the rural areas regional and local markets have been established to supply a various range of local commodities. Surely, tourism is regarded as an essential element in rural development and management plans. He also infers that rural tourism is considered an important force for the development of low-grown and least-developed villages.

Particularly, the villages with limited choices of development can consider tourism an elixir for their growth and development (Javan & Saghayi, 2004). Tayebi & Jaberi and babaki (2008) have shown in their researches that strategy of rural tourism should be compatible with local goals, manners, customs and traditions of that area and conform to local rules and regulations. Results of Weaver's researches also showed that not only can rural tourism increase job opportunities, increase revenue, solidify domestic economic foundations, but also it can raise cultural opportunities for local residents (Weaver, 1986).

Rahmai (2007) also mentions that a well- planned and managed rural tourism can lead to rising and preservation of environmental and local resources. Ashley et al. (1997) point out a wide range of impact of tourism on rural livelihoods in different areas and regions in Namibia in her research titled "The impact of tourism on rural livelihoods". Unwin (1996) has also investigated effective themes in the development of tourism in Estonia since independence in 1991 in his article titled "Tourist development in Estonia, images, sustainability, and integrated rural development". Shid far et al. (2003) could to a large extent designate concept of rural tourism and realm of it as well as how to plan tourism in rural areas in their book "Rural tourism: an introduction". Moreover, Javan & Saghayi (2004) could also show in their research that local tourism impacts varies greatly among rural regions and depends on a host of factors including workforce characteristics and seasonality issues.

It was also noted that Local support, however, is usually a necessary component of a successful tourism strategy in rural areas. However, Hening, (1996) considered tourism a threat to agriculture and believes that urbanism in rural areas results in numerous residential areas and difficult coexistence between agriculture and other activities. Land demand for construction sometimes leads to the staggering rise in land price and then creating

inappropriate situations to keep agricultural activities. Sharifzadeh et al. (2001) analyzed sustainable dimensions of tourism in their article titled "Sustainable development and rural tourism". Rahmani (2007) researched development of Barkhar district in Isfahan province through rural tourism development. Ghaderi (2003) investigate the role of tourism in rural areas in his Ph.D. dissertation titled "Tourism and sustainable rural development".

Table 1.The results of positive and negative effects of tourism development

Dimension	Positive results	Negative results
Economic	Income Increasing To establish occupation opportunity Motivation of stock To acquire of foreign investigation Development of infrastructure foundations Using of national present capability Regional planning Generation& Revenue	Inflation, increasing of prices Seasonal occupation unemployment Increasing of the price of lands Unbalancing of the regions Decreasing of public services Rural-Urban drift
Socio-Education	Increasing of people’s life quality Increasing of recreation possibilities Increasing of the quality of common services To become familiar with the other counties’ culture Cultural communication development To honour of own cultural Social interaction	Increasing of prostitution Increasing of alcoholism Establish a wrong local culture Inspire a sense of undeveloped cultural and financial to residents cause high crime rate
Bio-Environmental	Conservation of environment Conservation of natural protected areas Conservation of natural landscape Increasing of knowledge of people with respect to worth of natural resources More built-up areas	Natural resources destruction Land cover and wild life destruction Air pollution and sound pollution Ancient destruction Cause over crowding

Source: Rahmani, 2010 & WTO* = World Tourism Organization

3. CASE STUDY AND METHODS

Noor town is located at northern part of Iran and west of Mazandaran province. This town has been surrounded by two natural physical features: Alborz Mountains on the South and Caspian Sea on the north (Figure 1). This town is situated between latitudes 36° 45' and 36° 50' N and longitudes 51° 20' and 52° 10' E and it has 2675 square kilometers. Topographically, Noor town has both flat land and mountains and it is 15 meters below sea level. Average rainfall and temperature in this area is 1609.8 ml. and -0.4 to 33.4 degrees Centigrade respectively (Weather center in Mazandaran, 2011). The samples employed in this study are obtained from various parts the research areas as stated below:

Shahr kala, Gandyab bala, Gandyab payin, Abasa, Hendumarz, Tashku sofla, Tashku olya, Form abad, Gaskar mahalleh, Afrasyab kala, Amirabad, Rostamrud, Kordmahalleh, Zarrin mahalleh, Tirkadeh sofla, Tirkadeh olya, Sihkala, Hosseinabad, Kolachuran, Teska, Tamishan, Darya shahr located on the coastal bank of Noor town between mountain and sea. According to the census conducted in 2006, the above villages have the population of 18422 (health center, 2012). The required data for this study were collected through field investigation and by visiting the head of every household. Sampling for this study was done by Cochran sampling techniques to choose from among 300 households. Questionnaires were distributed to the sample households.

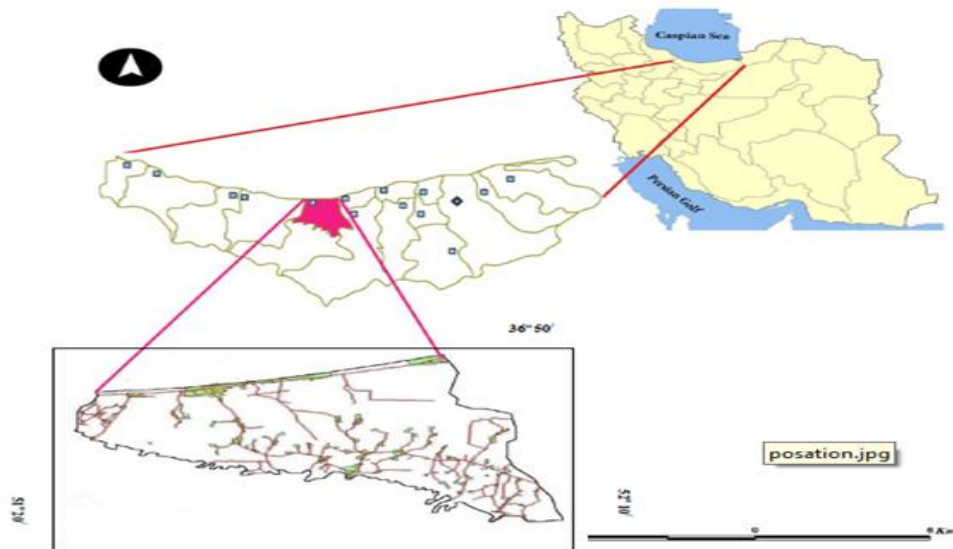


Figure 1 study area: Noor Town, Iran

As for the methodology, this study benefits from descriptive as well as inferential methods focusing on correlation. The data needed for this study are economic, social, cultural, environmental physical and institutional. The questionnaire, observation, and review of the existing documents in organizations and libraries have been conducted with a recent instrument (Figures 2 and 3).

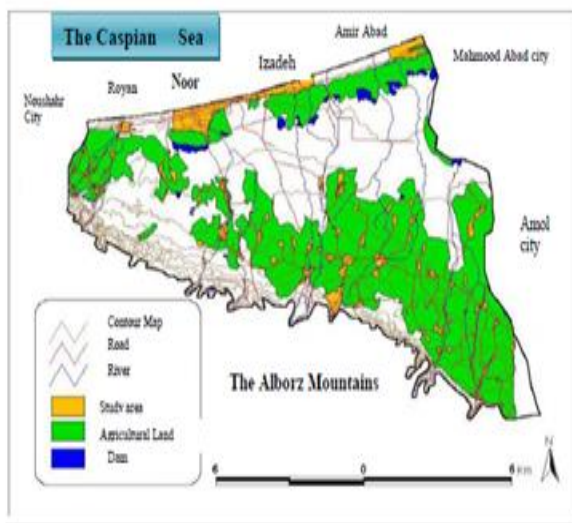


Figure 2. Urban and Rural regions in Noor Town

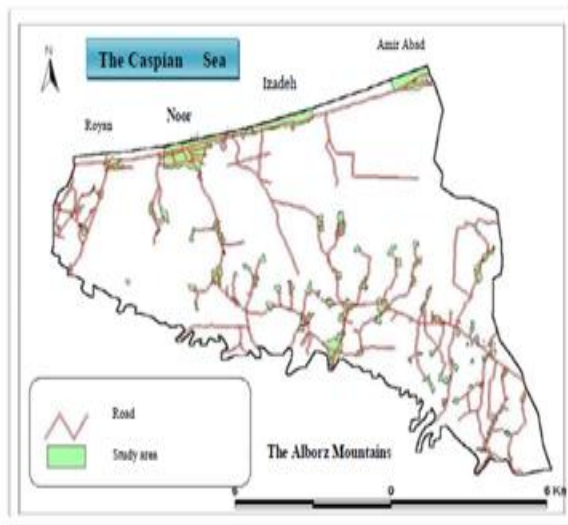


Figure 3. Noor Town Topology

Data analysis in this study was conducted through descriptive and inferential statistical analyses and the collected data were analyzed by using GIS software (ArcGIS 9.3) and SPSS in which rate of tourism growth was determined through Chi-square model. From the viewpoint of validity, this study examined content validity and face validity. To measure the reliability of the questionnaire, Alpha Cronbach was used for each variable separately through SPSS.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Hypothesis 1

In recent years, tourism growth has shown a significant economic effect on coastal villages of Noor town. To investigate tourism growth as well as its role in economic growth of Noor town, the chi-square test was conducted between two variables of tourism development and economic development in which the following dimensions have been taken into consideration: employment (employment of women and youths, rise in employment in service jobs, recruiting workforce surplus of agricultural sector, increasing vacancies in construction sector), income (rise in income, narrowing social gaps, increasing purchasing power) and land price.

Table 2 shows results of chi-square test conducted to test hypothesis 1 and analyze the 3 independent variables at the significance level of 0.5. As mentioned above, the 3 economic independent variables are employment, income and land price. Based on the results shown in table 2 it is inferred that from viewpoint of the residents (head of household), tourism growth has significant effect on employment of women and youths, rise in employment in service jobs, recruiting workforce surplus of agricultural section, increasing vacancies in construction section, rise in income, narrowing social gaps, increasing purchasing power and land price.

Table 2. Analysis of chi-square (X²), the impact of tourism development to economic elements.

Dimension	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Very high	high	Moderate	Little	Very little	Total	Chi-square			Result
									Statistic rate	Degree of freedom	Significance level	
Economic	occupation	Women occupation	8	10	63	80	139	300	197	4	0	S.R*
		Youth occupation	16	39	90	77	78	300	64.8	4	0	S.R
		Increasing occupation on services	54	60	16	57	65	300	31.0	4	0	S.R
		Employment of additional forces on agriculture and animal husbandry	19	28	84	77	92	300	76.5	4	0	S.R
		Increasing of occupation opportunity on various section	6	52	71	98	63	300	59.5	4	0	S.R
	Income	Income increasing	30	50	81	65	74	300	27.7	4	0	S.R
		Narrowing social gaps	26	44	92	68	70	300	43.3	4	0	S.R
		Increasing purchasing power	22	63	94	57	64	300	43.9	4	0	S.R
	Land worth	Lands price	52	86	87	40	3	300	41.5	4	0	S.R

S.R* = Significance Relation Source: Information derived from the 2013 questionnaire.

Table 3. Correlation between development and growth of tourism and employment, income and change in price of land in coastal villages of Noor town from view points of the residents (head of household).

Dimension	Dependent variable	Very high	high	Moderate	Little	Very little	Total	Chi-square			Result
								Statistic rate	Degree of freedom	Significance level	
Economic	employment	36	32	63	45	124	300	94.8	4	0	S.R*
	income	30	350	80	66	74	300	27.2	4	0	S.R
	Land price	52	86	87	40	35	300	41.5	4	0	S.R

S.R*= Significance Relation Source: Information derived from the 2013 questionnaire.

According to the results of the variables employment, income, land price and environmental issues it is inferred that tourism development shows a significant effect on employment, income, land price and environmental issues at the significance level of 0.5. By analyzing the variables employment, income, land price and economic dimensions at the significance level of 0.5, it was inferred that, tourism growth has had a significant economic effect on coastal villages of Noor town in the recent years.

Table 4. Correlation between tourism growth and effect of its dimensions on economic dimensions in coastal villages of Noor town from view points of the residents (head of household)

Spectrum	Observed	Expected	Difference
Very high	52	60	-8
High	28	60	-32
Moderate	77	60	17
Little	66	60	16
Very little	77	60	17

Chi-square		Result
Statistic rate	28	
Degree of freedom	4	
Significance level	0	

Source: Information derived from the 2013 questionnaire.

4.2. Hypothesis 2

In recent years, tourism growth has shown a significant social and cultural effect on coastal villages of Noor town. In order to test the second hypothesis, 13 dependent variables were taken into consideration to be rated through a 13-item questionnaire. The variables were analyzed considering and focusing on three points of view: changing lifestyle, more motivation to stay and not to migrate and as well as cultural and dynamic interactions of the population. The following 13 independent variables were analyzed at the significance level of 0.5: inclination to consuming long-lasting products and appliances, change of attitude towards lifestyle, preventing from migration of workforce surplus in agricultural section, motivating the youths to reside and work in the villages, increasing sense of belonging to hometown, motivating the villagers to stay in their hometowns, decreasing the villagers' migration to cities, raising public knowledge and awareness to the environment, introducing the unique customs and traditions, the villagers' amenability to tourism improvement, improving level of services such as sanitation and housing etc., supporting dynamicity and expansion of culture of village-dwelling, higher contribution of the villagers in performing tourism plans. As shown in table 5, the results were indicative of the fact that the 13 variables were approved.

Table 5.Chi-square analysis (the impact of tourism development on socio- educational)

Dimension	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Very high	high	Moderate	Little	Very little	Total	Chi-square			Result
									Statistic rate	Degree of freedom	Significance level	
Socio-educational	Life style changing	Tendency to using of commodity and consistent equipments	50	104	76	40	30	300	59.8	4	0	S.R*
		Changing on people's tendency with respect to life style	54	108	79	14	45	300	84.03	4	0	S.R
	Increasing stay hometowns, decreasing the villagers' migration	preventing from migration of workforce surplus in agricultural section	20	50	101	60	69	300	57.7	4	0	S.R
		motivating the youths to reside and work in the villages	27	55	109	5	44	300	59.6	4	0	S.R
		increasing sense of belonging to hometown	44	72	86	62	36	300	27.6	4	0	S.R
		motivating the villagers to stay in their hometowns	28	82	98	42	50	300	92.3	4	0	S.R
		decreasing the villagers' migration to cities	46	65	73	7	60	300	54.1	4	0	S.R
	Cultural reaction and population motivating	raising public knowledge and awareness	49	81	111	32	27	300	83.9	4	0	S.R
		the villagers' amenability to tourism improvement	57	95	77	46	25	300	49.0	4	0	S.R
		introducing the unique customs and traditions	19	45	121	68	47	300	97.6	4	0	S.R
		improving level of services such as sanitation	29	75	88	41	67	300	39.6	4	0	S.R
		supporting dynamicity and expansion of culture of village-dwelling	21	50	102	70	57	300	58.2	4	0	S.R
		Higher contribution of the villagers in performing tourism plans.	14	39	75	80	92	300	70	4	0	S.R

S.R*= Significance Relation

Source: Information derived from the 2013 questionnaire.

Table 6.Correlation between tourism growth and development with environment, increasing infrastructural and structural services and land-use change in coastal villages of Noor town from view points of the residents (head of household).

Dimension	Dependent variable	Very high	high	Moderate	Little	Very little	Total	Chi-square			Result
								Statistic rate	Degree of freedom	Significance level	
Socio-educational	Changing life style	54	158	79	29	30	300	76.0	4	0	Significant Relation
	Increasing motivation to stay and decreasing emigration	44	66	75	46	69	300	13.2	4	0	Significant Relation
	cultural and dynamic interactions of the population	53	77	99	54	17	300	62.4	4	0	Significant Relation

Source: Information derived from the 2013 questionnaire.

Based on the results of the dependent variables changing lifestyle, more motivation to stay and not to migrate and as well as cultural and dynamic interactions of the population at the significance level of 0.5 it was inferred that tourism growth has shown a significant social and cultural effect. Analyzing the dependent variables changing lifestyle, more motivation to stay and not to migrate and as well as cultural and dynamic interactions of the population at the significance level of 0.5 resulted in illustrating the fact that tourism growth has shown a significant social and cultural effect on coastal villages of Noor town in recent years.

Table 7.Correlation between tourism development and growth with social and cultural variables in coastal villages of Noor town from view points of people (head of household)

Spectrum	Observed	Expected	Difference	Chi-square		Result
Very high	54	60	-6	Statistic rate	53.73	HO is rejected
High	108	60	48			
Moderate	79	60	19			
Little	29	60	-32			
Very little	30	60	-30	Degree of freedom	4	HO is rejected
total	300			Significance level	0	

Source: Information derived from the 2013 questionnaire.

4.3. Hypothesis 3

Tourism development has shown a significant environmental- physical effect on coastal villages of Noor town.

To test the hypothesis, 7 independent variables were taken into consideration. The 7 independent variables comprised the 7 items of the questionnaire and they were analyzed from 3 viewpoints as shown in table 8. Table 8 also shows the test and its total results regarding hypothesis 3.

As it is inferred from the table 8, significance test of indices shows that environmental-physical indices of hypothesis 3 show that tourism has a significant effect on the 7 indices from viewpoints of the residents at a significance level of 0.5. The 7 indices are: establishing residences, reduction in land under cultivation, reduction in plant species, increasing recreational and sports resorts, environmental pollution, garbage collection, and beautification of villages.

Table 8.Chi-square analysis (the impact of tourism development on environmental and physical parameters)

Dimension	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Very high	high	Moderate	Little	Very little	Total	Chi-square			Result
									Statistic rate	Degree of freedom	Significance level	
Physical-environment	Land –use change in village	Reduction in land under cultivation	56	55	95	56	38	300	29.4	4	0	S.R*
		Reduction and change in plant species	17	37	113	77	56	300	91.5	4	0	S.R
	Increasing infrastructural services and environment	Establishing residences (hotel etc)	31	52	83	63	71	300	88.0	4	0	S.R
		increasing recreational and sports resorts	26	69	79	44	82	300	38.9	4	0	S.R
		environmental pollution	76	74	71	50	29	300	27.3	4	0	S.R
		garbage collection	60	46	110	35	49	300	57.3	4	0	S.R
		beautification of villages	43	54	72	48	83	300	19.0	4	0	S.R

S.R*= significance Relation

Source: Information derived from the 2013 questionnaire.

Table 9. Correlation between tourism growth and the dimensions land-use change in villages, increasing infrastructural and structural services and environment in coastal villages in Noor town from view points of people (head of household).

Dimension	Dependent variable	Very high	high	Moderate	Little	Very little	Total	Chi-square			Result
								Statistic rate	Degree of freedom	Significance level	
Environmental - physical	land-use changes in villages	54	57	95	63	31	300	35.3	4	0	Significant Relation
	increasing infrastructural and structural services and environment	31	64	77	59	69	300	20.4	4	0	Significant Relation
	Bio-environmenta	76	30	108	8	78	300	108.1	4	0	Significant Relation

Source: Information that is derived from the 2013 questionnaire.

According to the results obtained from the independent variables land-use change in villages, increasing infrastructural and structural services and environment at the significance level of 0.5, it is concluded that tourism growth and development has a significant effect on land-use change in villages, increasing infrastructural and structural services and the environment. Generally, it is inferred that tourism growth and development has a significant effect on environmental-physical factors in villages.

Table 10. Correlation of tourism growth and environmental-physical factors in coastal villages in Noor town.

Spectrum	Observed	Expected	Difference
Very high	76	60	16
High	30	60	-30
Moderate	98	60	38
Little	21	60	-39
Very little	75	60	15
total	300	300	

Chi-square		Result
Statistic rate	72.43	H0 is rejected
Degree of freedom	4	
Significance level	0	

Source: Information derived from the 2013 questionnaire.

5. CONCLUSION

Due to its historical and cultural background as well as its tourist attractions Noor town, one of the most important areas of Iran, its tourism role was investigated with respect to the development of coastal villages through statistical methods and field research. Therefore, the

rate of tourism effect on the whole area was measured physically and socioculturally. The results of the data analyses help us to explore appropriate strategies for tourism development in coastal villages in Noor town. Through identifying the potentials as well as relative advantages of the villages and offering new solutions, good measures can be adopted on the way to development and growth of the villages.

Results of qualitative aspects of each factor are indicative of the facts that: Tourism priorities and advantages of rural areas can facilitate the process of tourism growth. Without perfect planning, these areas may be damaged socially and environmentally to a large extent. In this respect, the extent to which coastal villages of Noor town can be damaged far heavier due to its fragile ecosystem. Therefore, planning for growth and development of tourism should be conducted by considering and analyzing all existing dimensions which are essential for local, regional and national development. Any type of planning for tourism should have contribution and cooperation of private and state organizations focusing on capacities of the areas. Moreover, some training and research centers must be established in the selected areas focusing on sustainable development criteria to pave the way and lay the essential foundations for sustainable development in economic, social, cultural, environmental and physical dimensions.

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