

Bazaar Tourism as an Integrated Model for Balanced Tourism Based on Sustainable Development Paradigm

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ABSTRACT

The recent growing concern about the environmental impacts of mass tourism has persuaded experts to look for different strategies to prevent its impairment to the nature. Because of the moderate climate and pleasing environment, Guilan Province in the north of Iran has been facing with a surge of mass tourism over the past 15 years causing a serious concern for its environment. This paper aims to explore a new strategy to deal with the negative impacts of tourist flow in this region. The analysis of the data obtained from a field research indicates a gradual interest to cultural attractions by tourists. Under the sustainable development paradigm and in conjunction with the social, economic and cultural characteristics of the study area, bazaar tourism is introduced here as an alternative strategy to lessen the adverse effects of mass tourism in the region.

Key words: Bazaar tourism, sustainable development, cultural tourism, alternative strategy, Guilan Province.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is arguably the most rapidly growing industry in the world (Mbaiwa & Sakuze, 2009). With the increasing mobility of people, information, and capital on a global scale, the world has seen strong growth in tourist flow, foreign direct investment and collaboration between regions in tourism industry. Governments are becoming increasingly aware of the positive benefits of tourism in terms of generating foreign exchange revenues, attracting investment, creating employment opportunities, and spillover benefits to other segments of the economy. As global competition heightens, countries particularly developing nations, are working hard to promote tourism as a main driver of development (Khammash, & Alkhas, 2009).

Today, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism is one of the world's largest industries, employing approximately 258 million people and generating over 9% of world GDP. It is expected that 65 million new jobs will be created by the tourism industry in the next 10 years (Geoffrey, 2011). However, tourism worldwide is facing a growing number of challenges in developing, managing and marketing its products in a competitive, complex and rapidly changing environment. The generation and use of knowledge to feed innovation and product development is crucial for the success of both tourism destinations and enterprises (Albino, Rodriguez, Mendes & Pereira, 2010). In recent years, improvements in the environmental performance of tourism has received increasing attention over the world (e.g. DITR, 2002; TQ, 2002; UNEP IE, 1995), a trend which needs to be sustainable in all aspects, environmentally, socially and economically. Tourism can be a powerful economic engine, which, if properly managed, can lead to increased welfare at lower environmental and social costs in comparison with other economic sectors. However, when poorly developed it can also lead to the collapse of the resource base it uses, with negative consequences for destinations, surrounding regions or even entire countries (Dinica, 2009).

Concepts imbedded in such terms as 'sustainable tourism', 'responsible tourism' and 'ethical tourism' aim to address the environmental impacts of tourism. Hence, sustainable development has become a buzzword within the international development community (Ahn, Lee & Shafer, 2002). There are numerous definitions for Sustainable Tourism, such as eco-tourism, green travel, environmentally and culturally responsible tourism, fair trade and ethical travel (Shah, McHarry & Gardner, 2002). The most widely accepted definition is, perhaps, that of the World Tourism Organization which defines sustainable tourism as: "Tourism which leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems" (WTTC, 1996).

Ahn, et al (2002) state that sustainable development evolved from preserving natural resources for present and future generations to emphasize values associated with cultural and community diversity, concern for social justice and fairness, and a strong orientation towards stability. Sustainable development has, as a result, been applied to tourism, especially tourism that relies on natural resources and involves human beings and their cultures. The

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sustainable development approach to plan tourism is important because most tourism developments, involving stakeholders such as tourists, tourism businesses and community residents, depend on attractions and activities related to the natural environment, heritage and culture.

Although there is no accurate accepted definition applicable to all tourist attractions (Leask & Fyall, 2006; Swarbrooke, 2002), sustainable tourism was designed not to stop tourism, but to manage it in the interests of all three parties involved- the host habitats and communities, the tourists and the industry itself. It seeks a balance between development and conservation and finds the best form of tourism for an area taking into account its ecology and culture. Sustainable tourism desires to integrate tourism into a balanced relationship with broader economic development. That is the way in which sustainable tourism fulfils its requirement to think holistically, and is one of the approaches to responsibility in business, not just a business for its own sake (Lane, 2008). All in all, sustainable tourism should not adversely affect the environment. However, it should be acceptable to the community, profitable for businesses and suitable to the visitors.

Because of the dominant dry and semi dry climate, there are limited natural resorts suitable for the tourism season in Iran. Suitable tourism resorts are mainly restricted to a relatively small region in the north of Iran which in fact constitutes a narrow section in the southern shores of Caspian Sea. This part of the country, known as the north of Iran, at present includes Guilan, Mazandaran and Golestan provinces. Because of the suitable environment and abundant natural resources, the density of population in this part of the country is almost three times as high as that of the rest of country. The relative proximity of Tehran, the national capital, at about 3 hours driving distance and its huge population (about 12 million) provide a strong tourism demand for the Northern provinces in Iran. As one of the three provinces in the north of Iran, Guilan is known as one of the most famous destinations for ecotourism activities because of its natural attractions such as sandy beaches, emerald forests, bio diversity, gorgeous mountains, wild rivers, beautiful wetlands and eye catching landscapes. Basically, tourists come to Guilan Province to enjoying its environment; however, the increasing wave of travelers to the region is threatening the natural environment.

Over the last two decades, especially after the end of Iran-Iraq war in 1988, the living conditions in Iran have gradually improved. Some aspects of this improvement can be seen in the substantial increase in the rate of car ownership and the rise in family income. For instance, the number of private cars annually registered in the country surged from 65620 in 1991 to 1170581 in 2009 (Table 1). In this respect we can see also the share of family travel cost from total living expenditures has increased from 8.5 % in 1991 to 17.5 % in 2008 (SCI, 2009). This has led to a tremendous increase in tourism activities in the country.

Table 1 Number of annual registered vehicles in Iran (1991-2008)

Year	All vehicles	Private car
1991	142027	65626
1996	164899	109552
2001	451984	271886
2005	2054322	831829
2006	1932608	896483
2007	2183221	889213
2008	1888514	1007403
2009	2005475	1170581

Source: (SCI, 2010)

Under the general tourism policy of government and because of the lack of efficient tourism planning during the past decades, there has not been adequate investment in the tourism sector; consequently, the development of different touristic sites has been limited. As a result, to spend their leisure time, people have mainly been attracted to the natural environment, thus, ecotourism has considerably expanded. However, this trend has occurred unplanned. Subsequently, ecotourism in the region has changed to mass tourism and the environment is becoming under excessive pressure. A recent report on the status of natural resources in Guilan Province indicates that the majority of natural resources in the region are in real danger because of the uncontrolled tourism activities (GEPO, 2009). To alleviate the existing pressure of mass tourism and its negative environmental impacts, this papers attempts to explore a different tourism strategy.

The main data employed in this study comes from a field survey as well as existing reports and documents on the tourism activities about the study area. Based on the premises on which this study was carried out, a questionnaire was designed to collect information mainly based on the destination of travelers to Guilan Province. Questions were related to the goals, their travel destination and motivations, and the attractions that draw them to the region. A survey was conducted in three separate periods, July and August in the years 2007, 2008 and 2009, and a

total of 1200 individuals were asked the above questions. These travelers were questioned in a toll pay entrance of the border of Guilan and Qazvin provinces.

Study area

Situated in the north of Iran with 14042 square km and 2.4 million inhabitants, Guilan Province constitutes 3.5 % of the total population of the country, which makes it the second most densely populated province in Iran after Tehran. This province borders Ardabil province to the west, Zanzan and Qazvin to the south, Mazandaran to the east, and the Caspian Sea and the Republic of Azerbaijan to the north (Figure 1). The provincial capital city of Rasht, the largest city on the southern Caspian coast, in the last census in 2006 had 557 thousands inhabitants (SCI, 2007). Other important cities in the province are Anzali, Langeroud, Lahijan, Astara, and Talesh. As a second largest city in the province, Anzali is also the biggest port in the north of Iran. Guilan Province with 49 cities and town and 2694 villages is a highly populated province in the country. Based on the last census in 2006, about 50 % of the population of Guilan lives in rural areas (SCI, 2008).



Figure 1 Study area in the north of Iran

The climate of the province varies from mild in the plain and coastal areas to semiarid in the south end and cold in the mountainous parts. The climate of the region is influenced by the surrounding mountains and the Caspian Sea. The mountains in the west and south serve as barriers withholding the humidity, which causes a high amount of rainfall in most parts of the province between 1200 to 1800mm (GMPO, 2010). Many rivers originate from the northern slopes of the Alborz Mountains and terminate in the Caspian Sea. The mountains covered with lush vegetation, luxuriant forests and permanent grasslands bring wonderful natural beauty and a pleasant climate to most part of the province. The natural scenery in the plain areas of the region also provides enjoying eye-catching views as we can observe in the beautiful Anzali, Boojagh and Steel wetlands, the sandy beaches on the Caspian Sea shores, and many rivers flowing in south-north direction. These wonderful natural attractions in the region are very important from recreational points of view.

In terms of cultural geography, in a relatively small, but diverse region, Guilan Province comprises a variety of cultural groups including Gilaks, Azaris, Taleshis, Ghaleshis and Kords each concentrated in certain areas. While the Gilaks and Azaris mostly reside in the plain areas, Taleshi, Ghaleshi and Kords groups have mainly settled in mountainous areas. Since the past, the different environments have led to the appearance of different livelihoods in the region such as cultivation, fishery, silkworm farming mostly in plain areas and animal husbandry, wood working and handcraft mainly in altitudes. This diversity in local products has necessitated the transaction between residents of different places and cultural groups which has led to the emergence of various local bazaars where economic and social interactions have been taken place.

The province has a strong culinary tradition, from which several dishes have come to be adopted across Iran such as *Miza Ghasemi*. This richness derives in part from the climate, which allows for a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and nuts grown across the province. Seafood is a particularly strong component of Guilani cuisine. Sturgeon often smoked or served as kebab, and caviar are delicacies along the Caspian shores (Iran Chamber Society, 2011). We can see also other types of fish such as *Mahi Sefid*, *Kuli*, *Kulmeh*, Caspian Salmon, *Mahi Kapur*

which are consumed widely in the region. Traditional Persian stews such as *Ghalieh* fish stew and *Ghalieh* shrimp stew are also featured and prepared in a uniquely Guilani fashion (Middle East Explorer, 2011).

The traditional Guilani costumes in rural areas comprises the headscarf, a long dress, a vest, a skirt, pants and a covering wrapped around the waist. *Aljaqba*, is clothing woven from velvet or the colorful checkered cloth called "*Chador Shab*," is sported by women in the eastern mountains of Guilan. "*Shaliteh*" or "*Koutah Touman*" is a short plaited skirt, which is also called "*Gard-e Touman*" and "*Deraz Touman*" refers to long-plaited skirts, used in central and eastern Guilan (CHN, 2009). In western Guilan, the people of Talesh call this skirt "*Shelar*". Women of Guilan wrap a long piece of cloth around their waist when they are picking tea leaves or citrus fruits, or when they are obliged to work for hours in a bent position on paddy-fields. They also use this cloth around their waist to hold their baby while working. Because of the beautiful and colorful surrounding environment, the women of Guilan, except the elderly women, rarely use black color in their clothing. In the past, the people of Guilan would wear old clothes in mourning ceremonies and refrained from dressing in black (Eslah-Arabani, 2001).

RESULTS

Mass tourism as a dominant shape of tourism in Guilan Province

Ecotourism is nature-based travel that embraces principles of sustainability thus manages to conserve the natural environment on which it depends, provides economic benefits to the local community and tourism industry, and educates and satisfies the tourists. Researchers from different disciplines have addressed the basic question of whether ecotourism is successful from the perspective of particular stakeholder groups of ecotourism. For example, many have examined ecotourism's effects on the natural environment (e.g. Jacobson & Lopez, 1994; Jim, 2000; Obua, 1997; Sherman & Dixon, 1991) and on local communities (e.g. Alexander, 2000; Belsky, 1999; Carballo-Sandoval, 1999).

Over the past years, the term ecotourism has come into vogue, has been variously defined and is still being debated (Lindberg & Mc Kercher, 1997). It is one of the fastest growing sectors of tourism and has been promoted to complement and/or supplement development opportunities (Hvenegaard, 1994.) Since the advent of ecotourism, the natural environment has been the core of ecotourism product, but there has been growing concern that ecotourism could have greater detrimental impacts on the environment as the activities occur directly in natural areas which have limited resistance to the pressure of use (Butler, 1990; Wall, 1997).

As with any type of economic development, tourism creates changes that threaten the quality of life. Changes in the host community's quality of life are influenced by two major factors: the tourist–host relationship and the development of the industry itself (Ratz, 2002). These concerns are evident in Guilan Province for ecotourism has shifted to mass tourism and many tourists come to this region unplanned as we can see in the rising number of domestic tourist travelling to Guilan Province from one million in 2005 to about 1.7 million in 2009, an increase of 64 % over five years (Table 2).

Table 2 Number of tourist arrival in Guilan Province (2005-2009)

Year	No of tourist
2005	10299077
2006	12334223
2007	14184356
2008	16312009
2009	16953047

Source: (Guilan Management and Planning Organization, 2010)

Natural resources have been the main tourism attractions in Guilan province from the past. Guilan is part of the exclusive region in north of Iran with mainly mild climate. In general, the northern part of Iran is known for summer and other holidays and most resorts have been developed as destinations for mass tourism. A great number of tourists come to Guilan province to enjoy the sun, sea, forests, rivers and other natural beauties.

The handling of environmental resources by the tourism industry has not always followed an orthodox route. The tourist load in some areas in the region has exceeded and the landscape of some parts has been notably changed. For example, a considerable part of Anzali Wetland, a wetland of international importance, has been transformed by urban development and lost its authenticity due to excessive ecotourism activities. The concentration of unplanned tourism activities in the province, uncontrolled building construction, inefficient waste management system and inadequate infrastructure have resulted in serious environmental pollution (Azimi, 2002).

Mass tourism can be reduced with alternative tourism (Butler, 1990; Ioannides, 1995; Oigenblick & Kirschenbaum, 2002; Weaver, 1995, 1991), the terms that cover a wide range of options including, for example, cultural tourism (Hughes & Allen, 2005; Ryan, 2002; Yan & Bramwell, 2008), Rural Tourism (Sanagustín Fons,

Moseñe Fierro and Patiño, 2010; Yagüe Perales, 2002), Eco-cultural tourism (Wallace & Russel, 2004), Heritage tourism (Reid & Schwab, 2006). The alternative forms of tourism may be beneficial to a country, especially if mass tourism is a threat to the environment due to the lack of planning or rules. It is likely that some alternatives for ecotourism activities would produce less ecological impact.

As an alternative approach, Bazaar tourism could be employed as a strategy to reduce the negative impacts of mass tourism in the sensitive environments like Guilan Province. Traditionally, Guilan Province possesses many local bazaars held across the region especially in local communities and attracts many people from surrounding areas. In addition to trade, these local bazaars (often called weekly bazaars) present socio-cultural characteristics of various groups specific for local communities. Despite the expansion of cities and increase in their number, the weekly bazaars continue their activities and we can even observe their appearance within the larger cities like *Soleymandarub* weekly Thursday bazaar in Rasht.

An integrated model for planning balanced tourism based on sustainable development paradigm

The economic development in Guilan province has mainly been on the basis of the ecotourism model. With the start of economic growth, mass tourism has sprung up in most areas of the province rather than planned ecotourism. The basic argument behind this decision was that it produces economic gains and increases local incomes in the province. Therefore, tourism resources could keep pace with the demand for this type of tourism. However, it has resulted in many serious environmental problems in the region.

Over the last two decades, there has been an intense seasonal demand for ecotourism in Guilan province. As Table 3 indicates, more than 70% of the tourists arriving in the region go to natural destinations. First, the higher demand on natural destinations has increased the pressure on the environment. The increasing pollution of the sea, contamination of rivers and surface waters, (e.g. Anzali wetland), degradation of the forests and grasslands are partially correlated to the tourism activities in Guilan Province (Azimi, 2005). The second problem is related to the frequent disregard of proper land-use planning in most parts of the region. This problem is mainly associated with the intense pressures caused by construction connected to tourism activities, especially in coastal areas. These problems contribute to the wider questioning of mass tourism by researchers and local authorities, which has led to the search for different development models or upgrading the existing tourism model.

Table 3 The main objectives of the arriving tourist in Guilan Province

Main Goals	2007	2008	2009
	%	%	%
Tourists seeking mainly for natural sites (Sea, forest, mountains, wetlands, etc)	85.0	83.1	78.5
Tourists seeking mainly for cultural and religious sites	9.2	12.0	16.8
Tourists seeking mainly to participate in sport and events	0.7	1.6	0.5
Other goals	5.2	3.3	4.3
Total	100	100	100

The outcome has been the need to find new models of growth in the province which could be integrated into the local socio economic and environmental realities from one side, and upgrading the existing model with concrete measures and interventions on the other side. To improve the tourism industry in the region, other forms of tourism, perhaps can be employed. Bazaar tourism is one with adequate potential for attracting at least part of the arriving tourists in the study area. The adaptability of Bazaar tourism to the socio-cultural characteristics of Guilan region and its development capability could benefit both the society and environment.

Bazaar tourism as an alternate strategy for mass tourism

Urban sociologists, geographers and urban experts generally explain the bazaar as the heart of an Iranian city. Dominated with retail cluster, the traditional bazaar in Iran was a unified, self-contained building complex of shops, passageways, and caravanserais, interspersed with *Meydan* (squares), religious buildings, public baths, and other public places. Moreover, the bazaar was a place to celebrate important social events. It was not only the commercial centre of cities, but also a place for social, cultural, political and religious activities. Falamaki (1992) describes it as a centre of social representation of city, like the piazza for European cities during the middle ages and Hiroba in Japanese cities. Even though today parts of the older functions of traditional bazaars no longer exist, it is the most important retail centre in most cities as well as an important place for tourists (Masoudi Nejad, 2002).

Besides the traditional bazaar in Guilan Province, there are many temporary (weekly) bazaars which play an important role in the retail sector in both cities and rural areas. Known as weekly bazaar, they usually operate on

a specific day of the week. Weekly bazaars have a long history in the region and it is believed that early cities in the region have mainly originated from these bazaars. Weekly bazaars are usually held in open space in which many kinds of goods are offered. Various items such as clothes, dishes, handicrafts, food stuff, fruits, toys, even livestock are offered at competitive prices. In these bazaars, men and women in beautiful local apparel offer their goods, which makes them an interesting place to visit for tourists. When they are held, weekly bazaars are the most bustling places in that area. Usually, each weekly bazaar has its area of influence, but some of them are well known enough to attract people from a wider area even beyond the boundaries of the province. On bazaar day, the surrounding sites are very crowded and places like restaurants, banks, barbers and teahouses are busy during the bazaar day (Eslah-Arabani, 2001). Table 4 illustrates the main weekly bazaars presently active in Guilan province based on their operating days.

Table 4 Important weekly bazaars in Guilan Province, 2010

Saturday bazaar	Sunday bazaar	Monday bazaar	Tuesday bazaar	Wednesday bazaar	Thursday bazaar
Masal Lulman Anzali LashtNesha Dehsha Langerood	Somieh Sara GashtRoodkhan Khommam Peerbast Lulman Koochesfahan Roodsar	KapurChal Ziabar Shaft Sangar Hindkhaleh Khoskbejar Astaneh Siyahkal Rahim Abad	Parehsar Fooman LashtNesha Amlash	RezvanShahr Kasma Zeedeheh Chukam Peerbast Lulman Koochesfahan Langerood	SayedSharaf Shah TaherGoorab Zarmeekh Jomeh bazaar Astara

Source: Source: (Eslah-Arabani, 2001)

Some of the local bazaars are held in conjunction with religious sites. Guilan Province has many *Imamzadeh* tombs (a shrine-tomb of the descendants of Shi'a Imams), some of which are famous and therefore, many people pilgrimage to these holy sites. They are everywhere in the province, especially in rural areas and some even in mountainous regions. When people make pilgrimage to these places, an opportunity is created for holding a local bazaar. Since people make pilgrimage in special times, therefore the timing of these bazaars is related to the religious occasions. Traditionally, Thursdays, as well as the anniversaries of certain days in the lunar calendar are the busiest occasions for these bazaars. Some *Imamzades* are located in remote areas, thus people visit them mainly during the spring and summer season (e.g. *Imamzadeh Ebrehaim*, *Imamzadeh Eshugh*). Some other are located within or in vicinity of the cities such as *Imamzadeh Astaneh Ashrafieh* within the City of Astane, and *Imamzadeh Agha Seyyed Sharif* and *Imamzadeh Hashem* in vicinity of Rasht. In *Imamzade Tora* in addition to the ordinary people who pilgrimage, lamenters and entertainers also come and do their business (Eslah-Arabani, 2001).

Several features could be identified for the local bazaars. One is that most people offering goods in these places are traditionally small producers (usually rural families) who take their goods directly to these local markets on bazaar day and sell their products at a competitive price. As a result, consumers take advantage of competition among many small producers. For these reasons, people usually keep their purchase for the bazaar day. Second, because in most cases there is no middleman between producers and consumers, the prices here are closer to real prices than those in regular markets. The third feature is that since most of the goods offered in these places usually are to be sold by the end of the day, products are not stored, especially edible items. Fourth, most people who offer goods and services in these bazaars are representing their local cultures. Therefore, the local bazaars provide an opportunity for people especially those from outside the region to observe different cultures on a bazaar day and become familiar with new people and things.

Potentials of bazaar tourism and its effects on mass tourism

One of the problems with these bazaars is that, at present, most of them lack an efficient plan and therefore fewer tourists visit them. An efficient plan for reorganization of the local bazaar in the region could place them in a better situation in terms of economic and social activities. Reorganized local bazaars will be able to attract more people from outer areas especially tourists. More tourist attractions to these socio-cultural sites, at least, will lessen pressure on the natural environment. The gradual increase in the number of tourists from local bazaars could enhance the existing facilities within them and result in the expansion of their sizes and numbers in the region. The consequence will be less pressure on the natural attractions. Another positive effect of bazaar tourism could be its economic impact on the local economy through providing more jobs for the local people in tourism sector and related fields.

Bazaar tourism can also help the completion of unfinished development projects emphasizing the protection of cultural heritage and the environment, develop the countryside and promote a balanced tourism. While ecotourism is a seasonal and temporary activity during the year, Bazaar tourism in Guilan can be as a permanent tourism activity. Through bazaar tourism, more tourists will be in contact with local people, and this might lead to

better understanding of the local cultures by the tourists and vice versa. Such impacts will bring more stability to local cultures and their heritage. Through more direct contact with local people, bazaar tourism will help to maintain the local customs such as foods and products which are already in decline because of unfair competition with urban values and products.

As a result, with a proper plan for alternative tourism, the number of tourists can spread all over the province and local bazaars as cultural attractions will work along with ecotourism. Tourists can observe traditional clothes and participate in some local ceremonies and purchase local products e.g. handicrafts, clothes, fruits and vegetables indigenous to that area. Thus, bazaar tourism can benefit Guilan region at least in two aspects; first improving the local economy and second protecting local culture and environment.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Tourism policy now searches for softer and locally integrated models of tourism development. The need to protect the environment, the gradual expansion of alternative tourism and the promotion of 'locality' in planning constitutes basic priorities of tourism policy. The purpose of this paper is to introduce bazaar tourism as a new approach in alternative tourism by which the excessive pressure on environment by mass tourism in sensitive environments, like in Guilan Province, to be reduced.

Guilan Province has been under pressure from mass tourism during the past years. The continuation of existing trends of mass tourism could bring more harm to the natural environment; however, there are other tourism opportunities in the region which need to be recognized and developed. With respect to the different aspects of cultural tourism examined as alternatives, here a new approach was examined as an alternative for tourism to reduce the adverse effects of mass tourism. The potential of local bazaars in Guilan Province as tourism attractions has been discussed above however; in order to utilize these local bazaars as efficient places for tourism, a number of actions should be taken to promote their situation.

The first thing is to improve the accessibility to these places especially for those located in rural and/or relatively remote areas. Some of these bazaars with strong local culture representation which are held in rural areas have weak accessibility, particularly for people coming from outer areas. Providing suitable access roads for these places will provide a situation by which tourists will make acquaintance with the local economy and culture. They will enjoy the natural environment as these bazaars are usually held in open space and in vicinity of nature.

Even though the local bazaars traditionally operate in specific sites and on certain days of the week, there is not much organization within their operating sites in terms of sorted product sellers, as we can see in regular traditional bazaars in cities organized in rows of specified shops called *Raste bazaar* each allocated to certain product like garment, gold and shoes. Moreover, because of its existing local operating domain, there is a lack of adequate facilities like walking routes, parking sites, rest areas, public washrooms and so on in the bazaar places. To upgrade these sites as attraction places, there is a need for an efficient site plan by which the activities on bazaar days would be reorganized and some public facilities would be provided as we can see in the case of Astara local bazaar.

The third thing that needs to be considered is publicity. In order to encourage people to visit the local bazaars, media support is essential for introducing these places to people outside the region. This is something which requires the attention of tourism authorities. Providing brochures, maps, TV ads, internet homepages, and so on could introduce the local bazaars for people which eventually could draw tourist attention to visit these sites.

If we consider local bazaars as places where local products are offered, their promotion as touristic sites will lead to more local product purchase by tourists that consequently could improve the local economy and more local job creation. Improvement of local economy not only raise the income for local residents, but also promote local cultures through offering local goods and services such as handicrafts, clothes and dishes. This will help to preserve cultural values and diversity in the region which in turn could attract more tourists to the region.

While the globalism threatens local cultures and they are weakened by the global economy, the bazaar tourism approach could promote local cultures and products. Meanwhile, the positive impact of bazaar tourism in reducing the adverse effects of mass tourism from an environmental perspective could be essential. This approach could be employed in various places with a situation similar to that of discussed for Guilan Province, but with proper consideration of social, economic and cultural characteristics of different locations.

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