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*Mohammad Shokati Amghani*¹

*Reza Eshaghi*²

*Ahad Maheri*³

*Rohollah Rezaei*⁴

*Hossein Shabanali Fami*⁵

Investigation of Tourism Development Barriers in Rural Regions of Oskou County (Case Study: Agh Gonbad Village)

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Introduction

The main source of income of rural households in developing countries comes from agriculture and this sector has an important role in providing food security villages and cities; However, the agricultural sector alone cannot create sufficient job opportunities for the rural population is increasing and it is necessary that activities other crops such as rural tourism, industry and services is completed. Accordingly, the highly motivated rural development policy for the balanced development of non-agricultural activities and rural tourism headed by removing barriers to its development to achieve sustainable development has been created. At present age, tourism and the tourism economy have become one of the fastest growing

1- Ph.D Student of Agricultural Development, The University of Tehran.

2- Ph.D student of agricultural extension, The University of Tehran.

3- MS.c of Social Research, The Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Br.

4-Associate professor, Department of Extension, Communication and Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture, The University of Zanjan.

5- Associate Professor in Agricultural Extension & Development, the University of Tehran.

industries in the world and a tool for national income and of the main pillars of the global economy and the concepts, shapes and pillars of sustainable development as well.

Materials and methods

Oskou County is located in East Azerbaijan province and encompasses an area of 59/1762 square kilometers of the total areas of province. The County is about 20 kilometers away from the city center. The research method of the study was quantitative, non-experimental and field research in terms of the nature, rate and degree of control and method of data collection, respectively. The statistical population of the study consisted of 759 villagers of Agh Gonbad village (N= 759). According to Krejcie and Morgan table, 240 persons of them were selected by Simple Random Sampling for doing the study (n=240). A questionnaire was used to collect the data which consisted of two parts including respondents' profile and respondents' viewpoints about the importance of each of the barriers to development of rural tourism. A five-point scale (1 = very low and 5 = very high) was used to measure the second part. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by a panel of experts. A pilot study was conducted to establish reliability of the instrument. Cronbach alpha's coefficients for main scales of questionnaire including respondents' viewpoints about the importance of barriers to development of rural tourism was higher than 0.75. Collected data were analyzed using the SPSS software. Descriptive statistics (including frequency, percentage and mean) and inferential statistics (including factor analysis) were used for data analysis.

Results and discussion

According to the results, the majority of the respondents (86.7%) were male and only 13.3% were female. The average age of the respondents was about 66.9 years,

ranging from 21 to 70 years. The results revealed that the majority of respondents (40%) were diploma. To determine the appropriateness of data and to measure the homogeneity of the variables on barriers to development of rural tourism, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test were applied. KMO and Bartlett's test results obtained for these variables showed that the data were appropriate for the factor analysis. The Kaiser Criterion also was employed to arrive at a specific number of factors for extraction. Based on this criterion, only those factors with eigenvalues greater than one were retained. The results of factor analysis revealed that three factors can be considered as important for identifying and explaining the barriers to development of rural tourism in Agh Gonbad village and these factors were infrastructure-welfare, socio-cultural and organizational- structural. In total, these factors explained 60.56% of the total variance of development of rural tourism.

Conclusion

As the results show, the infrastructure-welfare factor had the first priority and constituted a high portion of the variance. Therefore, providing the necessary equipment and infrastructure particularly roads, restaurants and hotel is the first step to development of rural tourism.