

## **A Study On the Rural Tourism Status and Its Role on Handicraft Business Development. Case study: Southern Estarabad, Gorgan**

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### **1- Introduction**

Today the tourism and its economy has become one of the original bases of world trade. In addition to the tourism which has an effective role in national development and diversity of economy, handicraft business can be considered as a complimentary to historical and tourism attraction. The objective of this study is to investigate the status of rural tourism and its role in handicraft business development, which has been done in southern Estarabad, Gorgan. The study used descriptive and field search analytical methodology. The data collection is done through literary and field study methods. The population of study consists of 57 handicraft professionals in the area which are chosen based on census method by the mean of all professionals. To study the role of tourism volume, using the Koulam method 228 people selected who are classified and referred to randomly. For analyzing data, K-Square method is used.

### **2- Theoretical Bases**

The rural tourism in different countries has different meanings and concepts. For example, in Slovakia, the rural tourism is walking around farms and lodging in guest room of farmers. In Greece, the most important tourism service is accommodation in farmers house with breakfast in home with traditional method. Among Hungarians the term of village tourism is commonly used. In Indonesia the rural tourism is very important and has been developed in Sumatra and Java farms. Tourists visit rice farming and kaocho harvesting. France has the best pattern of rural tourism: the farmers have special place in farms for tourists camping or build a house called " Gits" for rental lodging. Rural tourism attractions are divided in two groups: natural and cultural – historical. Because of creating job opportunities and economic sources, Rural tourism is very important for rural communities beside the agriculture, animal husbandry and handicrafts. Villages, because of having attraction in natural beauties and scenic landscapes and also historical attractions, are appreciated by tourists. Rural peoples activities in handicraft business add to the tourism attractions and their economical conditions.

### **3- Discussion**

The cause of tourists presence in the area as they explain are 97.56% for recreation and taking advantages of nice weather and scenic views, 67.67% visiting people, 48.12% handicrafts shopping, 3.95% visiting relatives, 7.71% getting familiar with people culture and traditional life. It can be remarked that about 63% of voyages are in order to recreation,

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enjoying weather and handicrafts shopping which was a notable figure, and it can be used in planning for development of handicraft products market. Also, about 74.6% of tourists have recommended for developing handicrafts production. From the view point of handicraft professionals most of the tourists are from the inside of province and the study area 43.42% of tourists are from other provinces.

#### **4- Conclusion**

In this area, the tourism industry is facing some challenges such as lack of management skills, unsuitable transportation structure, weak investment return, existing medias and retailers of handicrafts market and limited sale of products. The development and improvement of handicrafts production and tourism need planning and attention of authorities. The area has high potential so precise planning using different procedures such as mass media making films and posters may be helpful in attraction of tourists and introduction of tourism characteristics of this area.

#### **5- Suggestions**

By development of tourism and increasing tourists in the area, it is possible to see the Positive effects in economic status of resident of the area, reduction in immigration, rural development, increase in job opportunities, improvement in markets of agricultural products, introduction of products for sale and competition in quality between professionals of handicrafts. It is suggested that government organization help in preparing raw material of handicrafts. Advertising and introduction of products can make internal and external market. By establishment of cooperative companies the market of handicrafts will improve.

**Keywords:** Rural tourism, Handicrafts, Gorgan, Rural development.