



Tropentag, September 16-18, 2015, Berlin, Germany

“Management of land use systems for enhanced food security:
conflicts, controversies and resolutions”

Analysis of the Rural Development Strategies Based on Ecotourism in Arid Areas (Case Study: Yazd Province, Iran)

MAHSHID SOORI¹, ALI NOORIFARD²

¹*Urmia University, Dept. of Range and Watershed Management, Iran*

²*University of Tehran, Fac. of Management, Iran*

Abstract

Tourism industry has an important effect on international economy, nowadays. Ecotourism, as one of the most important branches of tourism industry, has great effects on increasing income, job opportunities, and welfare level of native societies. Growth and development of ecotourism in recent years shows that it can be the dominant industry for future decades. Ecotourism is a suitable tool to provide sustainable development in various parts of the world. It can be a proper approach to develop the rural regions of countries. Economic and livelihood improvements of rural regions are achievable by doing particular and scientific researches on ecotourism in near future. Iran has various natural resources, ancient, historical, religious, and artistic attractions. So, in the field of ecotourism, it can be one of the most powerful countries in the Middle East region. One of the most important natural attractions of Iran is the arid area. Therefore, ecotourism management in arid areas is important to improve the native rural population profits. This paper analysed the ecotourism of Yazd province, as one of Iran arid regions, by using SWOT model and QSPM (Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix). Capabilities, opportunities, and infirmities of this area were surveyed. The results show that appropriate strategies to develop ecotourism in Yazd province include: supporting the private sector investors by providing low-interest loans; establishing expert non-governmental organisations (NGOs); training the native rural population in field of ecotourism industry principals; providing tax deductibility for ecotourism investors; developing the ecotourism infra structures in rural areas; and advertising the attractions of arid areas. It is expected that applying these strategies lead to improve the welfare level of native rural residents of arid areas such as Yazd region.

Keywords: Arid Areas, ecotourism, QSPM, rural development, strategic planning, SWOT model