Strategic Planning for Tourism Development Bojnourd using SWOT Model

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INTRODUCTION

Human beings in their different periods of life have traveled in order to see natural attractions, enjoy more appropriate bio-facilities, and be aware of ethnic and cultural diversity and have tolerated its problems, thus tourism is as old as the History (zahedi, 2006:5). Tourism industry around the world is one of the main earning resources and yet is an effective factor in cultural exchange between countries and as the most extensive service industry has a special position. Therefore, many countries are in a close competition over increasing their revenue and interests from this industry. Developing tourism industry, especially for developing countries that are faced with problems such as high unemployment, limited economic and currency resources and being single-product, is very important (sabagh, 2000:11). Nowadays, developing tourism is considered as a potential regional power along with other activities and studies have shown that there is a positive and significant relationship between economic development and growth of countries (lee,1995:5). This industry relying on the preliminary capitals (tourist attractions) and principal and realistic planning, they can become a huge resource for production in national and regional levels (Elliott, 1997:15). Tourism development requires special facilities, including: desirable weather, historical and cultural relics, natural attractions, customs and traditions, infrastructures, facilities and equipment (heydari, 2008:8). Having understood this, countries started to provide appropriate facilities and equipment to attract tourists. Leading countries in tourism sector either in terms of natural sights like lakes, sunny beaches, and full-of-snow mountains, or in terms of other elements and building some artificial attractions and also creating an organizational structure with providing extensive investing beds could response to a vast demand for tourism needs and, to the same extent, have enjoyed its effects and achievements (ehsani, 2009:35). The four-season nature of Iran, its tourism and religious attractions and its 7000-year civilization have enabled it to be in the first ranks of the world tourism, but unfortunately, despite...
such high capabilities, it couldn’t use the least existing facilities toward social growth and stable development and growth in tourism sector (Motii Langroudi, 2011:346). Many of these advantages have remained potential, which can waste the developmental abilities of tourism sector and attracting tourists. Different regions of Iran, especially North Khorasan, have abundant landscapes and capabilities, but the point that should be considered here is the evaluation of the existing situation of these capabilities and abilities in order to empower these regions and develop tourism. With regard to this, tourism industry can prepare the background for developing countries and using the existing capabilities can achieve development. Shirvan a city in North Khorasan State and is rich in natural, cultural, historical and religious relics. The first step toward developing tourism industry of this city is to identify the existing attractions and potentials as well as the bottlenecks and to evaluate natural powers and to have a strategic planning to exploit these capabilities in line with tourism development. Yet, our country, especially Shirvan city that is one of the deprived regions, is faced with a lot of challenges in different sectors and different factors to develop tourism. These challenges can be acknowledged in managerial sectors, lack of tourism capability identification, investments, public partnership, infrastructures and culture. Whith regard to this, the present research tends to introduce the natural and historical attractions of Shirvan and vote promotes them. Urban tourism should be planned carefully. The seating and revenue. Many aspects of attractions and facilities were initial acted. Urban tourism requires all the attention and development of cultural level, creating international understanding and get familiar with other cultures, and to visit historical and ancient buildings (alvani,1994:17). Currently, many countries consider tourism as the best way for communication and development of cultural level, creating international understanding and gaining economic revenue. Many aspects of attractions and facilities were initially created to serve local habitants, but tourists’ use promotes them. Urban tourism should be planned carefully. The seating and the way of creating the attractions and other required infrastructures and maybe organizational improvement should be adopted (ranjbarian et al, 2000:44). Depending on the different tourism potentials and resources, the tourism targets can present one or more types of tourist attractions to the tourists as the tourism product. Tourism includes all the

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Theoretical Research:
Tourism:
Until late 1970s, tourism was introduced as a golden and non-pollutant activity and its desirable effects and benefits, especially its economic profit, was emphasized continuously (wight ,1993:45). Nowadays, tourism is one of the most promising activities, which is regarded as development gate. Generally, tourism constitutes a flow of capital, human, culture and mutual relation among them. Therefore, it creates different effects on geographical spaces (briedenann& wiekens,2004:215). Nowadays, tourism is not discussed with the concept and image produced by Marcopolio, Ibn Betootex, Naser Khosro, etc. who surfed the world and left logbooks or tended to explore the unseen and the unknown, but it is discussed with other concepts. Today, tourists travel in order to have fun, tour and pilgrimage, pass leisure time and rest, get familiar with other cultures, and to visit historical and ancient buildings (alvani,1994:17). Currently, many countries consider tourism as the best way for communication and development of cultural level, creating international understanding and gaining economic revenue. Many aspects of attractions and facilities were initially created to serve local habitants, but tourists’ use promotes them. Urban tourism should be planned carefully. The seating and the way of creating the attractions and other required infrastructures and maybe organizational improvement should be adopted (ranjbarian et al, 2000:44). Depending on the different tourism potentials and resources, the tourism targetscan present one or more types of tourist attractions to the tourists as the tourism product. Tourism includes all the

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Tourism development:

Tourism development is a complex process which includes international and national development factors and groups involved with the government policy, planning and legislation. Tourism development is to develop this industry and attracts tourists to a region using the existing resources, so that a full synergy is created among tourism elements (tourists, people and target) and the potential advantages of tourism development of economic, social, cultural and political aspects are realized (Moti Langrudi, 2011:346). Three main factors in tourism development are tourists, the people and the target features, the amount of adaptation and overlap of which creates a region that an interlacing development will realize. Interlacing development is like the adaptation of the main three factors in tourism development of the area or domain of tourists, which includes the expectations or needs, culture and values, personal features and financial and economic powers of the tourists (Mohammadi, 2007:153). Tourism development as a strategy should be investigated from different economic, social, ecologic, and institutional aspects. Tourism can revive the economics of local communities by partnership in entrepreneurship and income creation, and also it can play a role in local culture improvement and can make a change in preserving or reconstructing the environment and the human-made things (Taghvaii, 2008:37). Tourism development increases occupational opportunities, income and wage creation for native and local people and extends the relationships between city and village. In the other hand, given the capabilities and various attractions, Iran has several opportunities to develop tourism which is possible through planning and developing infrastructures.

Tourism development strategies:

Tourism strategy determines that which kind of tourists, where and how should be developed and by what kind of facilities and services and what kind of attractions should be developed. Tourism policy strategies establish a geographical place for the future and determine their landscape for huge country-wide or world-wide plans and determine their position in huge plans and are documents for tourism development in future. In fact tourism strategy is the tourism market landscape (Movahed, 2007:135). As it is inferred from global studies and experiences, essentially tourism development has two kinds of positive and negative effects in environmental, social and cultural areas. Therefore tourism development should be organized in such a way that have the highest positive and the lowest negative incomes. From this view, strategies and policies in each region should be selected given its special conditions and culture that is compatible and coordinated with national objectives and native and local values. Several factors play a role in tourism development, but three factors are key and important ones: the host (people), tourists and the attractions. The overlap among these three factors is tourism development and can be the main tourism strategy. Stability concepts have been accepted widely as the basic approach for any kind of development including tourism development. On the contrary of traditional approach, stable tourism can supply the balanced the socioeconomic and environmental goals in national and local levels. The method used in tourism planning, like other development programs, should be in such a way that allows stable development. The way of realizing stable development conveys that in addition to realizing interests for today's community, it will preserve natural, cultural and other tourism resources for continuous usage (Low, 1993:185).

In this regard the most important factors are:
- Increasing accessibility to tourist attractions through creating infrastructures, parks, etc.
- Maintaining natural and cultural attractions in developing cities.
- Balancing the habitants' and visitors' interests.
- Promoting cultural and social livability of local communities.
- Promoting the economic livability.
- Unstable consumption pattern (taghvaii, 2008:37).

**Scope of research:**

Bojnourd city of North Khorasan province is between 37 degrees and 27 minutes and 27 seconds to 37 degrees 29 minutes and 31 seconds north latitude and 57 degrees 17 minutes and 4 seconds to 57 degrees 21 minutes 36 seconds east longitude and a height of 1070 meters of open water. Bojnourd city in Turkmenistan on the north and south of the city of Shirvan city stub from the East and to the West to the city of mystery and Maneh Semelghanis limited. The capital city is Bojnourd weather climate is cold in winter and hot in summer and mild (Jahan Pars Consulting Engineers, 2010, 1).

**Map. 1:** Location of the study area (Bojnourd, North Khorasan, Iran)

**The research method:**

This research is a descriptive-analytic research and is conducted using SWOT model, which is one of the strategic tools for matching internal advantages and disadvantages. From the viewpoint of this model an appropriate strategy maximizes the advantages and opportunities and minimizes the disadvantages and threats. The required information was collected by field and library methods. All the external-internal factors were developed using Delfi method, field observation, library studies and coordination with Cultural Heritage organization, and finally the strategies to decrease the bottlenecks and tourism development for the studied region were addressed.

SWOT analysis is an appropriate tool that investigates and analyzes all the factors in different situations in order to develop and present acceptable strategies in region level. SWOT is an acronym of the words: strengths, weaknesses (internal factors) opportunities and threats (external factors). In this pattern opportunities and threats are indicative of major desirable and undesirable challenges that faced in the environment, and against them, strengths and weaknesses, show internal facilities, capabilities and lacks.

This matrix is one of the most important tools through which managers can compare the information and present 4 types of strategies. SO strategies, ST strategies, WO strategies, WT strategies.

**Discussion:**

**Potentials and attractions of Bojnourd:**
In order to investigate the capabilities and address the existing problems in Shirvan tourism development using SWAT factors, in order to remove weaknesses, threats and opportunities, are listed and we will address to strategies for developing tourism given the most important strengths and opportunities.

A. In this stage the internal environment effects of the studied scope are investigated and listed in the following table in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses affecting tourism development:

Table 1: dividing the tourist attractions of Bojnourd

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural attractions</th>
<th>Tourist attractions</th>
<th>Human-made attractions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Castles, Tombs, Mosques, - Architectural styles, - Crafts, - Special rural and urban spaces - Special party and celebration - Music and authorities - local dance - There are a variety of ethnic groups with different cultural components - Various ethnic context with different cultural components - Cultural sights and agricultural and livestock products - Half-habitant tribes and nomads in the region, and their crafts, carpet-making, Glim-making - Islamic periods - Baba Tavakol Shrine - The cultural landscape - Crops, livestock, farming - Sultan Seyed Abbas Shrine - Musa Ja'far Muhammad Bagher Shrine</td>
<td>- Mountains, caves, rivers, falls, springs, and various vegetation are considered as a natural attraction. - Mountain-climbing and hiking - Shah Jahan Mount from Aladagh mountains - Mountaineering and Hiking - Mount Saluck - Beautiful park Babaaman - Besh Ghardash Park - Valley pleasing and fun Nargeslo, Mahnan, Bazkhaneh, Nodeh, Chenaran - Tourist Village Esfydan - Spring Pigho - Spring Geryvan - Niagara Hamid - Mineral water of Prophet Ayub</td>
<td>-- protected areas - Artificial parks festivals and -- cultural and are centers -- conferences - Mirror Home Mofakham - Mansion Mofakham - Museum Bojnourd - Park Babaaman - Bush Park Gharda Teymouri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**External and internal factors in the region’s tourism:**

Table 2: IFE matrix of internal factors affecting the tourism of the studied area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>- Lack of appropriate employment in the County - Non-exploitation of potentials and attempts to attract the required capabilities for tourism development - Short-term stay of tourists in these regions - Lack of the required resources in tourism development - Low level of people income in the county - The population's reliance on agriculture and animal husbandry for employment and income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social – cultural – population-related</td>
<td>- An increase in migrations and a decrease in population - Lack of advertisement and awareness for tourists - Lack of tourist tours and services - People's unawareness concerning tourism privileges - Lack of cultural places in many villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeletal – spatial</td>
<td>- Lack of welfare and accommodation facilities like hotels - Inappropriateness of environmental and skeletal infrastructures - Want of rest rooms - Increased servicing costs - Lack of an appropriate road system to connect villages to rural districts and vice versa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this stage the external environment effects of the studied scope are investigated and listed in the following table in order to identify the external opportunities and threats affecting tourism:

**Table 3: EFE matrix of external factors affecting tourism in bojnourd**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Economical** | - Possibility of more fundraising and money-making from tourists of other cities  
- Create jobs through tourism development  
- Tourists of other conterminous countries can enter this county and it will lead to custom transactions  
- Fundraising from private sector by motivation |
| **Social –cultural – population-based** | - Possibility of attracting researcher from around the country in order to investigate the existing monuments  
- Possibility of holding conferences and Mugam music programs in order to introduce the culture, tradition and attractions to the tourists  
- Possibility of creating cultural exchanges and going out from cultural isolation  
- Possibility of controlling social deviances  
- The existence of listed historical and cultural valuable monument in the province  
- The existence of a provincial TV channel and exploiting it for advertising and introducing the capabilities |
| **Skeletal – spatial** | - Possible long-term accommodation for tourists after building the accommodation and recreation centers  
- Possibility of building more appropriate roads to advance transportation and ease the access for tourists  
- Being located in a good position and a trajec for travelers (Shomal-Mashhad) |
| **Structural managerial** | - Possibility of strategic management and planning for stable tourists  
- Organizing the adjunct activities like crafts, building museums, etc.  
- Support from authorities and the government in tourism programs  
- Possibility of creating tourist websites in order to introduce the capabilities and electronic system in introduction  
- Possibility to reduce Government Policies on Tourism Projects |
| **Geographical natural** | -The existence of various natural landscapes and being adjunct to Shahjahan heights – Petelgh and its adjunct regions |

- Lack of convergence and cooperation between people and authorities concerning tourism in the region  
- Want of a correct planning and management for tourism development  
- Want of exact statistics and existence of advised decision-making from authorities  
- People's unawareness about how to use the existing capabilities |
- The rural regions are mountainous and impassable  
- Contamination of water and soil  
- Increasing tourism categories  
- Failing to raise funds due to short stay of tourists  
- Increased land price and increased financial load for creating tourism equipments  
- Lack of an economical attitude toward tourism sector in the region  
- Inattention to serious planning for tourism sector  
- Lack of enough budget assignment for tourism sector  
- Lack in the protection of cultural heritage, history, tourism, natural and traditional arts and crafts  
- Lack of infrastructure for tourism development andPlaces to Stay  
- Lack of advertisement and informing for tourists  
- An increase in social violations as a result of tourist entrance  
- Destruction of native and local culture as a result of increased tourists  
- Increased pressure on the natural resources as a result of extended consumerism culture in the society  
- SensitiveregionneartheAfghanistan border and EndangeringthecontroversialaspectofaddictionRegion  
- Weakness in marketing, because tourism is seasonal  
- Inattention from the county authorities of the province and the government concerning tourism  
- Lack of an exact planning from senior management  
- The region and the adjunct regions' deprivation and a sort of ignorance from the authorities  
- The incidence of droughts and endangering of water and natural resources
In the above tables the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were specified and in the following table, given the comments of authorities and people, we have tried to prioritize the external and internal options in order to obtain a quantitative and regional result.

**Table 4: Prioritizing the strengths and weaknesses and opportunities and threats in the viewpoint of tourists and authorities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prioritizing the strengths</th>
<th>Prioritizing the weaknesses</th>
<th>Prioritizing the opportunities</th>
<th>Prioritizing the threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Being formidable in terms of capabilities and vast lands for investment in tourism industry</td>
<td>1- Non-exploitation of potentials and attempts to attract the required capabilities for tourism development</td>
<td>1-Possibility of more fundraising and money-making from tourists of other cities with motivation</td>
<td>1-The region and the adjunct regions' deprivation and a sort of ignorance from the authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-The existence of top tourism regions with historical contexts</td>
<td>2-Lack of welfare and accommodation facilities</td>
<td>2-Create jobs and economic boom through tourism development</td>
<td>2-Failure to obtain the initial investment as a result of short-term stay of tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-The existence of various herbal and bestial biological areas</td>
<td>3-Lack of an appropriate road system to connect villages to rural districts and vice versa.</td>
<td>3-Possibility of creating cultural exchanges and going out from cultural isolation</td>
<td>3-Increased pressure on the natural resources as a result of extended consumerism culture in the society</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-The existence of historical, cultural and natural attractions with an established value</td>
<td>4-People's unawareness about how to use the existing capabilities and unawareness about tourism advantages</td>
<td>4-Being located in a good position and a trajectory for travelers (Shomal-Mashhad)</td>
<td>4-The region's sensitivity due to being coterminous with Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-The existence of intact regions for tourism boom</td>
<td>5-The rural regions are mountainous and impassable Inappropriate 6-environmental and skeletal infrastructure 7-Increased migration and decreased population 8-Addiction to drugs</td>
<td>5-Support from authorities and the government in tourism programs and paying attention to top tourist regions</td>
<td>5-Increased land price and increased financial load for creating tourism equipments</td>
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<td>6-The existence of security in the region</td>
<td>6-environmental and skeletal infrastructure</td>
<td>6-Possibility of holding conferences and Mugam music programs in order to introduce the culture, tradition and attractions to the tourists</td>
<td>6-Lack of enough budget assignment for tourism sector</td>
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**Presenting strategies and solutions of tourism development:**

**Invasive-computational strategies:**

In invasive strategies where focus is on internal strengths and external opportunities, the external opportunities are exploited. The following solutions are presented to exploit the existing advantages in order to develop tourism:

- Identifying and using the attractions and capabilities by investing in attracting tourists and compete with the adjacent regions
- Exploiting the increased travel motivation with regard to the appropriate situation and standing in Shomal-Mashhad route.
- Investing and exploiting the existing attractions and, subsequently, creating jobs and decreasing factors such as unemployment, social deviance and addiction
- Declaring the privileged touristic regions (rural-nomadic) with support from authorities and establishing their historical relics
- Adopting the required preparations in order to connect bjonourd touristic regions to the adjacent attraction networks
- Promoting advertisement and notification activities in order to introduce the city

**Diversity strategies:**

In diversifying strategies where the focus is on internal strengths and external threats, and also the region's capabilities are shown against the threats, the goal is to increase the existing capabilities and reducing the threats by developing tourism scheme.

- Diversifying the facilities and capabilities of the main touristic regions and equipping the routes with touristic facilities, utilities, and entertainment and providing the persistence motive in tourists.
- Adopting plans and focusing protection and safety in acute boundary spots in order to prevent drug contraband
- Identifying and investing with planning in developable regions and promoting and improving the culture (preserving traditions, customs, religions, etc.) and leaving isolation

**Review strategies:**

In addition to emphasize on internal weaknesses, it has been tried to exploit external opportunities in order to remove weaknesses of the touristic regions.
- Reviewing the distribution of tourism facilities, services (including residential-welfare centers)
- Reviewing the development policies of the regions talented for tourism and developing related institutions and organizations in the city in order to learn people how to use tourism capabilities and advantages and training how to exploit tourism relics
- Paying attention to the privileged touristic regions, appropriating the environmental and skeletal infrastructure by investments, and adopting the required budget in order to prevent rural migrations
- Coordinating the plans among organizations responsible for tourism development in the State

**Defensive strategies:**

In defensive strategies which are based on internal weaknesses and external threats the following are suggested in order to remove them:

- Creating facilities (loan) and investment grants for constructing residential complexes, recreational facilities and investing in appropriate plans for tourism development.
- In order to encourage people to travel and creating long-term persistence motive in tourists in bojnourd and tourism development of this region, marketing researches and research in diverse aspects and attractions of the city in target markets should be exploited.
- Identifying the different touristic potentials in the city and appropriating and making them accessible for them.
- Holding investment developing meetings and seminars in tourism industry by city councils and the related agents
- Promoting and extending advertisement in tourism sector through modern methods, media, brochures, book, etc.

**The most important effects and benefits of tourism development in bojnourd:**

1- Decreasing unemployment rate, economy development and preventing rurals from migration to bojnourd.
2- Flourishing handy crafts and business, employment and income-creation for native habitants
3- Bringing out the city from isolation and deprivation
4- Creating firm mutual relations among urban regions and village and regional development
5- Cultural upgrading and promoting cultural exchanges
6- With an increase in income level of families and a decrease in unemployment factors such as unemployment, social deviance and addiction will decrease.

**Bottlenecks and problems in tourism underdevelopment of bojnourd:**

Despite the attractions and potentials in this city, there are several barriers for tourists, the most important of which are:

1- People's unfamiliarity with touristic capabilities and attractions and relics and incuriosity toward them
2- A weakness in traffic signs and tourist guides along the routes and connection networks with touristic regions and inappropriate road and transportat ion infrastructure coverage of the target touristic villages
3- Lack of appropriate and enough rest rooms in most parts of the city for tourists
4- Leaving historical buildings and gradual destruction of them
5- Lack of guide signs and maps to access the historical and cultural and natural elements
6- Disparity of the attractions and accessibility to the touristic regions of the city
7- Lack of appropriate places for landfills and waste waters in most touristic regions
8- Successive famine and its effect on the natural resources

**Conclusion:**

Given the deprivation of this region, the special geographical conditions and situation have created a set of most important natural attractions and potentials which can be used as the backgrounds needed for tourism development with careful planning and considering appropriate strategies. As such, these capabilities can be a means to create income and occupation for the people of the city. Even the least abilities and capabilities should be exploited, since they can affect touristic, cultural, economic, and social development of the city. Bojnourd city, in spite of having potential abilities, due to the lack of infrastructure facilities and inattention of the authorities toward tourism, is not a tourist attractor. As it was mentioned, another problem is the lack of infrastructures. Lack of infrastructure facilities is a problem for exploiting the existing potentials. Achieving the tourism development goals requires promoting and developing infrastructure facilities. This problem won't be solved just with investing and waiting for tourism development. Using SWOT method in the studied region, 43 strengths and opportunities and 37 weaknesses and threats are identifiable as the limitations and bottlenecks of the region for tourism development. In a simple analysis it can be said that the vulnerability threshold of the
region is high and it needs appropriate policies in order to remove the weaknesses and threats using strengths and opportunities.

There is a long way to develop tourism in this city and tourism development in bojnourd requires a comprehensive, targeted and prospective planning with an appropriate management, creating infrastructures, the required facilities, paying attention to all the related sectors (economic, cultural, social, etc.) native people partnership and effective advertisement. As it was stated, this city has high capabilities but it can be said easily that these facilities haven’t been used toward tourism development. Among the most important problems of tourism in this part are: the lack of a cohesive planning for tourism, lack of residential and welfare infrastructures, lack of advertisement and failing to exploit the existing facilities.

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