

Development in Tourism Industry Needs

Revising

When we compare Iran with other countries like Turkey, India, Morocco and Tunisia which are rather equal with our country in facilities and equipments, a glance at Iran's ancientness, history, strategic situation and weather conditions shows that we need a thorough revision in the infrastructure of our tourism industry.

According to numerous studies and analyses of the weaknesses and strengths, in order to empower positive aspects and weaken negative ones, changing the present situation seems to be a "necessity". Using the experiences of the successful countries that provide safe and sound environment for tourists and give them the opportunity for sightseeing, should be considered as the first and basic step in solving the related problems.



What is necessary is to decrease the government's interference to the lowest possible level, support private sector, especially NGOs involved in the development of the tourism industry, not only make the minds and the ideas behind the issue stronger, but also pave the way for foreign investments and expansion of tourism industry. On the other hand, cooperating with related and effective organizations as "Ministry of Foreign Affairs", "Customs Office", "Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization", "Health Services", "Transport" is the second step in approaching our goal.

To reach our ideals, we need an analytical look and study the present situation based on hard data and a perfect analysis of the existing situation. The deep gap between the number of Iran's tourist attractions and the number of tourists, entering our country shows that there should be a serious, scientific and realistic review of the matter. To treat tourists respectfully shows them hospitality, generosity and understanding of our nation. It makes an easy access to the world of tourism and helps us establish a correct interaction and cooperation with other countries.

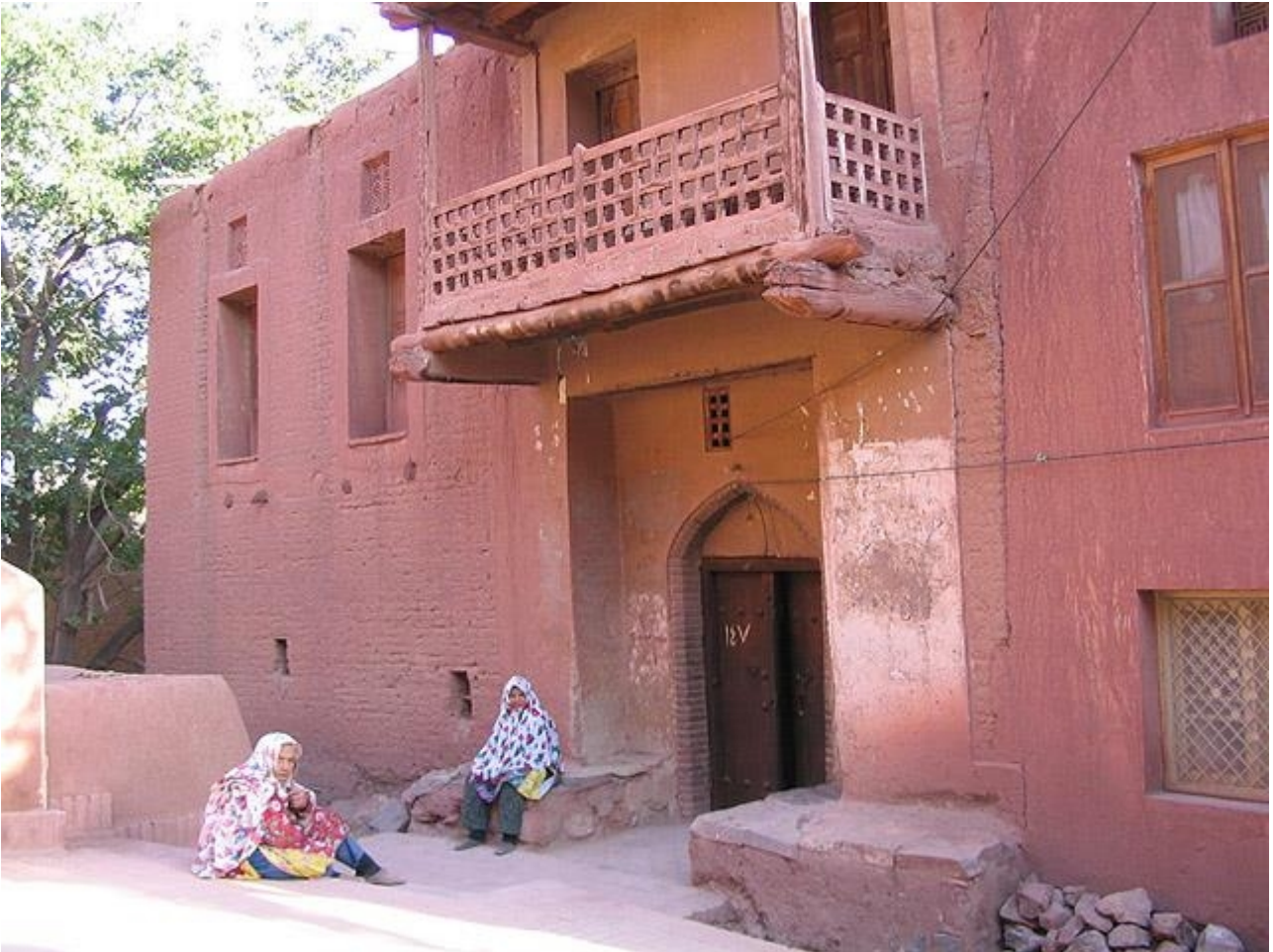
Positive Points and Opportunities

Ancientness & Reputation

Based on the historical texts and some educational schoolbooks of foreign countries the word "Persia" means greatness and magnificence. This concept by itself can guarantee success regarding tourism industry. Works let by the Muslims and Non-Muslims sightseers as Moghadasi, Ibn-e-Hooghel, Ibn-e-Batoote, Abudelf, Angel Burt Campfer and the others, are indisputable evidences for nothing but Iran's first rank in strategic situation, historical background, ancient civilization, tourism attractions etc.

Attractions & Eco-Tourism

Natural sights, geographical phenomena, sea and seashores, weather conditions, mountains, mineral hot waters, sulfuric fountains, winter resorts, historical and artistic monuments, museums, antiques and the other endowments have created an outstanding and specific situation for Iran.



Rich Culture of Hospitality

Iranian people are famous for their hospitalities and those who visit Iran admit it. It is a well-known character for our people and referring to the travel accounts of world great sightseers can prove it.

Religious Motives

The tendency and desire of Muslims of the world for traveling to Iran, paying a visit to holy shrines and enjoying natural gifts (particularly north region of the country) which suit their Islamic culture are suitable ground for attracting and inviting our coreligionists.

Art & Cultural Attractions

Among all kind of tourists visiting foreign countries, tourists who are interested in knowing different cultures, tend to study and review intellectual and cultural aspects of the host countries. Considering the importance of the matter, we should consider such tourists as our official messengers and missionaries to their homes. Moreover, it is the other notable aspects of our country.

Budget Destination

During the past years, reduction of the value in our currency, comparing to the foreign exchanges has caused the price to decrease. Since tourists generally prefer to visit less expensive countries to pay less

for their accommodation, food, amusement etc. it give us great chances to provide them with the acceptable services during their journey to our country.

Challenges and Threats

Lack of Culture of Interaction

Unfortunately, based on the narrow-minded and one-sided interpretations, some people believe tourism and tourists respectively as vagrancy and unbelievers. These people do not pay any attention to the real meaning of tourism or are unable to understand and analyze the effects, the results and the advantages of developments in tourism industry. These personal and shallow understanding eventually cause troubles and sufferings for them, their friends and decision makers of the country, while tourism industry leads to vast cultural, educational, social and economic aspects.

In the last two decades, due to a worldwide and negative propaganda against Iran, our country was introduced as a severe religious country to the world, so it is very improbable for recreational tourists to choose this country as a destination, rather traveling to other places with much less trouble and expenses. Therefore, cultural communication, clear understanding and modifying our approaches to the tourists and tourism should be necessarily considered as the vital elements through paving the ground for providing peace for them.

Shortage of Effective Marketing Strategy

Passing about three decades from the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, there has not been clearly defined any suitable strategy regarding attraction of tourists. Therefore, the related approaches to tourists marketing in all kind of travel destinations, meetings, seminars and exhibitions has been left unsaid.



Accommodation & Staff

Nowadays, tourists are not looking for expensive and luxurious places, instead most of them are willing to pass their time in less expensive but comfortable and peaceful places. Therefore, the shortage of three star hotels as well as clean motels causes many difficulties. The only solution is a close and profound attention to the subject.

Employing unqualified staff in resorts who behave unskillfully toward tourists especially foreign ones, has also negative effects on the issue.

Unsatisfactory Air & Road Transport

Considering the current limitations and sharp growth in population rate, there is a great shortage in transport services provided to tourists when traveling to their resorts. If there is an appropriate budget allocated for removing the problem, we can approach our goals more easily.

Shortage of Services & Information Offices

In all tourist-attracting countries, there are many agencies responsible for guiding and helping tourists. There are also embassies and cultural centers presenting remarkable activities in this regard. Unfortunately, not enough attention has been paid to the subject and its possible effects in our country.

(Text shortened)

Government plans to make tourism a key economic driver

Iran's fourth 5-year tourism plan, and its 20-year tourism outlook plan, emphasizes the government's willingness to boost the country's tourism. Projected figures indicate a very strong commitment to making tourism a key driver of the national economy. However, while Iran's geography, nature, culture and religious landmarks are highly appealing, and could easily make the country a prime leisure tourism destination, it is plagued by negative press and a weak international image. This is characterized by a perceived instability, and strong extremism and rejection of Western values. These factors represent major barriers to be overcome if Iran is to achieve its tourism objectives. Euromonitor.com

Local hotels are poorly managed and serviced

Growth of international tourist arrivals to Iran is hindered by its weak tourism infrastructure, notably in terms of travel accommodation. The country offers few luxury and high-end outlets that can truly match international standards of luxury in the hospitality business. Local brands of hotels dominate but are poorly managed and serviced. The lack of foreign brands and international hotel groups makes it difficult for foreign visitors to choose an outlet, due to lack of trust. Members of the hotel union are trying to address these concerns. The starting point is the training of human resources and the refurbishment of key outlets in and around Tehran.

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