

Tourism Development Strategies for Meymand Village of Kerman, Iran (By SWOT model)

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Abstract: Nowadays tourism is considered as an important basis for sustainable development. Therefore, rural tourism is regarded as a makeable and essential element of tourism. Consequently, it is evident that strategic planning for rural tourism and the identification of internal factors (weak points and strong points) and environmental factors (opportunities and threats) have an important role in the development of rural regions and also the tourism industry. In this article, by means of the survey method and field study, we have tried to design strategies to develop rural tourism in Meymand village of Shahr Babak, Kerman Province, Iran, through specifying weak points and strong points, opportunities and threats in the form of a SWOT table. The results delineated that the strategy of "extensive utilization of native methods to repair, construct and renovate the internal architecture of Meymand village" is the most important and premier strategy among all rural tourism development strategies.

[Hamid Taboli, Mehdi Yadollah. **Tourism Development Strategies for Meymand Village of Kerman, Iran (By SWOT model)**. Journal of American Science 2011;7(3):59-73]. (ISSN: 1545-1003).

<http://www.americanscience.org>.

Keywords: Rural tourism, rural development, Meymand of Kerman, strategy, strategic planning.

INTRODUCTION:

Rural tourism

Nowadays tourism is one of the bases of economic development and most countries earn a remarkable income through it annually. The concept of rural tourism can revitalize the conventional concepts and views on tourism, and bring in a new dimension in sustainable development (Aref et al., 2009). Therefore, rural tourism and related issues such as poverty, occupation, hygiene, and food security are among the noticeable problems that strategic planning can address.

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), rural tourism can include a wide range of activities like: climbing, riding, adventure tourism, educational travel, sport and health tourism, arts and heritage tourism (Negrusa et al., 2007).

Negrusa et al. (2007) defined rural tourism as that form of tourism offered by people from rural areas, with an accommodation on small-scale and with the implication of important components of their rural activities and customs. Tourism appears to be

developing an elitist bias as participation from all sections of society is clearly not visible.

According to the Organization of Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), rural tourism is defined as tourism taking place in the countryside (Reichel., 2000). Rural tourism is located in agricultural landscapes and is characterized by enjoyment of a tamed nature or highly modified landscape. It is about the land uses and human cultures that the interactions between humans and land have created. It positions agriculture and farms as the foundation upon which the attraction is built (Knowd, 2001).

Any form of Tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between tourists and locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism. Rural tourism is essentially an activity that takes place in the countryside (Aref & Sarjit, 2009).

According to the discussions for and against development, rural tourism is increasingly considered

as a panacea, economic power increaser, increaser of liveability in remote areas, stimulator of reliving and also improver of life conditions in rural societies (Brieden & Wicken, 2004). This issue is in relation to agricultural policies in many countries and often it is a tool to support the environment and rural culture. Thus, it can play a vital and fundamental role in the development and maintenance of villages (Sharifzadeh & Moradnejad, 2002).

Regarding what was mentioned above, in order to improve the development process in rural areas, especially the one studied and mentioned above, it is increasingly necessary to utilize suitable strategies and guidelines for rural tourism development considering environmental characteristics and conditions, tourism sites and the ecological (natural and human) products of each area.

In this research, regarding tourism the potential and limitations of Meymand historical village, and also considering environmental threats and opportunities of the area, strategic planning was started and the related strategies presented to remove the problems and optimize the usage of capacities.

In addition to answering these questions "*what is the potential for rural tourism development and its limitations? And what are the strategies and guidelines to develop tourism which leads to rural and national development?*" weak points, strong points, opportunities and threats from the viewpoint of participants and beneficiaries related to rural tourism development are analysed and studied. In addition, regarding the above opinions and attitudes, suitable strategies and guidelines are presented by means of the SWOT method in order to utilize strong points and opportunities, and remove weak points and threats optimally and purposefully to achieve tourism and rural development.

Generally, rural tourism is important in two aspects: one as a vast worldwide activity and the other is its effect on the development of regional and local policies. Thus, it is logical to admit that there is not any acceptable and general definition of rural tourism (Sharply & Sharply, 1997). Moreover, although it should be admitted that different characteristics such as special activities and situations separate rural tourism from other tourism parts or types, it is noticeable that there is not any public-acceptable definition or

characteristics of rural tourism (Sharply & Sharply, 1997). While at first glance, it seems easy to define rural tourism, as stated by Lane: the tourism that happens in suburbs is called rural tourism; however, such a simple definition contains many ambiguities. For example, apart from the different definitions of tourism and especially in a suburban framework in which the difference between activities that are forms of tourism, and spending leisure time, exercising and recreation, might be blurred; notwithstanding the fact that the definition of a suburb may vary. Therefore, it seems simple conceptually to define rural tourism as a trip to the suburbs; however, this definition cannot include the sets of activities, various managerial forms and developed institutions in different countries, which act in relation to the tourism industry. From the more comprehensive concept point of view, rural tourism can be considered as a range of activities and services related to recreation and the calmness of the tourists, which are organised by farmers and villagers to attract tourists to their areas for income. If the above mentioned is accepted, it includes rural, farming and agricultural tourism, generally, and, as a result, it will include services to tourists, such as residences, lodgings, recreation and entertainment equipment, holding local festivals, production and supplying of handicrafts and agricultural products (Sharifzadeh & Moradnejad, 2002). Therefore, regarding the mentioned definitions of tourism and rural tourism, rural tourism can be defined as follows (Eftekhari, 1994):

Rural tourism can be defined as all activities and services done by farmers, people, and governments for tourists' recreation, rest and attraction, and also activities undertaken by tourists in rural areas, which can include agricultural, farm, natural and cultural tourism.

As mentioned and based on the above definitions, rural tourism does not include agricultural tourism alone, but also all activities undertaken by tourists in rural areas. Therefore, it can be said that tourists of villages visit rural areas with different motives such as ecological uniqueness, special adventuring opportunities, visiting qualitative cultural attractions and rural areas (Brieden & Wicken, 2004). Therefore, regarding tourists' purposes and motives for travelling, rural tourism can be divided into five groups, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – types of rural tourism (Mehrjerdi, 2004)

Mostly interacts with ecological attractions	Natural Tourism
Related to culture, history, cultural and ancient heritage of villagers	Cultural Tourism
A type of tourism in addition to interacting with natural attractions (river, mountains, ...) is related to people life and their social norms, which in itself is in interaction with the above mentioned natural attractions	Native Tourism
In this type, tourists live with rural families and participate in the economical and social activities of the village	Rural Tourism
Without causing any negative results in the ecosystem of the host area, tourists participate in or interact with traditional agricultural activities	Agricultural Tourism

Also, according to Jenny Holland et al. (2003), tourism can include farm tourism or agricultural tourism, however, both of them are popular among tourists in rural areas (Holland., 2003).

There are different viewpoints about rural tourism development. Some accept it as a part of the tourism market and believe it can be compared with other forms of tourism like tourism under sunshine, tourism on the beach, and tourism on sandy beaches (Sharply & Sharply, 1997). According to other aspects, rural tourism was introduced as a philosophy of rural development, which has three important attitudes:

One opinion is that tourism is a philosophy for rural development, which is a reflection of the rural environment.

According to others, tourism is a tool and policy for the reconstruction of the rural economy (Sharifzadeh & Moradnejad, 2002). Some also believe that tourism is a policy and tool for sustainable rural development (Jenkins, 1998). It is noticeable rural tourism industry in Iran requires attention to the following aspects: satisfaction of citizens' needs, development of regional-local policies, and attraction of tourists and absorption of foreign investment (Shahabiyan, 2003). Geological, morphological, and climatic equipment, mineral waters, plant cover, etc. in studies and policymaking of rural economic development are among the most important factors in the tourism industry (Ghareh, 1999), even though supervising them is difficult. Also, villages are a multi-purpose resource and tourism is just one of the village requirements, and, sometimes, tourism can even be considered a threat to the village.

Rural tourism in Iran

The rural cooperatives in Iran in recent years have diversified themselves into various areas of socio-economic activities. The failure of the government

sector and various limitations of the private sector have compelled the policymakers to pin their faith on the cooperative system. For certain activities/areas, success is based on the ability of the grassroots institutions to tackle them with their participatory and people-based approach, the cooperatives are considered to have an advantage over other organizations. For example, in Iran, the rural cooperatives are considered the most effective organizations in the field of rural agriculture. Similarly, because of their vast network and reach, the rural cooperatives are considered to be the best promoters for agriculture in Iran. Rural tourism is often considered an economic alternative for rural areas facing decreasing profits and requiring a second or third economic footing (Verma, 2008). However, like other tourism activities, rural tourism has a full range of environmental impacts (Kuo, 2008). Rural tourism in Iran does not have a long history because of the inadequate foundations and preparation. Iran has a wonderful potential for tourism, particularly rural and ecotourism. The main problem and difficulty is in attracting tourists. Unspoiled nature, varied picturesque landscapes, a thousand-year-old cultural and architectural heritage, a profusion of leisure opportunities and reactions, closeness to the urban centres as well as the authentic character and rural charm, all these constitute the important factors for the development of rural tourism in Iran (Aref & Sarjit, 2009). However there are some other steps that should be taken, because Iran is not ready to welcome rural tourists yet – attraction (for example development of rural tourism around a heritage site), rural infrastructure accessibility (roads, transportation) and building rural capacity for tourism development.

Additional budget is required for rural areas. Rural tourism has some advantages in the rural areas of Iran, for example, it provides employment for local residents and prevents their immigration to the cities. Currently young people leave the countryside and go to cities to study or work. Usually they never come back

to their homelands. Some of the reasons for the failure of these efforts are as follows: The role of the rural cooperatives in this industry is not defined, socio-cultural and political barriers, and lack of human and economic resources.

Barriers to Rural Tourism

Understanding the barriers to rural tourism is important when a community is trying to organize itself for involvement in tourism activities. This understanding can help individuals, the community and organizations impact the tourism policymakers process more effectively.

Furthermore, it is important for the government to understand that rural areas face barriers that can hinder their progress in responding and recognizing the priorities of local communities in Iran.

Overcoming the barriers to tourism development presents a challenge to both communities and government, and will serve to facilitate the policymaking process. Various literatures address the barriers of tourism development through local communities, particularly in third world countries. Rural tourism in Iran has several barriers to development. Roads and accommodation infrastructure were cited as the two main barriers for growing rural tourism. In the long-term, developing accommodation, sealing the roads, and providing other services like cafes and shops are essential to fulfil the tourism potential of Iran, and attract a broader range of visitors to stay in the region overnight. In addition, the rural cooperatives in Iran still have to recognize the importance of tourism despite the rapid growth of the tourism sector around the world. The following are the main barriers:

1-Inability to analyse the changing socio-economic dimensions of rural tourism in Iran, and demarcate the areas in which rural cooperatives have a strategic advantage over other forms of organization.

2-Lack of policy research in this field, which can provide definite indicators for the future.

3-Inability to strategically link the rural cooperatives with the rural tourism in those cities in which tourism is booming. For example, in Esfahan and Shiraz, tourism has emerged as a major force. However, the rural cooperatives have not yet progressed to this level.

4-Inability of the cooperatives to externalise their areas of operation or activity to the field of rural tourism.

5-Weak advocacy for rural tourism development is also a big hindrance. Holding advocacy conferences by the cooperatives in the area of cooperative tourism can set the ball rolling in a big way and create a

conducive atmosphere for rural tourism development (Verma, 2008).

Bushell & Engles (2007, p.154) also state that tourism, as a phenomenon of affluent contemporary societies, is a particularly difficult concept in local communities in developing countries to grasp. In this sense tourism development may be more difficult than other activities. Shortcomings are similar to those of local communities; however, a few factors tend to be more pronounced in local areas:

Lack of formal education and appropriate managerial training

Lack of foreign language skills

Different ways of dealing with hygiene, litter, maintenance of infrastructure

Limited knowledge of food preparation for foreigners, including catering for dietary, nutritional and culinary tastes

Lack of decision making and planning skills concerning the possible consequences of tourism, coupled with limited ability to control tourism, unpredictable political climates, and long-term funding uncertainty (Bushell & Engles, 2007, p.154).

Consequently, rural tourism facilities and services may be unacceptable for international tourists. Hence, building capacity through rural cooperatives is necessary for stakeholders involved in tourism in local communities (Bushell & Engles, 2007).

However, due to a lack of awareness this is not being done at present. Similarly, lack of development of cooperatives in the field of cooperative tourism is also a sign of weak advocacy. There is also a lack of documentation of successful models of cooperative tourism in the region.

Research Method:

In this article both descriptive-analytic and survey methods were applied. Initially, attractions, equipment, tourism services, tourism situation and their effect on development of the studied society were surveyed and then a strategy and guideline for rural tourism development was introduced through a SWOT analysis.

First, the internal and external environment of the area was studied and a list of weak points, strong points, opportunities and threats were identified. Then by means of a questionnaire along with opinion polling among three levels: people, tourists and reporters, each one of these internal and external factors was weighed and ranked, and, finally, a table of internal factors analysis summary (IFAS) and table of external factors analysis summary (EFAS) were extracted to design a SWOT model and specify the strategies.

Weak Points (W)	Strong Points (S)	
WO Strategies	SO Strategies	Opportunities (O)
WT Strategies	ST Strategies	Threats (T)

Reference: David, 1999

The Sharp-Cochran method was used to specify the sample volume and then the questionnaires in the universe were filled out by means of random sampling.

Sharp-Cochran formula:

$$n = \frac{Nt^2pq}{Nd^2 + t^2pq}$$

N = the universe volume (100 families)

P = probability

n = required sample volume

q = No-characteristic probability

t = 1/96

d = sampling error (0.05)

Three groups form the universe regarding the above formula – 40 persons for head of household’s (people), 100 for tourists and 20 for reporters. It is noticeable that the experts group includes reporters, technicians of cultural heritage organizations and tourism management teachers.

Findings:

In order to prepare the strategy in the SWOT model, first, the bases of the internal factors (weak and strong points) and also external factors (opportunities and threats) were identified and then the importance of each index and also rank of each was specified by testers. It should be noted that in this study the subjects were studied in four groups of economic, socio-cultural, ecological, institutional factors and with five degrees of intensity (very much, much, medium, low, very low), which is used throughout the entire research.

Analysis of internal factors effective for Meymand tourism development:

In this part and regarding the studies done concerning the Meymand area and factors effective for its tourism development, some indexes in the form of weak and strong points in four economic, socio-cultural, ecological and institutional dimensions were mentioned, and their importance (index) and rank were studied by sample volume.

Regarding the above table, the most important strong points of Meymand tourism are:

Rare tourism capacities and historical attractions through the world with an index of 0.07 and rank of 3.61, cultural heritage organization planning to register Meymand village internationally with an index

of 0.07 and rank of 3.60, residential houses in heart of rocks (stone engravings) with an index of 0.07 and rank of 3.52, mineral and sweet springs, castles and petroglyphs with an index of 0.07 and rank of 3.27.

Also other tourism strong points of Meymand village are as follows:

Handicrafts and active handicrafts workshops in village with an index of 0.05 and rank of 3.15, local and traditional culture and customs with an index of 0.04 and rank of 3.20, adjacent to populated and urban centres with an index of 0.05 and rank of 2.95, availability for tourists with an index of 0.04 and rank of 2.86, calm and still environment for citizens with an index of 0.03 and rank of 3.10.

Also, based on the above table, the most important tourism weak points of the Meymand village are as follows:

Lack of NGO investment in tourist parts of this area with an index of 0.07 and rank of 3.25, insufficient and inappropriate residential and welfare equipment with an index of 0.07 and rank of 3.27.

Moreover, other tourism weak points of Meymand village include:

Insufficient hygienic and service facilities with an index of 0.06 and rank of 3.12, inappropriate environmental and non-environmental infrastructure (road and sewage) with an index of 0.06 and rank of 3.35, inappropriate sport and recreation equipment and facilities with an index of 0.06 and rank of 3.34, lack of governmental investment in this area with an index of 0.05 and rank of 3.50, lack of skilled and trained persons in this area to guide and inform tourists with an

index of 0.05 and rank of 3.25, inappropriate distribution of tourists in different seasons of the year with an index of 0.05 and rank of 2.86.

Regarding the total score (3.34) it can be concluded that the reaction of Meymand tourism authorities was more than the average level.

Analysis of external factors effective for Meymand tourism development:

The purpose of this study is to identify environmental factors effective for the tourism development of Meymand village. Identification of all opportunities and threats effective for Meymand tourism, then study them in form of rural development dimensions (economic, socio-cultural, ecologically and institutionally). Index and rank each criterion presented based on the following table.

Regarding the EFAS table, the most important tourism development opportunities for Meymand village are:

Continuance of living in Meymand with an index of 0.067 and rank of 3.12, unique architecture index of 0.065 and rank of 3.90, increase in travel and tourism motive among people index of 0.060 and rank of 3.23.

Also other tourism development opportunities of Meymand village are:

Unique tourism attraction with no competitors in country index of 0.058 and rank of 3.65, government attention to tourism index of 0.030 and rank of 3.80, semi-migration style of living index of 0.050 and rank of 3.80, increase in country authorities' attention and support of rural development with job-creation approach and income acquirement index of 0.040 and rank of 3.95, mapping of Meymand oases index of 0.042 and rank of 3.15, specifying possession of the oases index of 0.035 and rank of 3.20, hygienic water, soil and climate resources of the village in comparison to other areas index of 0.035 and rank of 3.45.

Table 2 – Internal factors analysis summary effective for Meymand tourism development

Index + Rank (Score)	Rank	Index	Index	
0.16	3.15	0.05	- handicrafts and active handicraft workshops in village	Strong Points
0.13	3.20	0.04	- local and traditional culture and customs	
0.25	3.52	0.07	- residential houses in heart of rocks	
0.26	3.61	0.07	- rare tourism capacities and historical attractions over the world	
0.15	2.95	0.05	- adjacent to populated and urban centres	
0.11	2.86	0.04	- availability for tourists	
0.09	3.10	0.03	- calm and still environment for citizens	
0.23	3.27	0.07	- mineral and sweet springs, castles and petroglyphs	
0.25	3.6	0.07	- cultural heritage organization planning to register Meymand village internationally	
0.26	3.25	0.07	- lack of NGO investment in tourism parts of this area	
0.18	3.50	0.05	- lack of governmental investment in this area	
0.19	3.12	0.06	- insufficient hygienic and service facilities	
0.26	3.72	0.07	- insufficient and inappropriate residential and welfare equipment	
0.16	3.25	0.05	- lack of skilled and trained persons in this area to guide and help tourists	
			- inappropriate distribution of tourists in different seasons of the year	
0.14	2.86	0.05	- inappropriate environmental and non-environmental infrastructure (road & sewage system)	
0.20	3.35	0.06	- inappropriate sport and recreation equipment and facilities	
0.20	3.34	0.06	- lack of acquaintance and training among villagers in how to act/ behave with tourists	
0.12	3.11	0.04		
3.34	--	1	Total	

Table 3 – External factors analysis summary effective on Meymand tourism development (EFAS)

Score (Index*Rank)	Rank	Index	Index			
0.114 0.211	3.80 3.65	0.030 0.058	1- government attention to tourism 2- unique tourism attraction with no competitors in country	Economic	opportunities	
0.193 0.209 0.190	3.23 3.12 3.80	0.060 0.067 0.050	3- increase in travel and tourism motive among people 4- continuance of living in Meymand 5- semi-migration style of living with three stages of migration 6- unique architecture	Socio-cultural		
0.158 0.132 0.112	3.95 3.15 3.20	0.040 0.042 0.035	7- increase in country authorities' attention and support of rural development with job-creation approach and income acquirement 8- mapping of Meymand oases 9- specification of the oases possession	Institutional		
0.120	3.45	0.035	10- hygienic water, soil and climate resources of the village in comparison to other areas	Ecological		
0.146 0.097 0.092	3.12 3.25 3.30	0.047 0.030 0.028	1- weakness in NGO investment facilities 2- insufficient development credits 3- selling non-native and factory products dispartate to environmental values	Economic		Threats
0.155 0.109 0.171 0.103 0.153 0.170 0.126	3.45 3.14 3.80 3.70 3.65 3.34 3.25	0.45 0.035 0.45 0.028 0.042 0.051 0.029	4- deficiency in informing about the village tourism attractions all over the province and country 5- fading of the traditional and local culture (language, cloths, ...) following tourists increase 6- increase in social crimes following tourists entrance 7- relative remoteness of Meymand from capital and big cities 8- insufficient policies and goals of rural tourism 9- migration of villages to city 10- decrease in governmental services in the village due to migration and the village population decrease	Socio-cultural		
0.078 0.094	3.12 3.16	0.025 0.030	11- destruction of plants and plant covering 12- erosion of the ceiling in traditional houses due to dampness and traffic	Ecological		
0.1 0.149	3.76 3.65	0.033 0.041	13- lack of development in tourism services, equipment and facilities 14- weak equipment for protection and maintenance of historical and religious places and buildings	Institutional		
3.347	--	1	Total			

<p>related organizations and institutes in villages to train people and tourists in order to have optimized utilization of tourism benefits. (W3,W4,O1,O2)</p> <p>* Training and informing people about behaving with tourists. (W5,W9,O1,O7)</p> <p>* Review the way of distribution of equipment, services and tourism facilities and categorizing and devoting the equipment to rural areas. (W7,W8,O1,O2,O5)</p>	<p>encourage people to exploit rural tourism attractions. (S4,S5,S7,O3)</p> <p>* Establishment of Green Associations (support rural environment) among different levels of people to utilize rural potential. (S3,S4,S5,S6,O1,O2)</p> <p>* Introduction of rural tourism management field of study in Kerman universities. (S4,S5,S7,O1,O2,O7)</p> <p>* Popularize rural tourism attractions by related authorities through media and participate in festivals. (S2,S3,S4,S8,O7,O8)</p> <p>* Study, relive, enrich and update handicrafts. (S1,S2,O1,O3,O7)</p>	<p>tourism</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2- unique tourism attraction and no competitors in country 3- increase in travel and tourism motive among people 4- continuance of living in Meymand 5- semi-migration style of living with 3 stages of migration 6- unique architecture 7- increase in country authorities' attention and support of rural development with job-creation approach and income acquirement 8- Mapping of Meymand oases 9- Specification of the oases possession 10- Hygienic water, soil and climate resources of the village in comparison to other areas
<p>WT strategies (Defensive)</p> <p>* Compiling special rules and regulations to utilize attractions optimally and preventing destruction and pollution. (W5,W7,W9,T1,T6,T11)</p> <p>* Using technology to protect the environment, strengthening, repair, etc. (W1,W2,W8,T1,T2)</p> <p>* Making constructive interaction between technicians, natives, environment and authorities. (W5,W9,T8,T9)</p> <p>* Reliving behaviours and customs (clothes, local games, foods, language and dialect, using horse, ...). (W3,W4,W6,T2,T13,T14)</p> <p>* Develop and build modern places with traditional style (parking, green space, landscape). (W2,W3,T1,T2,T13,T14)</p>	<p>ST strategies (Competitive)</p> <p>* Extensive and innovative utilization of native methods in repairing, building, reconstructing, internal architecture etc. (S1,S2,S4,T1,T2,T13)</p> <p>* Develop and equip the tourism paths of Meymand village. (S3,S4,T13,T14)</p> <p>* Development of tourism services, equipment and facilities. (S3,S4,S5,T13,T14)</p> <p>* Attraction of NGO investment for rural tourism. (S4,S5,S6,S7,T1)</p> <p>* Compilation of repairing and designing charter for rural part of Meymand. (S3,S4,S5,T4,T5,T14)</p> <p>* Use environmental resources related to capacity. (S3,S4,S5,S6,T1,T2,T11,T13)</p> <p>Use environmental resources as tourism goods. (S3,S4,S5,T11,T12)</p> <p>* Holding permanent exhibitions of handicrafts. (S1,S2,T1,T2,T3)</p> <p>* Directing rural purposeless capitals to develop and extend informational and communicational technologies</p>	<p>Threats - T</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- weakness in NGO investment facilities 2- insufficient development credits 3- selling non-native and factory products and dispartate to environmental values 4- deficiency in informing about the village tourism attractions all over the province and country 5- fading of the traditional and local culture (language, cloths,...) following tourists increase 6- increase in social crimes following tourists entrance 7- relative remoteness of Meymand from capital and big cities 8- insufficient policies and goals of rural tourism 9- migration of villages to city 10- decrease in governmental services in the village due to migration and the village population decrease 11- destruction of plants and plant covering 12- erosion of the ceiling in traditional houses due to dampness and traffic 13- lack of development in

	(ICT). (S4,S5,S6,S9,T1,T2,T13)	tourism services, equipment and facilities 14- weak equipment for protection and maintenance of historical and religious places and buildings
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As seen in the SWOT table, rural tourism development strategies for Meymand village are as follows:

A) SO Strategies (aggressive)

These strategies are applied using weak and strong points, which are:

- Utilizing travel motive to encourage people to exploit rural tourism attractions.
- Establishment of Green Associations (support rural environment) among different levels of people to utilize rural potential.
- Introduction of rural tourism management field of study in Kerman universities.
- Popularize rural tourism attractions by related authorities through media and participate in festivals.
- Study, relive, enrich and update handicrafts.

B) ST Strategies (Competitive)

These strategies using strong points to control environmental threats:

- Extensive and innovative utilization of native methods in repairing, building, reconstructing, internal architecture, etc.
- Develop and equip tourism paths of Meymand village.
- Development of tourism services, equipment and facilities.
- Attraction of NGO investments for rural tourism.
- Compilation of repairing and designing charter for rural part of Meymand.
- Use environmental resources related to capacity.
- Use environmental resources as tourism goods.
- Holding permanent exhibitions of handicrafts.
- Directing rural purposeless capitals to develop and extend informational and communicational technologies (ICT).

C) WO Strategies (Conservative)

In these strategies the weak points are decreased utilizing opportunities:

- Review and development of related organizations and institutes in villages to train people and tourists in order to have optimized utilization of tourism benefits.

- Training and informing people in how to act/ behave with tourists.
- Review the way of distribution of equipment, services and tourism facilities and categorizing and devoting the equipment to rural areas.

D) WT Strategies (Defensive)

- Compiling special rules and regulations to utilize attractions optimally and preventing destruction and pollution.
- Using technology to protect environment, strengthening, repair, etc.
- Making constructive interaction between technicians, natives, environment and authorities.
- Reliving behaviours and customs (clothes, local games, foods, language and dialect, using horse, ...).
- Develop and build modern places with traditional style (parking, green space, landscape).
- Validity (effectiveness rate) of designed strategies from the view of elites.

Regarding the variants of “effectiveness of designed strategies”, which include 22 indexes, the average of these indexes is calculated as the variant amount. Among 30 studied elites, the effectiveness of the designed strategies was medium, much and very much from the viewpoints of 5 (16.7%), 16 (53.3%) and 9 (30%), respectively. Generally, according to the calculated average of the variant (4.08), the validity of designed strategies was considerably different from the viewpoint of the elites (Table 5).

Table 5 – frequency distribution of designed strategies effectiveness from the viewpoint of elites

Frequency percentage	Frequency	Rate
0	0	Very low
0	0	Low
16.7	5	Medium
53.3	16	Much
30	9	Very much
100	30	Total

Primacy of designed strategies to develop rural tourism:

Based on the calculated averages and primacy of the designed strategies, it was specified by elites that the first primacy related to the strategy of “extensive and innovative utilization of native methods to repair, construct, reconstruct, internal architecture ...” and last primacy was related to the strategy of “establishment of rural management field of study in Kerman universities”.

Table 6 – Average score of rural tourism development strategies

Score average	Strategy	primac

4.65	Utilizing travel motive to encourage people to exploit rural tourism attractions.	1
4.60	Establishment of Green Associations (support rural environment) among different casts of people to utilize rural potential.	2
4.52	Introduction of rural tourism management field of study in Kerman universities.	3
4.48	Popularize rural tourism attractions by related authorities through media and participate in festivals.	4
4.45		5
4.44	Study, relive, enrich and update handicrafts.	6
4.32	Vast and innovative utilization of native methods in repairing, building, reconstructing, internal architecture etc.	7
4.28	Develop and equip tourism paths of Meymand village.	8
4.20	Development of tourism services, equipment and facilities.	9
4.14	Attraction of NGO investment for rural tourism.	1
4.02	Compilation of repairing and designing charter for rural part of Meymand.	0
4.01	Use environmental resources related to capacity.	1
3.90	Use environmental resources as tourism goods.	1
3.81	Holding permanent exhibitions of handicrafts	1
3.75	Directing rural purposeless capitals to develop and extend informational and communicational technologies (ICT).	2
3.68	Review and development of related organizations and institutes in villages to train people and tourists in order to have optimized utilization of tourism benefits.	1
3.64	Training and informing people about behaving with tourists	4
3.50	Review and way of distribution for equipment, services and tourism facilities and categorizing and devoting these equipment to rural areas.	1
3.40	Compiling special rules and regulations to utilize attractions optimally and preventing destruction and pollution.	5
3.38	Using technology to protect the environment, strengthening, repair, etc.	1
3.35	Making constructive interaction between technicians, natives, environment and authorities.	6
3.34	Reliving behaviours and customs (cloths, local games, foods, language and dialect, using horse, ...)	1
	Develop and build modern places with traditional style (parking, green space, landscape)	7
		1
		9
		2
		0
		2
		1
		2
		2

Matrix of evaluation of situation and strategic act (Space) for tourism industry of Meymand village:

A) Specifying factors of financial support

Score	Factor	
2	Capital yield	1
3	Pressure (financial tool)	2
1	Capability of converting to money	3
4	Capital in circulation	4
3	Cash	5
1	Easiness in existing from the system	6
1	Existing risks	7
1	Money flow	8
16.8=2	Average	

B) Factors specifying environment stability (ES)

Score	Factor	
-2	Change in technology of rural tourism industry	1
-4	Inflation rate in rural tourism industry	2
-4	Change in demand	3
-3	Competition degree in rural tourism	4
-4	Existing obstacles to enter into industry	5
-2	Completion pressure in industry	6
-2	Demand flexibility against price	7
-21.7=3	Average	

C) Factors specifying the strength of rural tourism industry (IS)

Score	Factor	
2	Potential growth of industry	1
3	Potential interest of industry	2
4	Financial stability of industry	3
5	Required skill	4
5	Utilizing resources	5
4	Capital density	6
3	Easiness of entering the industry	7
5	Utilization & using of resources	8
4	Others (flexibility against market variations)	9
36.9=4	Average	

D) Factors specifying the competitive advantage of rural tourism (CA)

Score	Factor	
-4	Rural tourism share among general tourism	1
-3	Services quality	2
-2	Training courses cycle	3
-2	Substitution cycle in industry process	4
-3	Faithfulness to the customers	5
-3	Use the competition capacity	6
-3	Technology private knowledge	7
-4	Vertical integration	8
-24.8=3	Average	

Results:

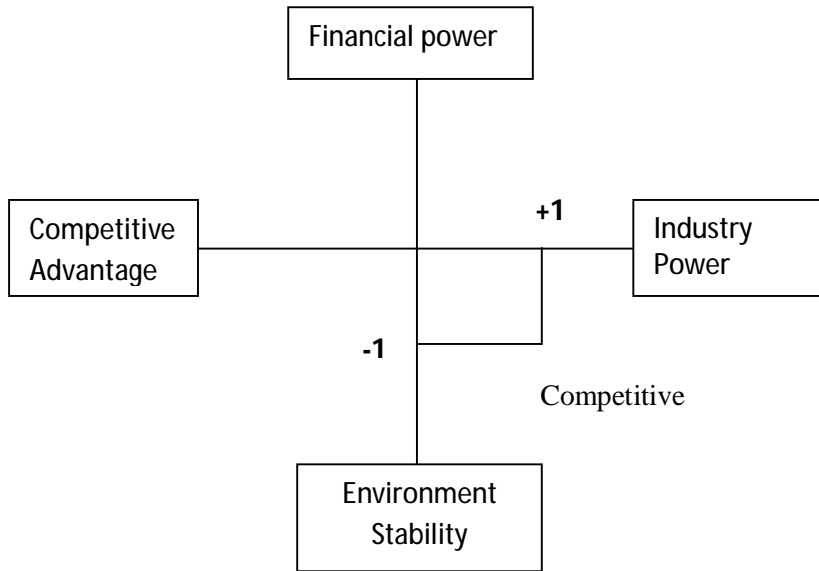
- the point on the X axis

$$CA+IS=4+ (-3) =1$$

- the point on Y axis

$$ES+FS= -3+2=-1$$

Matrix of evaluating situation and strategic act for rural tourism industry



Rural tourism industry should implement a competitive strategy.

Rural tourism industry in such a position (competitive) requires financial resources to increase its share, increase the strength of the industry, and extend and improve the processes.

Conclusion and recommendations:

Considering the Meymand village, especially the Dastkand oasis, which is one of the rare attractions of the world and regarding other strong points mentioned through the research and also based on the results in which threats like villagers' migration, insufficient NGO investment facilities are the most important threats, it should be tried by means of the mentioned strategies to utilize the weak and strong points – optimise the opportunities and reduce the threats.

Furthermore, the research results delineated that the strategy "*extensive utilization of native methods to repair, construct, reconstruct and internal architecture of Meymand village*" devotes the most important primacy of rural tourism development strategic planning of Meymand to itself.

Moreover, the matrix of evaluating situation and strategic act of rural tourism industry delineates that this industry should implement a competitive strategy.

In conclusion, regarding the research results the following is recommended:

- A) Present a report of SWOT analysis related to all touristic villages throughout the country

and the related strategies should be introduced and implemented.

- B) Design rural tourism industry within future 20 years.
- C) Design and implement moral charter for rural tourism.
- D) Regarding effectiveness of designed strategies, it is recommended that organizations and executives of the tourism industry attempt to implement the designed strategies regarding presented primacies.

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2/14/2011