THE PLACE OF SUSTAINABILITY IN IRAN TOURISM PLANNING

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ABSTRACT
This paper analyzes theoretical conception of sustainable development, sustainable tourism and principles of sustainable development. The place of sustainability in Iran plans is discussed. Sustainable tourism concept and principles, which highlight peculiarities of sustainable tourism conception as compared to general sustainable concept, are presented, and the planning of tourism in Iran's four five–year development programs is presented.

KEYWORDS: Iran, sustainable development, sustainable tourism development,

INTRODUCTION
Tourism is one of the world's largest industries. For developing countries; it is also one of the biggest income generators (Earth summit, 2002). Tourism is alive with dynamic growth, new activities, new destination, new technology, new markets, and rapid changes (Goeldner et al., 2003). The tourism industry is global; it is big business and will continue to growth (Grundey, 2008). Over the past decade, many developing countries have turned to tourism as an option for sustainable development (Jules, 2005); But it is important to see how sustainable conception, its principles and subtleties can be included and developed in the context of tourism infrastructure. Iran located in Middle East, in a unique situation with rich culture and beautiful natural landscapes which allow it to develop the tourism industry. Since Iran has an opportunity to grow the tourism industry and use it's economically benefits, it is necessary to establish a system, which can help planners to plan in a way that protect region peculiarities and cultural identity. It is important to create a plan for Iran which includes the sustainable concept and its principles to find a way to achieve harmony in economical and ethical levels as well as in tourism. The aim of this research is to disclose the concept of sustainable tourism, its principles and to discuss the place of tourism in Iran and possibilities of playing sustainable tourism development in Iran tourism sector.

Sustainability and sustainable tourism
Definitions of sustainable tourism development have two components; the meaning of development and the conditions of necessary for sustainability. Development is "around"; it includes human and institutional change as well as economic growth. The emphasis of sustainable development is to carry development achievement into the future in such a way that future generations are not left worse off (Tosun, 2001). The concept of "Sustainable Development" was introduced widely in to business and economic through the Brundtland Commission report "Our Common Future". Although the concept has been mostly used in relation to ecosystems and natural environment, recent efforts have attempted to apply it to the built environment and incorporate social and cultural aspects for "Sustainable Tourism" (Rabady and Jamal, 2006). The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines sustainable tourism as a concept that applies to all types of tourism. Further the underlying philosophy is to strike a balance and foment a veritable give and take, so that tourism: (1) relies on the optimal use of environmental resources, (2) exudes respect for the host communities, (3) Yields an equal distribution of socio-economic benefits amongst all those involved, (4) foments open and inclusive participatory decision-making processes, and (5) ensure high level of satisfaction of the tourists (Blanco & others, 2007). Studies and researches about tourism and sustainable tourism in Iran fulfilled not in the applied form; it is most often because as this concept became popular in the world; the goals and values of this concept have not applied in the strategic plans in Iran.

Principles of Sustainable Tourism Development
The principles of sustainable tourism system support sustainable tourism system and defectiveness of the model [fig.1] (Grundey, 2008).
Economic

The principles of the development of sustainable tourism

Environmental

- Preservation of biodiversity
- Control of natural resources
- Maintenance of ecosystem functions
- Effectual environment control

Figure 1. Principles of sustainable tourism development

Table 1. Principles of sustainable tourism development vs. sustainable tourism development

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<tr>
<th>Principles of sustainable development</th>
<th>Principles of sustainable tourism development</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. To understand environment limits: Damaging and irretrievable effects on the surrounding environment and natural resources has a big danger for mankind Therefore, it is necessary to set out the limits of usage of natural resources.</td>
<td>1. Ecological sustainability: Development must be combined to objective to reserve the main ecological systems, variety and unique of landscape and natural resources.</td>
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<td>2. To develop open and supportive system of economy: Sustainable development needs global system of economy, which promotes economic growth. Conditions, which assure the effective use of resources and development of business in all countries in the world, are necessary.</td>
<td>2. Economic sustainability: Development must be effective and beneficial economically, and all resources must be controlled in order to preserve them for the future generation.</td>
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<td>3. To fight against poverty and social inequality: Sustainable development requires solving the problem of poverty .it is necessary to help the developing countries to fight against poverty and social inequality.</td>
<td>3. Local sustainability: Development must be beneficial for local societies and must guarantee economical benefit for local regions.</td>
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<td>4. To assure welfare of the people: Welfare of the people is the main aim of sustainable development; people deserve to live in healthy and productive harmony with nature.</td>
<td>4. Cultural sustainability: Development must promote control in a person's life, it must be combined with local culture and cultural values; besides, it must help to reserve and strengthen cultural identity.</td>
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According to Holden, two aspects differentiate sustainable tourism development: Sustainable development does not have negative effect on environment and cultural heritage; Sustainable development must assure that bigger part of economic benefit stays in local tourism development includes four main principles, which are connected to principles of sustainable development (Table1) (Grundey, 2008).

The natural environment is an important resource for tourism. As the scale of tourism grows, the resource use threatens to become unsustainable. Some of the different kinds of impacts that tourism and operational activities can have includes:

- Threats to ecosystems and biodiversity
- Disruption of coasts
- Deforestation
- Water overuse
- Urban problems
- Exacerbate climate change
- Unsustainable and inequitable resource use (Earth Summit, 2002).

Nature–base tourism operations have a particular responsibility towards their natural environment in terms of ensuring ecologically sensitive land and habitat management and conserving biodiversity (DEAT, 2003). Tourism emerged from being a relatively small-scale activity into a global economic sector from the 1960s on worlds (Tules, 2005). Economic gains have been a major driving force for the growth of tourism in developing countries. Despite the negative economic impacts of tourism, the demand for travel and tourism continue to growth (Earth Summit, 2002). Tourism multipliers are based on the assumption that tourism spending in distributed across other economic sectors. The idea is that tourism activity is not a separate activity but located within the whole economic industry and is interconnected with other sectors (Nithanyuruwa, 2006). There is widespread agreement that very little of tourism revenue actually remains in the local economy because of “leakages”. Leakage from tourism can be a) Internal, or import–related; b) External, or pre leakage; and c) Invisible leakage associated with resource damage or degradation. Internal leakage is highest where there are insufficient backward and forward leakages between tourism and other related sector of the economy. In most developing countries, the average internal leakage is 40 to 50 percent of gross tourism earning from more advanced and diversified economics. External leakage refers to tourism revenue that is not captured by the destination country and is of greater concern among researchers (Jules, 2005). Experts of tourism Industry believe that Iran tourism potentiality and advantages are in a way that with a systematic planning and generation of national harmony can remove the negative factors and consequently can help the growth and development of tourism in this country; which certainly end to improved economic conditions. Tourism industry, in addition to raise the country’s foreign exchange, can play an important role in national growth of Iran, because this industry with creation of a new series of activities in the society, activate the other part of economic sectors. It is clear that transport, food stuffs, fuel and energy, handcraft, and building sectors will improve following the tourism industry. Tourism impact on local population is another key sustainability issues. Another significant impact is on the commodification of cultures (Jules, 2005).

Tourism activities can degrade the social and natural wealth of community. Fears of tourism threatening local cultures can be misplaced and many cultures have proved resilient enough to be able to take rapid changes required by tourism in their communities visited by tourists can (or have to) adapt surprising quickly. The intrusion of large numbers of uniformed foreigners in to local social systems can undermine preexisting social relationships and values (Earth Summit, 2002). One of the most important aspects of sustainable development is insistence of society–base tourism. This approach has advantages for local communications, and uses the techniques to guarantee local people will take the most advantages of tourism (Sadr- moosavi, 2004). Tourism industry supply different businesses and activities. According to experts of tourism with entrance of a tourist up to five occupations will come to existence. Careful to Iran potentials, which can accept six million tourists, with a simple counting we can say that by developing tourism industry in Iran most of the unemployed will find job. On the other hand tourism can play an important role for justly division of incomes between different regions (Momenn, 2001). It should be consider that the term “sustainable development” has come to present and encompass a set of principles, policy prescriptions, and management methods, and originated from developed countries. Actually they fail to provide a conceptual vehicle for policy formulation to progress sustainable development in developing countries (Tosun, 2001); so in Iran as a developing country it is important to coordinate sustainable tourism principles to its local conditions.
Tourism in Iran

Iran is located in southwestern Asia and covers the land area of more than 1,648,000. Iran's archaeology, cultural heritage, traditions and natural characteristics are among the main factors which attract inbound tourists to Iran (Zamani-Farahani, 2008); from long time ago Iran was one of the touristry places, Different and important travel accounts show the oldness of tourism in Iran. Before 1935, there isn’t any organization for tourism in Iran. "Tourism attraction and advertisement" was founded in ministry of interior in 1935. But from that time till now; the responsible organization for tourism in Iran has confronted many changes from its name and its structure to its objectives and policies (Faghri, 2007). Six years later (1941), this office was renamed to "Tourism High Council" and then in 1954 it changes again to Tourism Affairs Organization. In 1963 an Organization called Tourist's Attraction Center -affiliated to prime minister – was set up. From 1969 to 1977, International tourist entrance to Iran has been increased. From1978 to 1986, concordant with revolution and war in Iran, it became to decrease. From1988 on, after war, it became to increase again; but this increase of tourism in Iran in comparison with its potentials, is really nothing. Experts of tourism Industry believe that Iran is among world's top ten countries, but Iran has just 1/500 of world tourism industry (Heidary chianeh, 2003), the share of Iran's from income of tourism industry in the world is just 0.04 % (Faghri, 2007).

Table 2. Tourism in developmental master plans of Iran

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<th>PLAN</th>
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<td>Fourth five years plan</td>
<td>Consist of increasing number of tourists to 520000, prolong median stay time of international tourists to at least 8 days and also equipping the tourism roads</td>
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| Fifth five years (1972-1976)              | • Special attention to domestic and create average and cheap stay installations  
                                      | • Giving long-time loans with low interests to private sector in order to encouraging them to invest  
                                      | • Creating more facilities in playing, resting and tourist recreations. |
| First development master plan of IRI (1989-1993) | • Advertising Iranian's culture and civilization to the world  
                                      | • Create appropriate fields to issue Islamic revolution via tourism development  
                                      | • Create suitable fields of traveling Iranians to abroad and improving and extension of Hajj and holly pilgrim's works  
                                      | • Increasing number of tourists from 80000 in 1989 to 318000 in the last year of program  
                                      | • Increasing number of domestic tourists who are going to abroad to 830000 in the last of program year |
| Second program of IRI development (1994-1996) | Encourage the private sector to invest in tourism industry |
| Third program of IRI development          | • To introduce Iran and Islamic eminent values and culture to world lings.  
                                      | • Merger of tourism and Iran – touring organizations and country's culture heritage in order to move harmony in direction of cultural identity power, strengthen national unity, extending ultra section duties and increasing their utilized activities  
                                      | • Applying statistical system and suitable news transmission to cultural, natural and tourism heritage development and increasing popular cooperation. |

Nowadays, the important problem of tourism planning is the extent of influences which are different from a legal planning. These negative influences are seen in different economic, Socio-cultural and environmental dimensions. So in all macro and micro planning in all international, national and local levels, the influences of relevant factors should be considered. It is obvious that Iran is not an exception (Harrison, 1992). For the first time, in the fourth development program (1962-1966) of Iran, a special place was allocated to tourism. This was continued till 1978. After the victory of Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1978 and the starting of the imposed Iran-Iraq war, tourism industry of Iran was badly
damaged due to the political crises and war. But from the first development plan of the country after the Islamic Revolution, tourism was taken in to consideration once again (Faghri, 2007). The first development program after the revolution started in 1989, in this year tourism industry was in the worse condition in the interval between the fifth developmental program and the first one after revolution .the number of tourism and following that exchange income, on average, decreased 8% annually. Thus the number of tourists coming to Iran in 1988 was equal to 70000 dollars. In these years many facilities and services went out of activity and this industry faced a deep recession (Faghri, 2007). The purposes of developmental plans in Iran are showed in Table2 : (extracted from Heidarabadi, 2007).

Actually none of the elements of tourism planning approach(i.e. system approach; comprehensive approach; integrated approach; environmental & sustainable development approach; community approach; continuous, incremental and flexible approach; implementable approach and application of a systematic planning process) are not observed in the four five – year tourism development plans of Iran. These four tourism development plans, has not any item or policy about sustainability which is vital aspect of any planning for development especially for tourism development. Actually the plan's leakages in Iran can listed as follows:

- The protection of both natural environment and cultural heritage is crucial for tourism development of Iran.
- The concept of carrying capacity and its necessity was not mentioned in tourism development plans of Iran.
- Another weakness of these plans is their inflexibility.
- These plans were weak and powerless about important aspects like identification of target of market and marketing.
- No existence of attention to monitoring.

There is no doubt about tourism industry’s problems in Iran which are based on the insignificant role of government in tourism development, absence of conceptual background in tourism concept, internal establishments, plurality of policy decision centers in tourism topics, the Third world political economy, insalubrities of socio cultural systems absence of tourism regulation right and lack of tourism planning in local and regional levels. The expansion of “sustainable tourism” concept and precisely provision of its infrastructure has not defined well in Iran. The importance of notice and discussion about attractive areas, protection of cultural identity, and prevention of damaging natural resources in Iran should be considered in all tourism plans. Iranian's planners should remember this general rule which says “the development would not appear unless the sustainability principles were accepted and followed in all levels”. This needs cooperation between responsible organizations, system thinking and suitability with national, regional and local planning. According to sustainable tourism principles, a strategic tourism plan is necessary for Iran.

One of the practical ways for Iran tourism development is using other countries experience about tourism, their methods and findings; which help us to understand tourism development strategy. But geographical, economic, and social conditions of Iran should be considered. In addition to exact recognition of national touristry resources, extraction of positive and negative aspects of tourism in Iran should be done. This will help planners to create a powerful tourism strategy with respect to sustainable tourism development. On the other hand to improve sustainable tourism plans in Iran the importance of tourism management and government role should be considered. Tourism development choices must balance between national and local needs, public and private sectors, host and communities, civil society, tourists, and mass media. Sustainable tourism development thus presents a very complex task in Iran.

A world tourism organization report on the role of local authorities noted that local authorities have a key role to play in many aspects of tourism development and operations. It is essential that government should do much more work to engage more pro-activity with sectors than in past, but in doing so it must work in partnership with other levels of government, host communities and the tourism industry. This involves:

• Establishing national tourism objectives that reflect the unique character, opportunities and constraints.
• Developing a shared vision of what type of tourism is wanted and how to achieve that goal.
• Establishing a policy framework to achieve those objectives.
• Developing in collaboration with others, guidelines, policies, and practices for both new tourism projects and the management of ongoing tourism activities.
• Working with the academy, educational institutions and other organizations in education, training and development programs. (Mckercher, 2003).
Actually in Iran, new methods of managements and leadership need to be investigated for sustainable tourism; so the plan making bodies should develop constructive dialogues with stakeholders and key players in the tourism sector. Consequently, sustainable tourism is based on management to introduce a unique industry in sustainable development process. This management uses the knowledge to enter different type of tourism in sustainable tourism chain (Moslemian, 2006).

**Turning Iran sustainable tourism in to reality**

The development of tourism infrastructure is not enough superiority of Iran as tourism region. It is necessary to discuss the issues of region individuality; control of cultural identity; the most important is to avoid losing unique Iran landscapes. Development of “Regional Tourism Planning” in Iran is necessary. It is important to realize that tourism development is possible only when all levels of the structure of organization is suitable and relations are coordinated. Permanent and realization of tourism strategy are very important for Iran to compete on international tourism market. The principles of sustainable tourism development which are important in tourism management in Iran should be considered in application process. Generally, with respect of sustainable tourism principles, the sustainable tourism principles for Iran can be listed as follows:

**Ecological Sustainability**

Tourism development should be coordinate with natural heritage protection and ecological systems plans. This can achieved by formulating national, regional and local tourism policies and development strategies that are consistent with overall objectives of sustainable development; Instituting baseline environmental impact assessment studies; Insuring that the design, planning, development and operation of facilities incorporate sustainability principles; Ensuring tourism in protected areas, is incorporated into and subject to sound management plans; Monitoring and conduct research on the actual impacts of tourism; Identifying acceptable behavior among tourists and effective environmental control.

**Economic sustainability**

From partnership throughout the entire supply chain from micro-sized local businesses to multinational organization; Use internationally approved and reviewed guidelines for training and certification; Promote among clients an ethical and environmentally conscious behavior; Diversity the product by developing a wide range of tourist activities; Contribute some of the income generated to assist in training; ethical marketing and product development; Provide financial incentives for businesses to adopt sustainability principles. Economic development of Iran is based on its endogenous development and providing of powerful economic infrastructures which without any doubt is a long –term process.

**Local sustainability**

Tourism development should never result in economically un-development regions in Iran; but by making good national and regional policies, leave positive and effective socio economical influences on regions. So the community should maintain control over tourism development and tourism should provide quality employment to community residents. Tourism development in Iran must be based on increasing people’s quality of life in local and national levels; and could provide financial incentives for local businesses to enter tourism. Finally, local human resources capacity should improve to be able to plan a sustainable program.

**Cultural sustainability**

Tourism development in Iran should never damage its national and cultural identity; but should strengthen them and improve individual life quality. Education and training programs to improve and manage heritage and natural resources should be established to respect land and property rights of traditional inhabitants. In this stage in addition to training local human resources, cultural information and training should be taught to tourists; so they will know the cultural identity of country before traveling. Strengthening, educating and encouraging communities to protect traditional and national resources and identity can help to achieve sustainable goals in Iran. When studies and researches consider the sustainability principles in Iran, development of sustainable tourism according to its potentials, certainly will be practicable.
CONCLUSION
Sustainable development might have different forms. The use of strategy means accepting of its form in all aims and programs. Actions of tourism in a tourism region should be based on the principles of sustainable development; these are ecological, cultural, economic and local sustainability. It is important for establishing the strategies of sustainable development to use "Agenda 21" for the application of sustainable development for evaluating economic, social, ecological, political and institutional aspects. Today Tourism Industry of Iran needs a revolution and change in its structure, the planning and policy making according to new trends of the industry and socio-cultural and political situation of the country. It is really essential to study tourism in a systematic approach; with paying attention to understanding the nature of the processes and activities that both surrounded and occur within the tourism system.

REFERENCES