Tourism Security and Legality in the Persian Gulf: Viewpoint of I. R. Iran

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Abstract

Today attention to legal regulations is one of the contributory factors to the development of tourism industry. Legality is located on the base of legislations which clarify tourists and host communities mutual responsibilities and rights, and its goal is organizing supply activities of tourism in a sustainable way. In any society tourism is influenced by politics and economy, so providing long term security is a major concern of any government and establishing security and legality are preferred. The Persian Gulf is one of the most important strategic waterways in the world. Geo-politically, geo-economically and geo-strategically it has been considered an important and sensitive region during past centuries. This region possesses high potential and capacity to develop tourism industry. As such, in this paper features and components of security and security challenges facing tourism industry are described first and then role of government in providing security in accordance with safety issues in the world, security and tourism in the Persian Gulf are described. The research is based on descriptive-analytical method, documents and library studies. Results identify contributory factors to establish tourist's security and accurate policy making by government toward creating political security within and outside of the country and its effect on tourism development in the Persian Gulf.

Keywords: Security, Tourism, Legality, Tourist's right, Persian Gulf, Islamic Republic of Iran

1. Introduction

Sustainable growth of tourism depends on good performance of tourism cycle and several elements that interact together to form tourism system. Each element is important and is associated with other components. Security is one of the most important elements. In a close relationship, security and tourism are related to each other in both internal and external relations. There is a direct relationship between security and tourism. Security increase leads to tourism development and tourism development can increases security. Today security is considered as the most important principle in formulating development tourism strategy. Due to geo-political, geo-economic and geo-strategic position, the Persian Gulf region has been considered as the most important and sensitive region during past centuries. This region with beautiful beaches and unique marine ecosystems has high potential to become one of the largest tourism centers in the world. Regarding the relationship between tourism and security, obviously, one of the
fundamental prerequisites for achieving such a goal, established stability and security in the region.

Nations with big powers consider their own national security and interest ahead of regional security despite the fact costs are associated for the region. Convergence, common factors among countries of the region such as cultural, historical, religious and geographical subscriptions, ethnic ties, and economic benefits are better than divergence and differences. These subscriptions make opportunities for cooperation among countries of the region especially security cooperation. Special situation of the Persian Gulf demand countries to pursue stability and avoid unpleasant situation in the region. I.R. of Iran has proposed cooperation for security in the Persian Gulf region and it is ready for negotiating and finding proper way toward achieving such goal. Cultural, historical and social subscriptions among nations of the region, economic, commercial and tourism cooperation and policies for cooperation and creating confidence at regional and international levels can make an opportunity to forming a comprehensive and useful security system in the Persian Gulf.

The first step toward realization of joint security plan in the Persian Gulf is emphasizing on the relaxation and creating confidence. Comprehensive cooperation and joint plans are important. Some subjects of such plan are as follows:

- Free trade contracting and providing special facilities for tourists traffic in the region.
- Mutual or multilateral cooperation among military forces of the countries about subjects such as combating terrorists and organized crimes and
- Tourist Security

Presence of foreign military forces in the Persian Gulf always leads to creating stress and isolation of countries. Cooperation among countries of the region must be established on the basis of confidence in self-ruling for creating security and stability in the Persian Gulf and it must terminate presence of foreigners in the region. Regional security process in the Persian Gulf must be obtained through empathy. Islamic Republic of Iran always tries to create a general security system and formulate local structure through participation of regional countries. Endorsing mutual agreements and memorandums understanding about security in the past years, is a testimonial of such achievements.

War, terrorism, insecurity, border guarding, severe regulations about visa, ideological conflicts among countries were challenges about tourism in the past and these factors will remained toward the future. Although most factors such as social norms, religious and cultural values, dependence on oil revenue and centralized administrative-political system, governments not only in tourism policy making but also in implementation phase, are important obstacles against robust tourism, it seems that security space in the Persian Gulf and concentration of powers outside the region, affect foreign tourists' attitude to visiting tourism attractions of the region.

Due to the position of the Persian Gulf region in the global opinions, many considerable studies about the region have been done and most researchers in within and outside the country have tried to analyze this important region from different aspects. Specially in recent years due to increasing pressures of propaganda in order to distort historical name and identity of the Persian Gulf, Iranian authors and researchers have tried to combat against such negative propaganda. Because of special geographical and political position of the Persian Gulf and due to the insecurity created in the past, today establishing security in the region has been considered. Many articles have been also written about tourism and each of them has studied tourism capabilities of the Persian Gulf.

In this article, assuming a positive and direct relationship between "tourism development" and "security" variables, role of the security in tourism development process of the Persian Gulf is described next.
2. Regularity and Security

"Security" means avoiding any stress and anxiety which leads to disturbing the peace of mind. "Security establishment" includes providing desirable situation and normal conditions in the society by police forces in the framework of the law and by the objective of protection of ethnic-social values and protecting individual and social benefits (Validi, 1999).

From the view point of tourism, security includes all affairs which are done toward preventing disturbance in tourism activities. It means establishing normal conditions that help tourists to visit attractions in a desirable way.

Feeling of Security: Feeling of Security has some aspects. It has two individual and collective fields, and includes various aspects such as livelihood, legal and psychological aspects (Kolahchian, 2005).

Government and Diplomacy:

Governors’ look may be within prospective or outside prospective. Governors consider their national and economic benefits according to the global community and participate in unions and international groups or they may look for exogenous development.

Today one government will be successful if it looks for its national interests and political power. To apply tourism potentials, income, job opportunities and cultural and social gradation in international tourism market, need to comprehensive consideration of the governments. Some measures such as removing limitations, assigning special privileges to tourists, enjoying of limited freedom in food, beverages and recreation in beaches, license for building facilities and nightclubs, allow international companies to act in the field of food and beverage, establishing branches for owners of international brands to offer shoes, clothing and other tourist requires, assigning flights to the special air lines to accelerate transportation, special coupes in the rail transport and customs exemptions are examples of measures taken by government to develop tourism in their countries. Today tourists choose places as tourism destination that possess minimum of freedom, facilities and defined standards. Diplomacy is considered as art of creating opportunities and using dialogue properly to advance strategic objectives of governments.

Creative and experienced diplomats possess high power for analysis in facing political and economic problems. They can change threatened situation to have opportunity. Undoubtedly diplomacy in tourism industry plays an important role in penetrating in the market of investors and origin countries.

Chart(1): Theoretical Framework of security features

The Chart demonstrates security features.
- **Comprehensive** means that its work field is large and comprehensive
- **Inseparability** means that lack of any dimension hurts security
- **Intrinsic** means no need for reason
- **Limited to justice** in I.R. Iran means that it includes divine commandments about right, parity and mutual responsible of governor and nation
- **Correlation** among security and social and individuals values includes media propaganda, society public opinion and political powers
- **Conceptual** means that existence of security is the best tool to achieve concept of conceptual security (Pour Asadi, 2009)
Identifying market characteristics, transferring latest economic and political developments, professional meetings with travel and tourism agencies in destinations in order to introduce tourism attractions and facilities of the country, active participation in international exhibitions and festivals, tourism agreements and protocols in the field of development and tourism exchanges are cases that need active diplomacy of the countries which are interested in attracting investment and tourists. Country's weak diplomacy in tourism and avoiding continuous communication with decision centers in target markets- public and private sectors - leads to failure of private sector marketing efforts.

Iran has been located in the list of the yellow and dangerous regions in the world because of lack of government's attention to this issue in the past years. In recent years countries such as Japan, Italy, Britain, South Korea and the United States recommended their citizens not travel to Iran. It shows weak and ineffective diplomacy. Fundamentally, economic and cultural consultations of any country in the world are marketers of goods and cultural productions including tourism productions. If diplomacy apparatus of the country only considers political issues and doesn’t consider economic and cultural aspects- such as tourism- undoubtedly relevant experts themselves will be obstacle to tourism development. Today active diplomacy prevents any false news such as introducing a country insecure, improper dealing with tourists, and creating sanctions conditions and enlisting a country in the country list –Yellow, Black and warnings.

3. Security, the Most Important Contributory Factor to Attract Tourist

Today tourism is beyond classic and traditional borders and it is possible to establish a relation between tourism and other fields. Tourism industry and security concept have mutual relation and effectiveness. Tourism will be realized only with security development. When a government encounters security turmoil in its own borders, the importance of security will appear. Tourism attractions of the country lose beauty but security and stability can play an important role in tourism development. In the other word, the most important tourism attraction in a country is security. Security impact on tourism has been discussed frequently, but there aren't many researches about tourism impact on security. According to the statistics and information, one of the main causes for criminal behaviors and social anomyes is economic deprivation. Material incentives are always one of the most prevalent factors to diverted behaviors. Most criminals are forced to act against law, because of relative or absolute deprivation. It violates security principles. Industries can affect security distribution on the basis of its capacity and capability in employment , income and increasing economic efficiency. On the basis of such mechanism tourism as a successful and efficient industry can obtain this result. Since security-tourism equation bidirectional in a bipolar continuum it can be inferred that a secure country has an active tourism industry. A country can eliminate criminal intensiveness by investing in tourism industry. There is a considerable relation between tourism and security. At first, concept of feeling of security is analyzed. For this reason psychological basis must be considered because feeling of security is a psychological- social phenomenon and has various dimensions. Different people experience feeling of security in different ways. Some times security structure of society and indices show high level of security but social space interpretation and information about others, locate people in a special psychological situation, because they feel insecure regardless of social and economic structures. In contrast often people live in an insecure space but they don’t feel insecure. Feeling of security is related to the economic, political and cultural elements in a society.
True or false interpretation and experiences about social situation sets feeling of security on a spectrum from true and real sense of security to the false and unrealistic sense. Is this feeling of security real or unrealistic? In most cases despite on existence of security, there is unrealistic insecurity. So tourism can affect security because tourism development itself displays existence of security in society. Presence of tourist in a country unconsciously empowers feeling of security and psychological security. Often there are two reasons for security reduction for tourists and host community. First reason is misleading propaganda about security space of a country. Second reason is inefficient managerial operations. Second reason is a raw material for first reason. But despite of said reasons, desirable symbols in tourism growth and development will make symbols of security in national and international minds and leads to feeling of security. The main reasons of our vulnerability are resulted from feeling of insecurity, international misleading advertisement and sensitive geophysical and strategic location of the Persian Gulf, political instability in countries of the region and lack of a systematic plan in comprehensive tourism management for attracting tourists increases this feeling of insecurity. These reasons lead to degradation of tourism industry. This kind of security appears in the context of cultural concepts of tourism, so overcoming mechanism depends on cultural institutions that enforce feeling of security in the international tourism industry.

4. Security Challenges and Threats Facing Tourism:

In classification of violence behaviors against tourists, researchers try to introduce tourists as one of the key options and they set violent behaviors on both side of spectrum:
- General and common crimes for example theft, and violent attacks
- Organized political crimes such as terrorism and hostage taking (das Viek, 2000).

By looking at the two ranges of behaviors, nature and goals of such behaviors will be identified. Although in the violent attacks - mainly with economic objectives- feeling of insecurity will be transferred but according to the following two reasons, this kind of behaviors have not great influence in pretending destination unsafe.
- limited dimensions of violent behaviors and non-political reflections
- ability to direct and control these crimes by public policy making

Organized political crimes such as terrorism and hostage taking are discussed issues that not only according to the nature and objectives but also according to dimensions and objectives of activity, international reflections and weaknesses of governments to control these actions, are important.

Terrorists often claim that this is the only way and in reality, in the other word when other ways are failed, terrorism will be selected (Rish, 2001). Compared with other security challenges discussed in tourism, terrorism has had the most impact on tourism industry. There is a significant relation between expansion of political instability and growing trends of terrorist attacks against objectives of some countries.

After September 11, 2001, world public opinions notice Al Qaeda that threats interest of western countries specially United States of America in the Persian Gulf and world. Ignoring national borders of countries is an obvious feature of terrorist attack. Riots, theft and terrorism lead to tourists’ reluctance to visit some destinations. For understand tourism security process, current security risks must be considered and strategies for controlling negative impacts on tourism process must be analyzed. So the nature of security events must be understood first and its effects on tourism trends must be analyzed. In fact according to this problem, after gathering data about
According to the terrorist threats chart, 2% of terrorist attacks have been done against tourism. War and attacks have negative effects on host communities.

Political disturbances: these disturbances appear in the following forms:

1- Coup
2- Wide demonstrations
3- Riot
4- Turbulence

These incidents lead to decreasing tourism demand in the different points of the world. Events such as coup in Fiji, wide demonstrations against globalization and G8 conference, actions of the residents in western banks of Jordan River, actions of "Tamil Tigers" in Seri Lanka and etc. have had negative effects on tourism industry. Special models must be considered to identify amount and severity of such effects. Usually considering the number of security events in a time range can help in identify security risks. In the other hand, discovering terrorist incentives give important information about next objectives. These incentives are political, religious and economic incentives or enmity against tourists that destroy a tourism destination. There is a significant relation between security incidents affecting tourism. Identifying the level of incidents severity and their range is difficult and time consuming.

To identify places where security incidents happen is important Governments and investors try
to decrease security incidents effects and prevent of its spread to other places. Considering the geographical dimension of security incidents in tourism destination can facilitate planning toward decreasing these effects.

5. Government and Providing Tourism Security

Security issues can be more acute types of political issues (Bouzan et al., 2007). Tourism analysis from the view point of geo-economics and geo culture, needs to consider the political approaches. This two theories link economy and culture to the geopolitical and political space development. Tourism includes many economic and cultural dimensions and it can be considered as a tool for space development and consequently it leads to increase national power and international influences.

Although governments try to transfer tourism ownership from the public sector to the private sector, but their role in macro-planning in tourism is important. One of the intrinsic jobs of governments is to establish rudes and security. According to the government's planning and control, private sector and investors can work in tourism industry. So there is direct relation between establishing activities, establishing security, tourism stakeholders, and tourists. This relation shows tourists' expectations about a secure environment to spend leisure time. It is a fact that tourism industry can't continue to live without government's support, because only government can produce political security, legality, stability and needed financial infrastructures.

Government creates basic infrastructures and decides by negotiate and agreement with other countries about migration methods and the right to fly safely from air borders (Elliot, 1997). Thus government must try to provide a sustainable management system, proper policies and a control system. According to this fact that some factors which threaten tourists' security resulted from local security in tourism destination, so government with past experiences can decide for decreasing and eliminating these security threats. In other cases, security threats are resulted from exotic factors and criminal organizations or it is created by tourists.

In fact identifying security risks is one of the primary factors which tourism planners must consider. This identifying will be on the basis of geographical width, environmental experience and space analysis about security. Consequently a model of challenges and threats can be inferred and on the basis of such model governments can plan according to sustainable development. Six factors have been defined as travel obstacles:

1- Costs  
2- Shortage of time  
3- Physical conditions  
4- Family conditions  
5- Lack of attention or interest  
6- Fear and security

Unknown problems, usually lead to fear and stress. War, conflicts and negative policies of a region lead to fear for visitors (Alvani and Pirouzbakht, 2006). In fact government must try to eliminate fear in tourism industry.

6. Security and Tourism in the World:

By attention to government objective in tourism policy making importance of security elements in government objective will appear. Reasons for government interference in tourism are as follows:

Establishing national security by control tourism arrivals and departures, ensuring citizen security and health in other countries, keeping and continuing international ties on the basis of constitution, establishing security while tourists enter, stay, and leaving the country, global trust, acquiring legitimacy and advertising ideological principles (Ma'soomi, 2004).
Objective of terrorism and hostage taking is putting pressure on countries. In this case, tourist flows to other countries. Tourists tend to experience security during their travel but if there isn’t security they will chose other destination in future. Wars, boundary conflicts, military coup and crime are contributory factors to insecurity. Result is reduction in tourism flows. According to security problems in most countries of the Persian Gulf, a visa formality is difficult. There is a clear reason; these countries depends on oil revenue and they don’t need tourism incomes, so they understand the sensibility of their foreign policy resulting from attack to other countries, specially western countries and fear of this actions. But success or failure of tourism plans depends on establishing a secure and healthy environment for tourists. Security is a key element of tourism industry and logical management must try to create a secure environment (dos Veil, 2000).

Countries with security and political stability can use current potentials of tourism attractions and are experiencing a prosper economy, foreign exchange, international acceptability and legitimacy. They can introduce their culture and civilization to the world. But, countries with insecurity and political instability aren’t capable to use positive functions of tourism.

7. Security and Tourism in the Persian Gulf:

After 1990, two important events have had sever impact on security stability as one of the main elements of tourism industry in the Persian Gulf. First event refers to the first war of the Persian Gulf and military attack by America and its allies to Iraq in 1999. According to WTO estimations, tourism growth in 1990 compared with 1991 was -7.1% and at the same time tourism growth in the world was 0.7%. Second event refers to shock was experienced by America. Tourism arrivals growth of America was -4.7 in 2001. These two events have had negative effects on tourism industry in the Persian Gulf region. This point can be inferred that although all countries are affected by political instability in international fields but in countries where there are war and insecurity negative impacts will be more severe.

8. Role of Iran's Policies in the Persian Gulf Security:

According to the geography and culture, Iran is in the heart of the Middle East. Iranian's cultural background compared with other countries located in the Persian Gulf region, its religious identity and economic capabilities affect this region and the world. Iran as a bridge between east and west always was considered by countries and civilizations in the world. This role between continents and proximity to the Persian Gulf where is a place to transit oil cargo, increase importance of Iran for other countries, therefore any political revolution in this region leads to raising global sensitivities. Because of playing important role in the region, exchanges in the world and deep impacts on political-economic evolution in subcontinent-Central Asia and Indian Ocean-Mesopotamia and Anatolia, transit situation of Iran has been advanced into a special geopolitical statues.

On the other hand, discovering huge sources resulted from fossil fuel in the Persian Gulf and
industrial need to these sources lead to trafficking of ships carrying fuel in the Persian Gulf through Hormoz Channel. So, Iran's geopolitical situation changed into a geostrategic situation in the world and therefore, according to fundamental evolution in global economy, politics and culture and communities integration, common economic and political interests, today human under the effect of globalization, increases excitability and reactions to unusual developments in the international system. Thus with emphasizing on keeping security and stability of global system, any less important event in a corner of the world may lead to wide reflexes. According to the important role of Iran in evolutions of region and international system, powerful governments carefully followed Iran evolutions in the national and international levels. Any crisis can lead to creation of insecurity in the big marine and tourism routes. It shows that stability and security in Iran is important for worlds.

Combining multiple situations in the region infrastructure for Iran leads to creating unique and dangerous situation for country. As discussed, this situation on one hand guarantees security, stability and economy and on the other hand leads to insecurity, instability, and wasting opportunities and potentials (Akbarpour, 2008).

9. Security in Foreign Policy of I.R. Iran:

The most important objective of Iran's foreign policy is realization of global integrated nation. Islamic Revolution wants Revolution continuing out of its borders by expanding international relations with other Islamic movements until establish a global nation, and according to principle 154 of constitution, Iran's foreign political objective must be within this line (Mohammadi, 1998). For this reason, there is no way except for fighting against global arrogance. Concept of Arrogance in I.R. Iran refers to countries that want to rule political, economic and cultural sectors. Government of I.R. Iran believes that these dominating countries want to destroy global justice, and security. It believes that the current regime of governing the world needs to be changed and a new system needs to be substituted on the basis of Islamic justice and equality (Iran president's speeches in the general conference of United Nations, September, 2008).

Iran's government believes that presence of America in the Persian Gulf and other regions is colonial and it is an obstacle against global peace, security and development (Sajedi, 2007). Because Iran's economy is on the basis of oil export and Iran's trade is done broadly via the Persian Gulf waterway and also according to objectives such as energy, commercial maritime and tourism, the Persian Gulf is one of the main elements to achieving foreign policy objectives. Iran is deemed as a portal in the international field. So security in the Persian Gulf is important for Iran. Presence of foreign powers in the Persian Gulf always has been a threat for national security of Iran. Iranian governors believe that presence of foreigners leads to disturbance in the region (sajedi, 2009).

10. Conclusion:

Today existence of insecurity in any corner of the world will lead to global reflection. Authors' objective
was explaining position and role of security elements in tourism development trends in the Persian Gulf. In this paper, influences of political instability, terrorism, hostage taking and other factors on tourism trend in this region were analyzed.

Findings show that during past years, tourism potentials of the countries in the Persian Gulf have been affected by unstable security, disturbing political stability, lack of effective policy, centralized political structure, low levels of regional cooperation, traditional role of boundaries, and ideological conflicts in countries where most of people are Muslim. But, role of political instability and widespread phenomena occurring in recent years, such as violent behaviors and terrorism attacks against international tourists, have had the most effect on abnormal situation of tourism industry in the region. According to this approach, regional countries have benefit very rarely from tourism revenues because of uncertainty of public and private sectors for investing in tourism industry. Thus, security as one of the variables affecting tourists attracting in the studied region, has had fluctuations in recent years. Without stable security, there is no promising vision for this growing industry in the region. Interdependence of countries has linked economy and security of all countries together. In the other word, problems of a part in the world can be transferred to other parts and damage interests of most members.

I.R. Iran because of its historical, geographical, human, economic and technologic reasons is the stability and security key of the region, never wants instability and insecurity in the Persian Gulf and as such security of the region is vital for it. What creates crisis in the region is differences in the Iran and United States attitudes about the security of the Persian Gulf. Iran wants that this region be free of foreign powers and proposes that region security must be achieved by countries of the region. The Persian Gulf Security and stability can be realized when the countries of the region understand mutual interactions and want to ensure their security in the Persian Gulf region.

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