

Full Length Research Paper

The application of planning model to the classification of villages with the potential of tourist attraction: A case study in Bandar Anzali city, Iran

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Accepted 29 March, 2010

One of the financial resources of each country is tourism industry. Iran, a great country in the Middle East, is undoubtedly one of the tourists attracting countries. There are 32 provinces in Iran, one of which is Guilan, located in the north with a moderate climate. There are 16 cities one of which is Bandar Anzali, located by the Caspian Sea. Bandar Anzali is actually one of the tourist attractions which appeals many tourists every year. In order to recognize tourism capacities, planning models can be used. The main goal of this paper is the study of the tourism potentials of villages of Bandar Anzali that will increase the rural tourism of this region. Using Gatman's developed model, the villages were ranked according to their capacities. The villages ranked one have the most capacities of tourism and the villages ranked two and three have the least capacities. The method in this survey is descriptive-analytical.

Key words: Rural tourism, tourism capacities, planning model, Bandar Anzali.

INTRODUCTION

With the advent of the age of information and technology, the term leisure time has assumed a new sense. This activity has transformed the tourism industry into one of the biggest elements for a stable economy in the process of development in different countries.

A critical issue is the guarantee for the quality and the performance of programs as much as the clients are satisfied. In the age of tourism, there are many demands for a desirable use of leisure time. Nowadays tourists are looking for a place where they can spend their free time, which make the villages the best places of attraction.

The villages in Bandar Anzali, Iran, enjoy nice weather, and fresh healthy food, attracting city people for their beautiful gardens and other views.

The development of tourism basically offers the most desirable grounds for the capital investment in the rural and remote areas. In fact, equal development is much

more easily achieved through the improvement of tourism. Generally, the tourism industry helps revive many of the forgotten customs and traditions. It is the various ethnics, races, dialects and languages related to tourism and rural tourism can actually support this beauty and help bring back prosperity to the societies.

One of the key elements in developing rural tourism is identifying the available potentials in each village. Learning about the capabilities of each region and spotting the obstacles to the performance of the programs play important roles in the economic, social and cultural development.

To recognize the tourism potential requires the application of different models of planning, and hereby an established program can be used to add to the attraction of rural tourism, leading to the improvement of economic capabilities and employment.

METHODOLOGY

The method applied in this paper is descriptive and analytical. It includes two parts. The first one uses documents and books and

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Figure 1. Rural houses in Thailand.

the second part which comprises large amount of the paper is field studies; it is done through questionnaires, interviews, observation and research.

RURAL TOURISM

It has been proved that the proportion of creating job opportunities as a result of each individual tourist is five to one. And in every minute 24 jobs are created due to tourism industry (Chn, 2004, p. 1). According to the predictions made by the World Tourism Organization, by the year 2020 the number of tourists from 625 million at present will reach 1.6 billion and the current tourism income of 445 billion dollars will be two trillion dollars. Thus, the first conclusion is that the tourism industry is one of the prosperous sources of wealth in the world. (Hamshahri, 2005).

And here it must be stressed that the rural tourism forms a significant part of national and international growth in the tourism business. Nowadays a great number of western and industrial countries contribute to the rural tourism and have managed to win high ranks in attracting the biggest number of rural tourists in the world. Turkey, for example, is one the countries which possesses lower potentials of tourism than Iran, but has attracted 10 times more tourists than Iran and the income of this is 35 times more than that of Iran. In 2000 such countries as Spain, and France were ranked the most successful countries in attracting tourists (Tahririyeh, 2003, p. 1).

Spain as a holiday sea resort is indebted to the tourist complexes which are located in the developed rural areas of the Mediterranean coast (Sharply, 2001, p. 169). The home residential areas known as Paradors are globally

famous. Paradors are very beautiful residential areas which attract 55 million tourists a year collecting over 38 billion dollars (Cyberspain, 2006).

Another country which has been successful in attracting rural tourists is Thailand (Figure 1). Thailand, known as the country of smiles, has very beautiful villages inside which are special camps for tourists to stay in. In these camps (whose rent is just USD 7 a night) the tourist gets acquainted with the village families while living with them and enjoys the local food they consume (Thai, 2006, p. 1 - 5).

Iran is also enriched with tourist attractions in the villages and Guilan, a province in the north, enjoys splendid scenery with the Caspian Sea and the lagoons making it as one of the most beautiful tourist attracting places. In Guilan, the most important area is the port city of Bandar Anzali, which has a high degree of capabilities as a resort place welcoming thousands of "summer-heat-stricken" people (Rahnamai, 1999, p. 54).

Located in the west of Guilan province between 37°, 20' and 37°, 34' North latitude and between the meridian of 49°, 15' and 49°, 48' east, Bandar Anzali is at -23 from the sea level. It is neighbored by the Caspian Sea to the north, by Rasht and Somesara to the South, by Rasht to the east and Talesh to the west (Guilan Province Geographical features, 1999, p. 24).

According to the consensus of 2006, the area of Bandar Anzali is about sq m 3089 with a population of 133134 (Political, Economic and Social Statistics, 2006, p. 51). It is composed of two sections and two villages named Chaharfarizeh and Lijarki Hassanrood. There are 28 residential villages. The first section, Chaharfarizeh, is composed of some small villages as follows: (1) Abkenar, (2) Mahroozeh, (3) Torbehbar (4) Eshpela (5) Karkan (6) Eshtarkan (7) Moaf (8) Khomeiran (9) Siahkhale sar (10) Shileh soar (11) Siah vazaan (12) Kachalak (13) Roodposht (14) Chaibijar (15) Koopoorchaal (16) Aliabadkapoor chaal (17) Koochak mahale (18) Sangachin (19) Galoogah (20) bashman (21) Karbalai Mehdi goodeh. The second area, Lijarki Hassanrood, is composed of some small villages as follows: (1) Golshan (2) Hassanrood (3) Lijarki Hassanrood (4) Talebabad (5) Torbegoodeh (6) Shanhaye pardeh (7) Jafrood Bain.

Most of the villages are located either around the lagoon or around the biggest lake of the world (the Caspian Sea), or are adjacent to both locations. Meanwhile the villages are of spectacular beauty due to the rice fields, orchards, natural pools and fish farms, which has helped attract many tourists every year especially in summer when they come to spend their holidays (Figure 2).

As it is known the rural tourism is of the most known type. A village is the first ring of residential attachment with the nature. For this reason it possesses the highest potentials of ecotourism. In addition, considering the fact that most people are farmers in villages and the majority of country agriculture is in villages, here comes agro tourism intermingled with rural tourism (Nemati, 2005, p. 83).

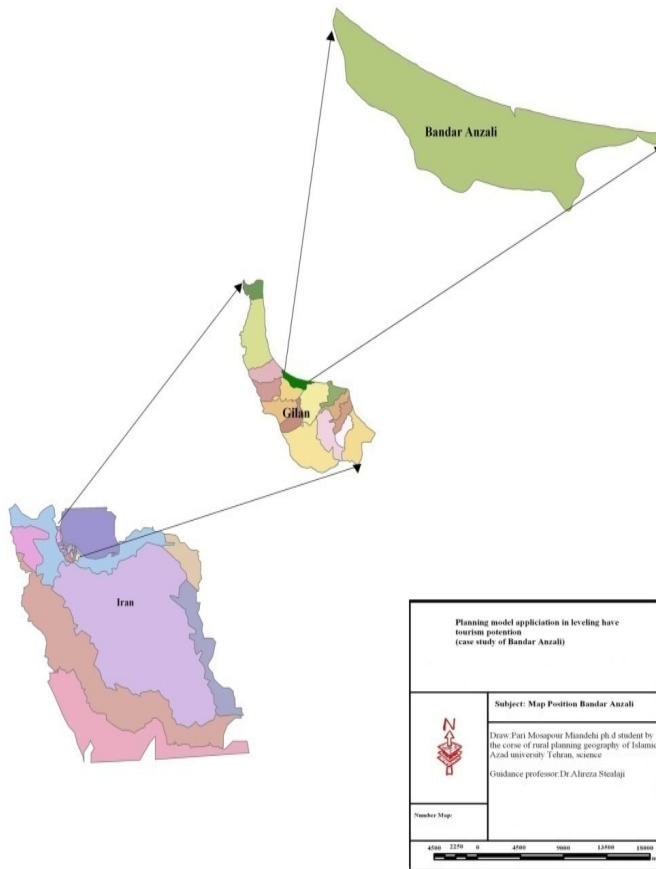


Figure 2. Map of Guilan Province, Iran.

The villages of Bandar Anzali as social and ecological habitats have ample capabilities for attracting tourists. They are thus discussed.

Natural potentials

The sea and the shores and the rivers

The Caspian Sea with an area of sq k 438000 is the largest lake of the world. It is surrounded by such countries as Russian, Turkmenistan, Qazaghestan, and Azarbaijan. The seashore is 6380 k long 992 k of which extending from Astara to the mouth of Atrak River belongs to Iran. The length of seashore of Guilan is 200 k and in Bandar Anzali it is 35 k. The Caspian Sea shores are of the most beautiful and attractive for tourism.

Rivers

Another benefit of the rivers can be found in the beautiful sights, fishing, and boating. Most of the villages are adjacent to the rivers.



Figure 3. Anzali lagoon.

Bandar Anzali Lagoon

The Anzali lagoon is situated in the southwest coast of Mazandaran Sea, in the west of the Sefidrood delta and in the south of Bandar Anzali. This lagoon is one of the most attractive water sights of Bandar Anzali, having a tremendous importance for tourism. In spring water, when plants and water flowers grow, it is especially majestic with the lilies, water pistachios, and the reed grooves where such birds as white swans, geese and khotkas (a kind of boat) live and lay eggs. The position of most villages along the margins of the lagoon adds to the attraction of the villages (Figure 3).

Farms and Farming

The farms and orchards, namely agro-tourism, are known as one of the attractions of tourism. In his type of tourism, people spend one or more days in the villages individually or collectively, observing the gardening and agricultural activities. They can also enjoy themselves picking and eating some fruits, helping themselves with local food and enjoying the Kolza fields.

Forest Parks

The forest parks in villages are considered as the tourism potential. In the present study, there is one village with a forest park.

THE HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS POTENTIALS OF VILLAGES

The historical and religious places include some ancient monuments, Imamzadehs and other mausoleums. Since Bandar Anzali is not old enough, it doesn't have many historical monuments and places in villages except in one; that is in Khomeiran where there used to be a ruined



Figure 4. Cultural potentials of villages.



Figure 5. Bashman market place.

bathroom. In most of the villages there are shrines and Imamzadehs.

CULTURAL POTENTIALS OF VILLAGES

The type of costumes, customs, and languages

In the villages under study, there have been numerous potentials since the past, but because of the development of urbanized culture, most of these abilities have been forgotten. Among these are the local costumes, traditional sports such as Guilemardi wrestling and Varza Jang (bullfight). In the local dialect, Varza is a bull which is mostly used for fights and people bet on it. Autumn and winter are the best times for bullfight when the bulls are physically prepared for the fight (Figure 4).

THE ECONOMIC ABILITIES OF VILLAGES: WEEKLY FAIRS, STALLS AND HANDICRAFTS

The fairs are the center for trade of local products and also for the exchange of ideas and regulation of some of the social interactions especially among villagers. Weekly



Figure 6. Handicraft potentials in villages: Terbgode handicraft.

fairs are mostly held in such villages as Koporchaal (Monday fair), Golshan (Tuesday fair), Lijarki (Wednesday fair) and Abkenar (Thursday fair). The stalls are also shopping centers which are held in villages (Figure 5).

In principle, handicrafts are referred to the work the material of which is derived from the same village. The lagoon and plants such as reeds and li (a kind of straw) which grow there and the local women who are very famous for their artistic hands have increased the attraction of the tourists. It is very interesting for the tourist to see how a straw basket or table cloth is woven (Figure 6).

SPORT POTENTIALS IN VILLAGES: SPORT HALLS AND FIELDS

The role of sports in developing tourism industry is so significant that the United Nations has named the year 2004 the year of sport tourism (Doya, 2005, p. 13).

The villages under study are also full of sport facilities for golf, football and so on.

RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES OF VILLAGES

Residential facilities are of high significance in promoting programs of a region especially in villages. Village tourists can be accommodated in the rural houses which are culturally in accordance with the rural community. These are suitable places for the tourists. The construction of the houses is different in different places depending on the variety of weather and the type of culture in each region. For this reason they can be considered as one of the places of attraction for the tourist. There are different types of rural accommodation,



Figure 7. Abkenar traditional homes.

these are:

Traditional homes or local accommodation

These houses whose building materials are derived from the nature are two-storied structures. The second floor known as Balakhaneh Tallar (Top house hall) can be found in some villages in Bandar Anzali (Figure 7).

Second houses

The accommodations are mainly found in the villages of Abkenart and Bashaman. Inside Bashaman, is an enclosed area known as Khazar Villa which has very beautiful villas. The owners of these dwellings are living either in Tehran, Capital, or in European countries.

Garden houses

These dwellings are built in the middle of the gardens or farms and according to the field studies done, these dwellings can be found in most villages.

Kotam and alcoves

Kotams are buildings erected in the gardens and farms for the sake of guarding the field. The construction materials are reeds and Torab (a kind of bamboo) found in the lagoon (Mosapour, 1995, p. 123).

Alcoves can also be found in most villages located by the sea. They can mainly be seen in Abkenar and Torbebar.

Gajameh

Gajameh is a small winter room built inside a Lotkah (local name for the boat) to keep rain away. According to the field studies, in none of the villages under study, Gajameh was observed. It is only used for a resting place for a short time by the sea.

Koomeh

Koomeh is a house made of reeds and thorn plants. It is a place for a watchman. It is located inside the sea or lagoon. In the present study, Koomeh is considered as a dwelling place.

In the field studies, all the villages have been studied to spot the capabilities of each and then the data has been analyzed. Based on the field studies through interviews and observation, it can be clearly claimed that all the villages under study possess the tourism potential and with a small capital investment, these villages can be turned into significant rural tourist-attracting places. The huge amount of ability falls in Abkenar village.

APPLICATION OF PLANNING MODELS

According to Dalir (2001, p. 181) a research must be done in accordance with the criteria of a scientific and geographic research method; thus for a better planning in different regions in the country, it is necessary to classify the areas according to the possessing or lacking certain facilities.

In this research the villages of Bandar Anzali have been studied and the data has been analyzed according to the capabilities they each have with the help of the planning model which was created by the author to rank the villages from the point of view of tourist attraction.

In this research Gatman's Model (Hossein Zadeh, Karim, 2004) has been applied. One of the methods of scalogram analysis used for the calculation of the amount of centrality and determination of hierarchy of settlements is the technique of Gatman's Criterion. This method is used when the purpose of the planning is to choose places where different social and economic services are provided for the population inhabiting a certain area. In this method, the institutions which offer economic and social services may be utilized as a criterion for the determination of the hierarchy. The factor of population is used in similar cases to give a final score or rank to each settlement. Among the simplest and at the same time the most effective, this technique is suitable in grading settlements.

This method was originally executed in North America in 1944 (Assayesh-Estelaji, 2003: 177). In the present research, where Gatman's developed method is used, instead of applying surface or deep structure services for

Table 1. Religious, cultural, economic, residential, sport capabilities of Bandar Anzali for rural tourism.

Names of Villages		Kolza plant	Forest parks	Farms	garden	Fish farm	natural pools	river	Lagoon	Sea	spring	Mausoleum	Shrine	Tomb tree	Local dress	Special language	Stalls	Handicrafts	Weekly fairs	Sport halls	Football pitch	Boating	bullfight	villa	Traditional house	Old house	Garden house	Kotam and alcoves	Total of Capabilities		G grade	
																													Type	Number		
Abkenar	1		1	1	9	2	2	1				1		4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	10		2	8	20	22	80	1	
Eshpela	1	1	1	1	3	2	1																				5	8	15	13		
Eshtarkan			1	1			1																					2	2	28		
Beshman			1	1	3				1	1			1				1	1			1	1		30				20	13	63	2	
Torbe bar			1	1			1	1			1			1							1							7	7	22		
Chi Bijar			1	1		7		1	1				2	2							1							8	20	10		
Khomeiran	1		1	1	2		1	1									1				1					5		8	9	17		
Rood posht	1		1	1	1		1			1		1	1		1	1					1						20	12	31	4		
Sangachin	1		1	1	9			1	1	1		1	1					1			1	1		2			20	13	41	3		
Siah khalesar			1	1	2	1		1													1						2		7	9	18	
Siah vazan			1	1		2							1								1								5	6	23	
Shile sar			1	1		3	1					1									1								6	7	21	
Ali abad	1		1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1		1					1	1			1		10	2	2				15	28	5	
Kapoorchal	1		1	1				1	1	1		1	1		1	1	1	1	1		1	1		2	2		5	17	23	7		
Kachalak			1	1			1					1			1	1					1								7	9	19	
Kargan			1	1		1	1	1						1	1	1					1								10	19	11	
Karbalai mahdi			1	1				1																					3	3	27	
goodah																																
Kochak mahale			1	1	3					1											1							2	5	8	20	
Gloo gah			1	1						1																				3	3	26
Mahroozah			1	1			1	1																						4	4	24
Moaf			1	1			1	1																						4	4	25
Terbgode			1	1	3		1	1										1			1	1					6	9	16	12	12	
Shanghay parde			1	1			1	1										1												7	22	9
Taleb abad			1	1			1		1			3						1			1			2				5	8	14	14	
Lijariki hasanrood			1	1			1		1	1		1						1	1		1			2					9	10	16	
Hasanrood			1	1			2		1			1						1			1							4	8	12	15	
Golshan	1		1	1			1		1	1								1	1		1	1		5				15	10	28	6	
Low jafrood	1		1	1			3		1	1								1			1	1	1	6	5			10	10	22	8	
Total	Type	9	1	28	28	8	19	15	12	12	1	10	6	3	5	5	6	11	4	1		7	1	7	5	3	5	12				
Capabilities	Number	9	1	28	28	19	23	15	12	12	1	12	7	7	5	5	6	11	4	1		21	7	1	65	21	6	24	142			
Grade		15		4	5	3	10	7	11	12	24	13	17	18	21		19	14	22	23	8	16	25	2	9	19	6	1				

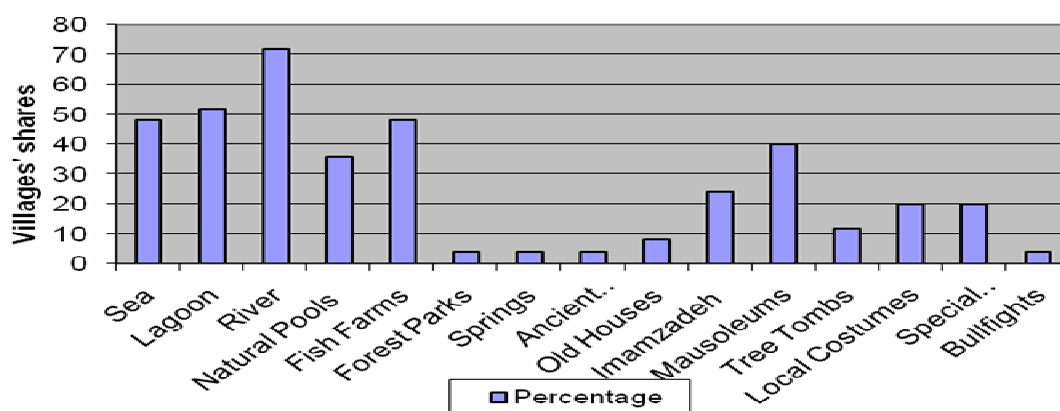
Table 2. Number and percentage of capabilities for rural tourism in Bandar Anzali.

Percentage	Number	Capabilities	Percentage	Number	Capabilities	Percentage	Number	Capabilities
64	21	Football pitches	40	9	Mausoleums	48	12	Sea
32	7	Boating	12	3	Tomb trees	52	15	Lagoon
12	3	Traditional houses	20	5	Local Costumes	72	19	River
20	4	Rental dwellings	20	5	Special language	36	8	Natural pool
28	7	Villas	4	1	Bullfight	48	11	Fish farm
20	5	Garden houses	48	11	Handicrafts	4	1	Forest parks
52	12	Kootams and alcoves	16	4	Weekly market	4	1	Spring
			20	6	Stalls	4	1	Ancient monuments
			32	8	Kolza	8	2	Old houses
			4	1	Sport halls	24	6	Imamzadeh

Source: Field study, 2008.

Table 3. Ranking of villages of Bandar Anzali, based on the model of tourism capabilities.

Names of villages	Grade	No. of capabilities	Percentage	Population	Percentage
Abkenar, Bashman, Low and High Sangachin , Low Jafrood, Roodposht, Golshan, Aliabad	1	28	76	1301	44
Kapoorchaal, Shanghaye pardeh, torobgoodeh, Chaibijar, Kargan, Eshpala, Talebabad, Hassanrood	2	19	51	9828	33.2
Kachalak, Khomeiran, Lijaraki, Koochak mahaleh, Siah khalehsar, Torbe sar, Shileh sar, Siah vazan, Maaf, Karbalai mahdi goodeh	3	17	46	6726	22.8
Total		37	100	29564	100

**Chart 1.** Ranking of villages in terms of tourism capabilities.

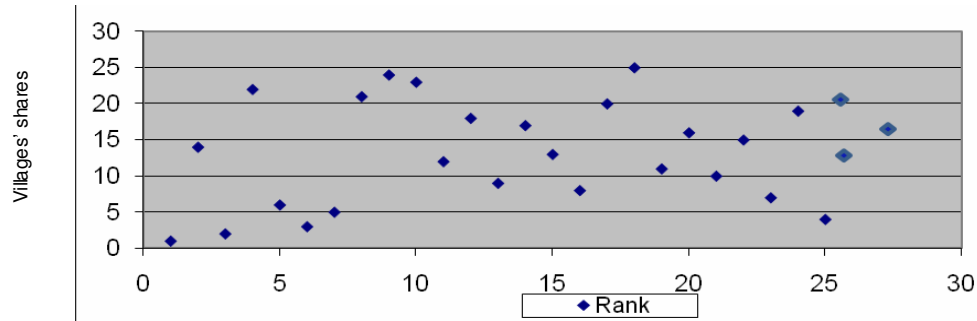


Chart 2. Ranking of villages of Bandar Anzali, based on the model of tourism capabilities of 2006.

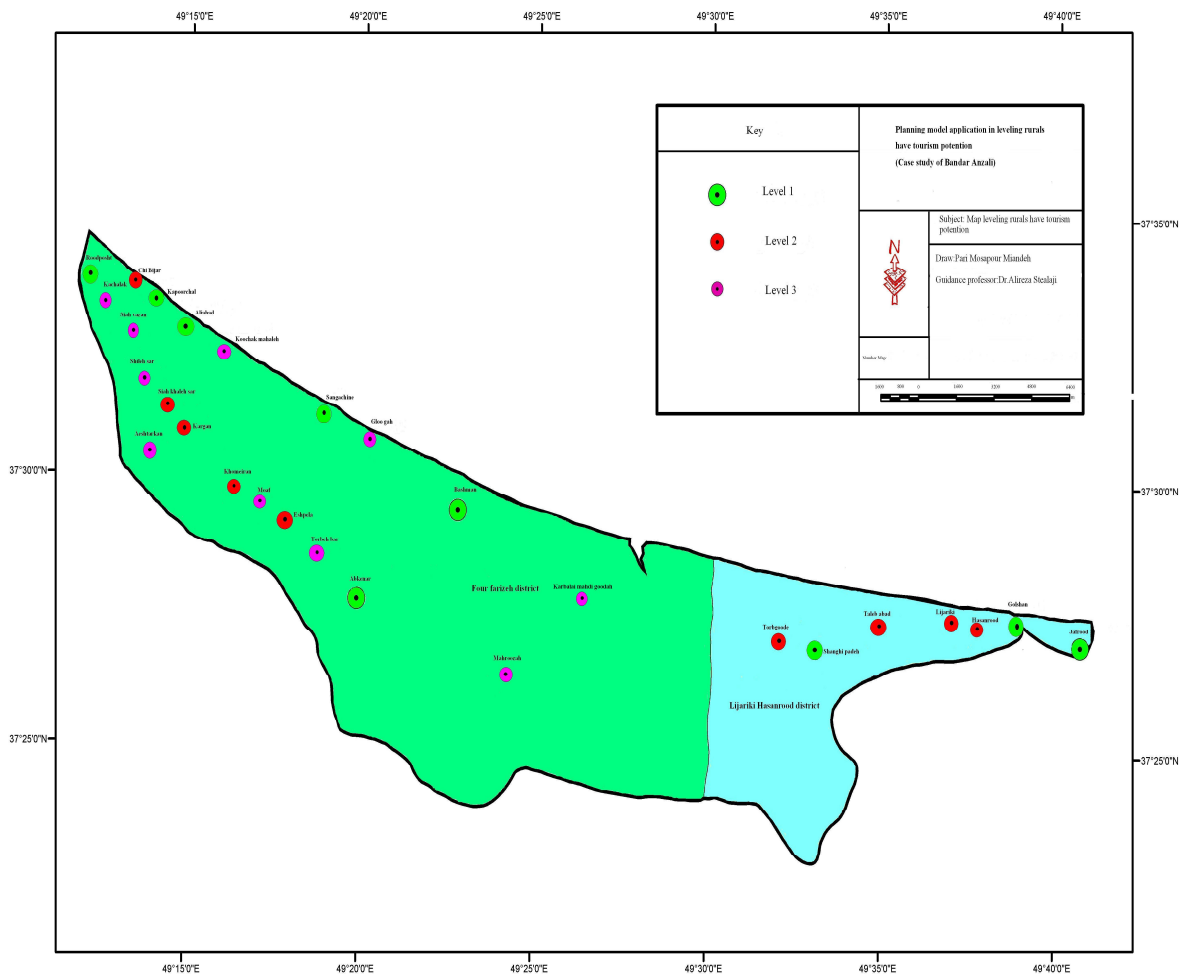


Figure 8. Ranking of tourism capacity of Bandar Anzali.

grading the settlements, the available capacity of villages is employed to do so.

In the present model which follows Gatman's model, the capabilities have been converted into quantities to make the ranking of villages possible. Accordingly, code 1 has been assigned to the capabilities of the lagoon, sea, farms, football pitches, boating, handicrafts and the

local costume of each village and other abilities have also been labeled (Table 1).

Next the number of capabilities of each village has been added up, producing the number of tourism capabilities and finally the villages were ranked based on the highest number of capabilities (Tables 2 and 3). Ranking of villages of Bandar Anzali based on tourism

capabilities is presented in Chart 1.

And based on this ranking, the villages have been classified (in Chart 2) in three groups (marked with colored dots).

Villages of level one are of the most tourist attracting ones but villages of levels 2 and 3 have less potentials for tourism. According to the classification of the villages based on the models created, the villages which have the highest tourist attractions can be identified and designed to promote rural tourism (Figure 8).

Based on the findings, the following map represents the graded villages in which the green circle shows the highest degree of tourism potentials and red and pink circles show the second and the lowest degree of capacity for tourism attractions, respectively.

Conclusion

As has been mentioned, the villages of Bandar Anzali were ranked based on the planning model and the villages which had the highest capabilities for tourism were identified. According to this ranking, investment in the rural tourism sector in this city can be programmed, which will eventually attract tourists to villages, on the one hand and increase the amount of income of people and prevent migration to the cities on the other hand.

Today, the tourism industry places much stress on villages, because tourists have a great tendency for having a good time in villages. Since most of the countries of the world have had great success in this field and earn a lot of money annually and some of these countries stand first in rural industry. One important factor in their success goes back to accommodating the tourists. Some countries, for example, Spain, has won fame in this way. Iran, which has very beautiful villages with pleasant weather and unique capabilities making one village distinguished from the other has not been so successful in rural tourism. This failure lies in the fact that, it has not managed to identify the potentials of the villages. Considering the points mentioned, if such a research is done on other cities of Iran, it will be possible to make comprehensive programs for rural tourism and

by increasing financial investment in rural tourism, more and more tourists will be absorbed to the villages, leading to permanent development of the villages.

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