Sustainable tourism planning (case study of Al-Manar City - Republic of Iraq) study of potentials and means of development

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Abstract. This paper examines the possibility of investing in tourism components in the marshes, which, if optimally exploited, makes Iraq an advanced tourist country, especially after the return of water to it and its revival again, by choosing a model in the marshes of the city of Al-Manar to plan a typical tourist village in it and can be generalized In other marsh areas where different tourism components will be exploited and used because this village is similar to the residential villages in the region in terms of the structural form and the method of using transportation to reflect the image of the traditional village of the river, however, it is in line with the requirements of tourist resorts in terms of providing various tourism services that The tourist feels comfortable, and through this tourist village there will be a tourist movement in the region for Arabs and foreigners, which helps in the exchange of information, learn about the heritage of the region, learn about its civilizations and practice various activities, as well as its economic returns through tourism and commercial activity in the tourist village and the region in general, Villages will provide many job opportunities for residents of the region, which reduces the unemployment rate and contributes to social change Cultural in the marsh community.

1. Introduction

Tourism has become an important pillar of the economies of the world, and this is reflected in the results of global tourism statistics through the numbers of tourists and the returns of tourism to international countries (1), and Iraq contains tourism components that make it occupy a global tourist site if it is used optimally, it qualifies it to be one of The most important tourist countries in the world, where the marshes extend to large areas and palm groves. These beautiful regions are rare in the world and whose beautiful nature qualifies them to become one of the most important resorts in the world. The Iraqi marshes are a unique environment and constitute an important part of our past and our history, and their regional and international importance is undoubted. The marshes of Mesopotamia had a unique feature of the Iraqi scene in its economic, social and environmental aspects. Although the Iraqi marshes were under pressure since the fifties, environmental integration and economic growth were continuing in the same way until the previous Iraqi regime deliberately resorted to the environmental destruction of the region, so this
civilization, which extends for more than five thousand years, came under the direct threat of extermination, with the exception of 10% of the original marshes region survived this violent attack. (2). Now, after the change of the political system in Iraq and the emergence of trends to restore the marshes, we note that the marshes still suffer from neglect and the lack of exploitation of the tourism potential that characterizes the region and thus the lack of a sustainable tourism environment. The planning of sustainable tourism in the marshes areas, based on their capabilities and reality, will contribute to the revitalization of the region and its economic, social and environmental development, which makes it a sustainable tourism environment. Also, the importance of sustainable tourism planning is in fact determining the form of future tourism development and determines the ability of societies to sustain the activity Tourism and its needs and work to revitalize it, in light of that it must be sustainable planning to work to find a balance in the environment, economy and social values in order to meet the life and work needs of the local people and their interests, within the global environmental, economic and social system (3). It is known that sustainability is how to deal with resources and capabilities to provide the needs of the present without harming the needs and eligibility of future generations of these resources, and sustainability is (how to deal with the environment and flirt with it and the way to show your love for the environment and how to preserve it) and therefore when reaching a balance between the environment and resources Humanity and its current balance in the future, sustainable tourism planning will be achieved.

2. Goal, Tasks, Methods of Study

The marshes areas in general and the Al-Manar region in particular suffer from neglect and lack of exploitation of the tourism potential that characterizes the region and consequently the lack of a sustainable tourism environment, and therefore this paper aims to improve the capabilities of the marshes and the Al-Manar tourism region to create a sustainable tourism environment capable of achieving environmental, social and economic dimensions. In order to achieve the goals, this paper will include data collection in order to create a model for a tourist village, choose the ideal place, and develop the old city center and the riverfront of the city, and it depends on analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and dangers of the internal and external environment of the region SWOT, and contributing to the possibility of tourist attraction and accommodating large numbers of tourists coming to the marshes. The method that will be used in this article is based on a descriptive analytical approach, field survey and coexistence, and personal interviews with officials and residents of the area.

3. Experimental Part

The marshes of southern Iraq are among the largest bodies of water in the Middle East, and they are an integrated environmental system that dates back more than five thousand years. It is also one of the largest wet and environmental regions in the region. It is located in the southern part of Iraq in the provinces of Basra, Maysan and Dhi Qar (4). The marshes have natural environmental features suitable for tourism activities. It combines the beauty of natural marshes, being water bodies, widespread in most of the evergreens, and the unique flora and fauna living in them. It also has a warm climate during the cold seasons, so it can be (Mashta) attractive to tourists in these seasons. Water bodies also reduce heat in summer. Also, its geographical location facilitates the process of accessing it through various modes of transportation. There are overland roads that link the marshes to the governorates of Iraq, and they are (7):

- Baghdad-Kut-Nasiriyah Road, with a length of 583 km.
- Baghdad - Kut - Amara - Basra - 549 km.
- The road to Baghdad - Hilla - Diwaniyah - Samawah, with a length of 584 km.
Al-Manar is one of the suburbs of Dhi Qar Governorate in southern Iraq. Al-Manar was established in 1959, and this city is located in the south of Al-Nasiriya, about 75 km away from Basra. The reality of the situation for the area of residential use of the city is equal to (816457 m²) and when compared with the planning criteria, the residential use of the city does not exceed the typical residential neighborhood (in terms of area) and does not rise to it in terms of providing services, especially recreational, cultural and open spaces.

Figure 1. The general Location of the Al-Manar marshes in Dhi Qar and Basra

Figure 2. a- The geographical location and the administrative borders of Al-Manar. b- The master plan for Al-Manar city. c- The residential area in Al-Manar city. d- Transportation in Al-Manar city. F- Landscape in the city of Al-Manar
4. Tourist planning in the city of Al-Manar.

The process of planning to revive tourist areas in a specific region begins with planning at the level of the tourist site (8). By finding resorts or establishments that plan in a way that helps to activate tourist areas through functional linkages or integration among tourist sites so that they represent successful investment projects that can be launched through to other tourist sites located in the city of Basra and these establishments are developed sites to receive tourists And it provides multiple requirements for their stay, entertainment and other needs. And by gathering these tourist settlements, resorts are formed with a specific identity and personality, and they become a great place to go and enjoy it (9). The planning of tourist resorts is subject to several considerations, including environmental considerations at the site level, namely the ease of access and the popularity of the tourist site and the characteristics of that site. Through field visits and access to capabilities in Al-Manar and taking into account several considerations, the most important of which are at the site level, three areas have been chosen that can be used as alternatives in the process of establishing integrated facilities for tourism services as a start to the tourism planning process in that region and these areas are:

A. Tourist resort.
B. Old city center.
C. River front.

A. Tourist resort.

After completing all the stages of data collection and field study for the region and reviewing the capabilities and means of development, then this paper will contain at this stage the preparation of planning alternatives after studying the region, and each planning alternative is analyzed for all factors (urban, economic, social, and environmental) and then review its advantages Its disadvantages and assessing it for the purpose of choosing the best alternative by comparing the alternatives, and choosing the alternative. The optimal choice for the project site will be by comparing three sites (on the front of the marshes, in the center of Al-Manar city, in the middle of the marshes). The evaluation will be in two phases, the first: a comparison between the resort site in the marshes and the project site in the central Al Manar area. The second: a comparison between the site of the weighted alternative in the first stage with the project site on the margins of the marshes (an intermediate position between the region and the rivers) and will be given signs (+, -) in order to compare the alternatives. (+++) Strong positive effect. (+ -) Average effect. (-) Strong negative impact.

Table 1. The first stage of the matrix of achieving alternatives

| Comparison factor                  | In the marshes (in the water) | the influence                  | In the center of the city of Al-Manar | the influence                  |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| The economic factor                | High economic cost            | -                              | Lower economic cost                  | -                              |
|                                    | Damage to the economic resource of the population, as it will be extremely harmful to the movement of fishing, birds, buffalos breeding and other natural ingredients. | -                              | Additional economic cost in land acquisition for project implementation | -                              |
|                                    | Additional economic cost represented in changing the layout and design of pivotal structures (water, sewage, electricity) | -                              |                                    | -                              |
| The social factor                  | The implementation period is greater and thus it will disrupt the movement of the population | -                              | The implementation period is less, but it is not preferable socially in terms of the length of the project, which impedes traffic, workflow and usual ease of access. | -                              |
|                                    | Damage to fishing, biological diversity, obstruction of normal living and living activity | -                              |                                    | +                              |
| Environmental factor               | Damage to the soil and biological diversity and failure to achieve the most important feature of environmental tourism and tourism planning (damage and changing the features of the marshes) | -                              | Less harmful to biological diversity | +                              |
| Architectural Factor (Urban Landscape) | Optical distortion - a unique and contemporary solution that damages the features and identity of the marshes | -                              | An existing and traditional solution | -                              |
| Total                              | (+) 1                         | (-) 1                          | (-) 4                                | (+) 4                           |
Table 2. The second stage of the matrix of achieving alternatives

| Comparison factor                  | On the front of the marshes | In the center of the city of Al-Manar | the influence |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| **The economic factor**           |                             |                                      |              |
| Average economic cost             | - +                         | Lower economic cost                  | - +          |
| No harm to the economic resource of the population, and in the movement of fishing and birds, and the raising of buffalo and other natural ingredients of the area | - +                         | An additional economic cost is to own land to implement the project | - +          |
| **The social factor**             |                             |                                      |              |
| The average implementation period will not directly affect or affect the daily movement of the population | - +                         | The implementation period is socially disadvantageous in terms of project length, which stops traffic, smooth workflow, and usual ease of access | - +          |
| **Environmental factor**          |                             |                                      |              |
| Not to damage the soil and biodiversity and achieve environmental goals for sustainable tourism and the ability to apply criteria and indicators | ++                         | Less damage to the biological diversity and the environment | ++          |
| **Architectural Factor**          |                             |                                      |              |
| (Urban Landscape)                 |                             |                                      |              |
| A unique solution, where it will be a breakthrough of quality in the region, and has a scenic visual scene for tourists, as it overlooks the marshes and is next to it in the river front and the old center. | ++                         | An existing and traditional solution | - -          |
| **Total**                         | (-) 2                       |                                      | (-) 4        |

Through the two previous tables. In the first stage, the site was weighted in Al-Manar district, due to its obtaining signs (+4) (-4), and in the second stage, the site was weighted on the edges of the marshes due to obtaining (+6) (-2).

Figure 3.

Planning and design of the tourist village a- The location of the tourist village in the marshes b- The proposed design and career planning for the tourist village
B. River front.

The Al-Manar River represents an important outlet for the city, and it is not restricted to a specific destination, as there are groves and green areas that have the potential to be rehabilitated to be points of attraction for the city's residents to spend leisure and holidays in them through:

1. Providing green areas along the rivers with evergreen trees.
2. Providing a road for the movement of the sable, separate from the movement of cars, and areas used for running sports.
3. Establishing a berth for boats, knowing that there is a place designated for this purpose.
4. Carrying out continuous maintenance of the river and preventing the dumping of waste, refuse and sewage by the buildings and other structures surrounding the river.
5. Establishing car parks that serve the park and public services.

![Figure 4. A proposed final planning proposal for the river front.](image)

Table 3. SWOT analysis for riverfront

| SWOT      | Strength                                                                 | Weakness                                                                 | Opportunities                                                   | Threat                                          |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Internal  | The presence of comprehensive data and studies on the marshes            | Weak local cadres specialized in implementing prepared designs            | The presence of specialized companies to prepare studies, engineering and planning designs | Lack of financial liquidity to implement the project |
| environment|                                                                           |                                                                           |                                                                                                                             |                                                 |
|           | The five-year plan and its approval by the provincial council and a plan to develop the regions in the Marshes Recovery Center | The lack of budget allocated to the municipality and the Marshes Recovery Center | Provincial and petrodollar development                          | Persuading discreet foreign companies for the purpose of investment. |
| External  | The tourist village that integrates with the Cornish is an economic and design integration |                                                                           |                                                                                                                             |                                                 |
| environment|                                                                           |                                                                           |                                                                                                                             |                                                 |
|           | The presence of foreign investment desires                                |                                                                           |                                                                                                                             |                                                 |
C. Old city center.

Iraqi city centers suffer from great neglect at a time when city centers and their old neighborhoods are considered (the spirit of cities) that must remain insurmountable to modernity that alters the essence of things or completely destroys them, and certainly not all modernity is negative but rather must be used on its positive side in what revives the neighborhoods and lanes and bring her to life. Although the history of the city of Al-Manar does not extend long enough to constitute historical or heritage cities such as many cities such as (the Holy City of Najaf), it only contains areas that extend to about a hundred years old, which makes it possible to consider it (the old center of the city), but over time this The center will be considered (the heritage area of the city), so any planner should lay down the policies that guarantee attention to these areas and define ways to preserve their identity.

Figure 5. A- The location of old center in Al-Manar. B-The final schematic proposal for revamping the old center. C-Commercial street design and preservation area models
Table 4. SWOT analysis for the old center

| SWOT | Strength                                      | Weakness                                    | Opportunities                                                              | Threat                                      |
|------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
|      | **Internal environment**                    | **External environment**                    |                                                                           |                                             |
|      | The presence of comprehensive data and studies on the marshes | Lack of specialized cadres in preparing designs | The presence of specialized companies to prepare studies, engineering and planning designs | Financial liquidity to implement the project |
|      | The five-year plan and its approval by the provincial council and a plan to develop the regions in the Marshes Recovery Center | The lack of budget allocated to the municipality and the Marshes Recovery Center | Regional and petrodollar development | Inclusion of the tourist plan and project establishment within the executive plan of the Marshes Recovery Center and the plan of the province of Dhi Qar. |
|      | The tourist village that integrates with the Corniche is an economic and design integration Through the questionnaire, it was revealed that the people accept the idea of the tourism project | Difficult to convince the residents of the implementation of the development | Iqbal and the governorate’s orientation towards Iraq to find an alternative source of financing for oil, thus this exploitation can be used and provide a source, which is tourism |                                             |

5. Conclusion and recommendation

1. Prepare a unified geographical information system (GIS) for marsh areas, and use modern technologies such as geographic information systems, remote sensing to document possible points for entrances and exits, and control systems.
2. Putting a commission within the Tourism and Statistics Department to survey the numbers of tourists coming to Iraq in general and the marshes areas in particular.
3. Study the lifestyle in the marsh villages and their economies and the way of life of the inhabitants of these marshes to benefit from them in the new proposals for future planning.
4. Create divisions in all departments specialized in the marshes side, such as the planning section in the marshes.
5. Qualifying a specialized cadre in the field of tourist police, training it in international foreign languages, developing good-looking and dealing and giving them the opportunity to meet in training sessions in the form of meetings and seminars in the form of working groups with tourism police in Arab countries.
6. Establishing mobile exhibitions of some works (archaeological, heritage, handicraft, models of mineral water, etc.) in multiple countries by opening exhibitions in different countries or through parties that are held in Iraqi embassies and attachés outside the country.
7. Adopting comprehensive planning and design policies in the renewal and reconstruction of Dhi Qar and the rest of the Iraqi cities, where it balances in a balanced way between urban renewal policies represented by (preservation, rehabilitation, redevelopment, urban dictation) and this requires
comprehensive demographic, social and economic studies, planning and design decisions, and approved on financing policies and providing the required technical and administrative capabilities and talents, to be a future city with its civilized identity and distinctive civilization characteristic of time and the achievement of civilized communication, keeping pace with the development of the age and expressing its changes and the vital progress of society.

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