



Rural Tourism Entrepreneurship Survey with Emphasis on Eco-museum Concept

Mojgan Ghorbanzadeh ^{a*}

^a Department of Architecture, faculty of Art, University of Bojnord, Bojnord, Iran.

Received 24 January 2018; Accepted 19 May 2018

Abstract

Unemployment and scarcity of job opportunities count as major problems suffered in villages, especially by the youth. To this end, rural entrepreneurship, particularly in tourism and ecotourism sector, may contribute to the growth of rural economy through strategic and forward-looking planning along with other factors. Innovation and creativity are turning into one of the essential ingredients of continued development. Rural museums, such as “Eco-museum”, are one of the measures taken with regard to protecting various material and spiritual phenomena resulting from traditional habitats. “Eco-museums” can be deemed as a project to support sustainability, and a significant factor for development of entrepreneurship and businesses, especially small- and medium-sized businesses. Espidan, a village in North Khorasan province of Iran, can exert such an effect and play such a role as an eco-museum. Through library resources and field studies, the present study attempts to examine the potentials of Espidan for strengthening its rural tourist properties and fulfilment of ecotouristic objectives in line with three main criteria: public contribution, exclusive eco-museum activities, and creating social, cultural and natural conditions (the determining the vital conditions for a place to evolve into an eco-museum). A study and evaluation of the recommended criteria in Espidan indicates that the village demonstrates considerable potentials for evolving into an eco-museum. As effective steps towards achieving continued development, practical solutions have been proposed for fulfilment of eco-museum objectives as such an evolution into an eco-museum can result in rural entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Eco-Museum; Sustainable Development; Espidan Village; Entrepreneurship; Rural Tourism.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship by improving the employment situation, income and productivity in rural communities can prevent the excessive migration of villagers and even lead to the growth of the phenomenon of "reverse migration". But entrepreneurship development, especially rural entrepreneurship, is facing serious barriers and challenges in all countries, including Iran. To date, research has paid less attention to the impact of the spatial context than to the social, economic and to some extent institutional contexts. In particular research on the localized spatial level has been limited and even more so when the spatial context is rural, since much of the research on the link between entrepreneurship and spatial context has focused on innovative environments and milieus, clusters and learning regions. Similarly, studies of rural development have generally devoted only little attention to the finer details of entrepreneurial activities or restricted their view of entrepreneurship to profit-oriented and short-sighted opportunistic behaviour. Consequently, linking the concepts of space and place to rural So far, different strategies have been introduced in different periods for rural development. Considering the concepts of space and place are crucial for understanding rural entrepreneurship. Rural entrepreneurship stands apart from other forms of entrepreneurship because of its particular spatial characteristics. While

* Corresponding author: m.ghorbanzadeh@ub.ac.ir

 <http://dx.doi.org/10.28991/cej-0309181>

➤ This is an open access article under the CC-BY license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

© Authors retain all copyrights.

the concepts of space and place has been given relatively limited attention in the field of entrepreneurship, they are well established in the field of human geography, where they are used to explore the nature of the socio-spatial and how it impacts on social processes. As such they are useful for exploring the role of spatial context in general and rural context in particular in entrepreneurial activity [1]. Tourism has become a development tool for many rural and more isolated areas to supplement traditional industries that are often in decline. In this paper, development of cultural rural tourism. Culture, which is often well preserved in rural areas, is a valuable resource to include; and that community-based partnerships such as cooperatives may be very effective [2]. Considering the high revenues of tourism, especially ecotourism and rural tourism in the world and the low status of Iran in income ranking, despite the high ranking in the tourism capabilities of Espidan village due to the natural characteristics of the environment, texture, and architecture and different geography based on the geographical location It also has historic buildings; it has become a destination for domestic and foreign tourists.

2. Theoretical

Entrepreneurship is considered a central force of economic development, as it generates growth and serves as a vehicle for innovation and change. Tourism is one of the economic sectors in which a great degree of involvement is needed by the entrepreneurial sector: diversification of tourism products and services is needed to cope with increased demand for new types of tourism needs. These include opportunities for more sustainable tourism [3]. In the Iranian economy, rural tourism can be considered as one of the areas of diversification into rural economics due to the environmental diversity and relative advantages of it. Given that many rural economy activities and agricultural income levels have fallen in recent decades and rising unemployment rates, as a result of the exclusion of young and educated young people from the rural community, rural development has jeopardized if tourism development completely planned in rural areas, it is possible to remove these areas to a degree from the recession and isolation and to promote rural and agricultural development [4]. Rural tourism offers a possible solution to some of the problems associated with lost economic opportunities and population decline that accompany the waning of agriculture. Many governments and regional authorities have embraced rural tourism as an opportunity to bring new money into rural regions, stimulating growth, providing employment opportunities and thus beginning to halt rural decline [5]. However, the definition does not include all those who visit the outskirts of cities. Therefore, a "unique and genuine rural tourist" can be considered as a special section of the great tourism market, which many authors call "tourism in rural areas" [6]. Considering the importance of opportunity in entrepreneurship, one can recognize the important role of rural tourism in changing and changing the economic environment of the village and creating new demands and the formation of different business opportunities in villages for the development of rural.

“Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life” support systems [7].

3. Eco-Museum is a Road to Rural Entrepreneurship

Eco-museum concept also originates from France, and the term ‘ecomusée’ is developed in 1971, even though term "eco" is derived from “ecology” it refers especially to a new idea of holistic interpretation of cultural heritage, in opposition to the focus on specific items and objects, performed by traditional museums. An eco-museum is a type of open air museum that is focused on the identity of a place, largely based on local participation and aiming to enhance the welfare and development of local communities. “An eco-museum is a dynamic way in which communities preserve, interpret, and manage their heritage for sustainable development. An eco-museum is based on a community agreement” (Declaration of Intent of the Long Net Workshop, European Network of Eco museums, Trento, 2004) or according to Davis (2007:199) “a community-driven museum or heritage project that aids sustainable development”. Eco-museum principles have an emphasis on: self-representation; full community participation in, and ownership of, heritage resources and the management processes; rural or urban regeneration; sustainable development; and, responsible tourism (Boylan, 1992). Eco-museum principles have now been deployed in many countries throughout the world, and in a variety of ways, responding to local physical, economic, social, cultural and political environments in order to manage the full range of environmental and heritage resources through processes that encourage public participation [8].

The eco-museum became a focal point for international debate about the purpose of museums. It proposed a strong emphasis on community involvement, meeting demands for action by the community to conserve its own material culture and natural heritage within the boundaries of its geographical area or territory. The Natural History Committee of ICOM was evidently concerned by the adoption of the term, remarking on the way in which it could seemingly be applied in a variety of circumstances and had deviated from its original ‘ecological’ context. As a consequence the committee suggested the following definition: The eco-museum is an institution which manages, studies and exploits – by scientific, educational and generally speaking, cultural means – the entire heritage of a given community, including the whole natural environment and cultural milieu. Thus the eco-museum is a vehicle for public participation in

community planning and development. To this end, the eco-museum uses all means and methods at its disposal in order to allow the public to comprehend, criticize and master – in a liberal and responsible manner – the problems which it faces. Essentially the eco-museum uses the language of the artifact, the reality of everyday life and concrete situations in order to achieve desired changes [9].

3.1. The Liuzhi Principles

- The people of the villages are the true owners of their culture. They have the right to interpret and validate it themselves.
- The meaning of culture and its values can be defined only by human perception and interpretation based on knowledge. Cultural competence must be enhanced.
- Public participation is essential to eco-museums. Culture is a common and democratic asset, and must be democratically managed.
- When there is a conflict between tourism and preservation of culture the latter must be given priority. The genuine heritage should not be sold out, but production of quality souvenirs based on traditional crafts should be encouraged.
- Long-term and holistic planning is of utmost importance. Short-time economic profits that destroy culture in the long term must be avoided.
- Cultural heritage protection must be integrated into the total environmental approach. Traditional techniques and materials are essential in this respect.
- Visitors have a moral obligation to behave respectfully. They must be given a code of conduct.
- There is no bible for eco-museums. They will all be different according to the specific culture and situation of the society they present.
- Social development is a prerequisite for establishing eco-museums in living societies. The well-being of the inhabitants must be enhanced in ways that do not compromise traditional values [9].

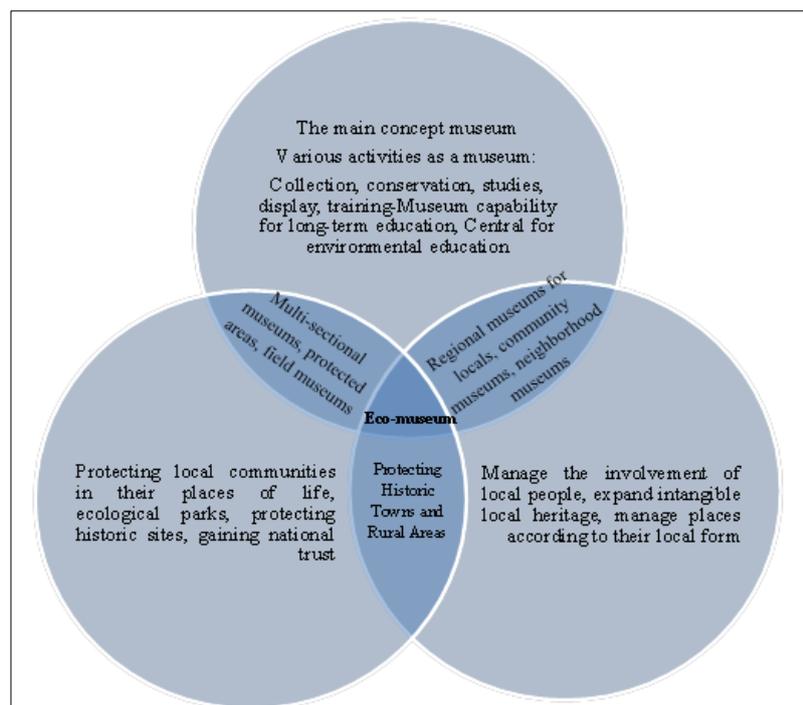


Figure 1. Concept of Eco-museum by Kazuoki Ohara [10]

This observation demands that the eco-museum be sensitive to local needs and aspirations, but also, owing to its safeguarding role, there is a requirement for sustainable solutions. In more recent times the dramatic rise in the number of eco-museums worldwide may be linked to visions for change and for growth, nurturing communities and promoting economic development using cultural and natural heritage. A further byword is sustainability, the recognition that long-term solutions are required. As a result the most recent definitions of the eco-museum focus on development and sustainability. For example, the European Network of Eco-museums (‘The Long Network’) adopted the following definition at their meeting at Trento, Italy in May 2004.

An eco-museum is a dynamic way in which communities preserve, interpret, and manage their heritage for sustainable development. An eco-museum is based on a community agreement. In their introduction to the establishment of eco-museums in China, An and Gjestrum (1999) make the distinction between the traditional museum and the eco-museum, stating: while the traditional museum is based on moving the heritage into a museum building – very often far away from the original owner of this heritage (and its environment) – the eco-museum is based on the idea that the heritage within a specific community should be preserved in-situ. The heritage – landscape, buildings, moveable objects, traditions, the content of the culture in this specific community – is given value by the eco-museum, and at the same time the eco-museum will be an instrument for its safeguarding and future preservation [9].

3.2. The Museum Characteristics of the Eco-Museum

The necklace model for the eco-museum; here the eco-museum is seen as a mechanism that holds together important cultural and natural elements within a defined territory. Equally the eco-museum can string together a number of important sites. The clasp represents the eco-museum's 'activists' who are responsible for operation and strategy. ultimate responsibility for their museum: the people are the curators. This, however, is just one of the characteristics that have been attributed to eco-museums. The eco-museum principles have now been deployed in many countries throughout the world in a variety of ways. They respond to local physical, economic, social, cultural and political environment in order to manage the full range of environmental and heritage resources through processes that encourage public participation. It is rare that all the principles in the above list are used; their adoption is very much dependent upon local conditions, and selective use has led to different kinds of eco-museum being created. Although many different types of eco-museums exist, it appears that when eco-museum principles are used there is often an emphasis on: self-representation; full community participation in, and ownership of, heritage resources and the management processes [9] (Figure2).

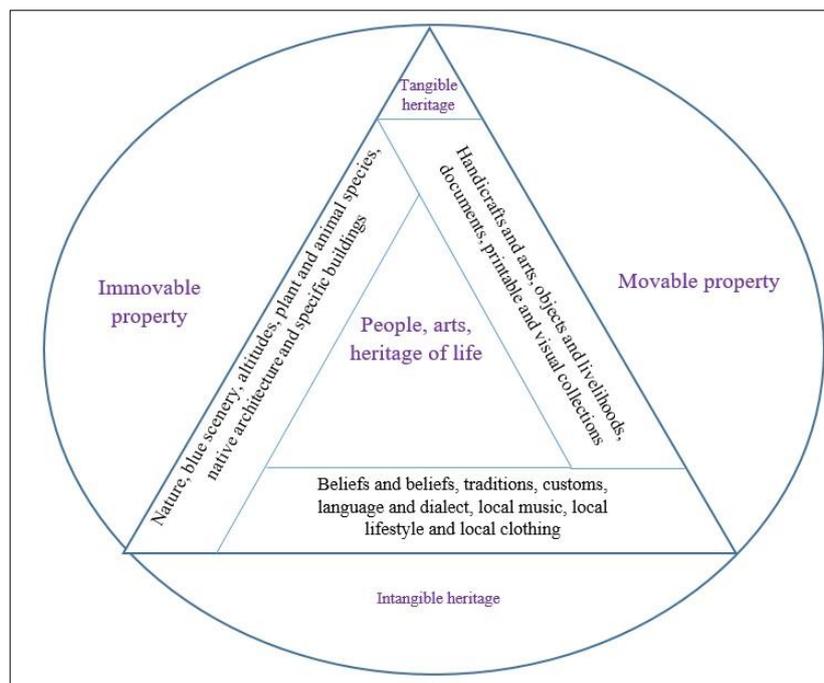


Figure 2. Museum characteristics in an eco-museum

Territories of 'conventional' museums are usually defined by political boundaries and their sources of financial support which determine collecting policies and target audiences. The eco-museum concept of territory is different in that it can more readily step beyond the artificial boundaries imposed by authority and select territories that are decided by (for example) topography, dialect, architecture, history, economy or customs; in other words, they have the ability to engage deeply with specific tangible and intangible components of place and present holistic views of their cultural landscape [9].

4. Eco-Museum and Sustainable Development of the Village

In order to ensure the sustainable development of tourism at destination level, some principles must be ensured, which concern in particular the local community: decent livelihood opportunities (locals selling products to tourists or supplying stores, etc.); poverty incidences and alleviation in tourist areas; numbers of tourism businesses owned and operated by the locals; percentage of staff employed by tourism businesses from the local communities; gender equality

in the employment esp. Concerning the locals; local communities' share of profits from tourism; tourism income of the local, and the average percentage it takes among their total income; training for locals to acquire competence and skill for participating heritage conservation and heritage tourism; respect for local intellectual property as indicated by laws prohibiting the trading in these assets; local's accessibility to heritage as tourism resource and use of tourism facilities; local community participation in decision making relating to tourism development of heritage resource (involvement in the planning, research and decision-making process and community satisfaction with tourism practice and heritage conservation); percentage of leaders of heritage conservation and tourism from local community; resettlement and compensation from tourism; education opportunity of the local people (Xiang, Wall, 2005) [8].

4.1. Local Empowerment in Dimensions Social, Economic and Environmental

There is a cultural implication that represents a challenge to exclusive national museums. In conjunction with aforementioned claims and in accordance with the new museology literature, these eco-museums have all, in a variety of ways, provoked change in the ceremonial landscape through their community projects. In other words, through the creation of a community time and space, eco-museums have represented a challenge to the dominant authorized heritage discourse. In this case, the relationship with the public is typically more harmonious and participatory, rather than exclusive and elitist. Furthermore, in gaining the participation of the community, eco-museums establish a legitimacy behind each project, through testimonies and shared experiences from local witnesses, which was lacking from larger public museums which largely excluded the public from their practices and decisions. Thus, the eco-museum can be seen as a unique community space and time, enabling cultural inclusion, where the public are able to re-appropriate and memorialize different stories and places through a different organization of history that might otherwise be unknown, unrecognized, or ignored. On the other hand the eco-museum movement has social implications that have led to local empowerment. In other words, several established projects have been created with the mandate of developing and socially enhancing the community and its public through identity recognition, skill development, or joint experience and creative opportunities [11]. Eco-museums made positive environmental effects and strengthened the region's economy wherever they were constructed.

4.1.1. The Environmental Effects of the Eco-Museums

1. Positive ecological and environmental impacts.
2. Preservation of ethnic identity and connection of generations.
3. Empowerment of motives for preserving the ethnic architecture of the rural communities for living or attracting tourists to reside in.
4. Revitalization of tangible and intangible cultural elements in the museum through staging ceremonies, traditional rituals, showcasing the styles of working and production by simulating gardens and traditional workshops.
5. Reviving and revitalizing cultural elements in the rural communities through establishing constant connections with the local, rural councils.
6. Contributing to the economy of the region by:
 - Attracting tourists and accommodating them in the renovated buildings or the museum's hotel.
 - Revitalizing traditional occupations and displaying them in the museum.
 - Creating jobs in the museum either directly or indirectly.
 - Selling the goods which have been produced in the museum traditionally.
7. Popular participation:
 - The endowment of buildings, kitchen apparatus and agricultural instruments to the museum.
 - Voluntary cooperation with the museum by the students and the retired.
8. Training:
 - The availability of museum's archive and library to the students, professors and scholars; gathering and documenting all of the information relevant to the buildings' de-assembling and re-assembling, customs and rituals in their original form would provide a unique background for conducting architectural researches and studying the rural culture.
 - Documenting the indigenous knowledge.
 - Holding educational workshops for the apprentices of different countries.
 - Teaching traditional skills to the youths and enthusiastic learners.

- Holding round-the-clock camping for children and adolescents to teach them the traditional skills. This educational action penetrates the society through children and deepens the society's awareness of its cultural heritage as a result.
- The familiarization of city dwellers (who do not have any connection with the natural environment of the villages) with rural life [12].

5. Background of the Research

The concept of eco-museum was created after Second World War when many traditional communities were torn apart, heritage places were destroyed and habits began to change. This led to a movement in 1960s in France which encouraged preservation of those elements. It is also connected to the idea of *musée éclaté* which is a form of an open museum.

The term was shaped by museologists Huges de Varine and Georges-Henri Riviere during their meeting with the French Minister of Environment in 1971. Their meeting was arranged to set up a new form of linked heritage and environment protection together. Both authors changed the definition a few times within the past years. The prefix 'eco' comes from Greek word 'oikos' which means 'house' or 'household'. Therefore, eco-museum is a museum which is created for, by and about people at their home in their environment. The definition of an eco-museum is ambiguous. Some researchers state that there is no standard definition. Maurizio Maggi presented a definition saying that an eco-museum is a special kind of museum based on an agreement by which local community takes care of the place. The agreement is a long term commitment but not necessary in the legal meaning and form. The local community is defined as inhabitants of the place and local authorities. Its care should translate into a vision and a plan for future development. The place is not merely certain location but also the whole local heritage including social, cultural and environmental elements. Another definition was presented during "Declaration of Intent of the Long Net Workshop" in Trento, Italy in May 2004 where this kind of museum was defined as a dynamic method in which communities preserve, interpret and manage their heritage for a sustainable development. This perspective shows that it is better to describe what is the function of an eco-museum rather than what it is. Museologist Peter Davis (2006) proposed a new definition after examination of eco-museums in Italy, China and Japan: a community-driven museum or heritage project that aids sustainable development.

Shaped in various forms and operating within varying conditions, all eco-museums should be created by a local community, preserve or promote local heritage, be (self) sustainable and linked to specified location.

Most eco-museums (80%) were created in the three last decades. Often they are located near frontiers which divide countries, cultures or minorities. It is a sign of local mobilization to protect cultural or natural heritage. An essential element of an eco-museum is its holistic nature which leads to its further connections with sustainable development.

According to Davis (1999), there are two types of eco-museums: a discovery museum and a community eco-museum. The first discovery museum is Armorica Regional Nature Park founded in 1968. The second type was first introduced in the eco-museum in Le Creusot Montceau-les-Mines in 1974. Its various functions include maintaining cultural identity and satisfying local needs of economics, politics and regeneration. Currently, eco-museums are present in several countries around the world, especially in French speaking countries, Scandinavian countries, German speaking countries and Japan [13].

5.1. Eco- Museum in Japan

One Asian country that is highly committed to the ecomuseum movement is Japan. On 26 March 1995, ecomuseum promoters and participants in Japan established the Japan Eco-Museological Society (JECOMS). The JECOMS published the "2009 Ecomuseum Charter" on 24 May 2009. This charter was based on the evolutionary definition of the ecomuseum that was provided by George Henri Rivière and outlined the definition, goals, activities and mechanism of ecomuseums in Japan. As in the French model, the Japanese ecomuseum consisted of a school, a laboratory and a conservation organization. However, JECOMS defined the ecomuseum as "a mechanism for exploring the relationship among human activities, the participation of residents and the environment for the purpose of sustainably contributing to the community-endogenous development".

The Chinese and Norwegian governments cooperatively developed an ecomuseum project in 1997. The first ecomuseum in China (Soga Ecomuseum) was established in 1998. To regulate ecomuseums, China established the "Liuzhi Principles" in 2000, which were widely adopted by international museum experts in 2005. These principles begin by asserting that the inhabitants of villages are the true "owners" of their culture and they have the right to interpret and validate it themselves. According to the Liuzhi Principles, public participation is critical to ecomuseums, and culture is a common and democratic asset that must be democratically managed [14].

5.2. Eco- Museum in Iran

Habibzad (2010) examines the phenomenon of the ecomuseum in Iran, exploring its relationship to local identity. She demonstrates, using numerous examples, how the ecomuseum approach has enabled local communities to identify their own 'sense of place'. Although none of the sites use the name 'ecomuseum' (preferring cultural village) and have benefited considerably from 'top-down' professional expertise and guidance, they largely follow ecomuseum principles and processes. The first Iranian ecomuseums were created without governmental financial or specialist help, being supported entirely by non-governmental and personal investments under the name of the Khooshehsar Bodm Gardi Network. This type of approach is somewhat unusual, since most ecomuseums are developed and managed as a joint venture between local communities and a local governmental (or quasi-governmental) authority.

The impact of ecomuseum activity, especially in terms of providing a boost to economic development, has been considerable. The ecomuseums in Meymand village (Kerman), Garmeh village and Kashan city (Esfahan), Chalar village (Mazandaran) and Ghasem abad village (Gillan) have encouraged local communities to act independently, becoming guardians of their cultural heritage and local ecosystems. Generating low-level tourism and economic well-being through the promotion of traditional crafts and local cuisine, the changes have done much to protect and enhance regional culture. Vernacular architecture has been valued, the rights of indigenous groups have been respected, and above all, local people have been given a democratic voice, becoming deeply involved with their own heritage. Creating and operating an ecomuseum is not an easy task. The Iranian ecomuseums demonstrate the ways in which local people have acquired new skills, developing, for example, their negotiating capabilities to create influential networks, and the ability to plan strategically to deliver demanding projects. Such cultural capital is difficult to measure, but it is evident that it has grown significantly over the past few years; similarly the growth of social capital may be seen in the creation of new friendships and the sharing of experience and expertise. The success of the ecomuseum activities is difficult to measure, but there is good evidence that the projects thus far have promoted pride and self-confidence among residents, decreased social problems, discouraged emigration, and promoted training for young people in rural localities. It is interesting to see ecomuseum-like approaches being adopted in areas, often rural, isolated or deprived, where traditional mainstream practices would sit uneasily. Conservation and curation of natural and cultural resources need to go hand in hand with community development and sustainability. The ecomuseums in Iran have much in common with recent ecomuseum and community museum developments in China, Vietnam and Mexico; although they are rather 'top-down' and are oriented towards promoting cultural tourism, they nevertheless set guidelines for the ways in which communities can value, conserve and benefit from their heritage assets [9].

6. Theoretical Background

Considering the fact eco-museum is deemed as a concept, its assessment in a community requires a definition of the term as well as defining indexes for the concept, which have been conducted in accordance with eco-museum theorists' and experts' opinion. According to the foregoing, the determining factor for a site to be an eco-museum is having the three principal criteria as well as the extent to which they overlap with one another. The three principal criteria include "indigenous people's contribution", "exclusive eco-museum activities", and "museum phenomena." After determining the conceptual model of eco-museum criteria, the present paper defines all the criteria, and illustrates how each criterion contributes to continued development. Then a definition is provided for continued development, which embraces social, economic, and environmental phenomena, ultimately yielding rural entrepreneurship (Figure 4).

7. Methodology

To achieve the study objectives and to answer research questions, the descriptive-analytical method was employed in this study; through a documentary study, the existing literature on eco-museum and entrepreneurship was reviewed at the first stage, the results of which are presented in the form of theoretical concepts. Required amendments were also applied as per the expert opinion of theorists of entrepreneurship and tourism. At the second stage, the three foregoing criteria, which were approved in the theoretical background of the study, were identified and examined through a field study conducted in Espidan. The afore-mentioned criteria are presented in the form of a table showing the As-Is condition of Espidan on the basis of eco-park indices. The effective solutions for evolution of the village into an eco-park are ultimately discussed.

8. The Scope of Study

Espidan is a village in Garmkhan Rural District of Bojnurd, North Khorasan Province, with a longitude of 57°34', latitude of 37°1', and elevation of 2003 meters (Figure 1). The village can be accessed through Mashhad-Bojnour Road, at the 22- kilometers distance towards the south from Sisab Village. Natural attractions of the village form its most significant tourist attractions. Lying on the hillsides of Aladagh and featuring lush valleys and rushing rivers, Espidan has since long ago been deemed as a summer resort with a favorable climate. Concentration of valuable elements such as river, old trees, gardens and garden houses along with a diversity of ground form, twisting routes, varying width of

valey, as well as successive narrow and broad spaces has augmented the quality of visual and environmental beauty of the region. The presence of a stair-like pattern in the village which is situated among the gardens, heights and steep slopes as well as the shelters on the passages which regulates the temperature in the passageways by throwing pleasant shadows during the scorching summer days account for the value of its physical environment. Another physical attraction of the village is the shrine structure of Imam Zadeh Mohammadbagher, a descendent of Imam Sajjad (PBUH), which dates back to the Safavid and Qajar periods, and is one of the monuments registered as a national cultural heritage. The beautiful and lovely valleys, the white peaks crowning the green hillsides, pure mineral water springs, fecund lands and gardens with tangled and fruitful branches spread with natural attractions. All these features form a basis for evolving such a village with such exquisite natural, cultural and historical attractions into an exemplary tourists destination in the province. The natural and beautiful landscapes, as well as diversity in vegetation, animal and climate has attracted many to this rural area situated in lush valleys.

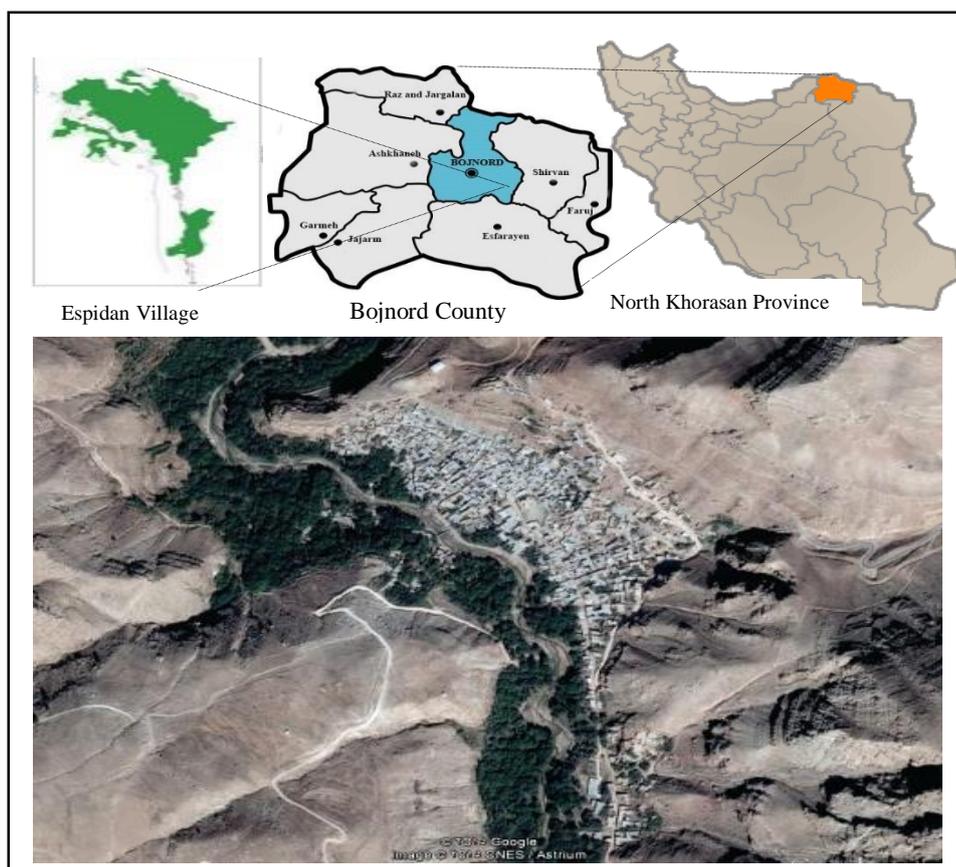


Figure 3. Situation of Spidan Village in North Khorasan Province of Bojnourd, source: writer

9. Discussion and Findings

According to the theoretical framework of the study, any site's categorization as an eco-museum is dependent upon the presence three criteria and the extent to which they overlap with one another: Indigenous people's contribution, various activities as a museum, and museum phenomena. An overview of specific activities of any site as an eco-museum as well as eco-museum phenomena in Esfidan village follows in the next section, and executive solutions are proposed for strengthening the eco-museum criteria and further overlapping of these three influential criteria in Esfidan village.

9.1. Special Activities of a Place as Eco-Museum

- Developing tourism and related activities and introducing eco-museum through internet and tourist centers.
- Collecting past knowledge for embracing the future.
- Preserving the environment, landscape, and endangered species.
- Improving and reconstructing the environment and landscape.
- Proper utilization of natural resources.
- Expanding indigenous people's knowledge.
- Hosting ceremonies and exhibitions for the purpose of introducing the local traditions and customs.

- Relying upon traditional knowledge in execution of all activities in accordance with the motto “think globally, act locally”.

Another feature of each eco-museum is the unique cultural, social, and natural environment that has been named as the museum's characteristics or the tangible and intangible heritage. The tangible and intangible heritage is given in the table below, which is shown in the following tables (Table 1 and 2) in the village of Espidan.

Table 1. Objective Tangible Heritage Instances in Espidan

		Crafts and Art	Carpet and Wrapper Weaving	
Tangible Heritage in the Concept of Eco-museum	Cultural and Social Values	Reproducible Documents and Collections	The Book “Espidan: a relic of the past, a heritage for the future (Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation) The registration file on Espidan’s historical texture (Cultural Heritage Department Studies)	
	Architectural Values	Indigenous Architecture	Condensed Stair-like structure Extrovert architecture, while being introvert Priority placed on pedestrians on passage ways Use of corridors of various length and width Use of local material	
		Outstanding Monuments	Imam Zadeh Mohammad Baqir, Barfan Caravanserai	
	Natural and Ecological Values	Nature and Aquatic Landscapes	Natural view of mountain	Condensed stair-like structure of the village on hillsides Beautiful pastures Espidan River, and 83 natural water springs, including Honor, Gariab, and Dehzireh springs
			Heights	Amirbashi Rock, Hasanbay Mountai
		Herbal and animal species	The 500-year old cypress tree, various herbal species like walnut	
Historical Values	Historical Monuments	Imam Zadeh Mohammad Baqir, Barfan Stone Fort, Barfan Caravanserai		

Tangible Heritage Instances in Espidan

Table 2. Objective Intangible Heritage Instances in Espidan

Intangible Heritage in the Concept of Eco-museum	Architectural Values	Traditional Technologies	Load bearing parts: Load bearing walls, and wood pillars Materials used in walls: Rubble trench foundation in the first floor, and clay and thatch on upper floors Materials used in ceilings: wood and local trees, and a final layer of Licorice, planted wheat, and thatch coating
		Methods for Adaptability with the region	Buildings are designed in such a manner to be adaptable to two different climates (scorching summer and freezing winter), while making best use of the natural slope of the region and local materials Proper location on the slopes considering the direction of sunlight Flat roofs Maximum two stories Small openings Thick walls
	Cultural and Social Values	Customs and Traditions	Moharram Mourning Ceremonies Norwruz Celebrations (Khan Dah Ruz) Dorna
		Language and Dialect	Turkish as their mother tongue, and Fluent in Farsi
		Traditional Costumes	Dressing like Turkish Nomads of Hamedan (for being imigrated from Hamedan Region)
		Local Games	Traditional Wrestling (Ba Chukhe) Tipcat (Alak Dolak) Choriju
		Local Music	Kormanji Mugham Music (Quchani)
		Local Lifestyle	The majority of the population are engaged with horticulture or animal husbandry as a profession

Intangible Heritage Instances in Espidan

9.2. Threats and Risks Espidan Village

Despite the fact the village cherishes several potential privileges as an eco-museum, it is currently encountered with several risks and threats as an eco-museum target which can be removed through a reliance upon the eco-museum capabilities of the village as well as financial supports from governmental and private-sector organizations. The threats include:

- Natural Disasters including flood, earthquake, frost, landslide from the hillside.
- Accumulation of garbage on passage ways and household wastewater flowing into the passage ways.
- Destruction of historical monuments.
- The erosion and destruction of some of the existing sites, and migration of the population.
- Lack of supervision on new constructions in the recent years.
- Transgression into Riversides and Disposal of Construction Waste on Riversides.
- Destruction of Passesway pavements by Gas Company for supplying gas pipeline.

10. Executive Solutions for Improving Eco-Museum Criteria of Espidan

Tables 3, 4 and 5 present several solutions for achieving greater overlapping of the three influential areas that are: activities of a museum, museum phenomena (tangible and intangible heritage) and indigenous population’s contribution:

Table 3. Solutions for Improving Espidan’s Eco-museum Activities

Specific Activities of a site as a eco museum	On a general and meta-regional scale	<p>Introduction of Potentials and opportunities existing in the village to domestic and foreign investors, and preparation of proper grounds for national and international investors through compilation of incentives and encouraging strategies.</p> <p>Advertising Espidan in various national and international television channels, on the websites and in different languages, in tourism journals and ...</p> <p>Acquaintance of museum curators with various types of eco-museum and establishing relationship with their managers. Curators’ alertness to the events occurring in the field of natural and cultural heritage, and contributing to their resolution.</p> <p>Acquaintance of museum curators with various types of eco-museum and connecting to their manager.</p>
	On a local and regional scale	<p>Preparing materials and implementing the architectural environment desired by the curators, and acquiring knowledge and skill on museum curating</p> <p>Selecting a local house, renovating it and living in it as the nucleus of eco-museum</p> <p>Making use of simple local interior architecture for accommodation of visitors</p> <p>Attending to the hygiene of visitors’ accommodational environment</p> <p>Serving local dishes</p> <p>Engaging the locals in museum activities</p> <p>Respecting local inhabitants’ traditions and culture, and introducing them to the visitors</p> <p>Introducing the art and industries indigenous to the area</p> <p>Introducing Iranian and mystic music, and its fusion with world music</p> <p>Showing the architectural values, including traditional technologies and local population’s lifestyle, to visitors</p> <p>Introducing the natural and ecological values, including the landscape and natural scenery of the eco-museum, aquatic scenery, and etc., to visitors</p> <p>Showing the production of agricultural and livestock products to visitors and engaging them in the related production activities</p>

Table 4. Solutions for encouraging local populations’ contribution to Espidan Eco-museum

Solutions for contribution of local population and governmental and private-sector investors	<p>Making necessary preparations and encouraging people’s contribution to the creation of eco-museum; developing infrastructures, equipment and various tourism facilities, and generating revenue through these items</p> <p>Belief in, and practical commitment to, the fact that the local population and communities are the principal owners and agents of tourism development</p> <p>Training and information dissemination to the inhabitants regarding how to receive tourists and tourism for preventing any conflicts between the tourists and inhabitants</p> <p>Training the youth of the village in skills such as entrepreneurship, starting a business, English language, computer, and internet</p> <p>Employing experienced and skilled experts for creating the eco-museum, promoting and training tourism through different meetings and sessions with the village population</p> <p>Coordination between foundations and different respective sectors for synchronization of rural tourism functions in eco-museum</p> <p>Facilitating and encouraging talks between local communities (the principal owners of the region’s tourism resources) and the community of tourists on the significance and fragility of monuments, recreational and tourist site and the live cultures of</p>
--	--

- Espidan
- Protecting the local identity to prevent community’s materialism and self-interest
- Proposing solutions for establishing economic and cultural relations between the local inhabitants and the tourists
- Diversifying the tourism facilities, activities and services for gaining tourists’ satisfaction, and as a result, increasing the number of tourists; engaging individuals from different social classes in various activities
- Making preparations for forming constructive social and cultural interactions for decreasing the chances of social disorders emerging as a result of cultural-social gaps between the community of the host and that of the tourists
- Focusing tourist activities on utilization of existing tourist resources and attractions that are not being used, such as landscapes, heights, rivers, and the like, for generating revenue and creating job opportunities and rural development

Table.5. Solutions for protecting and developing the cultural, social, and natural environment of Espidan Eco Museum (Tangible and intangible heritage)

<p>Developing and equipping tourist routes and installing signs, rules and regulation in these sites; compilation of tourist guides for visitors</p> <p>Identifying and utilizing attraction, products, and other relative tourist privileges</p> <p>Developing and expanding agricultural tourism for proper utilization of rural landscape, farms, and gardens for revenue generation</p> <p>Utilizing the constitutional capabilities and regulations for decreasing threats and tourism ecological-environmental pollutions</p> <p>Utilizing herbal species compatible with the climate of the village</p> <p>Making use of the topographic features and slope of the village for developing tourist activities</p> <p>Utilizing solar energy for providing the required energy supply</p> <p>Making policies with regard to protecting the natural lands and preventing their illegal occupation</p> <p>Improving the utilization condition of the lands located on the outskirts of the village</p> <p>Information dissemination with regard to the significance of natural resources and the necessity to protect them</p> <p>Preventing unauthorized constructions for protecting the historical value of the village</p> <p>Making necessary preparations for reducing the probable risks of natural disasters</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Protective and Developmental solution for tangible and intangible heritage</p>
---	---

11. Conclusion

Rural problems can be resolved and an all-inclusive rural development opportunity can be formed by creating a rural eco-museum and improving rural tourism and by creating job opportunities for revenue generation through local resources, economic diversification, and social contribution. Even though eco-museums have not been developed in Iran, it has offered great opportunities for planners, designers and respective agents, to make use of global experience while protecting the local culture and natural resources, and do not take the same wrong path by understanding the existing problems and challenges. Based on the foregoing, for Espidan’s evolution into an eco-museum, in-depth studies on the region is required so as to bring into attention all cultural, social and environmental components influencing the formation of Espidan heritage. Espidan population’s contribution, as the factor distinguishing this eco-museum with other traditional eco-museums, should not be limited to the local people and their engagement in showing the past traditions. The new conditions and concepts demand ideas beyond this definition for the principle of contribution. In this new definition, visitors are also active contributors which must be included in the governance principle of these museums. The development outlook is defined and specified in the beginning, and then the contribution of all local, governmental and volunteer agents is sought in this regard. Eco-museum shares less common ground with other similar projects and is of a different vastness. Nowadays, the term eco-museum is deemed as having the same value, or even the same name, as that of village. The idea of rural eco-museum might protect parts of the rural identity; however, by the time villages can persist in their own traditional lifestyle, protecting such a principle gains greater priority over other ideas. The obtained results indicate that formation of eco-museum and rural tourism in Espidan can exert considerable effects on the economic, social and environmental aspects of the village; expansion of social contribution and dynamism, expansion of social justice and public welfare in rural districts, increasing revenue, decreasing poverty, and expansion of environmental stability can be mentioned as some few instances of such effects. Creating an eco-museum site and developing a stable rural tourism is a fundamental solution to elimination of poverty and decrease the rate of migration, creation of welfare for local and rural communities, protection of the traditional cultural features, and creation of job opportunities in rural communities. Tourism has shattered Espidan’s seclusion, and its dynamism and growth has led to many considerable economic, social and environmental changes in Espidan which paves the way towards a constant and continued development. The emphasis on creation of Espidan eco-museum, considering the particular capabilities and privileges of the region, and through the rules and regulations, and targeted at decreasing the threats and ecological-environmental pollution, is one of the solutions that must be taken into consideration for development of tourism in

Espidan as a key solution for maximizing the benefits gained from natural, cultural and historical privileges of Espidan and, at the same time, for minimizing the threats and their impact, and ultimately achieving constant rural development.

12. References

- [1] Steffen Korsgaard, Sabine Müller, and Hanne Wittorff Tanvig. "Rural entrepreneurship or entrepreneurship in the rural: between place and space." (2015) *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*: 5,6 doi:10.1108/IJEER-11-2013-0205.
- [2] Roberta MacDonald, Lee Jolliffe. "CULTURAL RURAL TOURISM Evidence from Canada." (April 2003) Elsevier Science Ltd. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(02)00061-0.
- [3] Maia Lordkipanidze, Han Brezet, and Mikael Backman. "The entrepreneurship factor in sustainable tourism development." *Journal of Cleaner Production* 13 (June 2005). doi:10.1016/j.jclepro.2004.02.043.
- [4] Seyed Hassan Motiee Langroudi, Mahre Nosrati. "Feasibility study of tourism development in rural areas from the viewpoint of tourists in the Kerganroud section of Talesh city." (June 2011) *Geography and Environmental Planning (Journal of Humanities Research, University of Isfahan)*. Volume 22, Number 1.
- [5] Katherine Dashper. "Rural Tourism: An International Perspective." (2014): 1. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. doi:(10): 1-4438-6677-6.
- [6] Lourdes Molera, Isabel Pilar, and Alba Iadejo. "Profiling Segments of Tourists in Rural Areas of South – Eastern Spain, *Journal of Tourism Management*." (June 2007). Elsevier Ltd, doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2006.05.006.
- [7] Adrian-Liviu Scutariu, Carmen Nastase, and Mihai Popescu. "Perspectives of Sustainable Development of Tourism in the North-East Region of Romania." (December 2016) *Sustainability* 2017. 9, 56. doi:10.3390/su9010056.
- [8] Aleksandra Terzić, Željko Bjeljic, Ana Jovičić, and Ivana Penjišević. "Cultural Route and Eco-museum Concepts as a Synergy of Nature, Heritage and Community Oriented Sustainable Development Eco-museum „Ibar Valley“ in Serbia." (June 2014): 3&4. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*. Doi: 10.14207/ejsd.2014.v3n2p1.
- [9] Peter Davis. "Eco-museum A Sense of Place." (2011) Continuum International Publishing Group. ISBN 978-1441-15744-7.
- [10] Kazuoki Ohara. "The Image of 'Ecomuseum' in Japan." (April 1998) Pacific Friends, Jijigaho-sha.
- [11] Christopher Gunter. "Eco-museums: Challenging Temporality through Community Reappropriation." (Oct 2017) *The Journal of Arts Management*. doi:10.1080/10632921.2017.1320617.
- [12] P. Miryousefi. "Rural eco-museums: tourism development based on sustained development models." (2010) *the Sustainable World, WIT Transactions on Ecology and the Environment*. doi:10.2495/SW100621.
- [13] Katarzyna NEGACZ, Anna PARA. "The eco-museum as a sustainable product and an accelerator of regional development. The case of the Subcarpathian Province." (March 2014): 52&53. *Economic and Environmental Studies*. ISSN electronic version 2081-8319. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272020981>.
- [14] Zhen-Hui Liu, Yung-Jaan Lee "A Method for Development of Ecomuseums in Taiwan" (September 2015). *Sustainability* 2015. doi: 10.3390/su71013249.