RUM VILLAGE IN JORDAN: A SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY

KHALEDALZUBI

Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences- The Hashemite University-Jordan
E-mail: alzubi@hu.edu.jo

Abstract - This study aims at increasing our knowledge concerning the tourism sector in the region from the following points:
- The nature and human: the factors of tourism attraction and the impact of these factors in the tourism sector.
- Studying the socio- economic variable of Rum village.
- Studying the socio, economic and environmental impacts on the tourism activities
- The potential opportunities of tourism sector development in at Wadi Rum village

Index Terms - Development, Economy, Jordan, Social, Tourism, Wadi Rum.

I. INTRODUCTION

Wadi Rum village had in recent decades undergone significant socioeconomic changes resulted of the huge economic development due to the expanding of tourism activities in the region. The fundamental reason of these huge changes is due the fact that the region is considered as one of the golden triangle which contains Petra, Aqaba in addition to Wadi rum region. Wadi Rum, a fantastic natural landscape of sand and towering rock massifs, is most famous as a home for Lawrence of Arabia during the Arab Revolt at the time of the First World War. Along with the port city Aqaba, Petra and Wadi Rum form a Golden Triangle of great historic and cultural importance and are the premier tourism attractions in Jordan(Gregory 2014). Wadi of Rum and the nearby range lands and mountains have become parts of dira or tribal territory with free access to natural spring water and pasture granted to neighbouring fractions of the Howeytat when need be (seasonally or in times of drought)(Bocco 1987). Wadi Rum village had in recent decades undergone significant socioeconomic changes resulted of the huge economic development due to the expanding of tourism activities in the region. The fundamental reason of these huge changes is due the fact that the region is considered as one of the golden triangle which contains Petra, Aqaba in addition to Wadi rum region (Abuamoud,(2015).

Wadi Rum, a fantastic natural landscape of sand and towering rock massifs, is most famous as a home for Lawrence of Arabia during the Arab Revolt at the time of the First World War. Along with the port city Aqaba, Petra and Wadi Rum form a Golden Triangle of great historic and cultural importance and are the premier tourism attractions in Jordan (Howard 1987).

II. SHORT HISTORY OF WADI RUM

Recent excavations in the south have uncovered a Caleolithic settlement dating from 4500 BC. On a hill, at the foot of Jabal Rum, lies the Allat temple originally built by the Ad tribe and remodeled by the Nabataeans in the 1st century BC.

Before Islam, it served as the gathering place for the tribes of Ad, Thamud, Lihyan and Main. The Nabataeans, however, surpassed those early tribes in trade activities and monumental achievements. The desert tribes Wadi Rum maintain the warm hospitality which characterizes genuine Arab culture.

Rare species of animals, small plants, and herbs can be found by the inquisitive traveler. Red anemones, poppies and the striking black iris, Jordan's national flower, all grows at will by the roadside and in more quiet reaches(Drwish1996).

Herbal medicinal cures used for centuries by the Bedouins are found in the mountainous regions (Fodor 2008) .
Wadi Rum is also a bird-watchers' haven with its 110 recorded species. Vultures, buzzards, eagles and sparrows are a few to be seen by those looking skyward. Other interesting creatures to be found include the camel-spider, feared by local Bedouins for its ability to harm camels; however this spider is not dangerous to man (Chatelard2002).
Seen gracefully in its natural habitat, the Ibex, mountain goat, is often spotted in the desert terrain. Other interesting animals are the Gray Wolf, Bland ford's Fox, and the Arabian Sand Cat which is similar in appearance to a domesticated cat and survives in its harsh desert surroundings.
Howeytat men first got involved in the activity of tourism as Jeep drivers either contracted directly by individual tourists, or hired with some profit margin by the rest house. Many sold part of their goats or sheep to buy more Jeeps, or reverted to purchasing camels that had been traded for cars in the previous decades. Later on, some opened small shops in the village. A few were able to by-pass the rest house and offer direct services to hikers or climbers travelling alone or in small groups. They involved members of their families to accommodate them in Bedouin tents in the badia. Nowadays, almost all male residents of

Wadi Rum between 15 and 45 years of age work with tourists at least part of their time, even if extended family households often have other sources of income, derived mainly from animal husbandry or the army. As tourism was gaining economic importance, tourists became a new vector mediating between the Bedouin and the surrounding space, and it is not rare to hear Bedouin drivers and guides equating their jobs with tourists with that of herders (Chatelard 2005). Many aspects of these two activities can be fruitfully compared to understand how Bedouin have recycled their know how as herders into guiding skills. One big difference between goats and tourists, though, is that the latter, unlike the former, come with representations that they communicate to Bedouin, and that they have complex and changing demands .

Howeytat women, for their part, do not guide tourists and are not in contact with other Jordanian agents in the business. They may just receive foreigners as guests brought in by male relatives but even then interaction is limited due to language differences and/or to local concepts of women's shame. Thanks to schooling, a handful of young women in the village now read English, but even those have no motive for peering at maps or guidebooks in that language. Consequently, even though most Bedouin females are aware of the new tourist place names heard from male relatives, they cannot relate them to any personal or collective experience and do not use them even when discussing between themselves their husbands' whereabouts with tourists. In Wadi Rum, representation of space as it is manifested though place names has both a generational and gendered dimension, reflecting that different groups in the community have various levels of contacts with tourists and therefore view and appropriate space in a different manner (Salvi 2018).

III. THE STUDY

This study aims at increasing our knowledge concerning the tourism sector in the region from the following points:

- The nature and human the factors of tourism attraction and the impact of theses factor in the tourism sector.
- Studying the socio- economic variable of Rum village and the region in general.
- Studying the socio, economic and environmental impacts on the tourism activities
- The potential opportunities of tourism sector development in at wadi rum village

In order to accomplish our objectives, we rely on a general survey to the region includes written questionnaire and semi structures interviews with the key players at wadi rum village.

Rapid growth in visitor numbers accelerates the population movement and transformation of their way of life; from pastoral and Bedouin way of life depend on nonstop immigrations to traditional rural way of life). Many Bedouins gain knowledge of European languages from their work as deserts guides. Others work in transportation of visitors by their cars or camels in desert tours. A number of Bedouins worked in other services and tourist activities.

The population likes other in the region, influenced by the political events which move down the tourism activity in the region. A lot of them work on tourism sector, and depend essentially on tourism activities on their life since it is the lonely economic resource of their life and they don't have any other option to get money. However; the tourism activities on the region:

- daily visits of small groups
- adventure tourism activities like hiking, camping…etc
- Cultural tourism activities like, historical site visits
- Sports activities

The local community involves in these activities in different way such as the participation of the local people on the sports activities, national and international conferences dealing with Wadi Rum region.

Tourism can be an effective tool for sustainable development contribute to poverty alleviation and help conserve the natural and cultural environment. Attract land uses and development more compatible with community goals and the area's needs, infrastructure, and character. This requires an urgent need to improve the economic position of Wadi Rum including overall quality of life. This involves establishment an optimal and long run development framework for the village of Wadi Rum that generates employment and income opportunities for the present as well as for the future population (Brand 2000).

Many parts of the world especially developing countries view tourism as a vehicle for economic development due its role in income, employment generations, and poverty eradication. However, urban regeneration might be associated with improvement in infrastructure; such as access to safe drinking water, sanitation, education, health services, communications and transport.

In brief, elimination the main problems face the community this area is preconditions to develop the tourism. Moreover, community participation in decision-making is one way to achieve effective planning and management.

IV. OBJECTIVES AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

A survey based on a questionnaire was carried out in the village of Wadi Rum to provide the study with information useful on various aspects of the status quo of the social and economic conditions for the

community. The questionnaire was divided into five parts; each part focused on particular objectives. However, in general, the focus of this questionnaire was on the following objectives:
(1) Collecting background information on the family,
(2) Background information on the housing,
(3) The availability of basic needs,
(4) The credibility and satisfaction regarding the social services provided,
(5) The current status of tourism and investigation of vision for the future of Wadi Rum.

Early in 2018 the questionnaire was carried out in the village. The size of the sample included almost all the households in the village of 110 households, there were 110 respondents. The remaining 10 households were disregarded or dropped from the sample because either they were not properly cooperated with the surveyors or informed inconsistent data. The head of the household was asked to answer the questionnaire.

Closed questions and open-ended questions were used in the survey to explore additional options and to obtain other useful comments if possible. The survey was relatively simple to suit the different levels of education of the respondents. The questionnaire was conducted by a group of people;
(1) one of them was undergraduate student who usually lives in Wadi Rum,
(2) others involved in a particular way in the village under the supervision of an academic staff from the Hashemite University.
The in-person survey method (face-to-face) was adopted as an approach to the administration of this survey because it is the most reliable approach.

V. INFORMATION ON THE FAMILY

The focus of this part of the questionnaire was on collecting background information on the household, such as income, profession, family size, family members and their ages and education.
The results showed that 75% of the householders were employed (75 respondents), and 25% were unemployed. The main reasons of some unemployed householders according to their importance were; lack of job opportunities, inability to work, health reasons, and retirement respectively.
The householders were asked about their profession; four professions were classified;
(1) Tourism,
(2) Government,
(3) Trade,
(4) Agriculture and other profession to be mentioned by the respondents.
The results as shown in the following table indicated that 76% of the head of the households were working in tourism, 18% were working in the Government of Jordan especially in the armed forces. The remainders were working in commercial, agricultural and other activities.

Respondents were asked about their monthly incomes. They were divided into three categories; first category represents JD150 or less, second category represents JD (151-250), and third category represents JD251 or more.
The empirical analysis showed that 82% of the respondents were in the first category, 14% were in the second category, and 4% of the respondents didn't answer this question. In contrast, no one had more than 250JD per month. These results show that they are incongruous data due to the sensitivity of the income related questions.
Respondents were asked about their family size and gender. The result showed that the total family members were 582 of 100 households (about 640 people of 110 households). The size of a family ranged from 2 to 26 people in a household. The average number of people in a household was 5.8. Other results showed that 52% of people were male and 48% were female.
The respondents were asked about the family members in terms of; their ages, profession, education, and number of wives per household. The results showed that 113 people were employed out of 287 people who exceeded 18 years old (39%). The results also showed that most the employed family members work in tourism (75%), 21% work in the Government, and the remainders worked in other professions. In terms of education, the results indicated that 32% of the family members were illiterate (178 out of 554), and 68% were literate up to high school level. The results also showed that 91% of the households had one wife per household, 5% had two wives, and only 4% had three wives.

VI. INFORMATION ON THE HOUSING

The main objectives of this part of the questionnaires were on collecting background information on one hand on housing conditions, types, number of room, ownerships type, and main problems facing housing units, from the other hand, the respondents' viewpoints towards substitute housing, location, and participation in funding the proposed housing and alike, were other focuses of this part.

He results showed that the housing type was fixed housing units, and the arrange number of rooms per housing unit was 3.6 on an average area of about nearly 950 square meter. The results also indicated that 85% of dwelling status was owned. But 15% of dwellings were rental.

According to the dwelling status, the main problem facing the housing units in the village as shown in the figure was sanitation, other problems as surveyed were water, " sanitation & water", and electricity respectively.

The respondents were also asked about their opinions regarding whether they will accept to move to a modern housing or not once the opportunity is available. The result showed that more than 95% of them agreed to move to modern housing provided that the modern housing location is to be close by the current location of the village. However; a few respondents preferred the new location of housing in the reserve itself.

The respondents also were asked about their attitudes towards and willingness in cooperation with the housing project if implemented in order to reveal the extent of financial cooperation with the proposed project, and the main reasons of why they didn't want to cooperate financially.

The results of this part as shown in the following table indicate that 83% of the respondents didn't want to cooperate financially in the proposed project in spite of 95% of them agreed to move to a modern housing as mentioned in the previous results. In other words, 87% of who refused to cooperate with the proposed project were because they cannot afford to pay, and 12% were satisfied with the current housing. However, 17% of the respondents were ready to cooperate to fund the new housing in different ways, 88% of whom, wanted to cooperate up to 10% of the cost, meanwhile, 12% only were ready to cooperate with 25% of the cost.

Three ways of financial cooperation were suggested by the surveyors regarding the mechanism of cooperation in financing the proposed housing units; these ways were; monthly payments, full paid payment, and to get all the required infrastructure of the house; and then the householder will fund the rest of cost. The results showed that the majority of respondents preferred monthly payments, and a few respondents chose the third way, and none chose the second way.

The respondent also were asked about the new proposed housing service they want; three options were determined by surveyors which are; serviced area (water, electricity, and an area), core housing units (kitchen, and one bedroom), and a completed housing unit. Of course, 68% of the respondents preferred a completed housing unit, 23% of them agreed to have a core unit, while 9% preferred a serviced area for building purpose.

The respondents were asked about the future vision for Wadi Rum once the planned project is implemented (build a new modern village outside the borders of the current one), and investigation what sort of projects according to the respondents' point of view can enhance tourism development and urban regeneration. The results indicated that 97% of the respondents (97 of 100) were optimistic as concerns the planned project, while 3% of them only were not. This proves the strong concern expressed by the respondents as regards the prospect of a better future for the village. They were optimistic because most they believe that expansion and development the current village will increase the exploitation of areas for investment projects, and make the village more attractive for newcomers to reside in the area.

The respondents do believe that the quality of their life could be improved, and that this improvement can be achieved through urban regeneration and tourism development in Wadi Rum. Some of the respondents suggested possible projects of urban regeneration and tourism development as shown in the following table, mostly focusing on transform the current village into heritage village, establishing racing club, establishing climbing and sport club, creating new social development centers, creating vocational training centers, and in general improving the infrastructures to facilitate the development process in Wadi Rum. Respondents were asked about their attitudes and interest towards current study and the proposed project. Their opinions were classified into four levels, on a four-point scale where 1 represents a welcomed project, 2 represents a welcomed project to some extent, 3 represents unwelcome project, 4 represents refused project in principle. The results showed that 95% of the respondents welcomed the proposed project (mean= 1.06), and nobody had rejected it.

The respondents were also asked about their willingness or the willingness of any family members in cooperation with the planned project, the results showed that 60% of them were not ready to cooperate through working in the project, because social reasons or because they had other jobs.

The respondents were asked about their feeling being the village of Wadi Rum as a part from the reserve will facilitate economic and social development of the village. The results indicated that more than 90% of the respondents said that this action will not facilitate the economic and social development in Wadi Rum.
A very important question was asked regarding the respondent's viewpoints about the allocation of financial resources to implement the proposed project. Three priorities were determined for each household, as shown in the following Table. The main results showed that 58% of the households chose building houses as the first priority most in need in financing, while 22% of them said investment in housing and other basic services such as water and electricity is the first priority. However, 45% of them gave the third priority to the improvement of tourist facilities.

VII. THE CURRENT STATUS OF BASIC FACILITIES AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The main objectives of these parts of the questionnaire are to investigate the current status of basic utilities

such as; water sources, electricity, telecommunications, as well as access to social and other services such as health, educational and other facilities.

The results showed that the main source of water for 79% of the respondents was municipal water, while 21% of them depended on rainwater as the source of their water needs. Other results indicated also 96% and 54% of the respondents had electricity and telephone services respectively.

Other basic services, such as health, education, water, roads, and garbage collection as shown in the following table, were classified into five levels ranged from very good to very bad. The results showed that the above services are good in general.

Another major question was asked to the respondents regarding the perceived main problems in the village of Wadi Rum, and investigating the respondents' opinions on the best solutions for the main problems that Wadi Rum faces, as reported by the surveyors.

The major two community problems as surveyed in the village of Wadi Rum were poverty, and unemployment as shown in the following table. Hardship of economic life is expected as well, as a community problem due to its direct relationship with poverty and unemployment. In brief, overall level of the standards of living in the area is deteriorated.

The second category of problems perceived by the respondents, in term of their importance for the community were housing conditions, educational services, and lack of water supply. The least important society problems according to the respondents' point of view were the government role, social life, and services in general. However, transportation, environmental conditions, tourism, and diseases were not problems for the community. Moreover, community participation in decision-making is one way to achieve effective planning and management, given that the top to bottom approach has been ineffective policy for ecotourism.

With regard to the optimal solutions according to the respondents' viewpoints; the results showed that 76% of the respondents indicated that the optimal solution to the problems facing Wadi Rum is by governmental support, through investment in new projects. 14% of them said that enhancing tourist investments in all means is the optimal solution, while 10% of them only preferred offer investment incentives within Aqaba special economic zone as the optimal solution for their problems.

These solutions were raised from one hand, because they are expected to help to combat poverty, create new jobs, and improve the overall infrastructures in the area. On the other hand, these results provide input to decision makers on where limited funds should be allocated to.

VIII. TOURISM STATUS AND FUTURE VISION

The main aim of this part of the survey were to (1) investigate to what extent the residents of the village of Wadi Rum are involved in tourism,(2) to reveal their personal assessment on the current status of tourism, and (3) to explore the respondents' future vision for the village once the urban regeneration and tourism development are implemented.

The respondents were asked whether they involve in traditional handcraft, or any tourist activity. The results showed that 65% of the respondents or any other family member worked in a traditional handcraft especially in making lso the results indicated that 84% of the respondents (84 respondents) work in a tourist activity, while 16% of them do not work because there are no jobs. This is shown in the following table.

The respondents were asked about their personal assessment on the current status of tourism, and the impact of tourism of the improving the following conditions; income, community culture, creating jobs, environment, developing new tourist facilities.

The results in general, however, indicated that respondents were extremely agreed that tourism contributed positively with the improvement the above mentioned aspects. However, the respondents indicated that tourism contributed negatively with creating some social problems.

The respondents were also asked whether there is a need for awareness campaigns on tourism in Rum within the local community. The results showed that 74% of the respondents indicated that there is a need to some extent for awareness campaigns. 13% of them said there is no need for that, other result showed that most people in Rum have a great interest in tourism development as a way that leads to creating jobs, and then income.

The respondents were asked about the importance of selected urbanization improvements in the village of Wadi Rum. These improvements were; improvements of tourist facilities, improvements of social facilities, and improvements in infrastructure. The results showed that 61% of the respondents indicated that improvements in infrastructure such as; water, electricity, and communications is the most improvement in need in the village. 32% of them indicated that improvements of tourist facilities is a priority for improvement, while 7% of them said that social improvements is a priority. The respondents were asked about their opinions regarding some

determined and selected urbanization improvements in terms of their roles in tourism development in the village of Wadi Rum. These improvements are listed in the following table.

The results showed that tourist marketing process as a mechanism in enhancing the role of tourism in the village of Wadi Rum was classified as the first priority of 53 households, and it was given the third priority by 22 households. However, focusing on human development, access to main tourist facilities, and creating new tourist facilities were classified as the least priority most in need in facilitating the tourist activity in Rum

The respondents were eventually asked about their general assessment of the current improvements in all aspects of life in the village of Wadi Rum. On a four-scale level, from very good to bad. The results as shown in the chart below indicate that 57% of the respondents assessed the current improvements in the area as a very good process. 36% of them assessed it as good.

IX. INTERVIEWS:

People's proclaims can be summarized as follows:

• People in the village suffer from poverty; they depend on tourism activities in the region as a main resource of income. Thus, people hope that government gives more interest to the village and tourism activities in the region to obtain sustainability over a long period and consequently improve their life.

• People need to talk frankly and freely about their experience of poverty, to explain their situation and participate in finding solutions to the problems they face.

No single policy or program will meet all the needs of all the poor – “one-size” does not fit all. Decision-makers should find ways to draw on the knowledge of the poor in order to capture the nature of poverty as it is experienced locally. This enables them to tailor program to meet their needs.

• The community is relatively isolated from services and markets. The main sources of income are tourism sectors.

• The community has also benefited from significant investment through the Development Projects in the region.

• We felt a public awareness on environmental issues like nature conservation and protection of wildlife in the area.

• People feel that the new legislations in the region slow down the socio-economic development in the village in view of the fact that such legislations limit local people participation in the tourism activity.

• People criticize the new visitor center; the new location is far-off

• People are aware of the problem of population growth and the emergency of a new and modern housing. But they prefer a new expansion of the present village northwards. And they reject any other project aiming at removing the present village out of the reserve limits.

• People hope to obtain advantages in the new project of development in the village; they look forward to having the primacy in the investment activities.

• People state that tourism activities in the region played a fundamental role in the socio-economic development in the region, especially during the last decades. But this development has been retreated in the last two years because of the new legislation applied in the region

• People state that the tourism activities in the village improved the cultural and educational level of the habitant in general. The new generation of young guides is in the habit of meeting and talking easily with tourists and on equal terms, many of them have traveled abroad and are much more environmentally conscious than their elders.

• "Zalabyehs Tribe" are worried about being absorbed by the government (Aqaba authority) if they cooperated with their new projects

CONCLUSION

Improving the standards of living for the village residents, area's growth and its development depend to a large extent on the improvement of infrastructure, combating poverty; create jobs, urban regeneration, and activation the influential role of human elements. Widespread poverty in Wadi Rum has sometimes been attributed to hostile climate, lack of job opportunities, or the low of welfare. In other words, enhancing the potential links between the tourism development and urban regeneration is a substantial objective to meet area's growth and its development.

In the poor areas the main concern focused on the question of growth versus income distribution. The basic issues, however, is not only how to achieve urban regeneration and tourism development, but also who would carry out these objectives. The tourism development in area has a future vision as a substantial source of revenues to the residents of Wadi Rum.

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