

ICT Impact on Tourism Report- Iran

Tourism is one of the first services sectors to adapt and use information and communication technology (ICT) for promoting its services. Nowadays, ICT has deeply affected the way business is conducted and organizations compete (Porter, 2001; Mavri and Angelis, 2009) .

Tourism is usually defined as services to people travelling to and staying outside their usual environment for less than one consecutive year for leisure or for business purposes. Tourism involves transportation ,accommodation, restaurants, cultural activities and leisure and could be more effectively viewed and evaluated as a market rather than an industry (Mavri and Angelis, 2009). E-tourism reflects the digitalization of all processes and value chains in the tourism, travel, hospitality and catering industries (Buhalis, 2004). At the tactical level, it includes e-commerce and applies IT for maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of the tourism organization. And at the strategic level ,revolutionizes all e-Tourism business processes, the entire value chains as well as the strategic relationships of tourism organizations with all their stakeholders” (Andersen and Henriksen, 2000).

ICT readiness draws a parallel directly to the amount of values that tourism can produce. However, the meaning of being “ICT ready” continues to develop fast, initiating many organizations, companies and countries alike to spend time reconsidering their “service delivery” to incorporate constant connectivity into the practice.

So far, in Iran 1200 Tourism locations have been identified, and the investors can invest in them. World Economic Forum, Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017 detailed during the global economic organization of export; Iran ranked 93th (2017) and 97th (2015) in terms of the overall performance of the tourism industry, ranked 9th on the cultural heritage sites, 94th preparedness for “ICT Readiness” infrastructure and ranked the first on travel expenses.

According to the report by Iran Communication Technology Ministry in 2016, mobile phone penetration for the 80 million populations in Iran is 101.05 % and has 70 million subscribers, which is virtually a mobile phone per person. Iran with having 43 million internet users considers holding the record in the Middle East, however in terms internet speed in the region has one of the lowest ranking. Iran is among the first five countries which have had a growth rate of over 20 percent and the top standing in telecommunication development. Due to rural telecommunication services success Iran received the UNESCO special recognition certification at the end of 2009. Telecom market was the fourth-largest market in the region at \$9.2 billion and was projected to develop to \$12.9 billion by 2014 at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 6.9 percent.

About 150,000 people are employed in the ICT sector in addition to around 20,000 in the software industry, which count for 1.1-1.3% share of GDP in 2002. Software exports were estimated to have been roughly \$50 million in 2008.

As for the transition period, there is need for bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation and collaboration amongst the world's countries, and be more attentive to some special areas; viz., sharing information and data; international standards implementation. Special attention must be given to some areas such as; implementation of the common world standards set by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the safe digital transfer process are required. Simultaneously, policy-making changes attempts require cooperation amongst, cross-governmental agencies, International organizations and travelers. Furthermore, governmental agencies must revise traveler roles in this process; create opportunities for travelers to share decision-making procedures.

As to data experience, savviness, usage and sharing people have changed tremendously. Change in customer taste, invent of new technology, industry trend instigated tourism industry to adopt the new business models and management, in order to double their efforts for versatile customer selections and their improve performances.

Sweeping development in "Service Delivery" has happened and bond to continue. Generally speaking, these changes are due to digital and social media so much so that they are increasingly, considered as integral part of any business today. Estimations reveal there are four billion mobiles across the globe, with 2.7 social media subscribers. New members of these media, particularly the "digital natives" including online travel "aggregators (OTAs)", are changing the value chain leading to an increase in sharing economy; Airbnb, an American company which hosts an online marketplace and hospitality service reports over one million host in 2015.