

The Management of the Marshes of Thigar Governorate in the South of Iraq and their Importance in Improving the Process of Tourist Development

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Abstract

The study contributes in rising the tourist reality of marshes regions in the south of Iraq, for it may contribute in the process of comprehensive tourist planning and development of all aspects of life and seriously contributes in raising the inhabitants of these regions economically and support the economy of the country and develop its tourist movement. The place covered by the research is characterized by historical, natural and geographical depth because it has social and economic impacts on the population of the neighboring regions. So the marshes regions of Iraq are considered a promising tourist future for they are a diverse world of wild animals and plants. Together with the human element and other complementary ingredients, this forms the elements of the special distinctive Iraqi tourist product. And after reviving life in them, the success of the programs of raising the marshes, re-flooding 65% of the total area of the marshes, the success of the governmental efforts to get the approval of UNISCO to enlist the marshes of Iraq within the list of the world heritage as they are a heritage site mixing environment, antiquities and cultural entity. So it possible that the number of tourists willing to visit these regions will increase. From this study, it was found that the diversity of the natural ingredients of the marshes of Thigar in the south of Iraq provides a diverse tourist supply. This activates many types of tourism such as ecotourism and water tourism. The large environmental and climatic similarity among the marshes originates large flexibilities for choosing the tourist site for it is possible to establish the tourist project in any part in the marshes of Thigar with almost the same outcome of any other place.

Keywords: Marshes; Ingredients of tourist attraction; Tourist development

Introduction

The marsh regions in the south of Iraq are characterized by their great tourist, cultural, social and economic importance. They represent important national heritage and an ecological system with various distinctive life features. They are of a great importance to the natural and the human life for they provide shelter and many sources of income for the people. They were considered at their heyday the biggest ecological system of the wet regions in the Middle East. They played a vital role in the world ecological systems by supporting the rare wild life and the rich biological variety. They are among the regions that have many natural tourist ingredients and attractions. They have life variety and unique environment in their features that make them destinations for the immigrant birds of different types. In addition to this they nested the first and oldest human civilization. They contain so many antique sites that went back in history to the Sumerian area [1]. The region of marshes occupies an important part of the area of the three southern governorates (Basra, Missan, and Thigar). It forms a unique region in Iraq as well as in the world as a whole, sometimes it is called "the region of the cane" [2]. It is known by the abundance of water in comparison to the other lands of Iraq [3]. Besides it is famous for the so many types of fish such the gulf fish and the fish of the sweet water. That is why the UN Programs for environment consider it one of the most important sites for the life variety in the world. There are also evidences that the place is rich of profuse metal wealth [4].

The inhabitants of the marshes are the direct race of the Sumerians who lived in Iraq five thousands year ago. They built our civilization nearby Al-Nasiriya City where the first Iraqis built their civilization on the banks of the river and amid the water surfaces [5].

Hence comes the importance of choosing the research for the area covered by the research for it is considered one of the important tourist places because it has social and economic impacts on its people and those of the neighboring areas.

Historical Background

There are many differences concerning the opinions of the formation of the marshes which attract the attention of the scientists and the researchers of the archeological and the environmental fields as well as those who are interested in the water and environmental resources. The historical and archeological studies refer to the idea that this area is the place where the features of the Sumerians and their civilization appear as the discovered Sumerian antiques and epigraphy show [6]. The excavations show that the marshes of the south of Iraq and the surrounding dry banks witnessed the oldest settlement in the region especially the houses of (Alabeed) in reference to a hill of the same name in the western north of present Our City four thousands year B. C. By the end of this era, 3500 B.C., the south of Iraq entered a new era of settlement, that is the appearance of the cities as the milestones of Our, ALwarkaa, Aredo, and Nafar show [7].

Methodology

The research is considered a scientific contribution that aims at raising the tourist reality and shades light on the capacities of the tourist attraction of the marshes. It may contribute in the economic raising of the people in these places. Besides the area supports the economics of the country and develops the tourist movement so that it

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responds to the large numbers of tourists and the delegates visiting the region. The study will attempt this through investigating the concept and the formation of the marshes, ingredients of the tourist attraction, and their role in the tourist development.

The marshes

The marshes of the south of Iraq occupy an area in three governorates and it forms a triangle with its head in Gurna and its base in the governorates of Thigar and Missan as shown in Figure 1. The marshes in general are classified into two types the first of which is called the continuous marshes which are always covered with water. They are characterized by being deep (1 to 2 m in depth) and sometimes they are deeper than this, like Al Howaeza and the central marshes [8]. The second type is the temporary or the seasonal marshes which are covered by the water during a period of not less than six months a year [9], and it is relatively higher than the former type. They are formed as a result of the extra water coming from the continuous marshes during the season of flood through the rivers and streams to cover the neighboring relatively high places and form a temporary water surfaces that disappear during summer [10], Figure 2 shows the marshes.

The constituents of the tourist attraction

The natural ingredients: The regions of marshes are considered important regions in Iraq for they have a unique environmental system

that lasted thousands of years where man, animal, bird, and fish live on the water in a magical dependent atmosphere which is isolated from the world. They dazzle all those who reach them. They are rich of the wild life that makes them suitable places for tourist investment and for establishing tourist resorts that attract large numbers of tourists who come to know one of the rare places in the world. It seems that March and November are the most suitable months for the majority of people for their moderate temperature and humidity. This encourages the coming of local as well as foreign tourists. As for April and October, they are suitable for those visitors who can adjust themselves to the Iraqi weather. Tourists during these two months could be local as well as foreign [11]. The months during which minority of local people enjoy visiting the marshes are May, June, and September. And because of the very high temperature during July and August, it is difficult to practice any tourist activity. And because of the low temperature and high humidity during January and February, these two months could witness the coming of tourists from cold countries. The high temperature in these regions make them suitable destinations for tourists during these seasons [12], accordingly, it is clear that the weather plays a vital role in establishing the tourist destination in the marshes. Making use of the environmental elements contribute considerably to attracting tourists especially during winter.

In this respect, the British 'Thomas Robin', expert in natural wealth, refers that marshes of the south of Iraq are exactly similar to Venice City which is surrounded by water, and he adds in a research he devotes to marshes that marshes are treasures with all meaning the word carries [13]. As for the soil of the marshes, it was formed by the depositions carried by the rivers; it is a soil with soft texture, heavy and of weak or little discharge [14]. The land of the marshes is extremely flat with rare heights except the low hills here and there which it is believed they are sites of antique cities [15]. The depositions of the marshes are of silt texture in which silt constitutes about 55% of it, and mud about 17%, sand about 18%. The density of mud increases in the lower part of the alluvial plain [16]. The region is characterized by the variety of plant life, high temperature and humidity during summer season. In it we see plant samplings which contain many kinds of water plants that went back in origin to plant families all coming down from plants which are originally wild such as cane. The cane grows as high as 25 foot and it constitutes a major ingredient in building the houses of the inhabitants of the marshes. It grows in the deep marshes that cover wide areas spreading so densely leaving narrow passages for the small means of water transportation. As for the papyrus, the golan, and ghazara, they grow on the borders of the external marshes where water is less deep in comparison with the cane which grows in the deep water where the organic material helps growing its trunk [15]. The marshes are considered a suitable environment for the life of animals, fish and birds and their breeding, such as buffalos, cows, sheep, and goats, the European and the Indian wild pig, the Indian mongoose, and the Asian fox [13]. The marshes are the major source for growing fish, They are a suitable environment for fish life. As a whole the marshes are rich fields for fishing. They are the main source for fish of the sweet water. There are 60 types, 18 of which live in the area covered by this study. These types of fish grow on plant organisms, crustaceans, algae, and different water insects [17]. Many types of birds take marshes their homeland like Al-Zkh, cattle egret, night crow, black ibis, Abu spoon, and Abu typeface [18], as it is clear in Figure 3. Researchers believe that 250 types of birds come back to live in the marshes nowadays whose numbers may reach two millions birds during the season of immigration. They live in about 50 settlements in the marshes. About 60 types of the local and immigrant birds have been threatened by the process of drying the

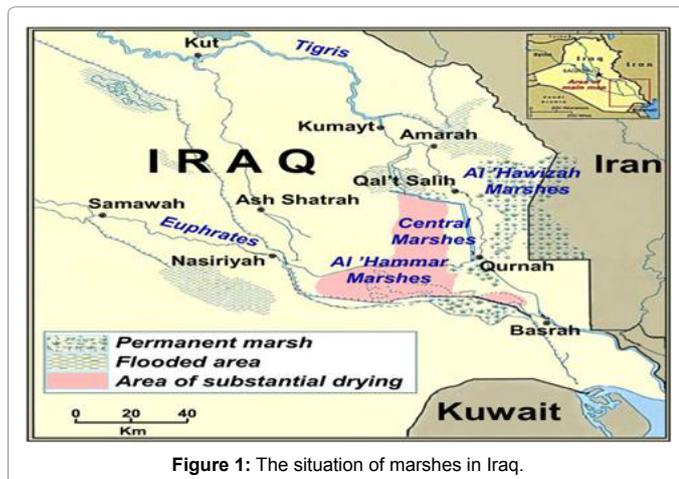


Figure 1: The situation of marshes in Iraq.

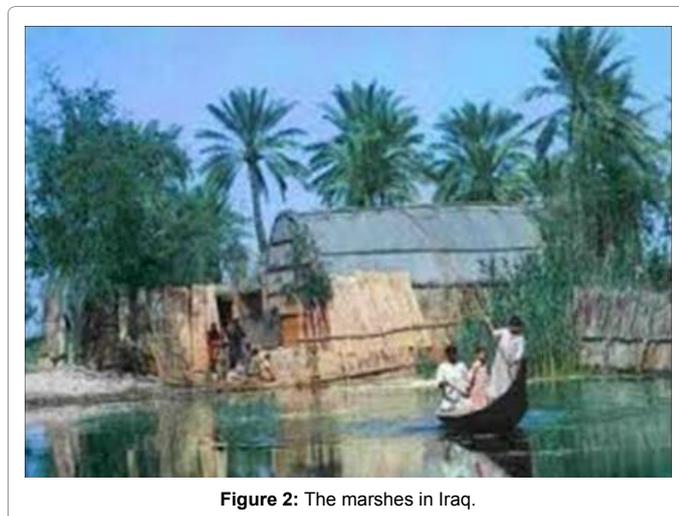


Figure 2: The marshes in Iraq.

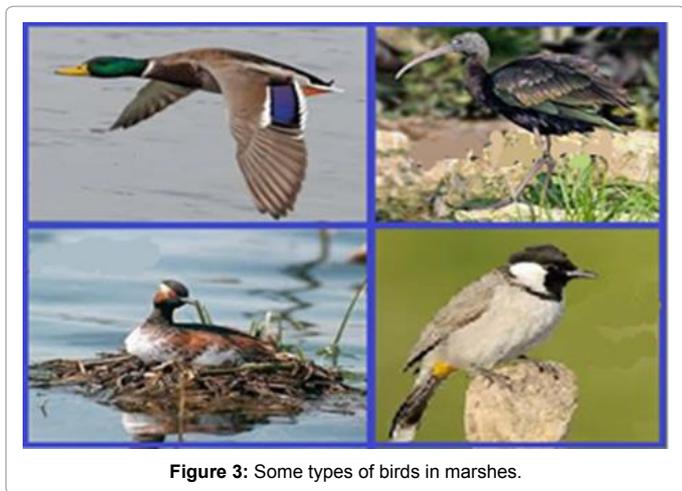


Figure 3: Some types of birds in marshes.

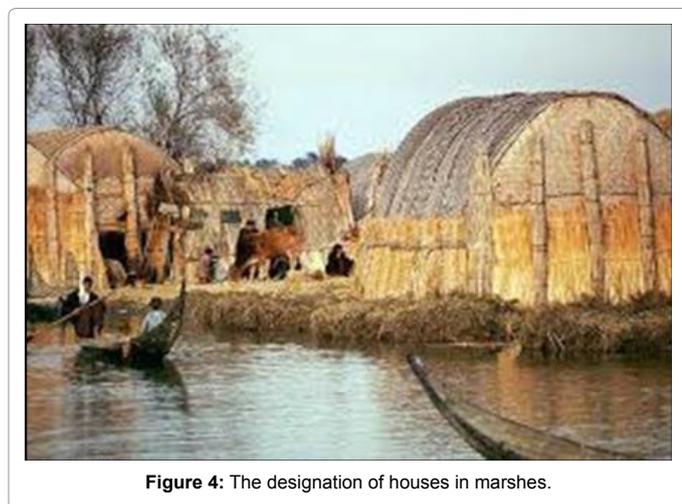


Figure 4: The designation of houses in marshes.

marshes, so the number of birds decreases to reach half a million in certain periods [19]. The area of the study also contains huge quantities of oil. Al-Nasiriya field of oil is considered one of the giant fields in Iraq, the stock of which is calculated by 16 billion barrel.

As for the reality of the population, the water nature of the marshes such as the water surfaces, rivers, and channels, all contribute to making the people of the marshes to build their houses amid these water surfaces on cane islands. They seem to be established on the water when seen from far away as it is clear in Figure 4, each house has a small area in front of it usually made of cane and mats, and their structures are rapped with cane too for the profuse quantities of the cheap local plant materials necessary for building houses. This shows the inheriting the traditional ways and for enhancing the spirit of cooperation and the social participation in building. Each family has a house and the houses differ according to their functions [5].

The life variety, the abundance of the water plants that form a magical spot of natural beauty together with the other ingredients of attraction are enough reason to pay due attention to the marshes regions, and exert efforts of planning and developing them to be a tourist destination and an important resource of national income. The rich nature of the marshes and their environment is one of the essential bases to achieve tourist development of the marshes of Thigar governorate.

The human constituents

The population of the marshes: The marshes, the so-called cradle of civilizations, are old settlements of human societies. They were inhabited by the Sumerians four thousands BC. They were one of the first peoples who put the bricks of the first civilization in the southern part of old Iraq which is known by Mesopotamia. For thousands years they were considered part of the fertile crusade, the area between the two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates [6]. The inhabitants of the marshes have their own special way of living which is affected by the surrounding geographical, social and economic circumstances. Despite the stability of the place, some of the people move from one place to another. Some of them, known as Al-Maeddan, live in scattered islands far away from the influences of the external world. And because of the water nature of the marshes, like water surfaces, rivers, and channels, the people take their houses on the islands of the cane amid the water [5]. They are not just a park with a different nature, they have a real life, and through his visit, the tourist can see the way the first Sumerians lived on the cane amid the wild waters where the boats never stop running and the busy men have no time to talk to the foreigners [20]. The locals always show the spirit of hospitality to the tourists, they are ready to offer services, to hospitalize, showing timidity and respect. They have no tendency to blackmail or cheat. This spirit of hospitality is felt by the tourist who feels save and satisfied in the marshes [21].

The local industries: These are represented by making the mats (al bawary) which depends on the cane as raw material Figure 5. It was available in most of the marshes in the form of cane woods separated by water passages. Albawary are used for different purposes like building cottages, hospitality houses and their land covering, animal barns , date pressing, corns keeping, dam building where albawary are used with soil to alleviate the effect of water [18].

Boat (mashhouf) industry is famous in many parts of the marshes which is necessary for the life of the people of the marshes. It is the main way of transportation in the places permanently covered with water, so almost every family has mashhouf without which they are not able to move from one place to another, to collect cane, and to fish, as in Figure 6. This industry is characterized by quality and accuracy [22].

Tourist development

The tourist development contributes to the economic, social,



Figure 5: Types of industries by using the cane.

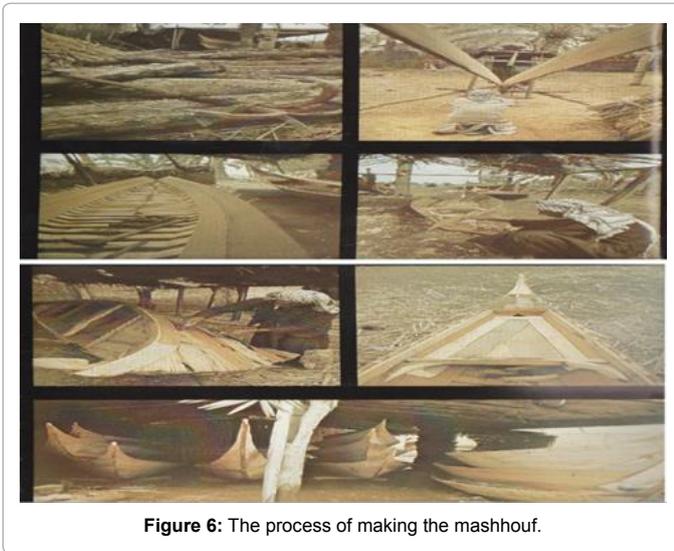


Figure 6: The process of making the mashhoof.

cultural and political growth. This growth is usually reflected on different sectors. The tourist activity has great impact on the life of societies and peoples in our present age, which encourages the tourist countries to pay their attention to organization and guidance that lead to development, improvement, awareness, and evaluation of the tourist activities to reach the wanted objectives, through planning for continuous development of tourist supply by investing the tourist capacities like establishing hotels, tourists villages and developing the infrastructure in order to create attractive tourist environment with simultaneous development of tourist order to respond to the desires of the tourists quickly and successfully [23]. In order to achieve a tourist development in the governorate of Thigar, strategic planning and anticipation of the economic, social, and environmental changes are necessary for the environmental harm that the marshes have been exposed to because of the process of drying. So it is necessary to put plans, programs, and policies capable of raising the life of the marshes again and to achieve a tourist development in the area, and adopting tourism as a strategy of development in the marshes of Thigar which will be reflected on the economic, social, and cultural aspects of life. Tourist activity depends more than other service activities on creating income, providing job opportunities directly or indirectly for its relationships with a large number of other activities [24]. Tourist development assumes its importance through developing other economic sectors by increasing order on the basic materials like foods, fuels, and other manufactured goods like home furniture and carpets. It motivates the growth of the small and large projects from production of souvenirs to establishing multinational hotel series [25]. The tourist development in Thigar depends basically on achieving local architectural development by raising the readiness of the infrastructure and the superstructure related directly to the tourist development. This could be possible by qualifying the destinations of the tourist attraction in various places in the regions of marshes. For instance developing the city of Alchebaish, raising its infrastructures, improving the necessary services to make it a modern city and attractive tourist destination to attract businessmen and tourists. Definitely, in any given country, the wider the circle of the tourist development becomes the more successful the tourist sector is. It becomes able to motivate the other sectors through the continuous growth and development. In all cases tourist development is important for the income, offering job opportunities and it enables increasing numbers of people who participate in tourism and enjoy its benefits [26]. The most important objective of the tourist development on

the social level is that it offers entertainment facilities, recreation of tourist and local people. It contributes to developing the places and the services in the tourist destinations, it protects the social desires and satisfies them, and it enhances the feeling of belonging to the nation, and creates an atmosphere of cultural exchange between the guest and the host. The continuous rise of tourism in the marshes of Thigar will lead to redistribute the population in a better way through the tourist projects that could be established in the new architectural tourist societies. Tourist development contributes to increasing the tourist consciousness (as a branch of social consciousness), spreading cultures and cultural communication among people, and improving the relationships among the governments of the tourist countries [27]. Tourism also provides the desired balance between the size of the population of the tourists and that of the hotels. It equally activates the internal tourism and external tourism [28]. Accordingly we can summarize the stages of the tourist development in the marshes of Thigar as follows [29]:

1. Putting and adopting the policies of the tourist central development.
2. Preparing plans for developing the tourist sites by a group of experts of different specializations.
3. Studying the available environmental elements in the sites to be developed in order to have an idea about the ways of tourist development and their alternatives.
4. Putting guides for development like the ones that alleviate the pressure on the resources and those that limit the capacity of the tourist destinations.
5. Providing special ways for the tourist institutions.
6. Providing residencies for the tourists.
7. Introducing the newly discovered destinations through promotion and advertisement by tourist companies and bureaus abroad and through the diplomatic and trade missions [24].

Developmental Plan for Establishing Tourist Projects in Area of the Study (Marshes of Thigar)

A Suggested process of developmental planning for establishing a tourist project in the marshes of alchebaish

The marshes of Alchebaish form an important and distinguished part of the marshes of the south of Iraq. They are located at east of AlNasiriya City, 80 kilometer from its center. They are an extension of the marshes of Abu Zarag and the marshes of Alhammar. They are fed by the rivers of Tigris and Euphrates. Alchebaish marshes are characterized by magical and beautiful natural environment beside the animal wealth and water plants such as the cane that is used in the local industries in the regions of marshes.

Services planning: Planning for services and their development and maintenance is the first base for the success of the project. It includes the following:

- **Planning of transportation ways:** This requires building well-qualified main and branch ways all leading to the project and end with the ways of water transportation specially which should be modern in shape and design that keep pace with the nature of the place. Inside the area of project the boats are the only way of transportation. Small passages and bridges for walking unite the scattered residential units without using main ways.

- **Planning the infrastructure services:** Electricity power: It is necessary to provide the project with electricity which has an active role in providing the tourist services. Lack of electricity will be negatively reflected on the tourist services. Electricity should be provided to all the units of the project.

- **Drainage of light and heavy water:** It is necessary to provide large tanks to store the light and heavy water by a net of pipes that fill and draw water from all the units of the project provided that they should be tightly locked to prevent infiltration of bad smells.

- **Drinking and usable water:** The project should be provided with large water tanks prepared specially for storing drinking water and the usable water which should be refined and salinized. The units of the project should be provided with water in accordance with the need of each unit for they differ in their need. The hotel for instance needs much water so it should be provided with enough water.

- **Means of communication:** The project should be provided with mobile net and internet and the units of the project should be united by telephone switchboard for quick communication among tourists and those who are in charge of the units of the project.

- **The general services:**

1. Providing the project with a special entrance that allows the supervisors to pursue the movement of those coming in or getting out of it.

2. Training security staff whose job to keep the safety of the tourist project and its officials, this should be related to the general security institutions for the necessary support.

3. There should be human organization for services whose function is to prepare every necessary thing that makes the project successful like reservation services , fees payment, medical services, cleaning, recreational services, children play grounds, multipurpose rooms, singing and dancing festivals, restaurants that offer delicious foods like the local rice bread(locally called siah) and Almeskuv fish (toasted fish). Finding places for the tourist to play spot games is necessary specially those games that suit the environmental circumstances like boat riding, fishing in the marshes, hunting birds and wild animals, and presenting dramatic shows which are mainly concerned with the cultural traditions of the life in the marshes.

The separated housing units of the tourist project: The tourist project includes many buildings distributed according to the ages and the social status for example residential units for the married people provided with double beds, residences for families, large rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms.

Tourist hotel: It consists of two stores at least, with entrance, information desk, and a lobby. It should be provided with single and double beds, baths, and multi-purpose rooms, kitchens in all its suites, close swimming pool with all facilities of swimming, first aids, and maintenance. There should be a berth for the boats which are necessary for the transportation of tourists, officials and luggage, and it should be conducted by the management of the hotel. The hotel should be attached with shops, and laundry.

The establishment of the protectorate of Alchebaish region: Researchers refer that the marshes will never have their distinctive status unless they become natural protectorate. It is the first stage in raising the marshes, if achieved it will create an environmental system suitable for establishing the tourist projects that will be attractive destinations

for the elements of tourist attraction they have. It seems that the Iraqi government is interested in implementing this project which constitutes part of the material of nature and life. This protectorate is considered a national wealth that deserves to be protected and developed as other countries do. Experts in agriculture say that Iraq is far behind these countries in respect to natural protectorates which are even poorer than those in the less advanced Arab countries. The agriculturalists in the southern governorates are keen on establishing the protectorate of Alchebaish 65 kilometer south of Al-Nasiriya city fed by different outlets. It forms an area of 7200 acre. One of the experts says that the aim behind establishing the protectorate which is the first one in Iraq, is to protect the living creatures from degeneration and disappearance .It also helps to keep the environmental balance and its continuity, and the possibility of achieving the best and most organized use of the life resources for the benefit of the local people. The protectorate will help to protect the plant and animal resources in the place, with the opportunity of developing such far- away places and the best use of the immersed lands. The protectorate will be a unique tourist destination for sightseeing, harmony, and attachment to nature (Figure 4). It also helps to keep the stability of the environmental conditions. The choice of Alchebaish as a protectorate is justified by the outstanding environmental system and the continuity of feeding it by Euphrates and the possibility of feeding it by the river of Tigris and it secures the continuity of fishing outside the borders. This will lead to good results like improving the environmental and climatic situations besides improving the social and economic situations of the inhabitants of Alchebaish being a distinguished site for doing scientific researches. Those who are concerned with and interested in this respect have the desire to cooperate in doing such projects [30]. Figure 7 shows some types of birds in Al-Chebaish region.

Process of developmental planning to establish a tourist project in Alsanaf marshes

Alsanaf marshes are located in western north of Alhammar marshes south of Euphrates in Thigar governorate as in Figure 8. A channel has been done from the main outlet by the people concerned and in cooperation with the local government to feed the marshes by Alsanaf marshes. The population in these marshes are active in rearing buffalo and cane industry.



Figure 7: Some types of birds in Alchebaish region.



Figure 8: The location of Al-Hammar and Al-Sanaf marshes.

The ingredients of the tourist attraction in Alsanaf marshes

- **Plant environment:** The marshes and swamps in the south of Iraq have a distinguished environment for certain types of natural plants such as cane and papyrus so it is necessary to cultivate these kinds of plants.
- **Animal environment:** It is necessary to pay attention to the animal environment in the marshes which is an ideal place for living of many kinds of animals, those which live in the water or on the borders of the marshes such as Buffalo, cows, birds and fish.
- **Economic Activity:** The economic activity in the marshes is not different from any other economic activity in the traditional societies where there is a direct relationship with nature, the economic activity coexist amid nature and deal with its details without a mediator. There is no clear ownership of land in the marshes, even though, each tribe live within its known borders.

The economic activities in Alsanaf marshes

Collecting cane and mat industry: Cane grows in the marshes profusely. It is the basic material for building of residential units like cottages, the hospitality houses (almadhif) or (alrabaa), and summer sheds (sobat), for land covering, date pressing, and for building animal farmyards.

Animal rearing: The inhabitants of the marshes rear buffalos and cows for their milk and its derivatives like milk cream, cheese, and butter which they sell daily in the market.

Bother economic activities: There are seasonal economic activities which are less important than the previous activities like the seasonal migration to the agricultural places for harvest, date collecting, fishing, bird hunting, and boats industry.

The Agricultural Activity

Agriculture in Alsanaf marshes is not secure for man is unable to control the water resources in the place. They usually grow date palms, rice (shelib), wheat, parley, corn, Gath, and vegetables.

The Tourist Activity in the Area of the Study

The marshes of Iraq (including Alsanaf marshes) have tourist potentialities incomparable to other places in Iraq or in the neighboring countries. They have a different nature, high beauty values, the existence of water, birds, fish, green floating islands and the type of life the inhabitants of these marshes lead, their economic activity and their social values. They are famous of their distinguished public heritage like the public dresses, local industries, public songs, public poetry, and manual handcrafts. The importance of tourism becomes apparent late in winter and early spring when water level raises and large water surfaces appear. This phenomenon has strong tourist attraction for the winter water-life gatherings and for the existence of water and warmth of weather together. Add to this the hobby of bird hunting and fishing.

Process of developmental planning to establish a tourist project in Abuzarag marshes

The marshes of Abu zarag are located in the south of Al Islah city east of AlNasiriya city in the governorate of Thigar (the subject of study). The marshes are full of weeds, cane, and papyrus. Many kinds of fish live in them such as albuni, (brown fish), alktan, Kushani, and bream. Many kinds of birds live on these marshes as well like moorhen, khudairy, seagull, swan, burhan and ducks, and other kinds of birds [31].

The variety of environmental, natural and animal life is the basic of investment in the tourist projects provided that these projects are established in places that attract tourists. So the first signs of the possibilities of using these marshes appear when Ministry of Water Resources established the birth of boats which is a promising economic and tourist project in the governorate.

We think that these projects, despite of their importance, do not suit the economic potentialities of the marshes so those who are concerned with these projects in the governorate should think seriously of putting constructive plans for the best utilization of the sources of the marshes, including Abu Zarag marshes, especially the governorates are given large authorization by the central government to run their own affairs by themselves. The process of development includes the following:

a. **Raising the tourist consciousness:** Trying actively to raise the tourist consciousness and introducing the tourist activity in these places will offer job opportunities for the population of different educational and age categories and improve their living. These things will encourage the local people to support these tourist projects. They are characterized by magnanimity and hospitality. They coexisted and united with their environment and suffered a lot of difficulties during the period of drying which lasted for a century. The people of the marshes welcome the visitors with the warmth known about them despite their worry about the reason of their visit or about what may affect their social stability.

b. **Motivating tourist investments and creating job opportunities:** It is the responsibility of the faculty of tourism and the institutions related to the Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Environment to improve the tourist potentialities of these regions and their antiques which will be reflected positively on the conditions of the people. The tourist activity and tourist development will offer job opportunities, improve the services, raise the living, educational, and medical levels. Studies should be prepared for tourist investment and enactment of the law of foreign investment and the protection of the rights of the investors in these regions. Supervision of the implementation of the projects by the people concerned is necessary to activate tourism in Iraq.

c. **Establishing the infrastructures and the superstructures:** Establishing the infrastructures is the responsibility of the government and the investors and it is the responsibility of the individuals to protect and maintain them. The commitment of the councils of the governorates to achieve the investment plans and offer the basic services will help in achieving a rise in all aspects of life and consequently this will be reflected on developing the tourist activity.

d. **Raising the level of the medical and social services:** The plan contains raising the levels of medical and social services of all kinds and opening enough number of medical and veterinary centers with the necessary staff and full medical accessories beside raising the medical and environmental consciousness among people, providing electricity nets, paving ways, providing communications, convenient accommodations, and sanitation nets.

e. **Providing accommodation and recreation facilities:** This could be done by paving the way for investment in the field of accommodation such as hotels, chalets, tourist villages, restaurants, recreation and entertainment places. Convenient ways of transportation and rest houses are essential for the success of these projects.

f. **Protection of environment:** This is the responsibility of the tourism and environment police who should supervise overfishing and

overhunting, prevent fishing and hunting during breeding, be sure that traditional ways are followed by fishers and hunters to protect the variety of life and prevent disappearance.

The Results

The marshes of Thigar have natural potentialities that make various forms of tourist supply which encourage activation of many types of tourism such as ecotourism, water tourism, and antique tourism. The area of study is old settlement centers some of which went back to pre-Sumerian historical eras as antiquities show. It has variety of human settlement, variety of residencies, all this because of the distinguished natural and human features of the marshes of Thigar. The absence of consciousness of the natural potentialities of these marshes and of what could be achieved by the tourist activity makes local people lack enthusiasm to support and participate in these activities.

Because these marshes represent natural and antique places of rare existence and have the heritage of one of the oldest civilizations, the Sumerian, Iraq has a big loss for the continuous negligence of these regions and lack of tourist projects and services and the absence of the tourist media.

It is clear from the frequent visits to these places and the interviews conducted with the people there they are ready to cooperate in activating the tourist movement to establish resorts and tourist projects and to welcome tourists of whatever nationality.

The area, the subject of the study, has huge fields of oil worth of billions of hard currency, which could contribute largely in providing the area with all the ingredients it needs.

Conclusion

Putting national and international vision for the management of the marshes that includes the basic principles on which the future of the marshes depends and which could be adopted by all those who are concerned with developing the region may respond to the economic, social and environmental objectives. It should be liable to be achieved and developed, and support the governmental planning for the future of the place. The vision could also be a base for the companies through treating all the challenges that may face the overall coordination. Special budget has to devote to requalify the marshes of Thigar through building the infrastructure like paving the roads, constructing bridges, building schools and hospitals, medical and veterinary centers, providing electricity, water desalination station, residential complexes. These will help people to stabilize and build new ties with environment and among themselves, and prepare the resources for the continuous development of the marshes through demolishing all the destructive procedures that prevent the development and reconstruction of the marshes. Iraqi government, councils of governorates, international oil companies, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, and all other donors should give opportunities to the technical and financial companies to support the achievement of the strategy or the vision of raising and developing the marshes, to select the marshes of Thigar for establishing natural protectorates of animals, birds, fish and mammals, to use these places as centers for scientific researches which deal with developing animals and their breeding, and to activate all the decisions of protecting environment.

It is very important as well to make use of the festivals and the aids to promote tourism through making tourist trips, in the marshes or to antique our city, which it is said to be the homeland of prophet Ibrahim, in order to strengthen the role of the tourist as a means

of tourist consciousness. Besides, encouraging the general and private sectors to establish tourist projects through offering loans and other facilities, paving the way for tourist investments and encouraging them, introducing the already available tourist developments, constructing an airport in AlNasiriya city which is located on the banks of the largest marshes in the southern part of Iraq. This suggested airport which is in the center of the south of Iraq will be an aviation passage (transit) which gives the place an important economic position.

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