CHAPTER IV
POTENTIAL OF TOURISM

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Expansion of tourism industry has caused all countries in the world to have much share from tourism income and try to set it up in their country. Iran is one of the countries with abundant potential and abilities in cultural, historical and natural backgrounds, has attracted various tourists throughout the world and trying to acquire the real setting. To achieve the revenue of tourism industry requires the formation of sub-structures and providing the essential backgrounds with long term and accurate programs and on the other hand these substructures to exist for each country including Iran. Tourism plays an important role in economy, thus I.R. of Iran attempts to attract about twenty million tourists yearly on a long term programming. On the basis of this program and according to the article 8 in the law for organization of cultural heritage, handicrafts and tourism (OCHHT) was approved on 10 March 2001, to attract the domestic and foreign investors, to form the infrastructural foundations for tourism, especially in less developed areas.

4.2 RECOGNITION OF PRESENT CONDITION

Tourism resources which are also called tourist attractions are the main pillars of development of tourism in the Semnan province. Without tourism resources, tourism is meaningless, and these resources, cannot solely lead to development of tourism.

In a region this means that tourism is developed according to the attraction level and a visual value that possess. Established place, Artistic and visual values, historical background credibility and authenticity of a place are some of the important characteristics of a tourism resource.
Tourism resources can be determined from the following 3 perspectives,

1. Kind and types of resources.
2. Operation level in attraction of tourist and tourism markets.
3. Place of establishment and the region in which the resource is located.

Present researchers, categorized tourism resource into the 3 following types.

1. **Tourism resources/attractions:**

   These attractions are all the natural elements in the field of morphology, hydrology, flora, fauna, climate and etc, which lead to attracting people to use their visual, climatic, leisure, recreational and sport values.

2. **Cultural, historical resources/attractions:**

   Cultural resources include physical, resources of culture and civilization such as, palaces, bridges, mosques, markets, spa houses and spiritual resources (non-physical) such as societal functions and ceremonies, events, and native games.

3. **Man-made tourist attractions:**

   These resources include the elements and attractions which or made by human in present era, for different purposes and functions and both attract tourists and also satisfy the needs of people. Among these non-made attractions are: Museums, Parks, Ski resorts, national reserves art galleries and they are planned accordingly.

   More over from operation level perspective of resources in attracting tourists or in other words the main market for every resource, the following level can be defined.

1. **Domestic or Provincial Level:**

   It means an attraction mostly noticed by habitants of nearby villages and cities and tourists of far cities. Less number of National and international tourists have visited these attractions. In the research questionnaire the domestic and provincial level is considered together.

2. **National/regional level of operation.**

3. **International level of operation:**
With regard to these issues, the tourism resources of Semnan province will be categorized according to type and level of operation (function).

Next model will represent the categories of tourism resources based on type in the form of a graphical representation.

### 4.3 DISTRIBUTION AND COMPOSITION OF TOURIST ATTRACTION IN SEMNAN PROVINCE

According to documentary and field research on Semnan province, totally 729 tourists attractions are found, out of which 70 of them (9.6 Percent) are among natural attractions and 362 of them are among cultural historical attractions (49.6 percent) and the rest are man-made attractions.

**Table No. 4.1 Composition of Tourist attraction in Semnan province**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Type of attraction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>729</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>Culture-historical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>Man-made</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Iran Tourism and cultural heritage organization*

From the total attraction existing in the province, 30.8 percent are located in Semnan and the rest are located in other cities.

**Table No. 4.2: Distribution of tourism attractions in Semnan province**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Man-made</th>
<th>Cultural-historical</th>
<th>Natural</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Type city</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Iran Tourism and cultural heritage organization*
4.3.1 List of available tourism facilities and services:

In order to assess and review the existing potentials for attracting domestic and international tourists to Semnan province, we will analyze and review the existing facilities, equipments and tourism services in Semnan province which includes. Accommodation, tours and travel agencies, financial and banking services, which will be analyzed below:

Table No. 4.3 Tourism facilities and service in Semnan province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Type of facilities and services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Active on-the way restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tour and travel agency office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Travel and pilgrimage service companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Information center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Iran tourism and cultural heritage organization, Semnan province, 2006.

4.3.2 Accommodation facilities:

Accommodation facilities include: Hotels, Inns, Resturants and Lodges and these facilities located on the National Highways. Each of them is discussed respectively.

1. A Hotels, Inns:

First Zone includes: Elburz region comprising the coastal provinces of Caspian Sea (Mazandaran and Golestan), the southern slopes of Elburz, Tehran, Semnan, Qom, Qazvin and Markazi provincies contained 127 hotels and inns in 2006, Totally there were 6515 rooms and 13280 beds. From the, total accommodation units which reported their statistics, 25.7 percent of rooms and 28.4 percent of beds exist in Semnan province. Semnan province has 7 hotels, inn and lodges which are active (It should be noted that steroids Hotel Reza was closed because of main preparation)

Therefore the annual capacity of rooms and beds are over 43130, 150/120 with regard to average stay period (domestic and foreign) is equal to 1.15 nights, totally Semnan province has the capacity of serving and attracting 91.400 tourists.
The interesting point is that while Semnan province occupied only 5.5 percent of the district, however it doesn’t fully utilize this limited capacity, in a way that only 0.43 of hotel rooms and 0.35 of existing beds are used during the year.

Also, with regard to average stay period of tourists in Semnan province, the average stay period of Domestic and foreign is less than the sum average stay period of the province and whole country which can be increased by employing appropriate policies and strategies.

**Figure 4.1: Hotel sangesar in Semnan province**

2. Inns:

According to the survey conducted by Iran tourism Semnan possesses 3 inns which have 101 rooms, 480 beds. This shows the potential capacity for attracting tourists and passengers.
Table No. 4.4: Number and capacity of Inns in Semnan province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number beds</th>
<th>Number rooms</th>
<th>Number of lodge</th>
<th>years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>443</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>453</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>480</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical calendar of Semnan province, 2006

B. Tour and Travel Agency office:

First zone comprise of 463 travel agency offices and comprise 60 percent of total of the country in 2006. Out of this number 74 offices are authorized only to provide tourism to do both activities, while Semnan province posseses 4.2 percent of Tour and travel agency offices. Moreover there is no active travel agency office in Semnan province. According to surveys Semnan province possesses 21 companies and Pilgrims travel agency office which received permission certificate. Because of lack of exact statistics and information we cannot divide active and non active travel offices in the province.

C. Tourism Financial and Banking Services:

The number and distribution of banks in Region-1 and in different provinces are shown in Table No. (5)

According to the table this region posseses 31 percent of the total Bank branches in the country, while Semnan possessing 280 branches has 5.8 percent of the total branches of the region.

The importance issue is the problem of international tourist using forgin currencies in Iran, so most of Tourists financial abilities remain useless. This condition is more acute for banks in Semnan rather than Banks in Tehran and Mazandaran.
Table no 4.5: Bank branches in Zone (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Province</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>2612</td>
<td>Tehran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>Mazandaran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>Golestan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>Semnan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>Qom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>Markazi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>Qazvin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>4609</td>
<td>Total of region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>14898</td>
<td>Total of country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>Regions share</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 HISTORICAL AND SPECTACULAR PLACES IN SEMNAN PROVINCE

Figure 4.2: Dispersion of historical attractions in Semnan province

Sources: General Office for Cultural Heritage, Handi Crafts and Tourism
4.4.1 Arg gate (Darvazeh Arg) of Semnan:

This gateway is located at the cross road of Ayatollah Talleghani and Shyekh Fazlolah Nouri Street in Semnan, which is one of the historical, beautiful and worthwhile monuments of Semnan. The gateway of Arg has been established during the reign of Naseredin shah Ghajar who has been Governor during year's 1889 to 1994 in Iran. The original building of the gate has been built by bricks with a height of over 7 m. One of the outstanding part of this historical building is the significant doorway which depicting the historical legendary fight between Rostam and white Satan with pieces of seven colored tiles. The door of the gateway has been made by thick planks with iron spikes. After the Islamic revolution this monument has been repaired and reconstructed by culture and heritage organization.

Figure 4.3: Arg gate of Semnan city

Source: General Office for Cultural Heritage Handicrafts and Tourism

4.4.2 Jame Mosque of Semnan:

Jame mosque of Semnan is one of the oldest historical monuments from Islamic era and indicator of growth and genius of agriculture and art of people of this city.

According to historical text it belongs to the 3rd century Hegira, primitive building of this mosque belongs to the Islamic era which was extended in Saljughi, Ilkhani and Teymoori dynasties. These monuments include several agriculture spaces such as courtyard, large porch, western chamber and 3 prayer halls (northern, southern and, eastern).
The large porch with height of 21 m is an artistic work from Khajeh Shams-al-din-ail Balicheh Semnani’s who was, Shahrokh Teymoori’s minister.

4.4.3 Minaret of Jame ‘Mosque:

It is one of the most fascinating minarets of Semnan province, which is located on the northeastern part of Jame mosque.

The length of this minaret from the ground is 31.2m and there an inscription that from the roof is 2 m high which has been decorated by Kufic script and very beautiful bricks.

4.4.4 Imam Khomeini Mosque:

This mosque is located in the city center of Semnan. This mosque has four big entrance doors on each side. The doors at the northern, southern and eastern sides have a vestibules (usually octagonal in shape) and corridors. The upper parts of the northern and eastern door have arch and artisticalwork with plaster and tile. The ceilings of the vestibules, on the north, south and eastern sides are constructed with numerous arches and designed with tiles.

After the victory of the Islamic revolution, this mosque has gained more attention by cultural heritage organization for repair and its reconstruction.

Figure 4.4: Imam Khomeini Mosque in Semnan

Source: General Office for Cultural Heritage, Handi Craftis and Tourism
4.4.5 Pehneh and Hazrat Bath:

This bath is located between Jame mosque and Emamzadehyahya in Semnan. This bath has been built in 856 lunar Hejira (1435.AD) in the reign of Abol Qassem Babar Khan the king of Teimoorid monarchy under the order of his minister Khajeh Ghiyasddin Bahram. During the reign of Mozafaredin Shah in the year 1321 Hejira and under the order of Haj Molla Ali Hakim Ellahi dealt with for repair and reconstruction of this building. One of most important things of this bath is beautiful doorway with tile works on it and on the upper side a poetical inscription in Nastaligh writes hand with professionalism and the way master had written. This bath is endowed in Jame mosque and after reconstruction by cultural and heritage organization in the year 1994 it was inaugurated as an anthropology museum.

4.4.6 Lasjerd Shah Abbasi's Caravansary-Semnan:

This caravansary is located in the village of Lasjerd in Semnan and its building is related to Shah Abbas Safavid I era.

This caravansary has two porches that are surrounded by 24 chambers around it. The two porches are in west and east side of the building and connected to the chambers.

4.4.7 Saroo Castle of Semnan:

These castles are located 10 km northeast of Semnan in a mountainous region of Saroo and during the time some parts of north castle have been destroyed and is empty. South castle apparently has 3 stores the first was for cattle, the second was for residence of peasantry and their families and the third one contained of temple, bathroom and pantry for the residence of soldiers and great persons of the castle.

4.4.8 Historical Complex of Bastam:

The city of Bastam is located 6 km from north of Shahrood with the care of historical books, according to which this city many years ago was the center of Qomes state.

Historical complex of Bastam includes several historical monuments and each of them have an explaination and chronicle for itself and in a word the historical and valuable complex of Bastam is like key fruit in the heart of baked bricks in this city.
4.4.9 Bayazid Tomb:

This tomb is located to the northern part of Emamzadeh Mohammed in Bastam city.

The tomb of this great Gnostic is very simple and without any trim. It never seems like any structure made for a great person. On his gravestone is a slab of marble that some say has Emam Ali (AS) engraved on it.

4.4.10 The Minaret of Bastam Historical Complex:

The historical brick spire of Bastam complex is located and enclosed in the eastern side of the Bayazid mosque. According to Kufic brick coping on the spire, it is made in year 514 of lunar Hajira.

Figure 4.5: The Minaret of Bastam Historical Complex

Source: General Office for Cultural Heritage Handi Crafts and Tourism

4.4.11 Jame Mosque of Bastam:

Not far from away from historical complex of Bastam and in the southern part of Jame mosque is located a building from the region of (Qazan khan) era and it’s agriculture belongs to the years of 700-706 Hejira. This mosque has two inscriptions on it - one of them written by its founder at the time of making and the other at the time of (Fath Ali Qajar) era while repairing.
4.4.12 Shahrokhiey School:

This school is one of the most beautiful theology schools of the province consisting of 2 stories and 28 cells with unique and beautiful architecture have been built. In front of each cell a balcony exits that in the case of need has been used in summer season.

4.4.13 Tower Of Kashaneh Bastam-Shahrood:

This tower is Located to the Southeast of Jame mosque in Bastam Shahrood city the height of this tower from the inner part is 24 m and the outer part is 20 m. The outer shape of this tower is trilateral in the west. Eastern angle of this tower has the phrase of (in the name of god) had written with beautiful Sols on a brick. Same orient lists believe building is a relic from (Qazan khan Moghot), the original name was (Qazaneh) and during the time changed to its original name (Kasheneh).

**Figure 4.6: Tower of Kashaneh Bastam-Shahrood**

![Kashaneh Tower](image)

*Source: General Office for Cultural Heritage Handi Crafts and Tourism.*

4.4.14 Ebn-E-Yamin Froumad Tomb, Shahrood:

At the end of Froumad village a very beautiful building could be seen that is Ebn-e-yamin tomb (the great Persian poet) which has date of birth as 685 Hejira.
4.4.15 Sheykh Abolhassan Kharaghni Tomb:

The tomb of this famous poet located on top of the hill in north of Kharaghnh parts 24 km from Shahrood and the green space around this tomb give a special holiness to the dome.

On the grave of sheikh is a gravestone that has some poems engraved.
4.4.16 Abbas Abad Carvansary Shahrood:

This caravansary is located in the village of Abbas Abbad Shahrood and belongs to the Safavid era. This caravansary has 4 balconies and 32 chambers in front of center yard.

4.4.17 Maindasht Carvansary Shahrood:

In the village of Miandasht Shahrood three Caravansaries exist which are together called Shah Abbas caravansary. One of these caravansaries has been built in the first Shah Abbas era and 2 others have been built later. The material used in all of them is brick.

**Figure 4.9: Maindasht Carvansary Shahrood**

*Source: General Office for Cultural Heritage Handi Crafts and Tourism.*

4.4.18 Damghan Jame Mosque:

This mosque is located in front of the Haj Fath Alie's school in Damghan. This mosque includes two-row columns and on the top of each column, round brick ceiling exists. The founder of this mosque was Mirza Mohammad khan Sepahsalar Damghni.

This mosque includes two nocturnal prayer areas that one of them is located in the East and the other is in the west part.

East nocturnal prayer part has been repaired recently and the west one was built again completely.
4.4.19 Tarikhaneh Mosque, Damgham:

The building of this mosque is located in Southern west of the city and is one of the most important monuments which remained from the primitive Islamic centuries in Iran; someone believes the date of making this mosque dates back to the end of 2nd lunar Hejira. The name of this mosque consists of two words, the first one Tary meaning of GOD that it is a Turkish word. The mosque’s plan consists of one square yard that ward the kiblah a hall with columns and on the other three sides a series of porches exist.

At the present time column’s hall has 6 vertical spouts and 3 horizontal spouts and the middle spout is higher than side and includes the altar.

There is the same saying which goes the plane of this mosque in accordance with Arabic style but in structural it has root from traditional archtecture and local Sassanid era.

**Figure 4.10: Tarikhaneh Mosque, Damgham**

*Source: General Office for Cultural Heritage Handi Crafts and Tourism.*
4.4.20 Chehel – Dukhtar Dome:

This tower (dome) is located in the Shahid Fallahi Street in Damghan. This tower is one of monuments from Saljoqhi era which has been built in order of Abushoja in 445 lunar Hejira with bricks.

There is an inscription with Kufic hand writing and beautiful bricks. Another inscription with Kufic hand writing on the top of the good gate can be seen in this tower.

Figure 4.11: Chehel – Dukhtar Dome

Source: General Office for Cultural Heritage Handi Crafts and Tourism

4.4.21 Peer - E – Alamdar Tower Damghan:

This tower is located near the Jame mosque and Haj Fath Ali Baig’s school in Damghan.

This tomb has been built in the year 417 Hejira like a round brick tower with congruous dome and length 13 m. It is famous for the reason of beautiful engraving hand writing in grill Kufic. Beside this building is located Mohammad Ebn-e-Ebrahim’s (father of Abu Harb-e Bakhtiyar) tomb.
4.4.22 Shah Abbasi Carvansary Damghm:

This caravansary has been built in the Safavid era and located on the Shahid Fallahi Street in Damghan city.

This building has a porch with great (hall) and many rooms on the top of the entrance gate.

It's a great building made a brick and the length of its walls is about 5 m. At present this caravansary is changed into police force location.

4.4.23 Caravansary’s Dehnmak of Garmsar:

This caravansary is located 40 km from east of Garmsar with a kind of quadrangle balcony on each side. The entrance gate has two stories with the shape of trapezium in the southern part of caravansary. At present this caravansary is in use by people and passengers as a traditional cafeteria.
4.4.24 Bahram-E-Gour Edifice:

Building complex of Siah Kooh-e- Garmsar:

Building complex Siah Kooh was inclusive of caravansary's Bahram edifice, caravansary of Ein-al-Rashid women’s apartment, hydraulic construction (spring reservoir, stone channel for transferring of water) and cobblestone road that have been located in 65 km south of Garmsar.

This complex has been located between the historical ways of Esfahan- Sari and has been built during 1028-1025 lunar Hejira in Shah Abbas era that has been noticed by the world and Iran travelers till now. Following comes a short explanation each of these buildings.

A) Caravansary’s of Bahram Edifice:

Caravansary’s of Bahram castle is one of the most important monuments in Siah Kooh complex that has been built with a type of rectangular plan towards western and eastern side.

Most important material used for making this building is stone but for some part of it bricks have been used. Two northern and southern gates were the only way for coming and going and four tower angles and two towers in the middle of the eastern and western side made it possible to defend of this huge stone monument.

B) Ein-Al-Rashid Caravansary:

It’s 2 km far from Bahram edifice and located on the way to historical Sefid ab-Siah Kooh road.

The stuff, which were used in its walls and ceiling were bricks that were significantly set with each other.

C) Hydraulic Complex:

Supplying and transferring of drinking water in the monument of Siah Kooh was very important. Drinking water of Ein-Al-Rashid caravansary was supplied from a spring near it and goes from there into the reservoir for use. But water for caravansary of Bahram edifice was supplied from a water spring that was called (shah spring) and then
was lead towards the women’s seraglio through a channel stone with a length of 9 meters and then followed to the southern angle pool out of women’s seraglio and after passing this way move towards the caravansary to Bahram edifice where most parts of pools, channels and reservoirs exist as ruins.

D) Cobblestone Silk Road:

The caravans on the way Isfahan – Sari high way and after passing caravansary of Bahrams edifice confronted to the Slaughs, and salt lands of south Garmsar, so that with the construction of cobblestone road with length 35 k. and width 5 m, caravans reached them with easiest and fastest way to the next resort place.

This road still is stable and strong in the heart of Kavir which the world travelers and Iran visitors wish to visit again.

4.5 HANDICRAFTS IN SEMNAN PROVINCE

Semnan province with the most variation in territory and culture in the mountainous and desert areas contains the creativities of artists in various handicrafts. The presence of the artists and artisans in handicrafts at the foreign and domestic exhibitions show this. On the other hand, artists use the Iranian and traditional designs inspired from nature of this area, showing the variation in cultures, values and native nobilities of this area.

Variation in this province has much increased the attractions of the handicrafts and different lives in this area have appeared in the form of symbols in the hand-woven, poetry and the other handicrafts in the past and at the present time. Moaragh, ties and wooden articles to the voluminous metal cutting nets, from metal and iron statues to silk exquisitely hand-woven, from the traditional and colorful handkerchiefs to calligraphy and golden illumination, from short-napped coarse carpets, Glich and coarse blanket to earth enweave and enameled vessels, from travelling bags (Mafrash), puttees, felt carpets to curtains, the beautiful printed clothes, all and all showing their much interest to this land and caused the artisan of this province transfer their mind's manifestations from the beauty of desert to high mountains in the north on the handicraft products and with their
marvelous hands, they make them ever lasting. These artistic works resulted from beauties of desert and mountains. So, Semnam province is called the colorful stone of Desert. The most important fields of handicrafts in this province are ceramics, short-napped coarse carpet, printed cloth, inlaid work or woodcut, Moaragh, felt making, and traditional hand–woven materials.

Semnan province due to having various climates with four different seasons and also with social conditions and rich culture in each city has an affect on kinds of food. This variation caused a taste for sweetness for tourists and guests, so they take them as souvenirs with.

The most common souvenirs purchased by tourists are Semnan Pastry with milk, sweet thick round bread, traditional dried bread, fig and pomegranate.

Different kinds of local yoghurts, Aroshe, dried whey, honey, cherry, black cherry and plum in Sangsar, nuts, kinds of dried apricot, sweets, pistachio, sweet dried bread in Damghan and melon in Garmsar.

4.6 MUSEUMS

4.6.1 Pehneh Garmabeh Museum:

This monument was used as the public bath about 565 years ago and located in old Bazaar of Semnan. It has been built by Timurids dynasty at the time of Baber Khan Mirza Abolghasem; Timuriking with order of his minister Khaje Ghiasedin Mohammad Ebne Khaje Tajedin Bahram Semnani.

After registration of Pehneh Garmabeh in 1976 in the list of national works (No.1022, 1977) and basic mendings in 1994, it was registered as a museum. The current monument is a museum with 1000 sq. meters located in the north west of Pehneh Garmabeh with two separate gates for the women and men. The entrance door has two platforms which have been tiled on three sides. All these tile works were made by Zeinolabedin Semnani. The courtyard of hot chamber is covered with a beautiful dome along with a number of photo-receiver windows.
In this courtyard, artistic works with remains of ancient tools from the ancient hills and areas of Semnan province have been collected. In fact, this place is the exhibition of Artistic works. Most parts of the museum are designated to archeological works taken out from Tapeh Hessar in Damghan, Khatir Kouh and Khandagh Tapeh.

The old building of the municipality of this city located in Ferdosi St. is the place for the museum. Its style of architecture constructed in 2 storeys comes back to the first Pahlavi dynasty.

4.6.2 Archeology Museum:

Archeology museum is located on the first floor. In Shahrood, there are historical hills like flint-stone hills showing a precedence and richness of this area.

Most of the discovered precious tools in this historical area are used as an ornament at Shahrood museum. Meanwhile some of them from Tapeh Hassar in Damghan are present in Shahrood museum Khatir Kouh. The other works which are seen in this museum are tools from Tapeh Khorian, Bolvar Tapeh including the earthenware, bronze and mirror.

4.6.3 Anthropology Museum:

In this part, a collection of tools, to produce clothing, ornaments, hand-weave, documents, deeds and also pictures from different activities of people have been presented. These objects indicate the relations and phenomena and by studying them one can recognize their function in the society they lived.

One of these sections are allocated to stalls of agriculture, animal husbandry, bakery, knitting socks and stocking, felt making, clothing, tools for burial, music instruments and passion play.

Beside them, there are some statues with special tools and traditional clothing of people from old times showing the style of living of that period.

4.6.4 Museum in Sangsar:

It was founded in 2008 by people interested in Sangsar tribe culture and traditions in Mehdishahr. The aim of setting up is to present the culture and tradition of Sangsari
tribes to people interested in the tribes’ history. The tools presented here were used by people in the past and handicrafts; in fact show the style of living of Sangsari tribes.

Part One: The tool to produce kinds of cloth from the beginning i.e. making string to produce the silk cloth, the other tools are instruments to cut the wool of sheep and goat, the process of manufacturing the string and kinds of spindle and also cloth-weaving machines.

Part Two: The furniture, and also tools for daily living semi decamping tribe containing kinds of dishes and war instruments.

Part three: Handicrafts with kinds of arts, kinds of hand-made tools, needlework and filigree work.

Part Four: Kinds of makeup tools and instruments for Sangsari women. Additionally, outside the museum, kinds of ovens, the tools for making butter, kinds of special fireplaces to make dairy and also the Sangsari black tent the large black tent among the tribes throughout Iran are seen.

**Figure 4.13: Sangsari black tent in the north of Shahmirzad**

*Source: nomadic office in Semnan province*

Visiting Hours: Every day is available from 9 hrs to 13 hrs and from 16 hrs to 21hrs.
4.7 SEMNAN PROVINCE ENVIRONMENTS

This province due to having the natural and suitable situation and also enough space is a good place for the life of various wild animals and plant species. In the north of the province, mountainous and cold areas with woodlands along with rather much rainfall and good plant covering and in the middle parts of the flat area, rainfall is less than in north but with a rather good plant covering. In the southern part, salt desert has too low rainfall with lack of suitable plant covering. More than 23% of the vastness of province containg the protected areas with wild animals including 25% of the total protected areas in Iran. These areas with special features are as follows:

- A place for keeping the plant and animal genes in the world,
- An area between desert and life environment in province
- A life place for the rare and special animal and plant species on the verge of extinction,
- Beautiful nature with natural views
- Having the special conditions for economic and research affairs.

Figure 4.14: Dispersion of natural attractions in Semnan province

Source: General Office for Cultural Heritage Handi Crafts and Tourism
4.7.1 Wild Animals, Shelter and Touran Protected Area

Touran is located in the South east of Shahrood and is one of the eleven biosphere store-place areas in the world. In fact, it is the largest biosphere store-place in our country. Famous species of wild animals include: jabir, deer, ram, wild goat (goat, ewe), zebra, leopard, panther, wild cat, karakul, hyena, wolf, fox and jackal, bustard, partridge, tihu, hunting birds, raven and bour, grouse and dodok. However importance of Touran National park should not be neglected as it are the last and the most important place for Asian cheetah and zebra. Plant species in this area are ghich, haloxylon, tamarisk, eskanbel, bone, wild almond, dermaneh, eshnan, karavankesh and kinds of gramineh.

Figure 4.15: Cheetah in the Touran protected area

Source: Semnan Environment Organization

Figure 4.16: Zebra in the Touran protected area

Source: Semnan Environment Organization
4.7.2 Shelter for the Beasts’ life at Khosh-Yeylagh:

Khosh Yelagh is the area in the northeast of Shahrood. The famous species of beasts are ram ewe, wild goat, leopard, deer, brown bear, wild goat, shouka, palascats, partridge, Tihu, hunting birds, bustard and grouse. The most famous plant species in this area are oak tree, maple tree, mamerz, velik, oro, ghich, haloxylon, tamarisk, gavan, darmaneh and kinds of garmineh.

Figure 4.17: Khosh Yelagh the area in the northeast of Shahrood

Source: Semnan Environment Organization

4.7.3 Protected Area in Parvar:

Parvar is an area located in north east of Semnan. The most important species of the beasts are leopard, bear, boar, maral, shouka, wildgoat, ghouch, ewe, dear, plant species are oak, maple, rash, self-grow pear, darmaneh, oros, garden thyme, gavan, garminch, mamarz, barberry and borage.
4.7.4 Forbidden Hunting Area in Khonar:

This area is located in the north west of Semnan and northeast of Garmsar. The most important species of beasts are ram, ewe, wild goat, deer, brown bear, leopard, boar, partridge, tihu and kinds of hunting birds. The major species of this area are oros darmaneh garden thyme, gavan, gramineh and plant barberry.

4.7.5 Forbidden Hunting Area in Tapal:

Tapal is located in the north west of Shahrood with vastness over 30000 hectares. The famous species of beasts’ life are ram, ewe, wild goat, deer, brown bear, leopard, Tihu, Partridge, and hunting birds, the plant species in the area are gavan, darmaneh, kinds of gramineh and oros.
4.7.6 National Park and Protect Area in Kavir/Desert:

It is located in the south west of Garmsar and of the most considerable species of beasts are panther, deer, wild goat, ram, ewe, bustard, raven and leopard.

Figure 4.20: Rare species of wild cat in the Desert National Park Garmsar

Source: Semnan Environment Organization
4.7.7 Natural Jungles in Semnan Province Forests with wide leaves:

Jungles of northern part in Semnan province are about 50,000 hectares in the highlands of 900 to 2500 meters from the sea level. The ecological conditions are hard in these areas and due to being in the heights and mountainous regions with much snow, the plant species grown are mostly trees, scattered and small trees such as oak, kerantra, mazo, mamarz, kachaf, koukou, shirdar, azgil, valik, self grown pear, and barely rash, maple, baranak, ven etc.

4.7.8 Oros Jungles in the Southern Slopes of Elburz Mountains:

The vastness of these forests is 15,000 hectares. And they are located in the highlands of 1700 to 2400 meters from sea level. They have special importance; e.g.: Charbag in Shahrood is the most condensed forest in Oros. They are 15 meters high.

4.7.9 Desert Jungles:

The vastness of this area is about 25000 hectares, and located in the form of semi-condensed mass of haloxylon and tamarisk in the southern middle part of Semnan province. They appear in the form of Taghdar in Chahjam and Khartouran areas and also in the form of Tamarisk forest in Garmsar desert areas

4.7.10 Hand-Planted Forests:

Contains the forest parks and the green spaces stretching the countryside to cities and estimated about 370 hectares throughout the province. Most of them are located around the cities and the dense-population centers. The entrance and exist of province stretching 160 Km long and with the vastness of 960 hectares around the road have been planted with Haloxylon. Of course, 46896 hectares of this area is covered by hand-planted forests. The most important parks in Semnan are Soukan forest park in the east of Semnan, Koumesh forest park in the north of Semnan, Mahalat Park in the west of Semnan, Garmsar Park, Damghan and Shahrood forest parks.
4.8 TOURISM SELECTED AREAS IN SEMNAN PROVINCE

4.8.1 Shahmirzad as Tourism Selected Area:

Shahmirzad (Shamarza) is part of Mehdishahr located 24 Km away from north of Semnan and in the southern slopes of Elburz Mountains and next to the desert plain. Being located on the border of desert caused the population to reach 4-5 times in summer. Due to the natural attractions such as snow-covered highlands in winter, many people visit there.

In addition to the natural attraction such as green lands near the mountains and moderate climate and also the spectacular cave named ‘Darband’ some historical monuments like ‘Shirghaleh’, ‘Ghaleh Sheiki’ and ‘Dej-e-Vahl’ as important centers for Esmaelian, increased the tourism attraction. Various agricultural products such as plum and walnut have international fame as they are exported to other countries. Also, the largest walnut garden with the space of 700 hectare is located in Shahmirzad. Communication road includes a road of 24km to Semnan, a 170km road to Sari and also a 55km road to Doab in Mazandaran province.

Shahmirzad due to the proximity to Semnan linked to the important road of Tehran and Mashhad through railroad. Construction of hotels, motels, entertainment, and welfare centers and also providing the sports facilities suitable to this area in the province is necessary; ski field for winter sports, parks, gas stations and sport spaces are the opportunities for investment in tourism industry.
4.8.2 Bastam, a Selected City for Tourism:

Bastam is the birthplace and tomb of the great Wiseman; Bayazid-e-Bastani and the tomb of Emamzade Mohammad is also located there. Bastam is 6 km away from Shahrood and is in the route of Shahrood Aadshahr road. The historical village of “Ghale Nokhan” is part of Bastam. Totally, Bastam due to having historical, natural and religious tourism attractions is a good place for foreign and domestic tourists visiting this area each year. Monastery (Khaneghah) and the tomb of Bayezid are visited constantly by different tourists even from different countries. And the tomb of Sheikh Abolhasan Khareghani, the famous Wiseman, is located in the village of “Ghalehno” in Khareghan next to Bastam.

Tourists from Moslem and neighboring countries Pakistan and middle Asian countries visit these places each year. Besides the historical places in Bastam, the beautiful nature of this area with the green trees along with freshness ornaments the space of city. Fresh and mild climate with spectacular natural views have promoted the attractive features of this area.

Proximity to Shahrood provides the access to essential facilities. On the other hand, this has provided access to the roads and communication devices such as railroad and airport. However, in spite of having guest houses, Bastam faces shortage of hotels, motels, restaurants and entertainment centers. Thus investing in tourism industry can be one of the needs of this area.
4.9 SELECTED AREAS FOR TOURISM

4.9.1 Selected Areas for Tourism in Semnan City:

4.9.1.1 Selected Area for Tourism in Abegarm:

Abegarm is located in the north west of Semnan. Warm water springs are located 21 Km far from North West of Semnan and 18km west of Mehdishahr. Since many years ago, many people have come to these places to treat their diseases and stay there for some time. Some people come there to visit Abegarm attractions. In order to provide better services for sick people, many pools with low depth and capacity have been built. Next to this area, two small plantations named Koliab and Chenaran have been located. To access the warm springs, 3 routes are available.

The first road is diverted from the major road of Semnan and the second one is starts from Mehdishahr and leads to the Abegarm.
The third one is with a low traffic and onerous which is diverted 25 km away from Semnan to Firuzkuh.

However, passing the routes leading to Abegarm is difficult for light cars. Thus, since 2006 a special road is being constructed there. Lack of suitable communicative routes to Abegarm and lack of inhabitants in this area during the recent years; provide the opportunities for investors to operate the projects easily without any obstacle. As they lead to Abegarm, they are in the limit of natural resources, road construction operations and also modifying the route will be done without any obstacle. Also turning the main route and access to the hot springs from the two way Tehran-Mashhad road can provide an opportunity to publicize and attract new tourists. As a result, the appropriate climate in this area enables the tourists use the warm water and spectacular and nice nature from the end of March to the middle of September. If a camp is set up, they can use the spring water even in winter every year.

4.9.1.2 Selected Tourism Area in Payghambaran:

It is located in the north east of Semnan. This tourism and religious area is stretching in the gravelled road connecting the southern slope of Elburz to the north of Semnan.

Payghambaran Tomb is located at the peak of a mountain 21km away from the main road of Tehran-Mashhad in Semnan. On the basis of the available information, two sons of “Nouh” messenger named “Sam” and “Lam” have been buried here.
Due to pilgrimage and religious attraction, many people visit for many years; especially on Thursdays and Fridays. Geographically, this area has a cold winter with moderate summer. The plant covering are those plants growing in the rural slopes. Variation of beast life is proportionate to the rock heights.

The drinking water for tourists is supplied through the spring located at the foot of the mountain. Mild climate, animal, plant covering in this area and pilgrimage attraction complements it as a tourism center. There is a graveled road of 5km from Semnan-Mashhad to reach Payghambaran area.

4.9.1.3 Selected Tourism Area in Ahowan:

Ahowan area is located 30km to the east of Semnan, 78 Km away from west of Damghan and leads to a mountainous area. Ahowan is cold in winter and mild in summer but it is a rural life area. Around Ahowan, there are some mountainous villages named “Kalateh”, gardens, different farms and irrigation pools created with a beautiful perspective. Beside the natural attractions, two caravanserais or historical inns named Anoshirvani stone inn (420-421, Hejira) and Shahsoleimani inn (1097, Hijia) at the time of Safavids have been built. These monuments show the historical importance for visitors. These two Caravancerais are located in the route of Tehran/Mashhad.
4.9.2 Selected Tourism Areas in Shahrood:

4.9.2.1 Jungle of Abr as Selected Tourism Area:

Abr is located 40km north east of Shahrood and south west of Ali Abad town in Gorgan located at the slopes overlooking to north of Elburz and “Zaringol yielding water. This area is called Abr Jungle. The heights are mostly covered with meadows or planted-tree pasturage; however the lower part of jungle is covered with different plant species. It is visited by tourists since many years. Due to the nice climate is the best place to spend the people’s leisure time in Shahrood. Being located between two different humid and desert climate conditions, natural topology, beautiful and charming perspectives with good plant and animal covering provides a good situation for environmentalists.

The most important road available to Abr jungle is Shahrood, Abr and Shirinabad road. It is diverted from Azadshahr-Shahrood road with 40km with asphalt and the rest 10km inside this area has not been covered with asphalt. The other mountainous road is made and sanded by the telecommunications and oil companies.

Figure 4.24: Abr forests in the north east of Shahrood

Source: Semnan Environment Organization

In this area, facilities such as drinking water system, electricity net and telephone located near the main gas pipes, will be provided, using gas meanwhile, mobile phone is heard in some parts of area.
According to the demand private investors form the tourism plan in this area and approve of it in the province tourism committee and issue the principle agreement to the name of investor by vice-president and the manager of OCHHT. The executive project is being done and followed up by investors.

4.9.2.2 Jungle of Olang as Selected Tourism Area:

Olang forests are located 85km away from north of Shahrood and in the water downfall of northern areas. Many years ago, people lived in Jouzchall area located in Ramian, used these forests for supply of fuel and grazing the cattle. The most important spectacular outlooks in this area for tourists, forests with various trees which are fabulous in spring and summer, high jungles and easy availability to jungles, animal difference and also diversity in the forest trees are the advantages of tourism in this area. Having dense jungles with nice and fabulous perspectives in Olang area, even the warm or cold seasons caused many people to come to rest there. Thus setting up the recreational and residing centers can attract many tourists, especially those who are going to stay there for several days.

In this area, there are no rural population, therefore there are not any foundations potentialities like drinking -water system, telephone and electricity network. The most important road available to this area is the by-pass route originated from the main road of Shahrood-Azadshahr. However, in some parts of this road using cell phone line is possible.
4.9.2.3 Jungle of Dasht-e-Shad as Selected Tourism Area:

Kalpoush Jungles and dry framings of Kalpoush area are located about 150 km away from north east of Shahrood and supported by Semnan province and part of it is located in the northern water downfall of Iran (Area in Golestan Dam).

Ecologically, this is part of the moderate semi humid areas. Mostly, has plant covering, and some parts of the forests area is considered as part of Golestan national park, so variation of animal species are unique, containing most animal species, including different categories of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish. Presence of green and charming nature and also the density and plant variety of the area besides the different animal species meet each viewers’ desire of the beauty of nature whether to spend the leisure time or to search anything.

Appropriate availability to cities including Semnan, Golestan and Mazandaran provinces even from the provinces of northern and Razavi Khorasan to this plain has increased the potential of this area to attract tourists.

The major road available to this area is the by-pass road to Kalpoush. Additionally, by constructing a dirt road through Shad village, availability of Loveh water fall in Golestan province and also Golestan National Park; one of the most
important foundation potentialities available in Dashat-e-Shad has also the same feasibilities found in Dasht-e-Shad including electricity net, Telephone and some services and welfare potentialities.

4.9.2.4 Jungle and Waterfall of Nam Nick as Selected Tourism Area:

Nam Nick forests and Hosseinabad is located in the limits of Semnan province and in the northern water downfall (Golestan Dam area). Being located in proximity to some other areas increased its attraction as a tourism area.

Thus the places which can be introduced to tourists are Dasht-e-Shad, corn poppy plains and sunflower ones. Improving the economic conditions of people here, increasing the population and promoting their attractions caused this area to be active.

Due to having Caspian Sea ecology, the plant covering is mostly the forest covering with the forest tree species and Caspian wide leaves. Also, various plant species being with the natural waterfall in the center of this jungle has promoted the capability of this tourism area.

Different mammals and reptiles as well can be found in these areas.

Presence of communication road for people living there is being widened, also being available to the northern Khorasan and Jajrom, on the other hand, the existing the bio-potentialities in Kalpoush areas and villages, are the advantages to attract tourists. In other words, having the available roads in this area via northern areas and North West of the country has created fabulous perspectives with the quiet and green nature along with various animal and plant species.

Proximately to other nice places, Abr jungles provided the opportunities to investments in substructures of tourism. The major road available to this area in Semnan province is the by-pass road of Mayamei to Kalpoush area. Availability of electricity wide net, telephone and urban gas pipes increased tourism potentialities of this area.
4.10 TOURISM BIOSPHERE AS SELECTED TOURISM AREA

Collection of Touran has been formed from 3 parts; National park (8%), beasts life shelter (17%) and the protected area (75%). Touran is located on the southern side of Tehran Mashhad, in the north east of desert plain, in the west of Khar Touran area and in the east of Troud area. This collection is the second biggest protected area after the Nibandan beast’s life shelter and is protected by the environment organization. Ecologically, it is considered a part of slightly semi-desert areas. While having much variation in the plant covering, the most uncommon species such as Asian panther, Iranian zebra and the birds like golden crow and bustard are seen there. Bioregion of Asian panther is limited to the special areas like Touran and desert bioregion.

In addition to Asian panther, Iranian zebra is the uncommon animal species that living only in Touran. Also golden crow is one of the most uncommon birds in the world and in fact is the native species found in Iran and only live in Touran. Meanwhile other animal species also live here. To reach Touran area, the most appropriate road is the one covered with asphalt originating from the western branch of Tehran-Mashhad road. It leads to Biarjomand and is about 24km. Additionally, due to the much vastness of this area, many graveled roads from Tehran-Mashhad road lead to this area. The infrastructural facilities are the same as Biarjomand ones. Including, drinking water system, trans-electricity net, and telephone and in some areas, cell phone line is an available tool. But urban gas pipes are 40km away from this area.

4.10.1 Selected Tourism Area of Mojen and Tang-e-Dastan Waterfall:

Mojen town is located 35km away from the northwest of Shahrood and is in a mountainaeous area. Tangeh Dastan is 10 km away from Mojen and 45km from Shahrood. Due to being located on a mountainous area and with the height of 2000 meters from sea level, and with a mild climate, it is a good place for visitors; chiefly in spring, summer seasons and the early fall. Due to plant covering, Mojen’s pastures are planted with trees and contain the pasture plant species. In addition, different kinds of mountainous vegetables, trees and plants are seen there. The climate variations due to
height of these area different kinds of animal life make it one of the important hunting parks in Shahrood.

Mojen as a historical area in the slopes of Elburz Mountains with the unique features and special architecture is called ‘Iran Desert Masouleh’.

In other words, the old texture of city located on a high mountain, like Masouleh in Gilan has been made in such as form that each roof is a yard for the other house. This has created a beautiful outlook for visitors.

Natural attractions of Tangeh Dastan along with the nice waterfall are the other advantages for tourism. Falls of Tangeh Dastan with height of 12 meters is located between two giant cliffs with a very beautiful perspective. The only dirt route 10km long is available to Tangeh Dastan and crosses Mojen but Shahrood road to Mojen is covered with asphalt.

Mojen has the foundation and general facilities including sanitary, and healthy drinking water system, electricity net, asphalted road, tele-communications, cell phone and gas pipes.

4.10.2 Selected Tourism Area in Khoshyeilagh:

The other shelter for the beast’s life is Khoshyeilagh with a size of 150057 hectares stretching from the north of Shahrood and is part of Semnan province continuing to the southeast of Aliabad town (Golestan province). This area is one of the first places protected in Iran and its name was changed on the basis of life shelter in 1985. About 85% of this area has a semi-dry ecology and generally is located in the central water downfall area. Humid and Mediterranean ecology forms. Totally 15% of the beast’s life shelter in Khoshyeilagh, animal-living environments and plant covering here are too various with different animal and plant species. This area due to having the various and natural perspectives and abundant ecosystem variation originated from forest, mountains, Khazar humid climate, and the desert dry plain, has formed a special and valuable environmental variation in a relatively limited size.
These features made it one of the spectacular animal places in Iran. Inside this area, there is not any village, or tribal environment. But bioregions of tribes around them are some places used as the tribes, route for migration. Thus, due to absence of any villages in this area, no foundation facilities like drinking water system, trans-electricity net and telephone are found. Also, there are no main roads and most of them are made of sand, and some can be used only by Jeep. Totally, the routes available to this area include the first by-pass route originated from Azadshahr-Shahrood main road. Also, Mayamei - Hosseinabad Kalpoush, Olang road, Tilabad, Nardin road available to Cheshmeh-Jilan, to Cheshmeh-Charmelli, Zardabeh-Touaz-Nardin route and Tangeh Merzamohammad are the other routes leading to this tourism area.

**Figure 4.26: Khoshyeilagh stretching from the north of Shahrood**

*Source: Semnan Environment Organization*

### 4.10.3 Selected Tourism Area in Farahzad Tash and Cheshmeh-Haft-Rang:

Farahzad and Cheshmeh Haft Rang are located in the central Elburz Mountains and in the north of Shahrood; in fact it is a part of Shahrood.

Due to abundant water and green lands, agriculture and animal husbandry are the main occupation of people living there. Due to the beauty of its springs at Cheshmeh Haft Rang treating some diseases is paid attention for a long time by the people there.
Farahzad with the green farms and gardens, Cheshmeh Haft Rang due to passing water of springs through the colorful mine materials are called seven-color springs.

From long time ago, Farahzad being located in the route of Gorgan and Shahrood and also having a fresh climate has been paid attention by tourists and people living there. Cheshmeh Haft Rang is in the north east of this area located across Farahzad gardens and in fact is one of the most beautiful effects of creation.

Ghatri is located in Bastam and is part of Shahrood. It is one of the areas located near Abr village. Water downfall field is part of the main branch of Zaringol including various springs, located in the southern border of Elburz Mountains and neighboring with Golest an province in north. Due to being situated on the mountainous area, it is surrounded by a cold and mild mountainous climate. Because of such a climate, there is a heavy rainfall every year.

Due to the moderate climate and relative humidity, the plant covering is fabulous.

The narrow main road of Shahrood-Azadshahr connects the main road of Tehran-Mashhad through Bastam district to the promenades located in the south east areas of Shahrood. To reach Ghatri, the by-pass route to Abr village is available.

This area has a suitable drinking water system and Tran's electricity network. Additionally, telecommunication office for telephone and post office are available in Ghatri. But cell phone line is only used in the heights of this area.

4.10.4 Selected Tourism Area in the plains of Sunflower and Corn Poppys in Kalpoush:

Kalpoush jungles are located in the area of Semnan province and in the northern water downfall of Iran. It is part of Shahrood and is located in the Kalpoush. Ecologically, it is part of semi-dry ecology to semi-humid one and located in the semi-humid ecology. On the other hand is determined by the condition of agriculture land cultivating of the plant species, in addition to the cultivated species, some kinds of small forest trees are also seen.

Two kinds of plants like corn poppy flower and sunflower attract the tourists.
Compacting the species and the beautiful and unique scene of corn poppy flowers from 20th April to 10th May presents a special effect in this area. Also, sunflowers often grown in Danial plains towards Korang heights bud in July and August. The animal species such as birds and reptiles are the two important species identified there. However small and medium mammals have been observed beside the plantation lands. The most important way to reach this area in Semnan province is Mayamei by-pass road to Kalpoush covered with asphalt 75km long and stretching to Rezvan district and the other ones. There is a road covered with asphalt from Shahrood and other areas of Semnan province to Mayamei.

Infrastructural facilities such as drinking-water system cross-electricity network, gas pipes, telephone and also cell phone line have been provided in most parts of the area.

4.10.5 Selected Tourism Area in Reza Abad-e-Khartouran:

The people of Reza Abad with tribal life in a village which is part of Biarjomand located 250km away from the south west of Shahrood, and 123km from the south of Biarjomand. The climate is warm and dry in summer, but cold and mild in winter. Plant covering around it contains plants growing in a salty place. Breeding camel is common there. The most important tourism attractions in the area are sand hills with different patterns stretching behind the south walls of the village.

Special plant covering on the sand hills and Tamarisk jungles are unique affects of Semnan province. The tribal black tents with the special culture and tradition of people complete the natural attractions. The road available to this area is through Shahrood to Biarjomand and then towards the center of rural district of Zaman Abad and leads to Reza Abad village. The other one to Reza Abad is through the south of the main road in Mazinan on the route to Tehran-Mashhad.

Abbasabad located in Shahrood is a well-known village due to the mineral excavations. Its located in the north of Tehran-Mashhad road, and is 140 km away from south east of Shahrood and 80km from Mayamei district, and also situated on the north of Mazinan desert with warm climate in summer and moderate climate in winter.
Abbasabad contains the shrubby plant covering resistant against the dry condition with the meadow plants ranked from 3 to 4 in leveled-desert areas.

There have existed types of deer and Iranian zebras in the past. But today, due to being crowded and environment pressure, they have migrated to the protected areas. The Carvanserais and historical monuments are the main attractions.

Miandasht and Alhak caravanserais are the big ones located in the route of Abbasabad with historical importance. Additionally, there are many roads to enter the depth of the desert to visit the mines and the attractions inside the desert. Also road from Abbasabad towards Dastjerd, Biarjomand and to Khartouran area provides availability of tourists to Touran biosphere such potentialities have provided availability to the natural, historical and tourism feasibilities for visitors.

4.11 SELECTED TOURISM AREAS IN DAMGHAN

4.11.1 Cheshmeh Ali as Selected Tourism Area:

Cheshmeh Ali location is the north of the historical city of Damghan 30km away from this city. Cheshmeh Ali is located between Astaneh and Kalateh Roudbar villages. Located in the place of spring and contains the natural historical attractions. Fatalishah, one of the Qajar kings in Iran built a mosque and a monument there. This building located inside the river and at the center of recreational collection of Cheshmeh Ali creates a beautiful scene.

The mosque buildings are located at the south side of the complex yard. Around the collection and the two sides of the pond have been decorated with different kinds of high trees.

This recreation place is situated on a nice climate, visited by different visitors due to the quiet and beautiful environment. Presence of medicinal plants and different plant species like plum, walnut and apricot, gardens and trees producing all kinds of fruits in the village around it, the mountains with mines from which stones are excavated for buildings and the presence of high mountains heights in this area have increased the other
attractions of this area. Mansour Kouh and Mehrnegar are the other historical castles which complete the attractions of this area.

Being located in a mountainous region, it has many plant coverings. Thus the animal species are proportionate to such area and ecology.

Due to different attractions in this area especially in Cheshmeh Ali Complex and around it there is a national camp next to Cheshmeh Ali, being set up increasing the capability and investment of tourism industry.

Roads in the area connect cities, e.g.; Mazandaran province to Damghan via a two-way road create a special situation for this area. This advantage i.e. having availability to the above places increased the attractions of the area. All roads covered with asphalt and have electricity network and drinking-water system. However few services and welfare potentialities are seen there.

**Figure 4.27: Cheshmeh Ali collection is the north of historical city of Damghan**

![Cheshmeh Ali collection](source)

*Source: General Office for Cultural Heritage Handi Crafts and Tourism*

4.11.2 Shahid Shahcheraghi Dam as Selected Tourism Area:

One of the areas located in Damghan city and used by tourists is Shahid Shahcheragi Dam. It is located in a valley surrounded by mountain. Some parts of it have been changed into that dam lake. In fact it is a natural attraction which can be used as a
powerful potential power for tourists. The most important potentiality of this area is dam perspective, located on the route of tourists coming to visit Cheshmeh Ali and the other one is the fresh climate and green space around it. Presence of dam and the lake has provided an opportunity for tourists to use boating, fishing and entertainment by settling beside the dam. This dam is on the route to some tourism attractions including Gerdkouh, Cheshmeh Ali, oros Forests in the north of Dibaj and rural grasslands located in Damghan, and generally they have provided multi-purpose opportunities from the attractions that exist for tourists.

In the region of dam, the climate is dry and almost like desert climate. The environment of this area due to the man’s interferences and continuous early grazing of flocks has been damaged and variation has been reduced.

Thus the plant covering and variation of animal species in this area are less than before. Shahid Shahcherai dam is located on the route of the asphalted Dam-Cheshme Ali and Dibaj road. And also Damghan railway station is located on the route of Tehran-Mashhad railway 11km away from this area. Availability of this area to the potentialities of Ahuano village provided drinking water pipes and electricity network. Due to the passing of gas pipes to Dibaj and the northern village, gas net will be provided in near future.

One of the investors from private section has invested here and presented a comprehensive tourism plan for this area and it is accepted as an ideal plan by vice-president and OCHHT in Semnan province. Also, the intensive studies by the tourism committee in province and the OCHHT have been done on this plan.

4.11.3 Gerdkouh as Selected Tourism Area:

The mountainous area of Gerdkouh is located 18km away from Damghan. Due to having the geomorphology and natural features, it has abundant, historical attraction and potentialities to develop tourism. Ghaleh Gerdkouh is one of the axes of tourism attraction called Gonbandan Dej; the mountain on which Gerdkouh castle is set up is similar to a dome. The nearest villages to Gardkouh are Ghodrat Abad and Avaz Abad located to the south of this mountain.
However, the plant and animal covering in this area due to decreasing rainfall has been reduced during the recent years, but the industrial and medicinal plants and also various other species along with the tropical, mountainous and animal species are the spectacular attractions of this area.

Today, besides the historical attractions like Gerdkouh and Ghodrat Abad Castles, Emamzadeh Ebrahim and the other attractions such as ecosystems, mountainous perspective and highlands along with environmental attractions related to the animal and plant covering are the most important tourism advantages. Such combinations from the natural and historical attractions absorb many tourists with different objective and tastes. Reaching to Gerdkouh Tourism area through Ghodrat Abad and a dirt road 8km long is possible. Damghan road to Ghodrat Abad village is a 15 km asphalted road. Ghodrat Abad prospers basic and foundation potentialities like drinking water pipes and trans-electricity network. Around the Gerdkouh Castle, there is not any cell phone line.

4.11.4 Cheshmeh Gholghol as Selected Tourism Area:

Cheshmeh Gholghol located 2 km away from the north of Dashtbou village and next to villages like Touye darvar and Dehkhoda; from suburb of Darvar in Damghan. It has mountainous and cold climate, but is next to the desert region and is variable. The plant covering due to the regional conditions is rural meadow; therefore, the animal species are related to the mountainous areas. In addition Cheshmeh Ghonbol, Emamzade Mirgebreil and remains of a castle in the east of Touye darvar village are the other tourism attractions.

Also, next to this area, a region named Angourestan (vine farm) with beautiful small waterfalls, plant covering around it and different kinds of fruit farms, created a charming and affable nature with a nice climate. A land with green farms and hunting animals supplemented the tourism capabilities. Approach to these areas is possible through a by-pass road of Damghan-Semnan covered with asphalt. But road reaching the Chesmeh Gholghol is narrow and not covered with asphalt. Some feasibility such as drinking water pipes, electricity network in some villages of this area is available.
4.11.5 Peerkhoshtar/Peerkhoshdar as Selected Tourism Area:

In the west of Kelateh Roudbar village in Damghan and a distance less than one kilometer from the village, some water springs from inside the calcareous mountains come up which is used for drinking and irrigation of farms. The beautiful waterfall comes into view in spring season with abundant water. This collection of springs with a nice waterfall provides a charming perspective for this area which is the most important merit to attract the tourists.

Due to being a mountainous area, the climate has mountainous features; however the area around Kalateh village including Khostar area, because of man’s interference, its plant covering is poor but has animal species, chiefly in the rural areas of tribals, various animal species live.

Rural environment, fresh climate and the variety of living creatures proportionate to the mountainside area attract a number of different tastes. The usual tourists, mountain climbing groups, hunters and environmentalists are groups that can enjoy this charming nature.

The most important communication route in this area is Domghan-Dibaj road passing through the Kelateh village. In addition, Kelateh village has the communication road between Semnan and Mazandaran which is 8km away from Kelateh district. The potentialities in Kelateh are availability of drinking water, trans-electricity network and gas pipes. All these feasibilities are available to this area. Kelateh has telephone system and independent telephone code. Also, mobile phone communication is used in Kelateh Roudbar and this area. Generally, it can be said that Khoshtar Tourism area, in addition to having the tourism attractions, has other merits including no opposition for construction and being free to do any activity and develop investment in this area.

4.11.6 Tourism Selected Area Tourism in Tang-e-Zendan:

Tang-e-Zendan is located 53 km away from north of Damghan, 17km from North West of Dibaj town and next to the Behshahr-Damghan road. The climate is a combination of cold winters with pleasant and moderate summers.
This narrow passage is located in the valley of Lar Kouh and in the southern mountain sides of Goykeshan. At the bottom of it the cold and refreshing water of like-springs flows upwards and has formed beautiful small waterfalls in abundance.

They have increased the attractions of the environment, besides the narrow passage, tong plant covering with different plants around it, specially in the middle of spring when some species bud, the innovative views have created and added to the environment’s attractions. In the high mountain sides of Emam Ebolghasem and Goykeshan, next to oros forest the otherplants have formed spectacular and beautiful views.

The other natural attractions next to this area are Nesroa waterfall located 20 km away from the north east of Dibaj.

4.12 SELECTED TOURISM AREAS IN GARMSAR

4.12.1 Kavir National Park as Selected Tourism Area:

Siahkouh area and the national park in the desert is one of the oldest protected areas in Iran. It is located in the south west of Semnan and in the south of Garmsar and is also situated between the central desert and salty lake. National park in the desert with 450 hectares is protected by organization of protection for environment in Semnan province.

This park has hot summers and moderate winters, thus it is categorized as moderately dry area. Plant covering is low and of less variety and includes the desert and semi desert plant. But the mountainous districts have the plant species with appearance of steppes, having different species of beasts similar to those in desert, plain, hill highlands and cliffs.

The tourism attractions in the National Park of Desert (Kavir) are divided into two groups; natural attractions and historical ones. The stone-pavement road is one of the most wonderful historical works with the 380 year-old antiquity which has provided a passage for the caravans through the boggy and salty lands next to the desert plain.
The famous monument of Bahram palace (Shahabasi Caravanserai) Ainolrashid Caravanserai is 2 km away from the south east of Bahram palace and the remains of Haramsara building, Sefidab and Lakab Caravanserais, water reservoir of Ghioughe have formed other historical attractions in this area. The natural attractions are mostly related to the nature of the desert. The unique features of central desert are silence, relaxation, clean weather, blue sky and nights with a lot of stars which are observed at night. In fact, the unique character of national park is that in spite of lacking the special plant and animal covering, one of the most innovative attractions in nature is seen there, the attractions that can be interesting for anyone who is interested in bare nature and the different and unknown beauties. These attractions in nature are good opportunities for investment in tourism industry and visiting this area.

In the National Park of the desert, there are not any inhabitants or feasibilities except the springs 6 km away from Bahram Palace. The main road available to the national park parallel to Shahabasi stone pavement road from Garmsar to Kouchk and then is parallel to stone pavement is a graveled road in addition to Kashan and Varamin. Also from new road (Garmsar to Qom) using Varamin to desert national park one can reach this area. Totally, Kavir National Park proposes the potentialities and capabilities for tourism which have not been produced sufficiently. Therefore, if these attractions are presented well to domestic and foreign tourists, a good opportunity can be provided for investment in tourism industry.

Figure 4.28: The famous monument of Bahram palace

Source: General Office for Cultural Heritage Handi Crafts and Tourism
4.12.2 Selected Tourism Area in Boneh Kouh:

Boneh Kouh is located in the north of Garmsar and in the ending part of Hableh Roud (river). This area due to being located on the ancient way of Gamsar (Khar) ton Mazandaran, has had a special importance historically and militarily. Construction of a strong castle named Stonavand next to the Hableh Roud shows its importance. Hableh Roud is one of the historical passages in Iran connecting the central parts of Iran to the northern areas. In the past, in Safavids period, Siahkouh stone-pavement road stretching via this valley connected Isfahan to Behshahr, the summer resort for Safavids. Stonavand has been one of the ancient castles in Iran.

The biography of it has begun from mythical and ancient periods of Iran and reaches to the periods that Freidoon and Kaveh prevailed on Biorasb and put him in prison at Stonavad Castle. Boneh Kouh has a desert and dry climate with the plant resistant to salt and dryness but the animal species, kinds of birds living next to the rivers and the predatory animals also some kinds of fish like trout live in Hableh Roud. They draw the beautiful effect from life and beauty next to the desert.

Totally tourism attraction in Boneh Kouh includes two kinds of natural and historical attractions; stonvand castle and the other historical remains like Rig tapeh’ Setapeh and the remains of Ghaleh Gabr; in Dehserab village, remains of the old installation about division of irrigation.

In the south of Dehserab village, railway bridges, old castle and old house in Naruhe village, are the historical attractions.

These historical monuments beside the natural views like Hableh Roud, plant and animal covering and the mountains with highlands in this area have demonstrated the potentialities and the opportunities of developing the tourism in this area. Boneh Kouh area includes several villages and farms, like Boneh Kouh, Narouhe, Sarabroud, Serab, Boneh-Kouh station and Asta farm, totally they are called Boneh Kouh. At the present time connectivity to this area from Garmsar to BonehKouh station is about 15km with an asphalt road and the rest of the route is about 7km with a graveled road. BonehKouh is located 300 meters away from railway. Additionally, being located on the route of Tehran-Mashhad railway, this one is available through Garmsar-Gorgan railway and
Bone Kouh station. The villages in this area are covered with Trans-electricity network, drinking-water pipes, but any communication through cell-phone is possible in some parts of this area.

4.12.3 Selected Tourism Area in Rameh:

Rameh village and the areas around it form Rameh Tourism area, containing a historical background, Rameh area is located 55km away from north east of Garmsar and 30km from the historical village of Dehnamak, including some villages and farms; of high and down Rameh, high and down Chartagh, Arjaneh, Emamzadeh Jafar, Gareje, Lezore, Shahvaras and Kohneh Deh. As Wild Elburz highlands are in the north of the area. So it is a mountainous area with a moderate and rural climate, especially in summer due to the high temperature which is unendurable for everybody, this area is a good place for visitors stuck in the hot and dry climate of the desert. Plants including some pharmaceutical plants, mountainous plants and various other plants are proportionate to the rural climate.

The beautiful areas around Rameh village; chiefly the heights and the various beasts’ life are the special effects of the nature there. This spectacular place which is part of forbidden hunting area of Khonar can be attractive for environmentalists.

Totally, rivers-likesprings and natural waterfalls with refreshing water, plant covering and animal species and also mountains and highlands of the area, have provided the intact opportunities for investments in tourism industry. At present, the only route available to Rameh is a 32km long which is ramified from Semnan-Garmsar main road. The feasibilities found in Rameh village are trans-electricity network and drinking water pipes. But the other potentialities such as telephone, gas and cell phone line are not available.

4.12.4 Tourism Area in Behvard:

Behvard is located 32km from North West of Eivankei in Garmsar (64km from Garmsar). In the center of this area is Behvard village. It is between a plain and a mountain and under covering of moderate-dry climate with warm summer and mild winter. There are various plant species in meadows and including many plants created a
charming and affable environment at the border of desert. In addition, the areas chiefly around Behvard village, Ghareh Ghach heights and Ghouch pass are relatively rich in beasts and are considered as one of the hunting places in Garmsar.

Water resources such as Behavard Dam Lake, springs and subterranean canal increase the animal plant covering, mountains and highlands of this area and also present tourism attractions and combinations of natural attractions of mountain and plains for visitors. Additionally, cultural resources such as Ememzadeh Khoshnam, a very old plane tree, Esken castle and finally way of rural and tribal life, complet the potentialities of this area but the only road available to the Behvard village is a by-pass-dirt road from Tehran to Eivanekei which is 9km long. Bhard village prospers with the drinking-water pipes and electricity network, but is derived from the feasibilities such as gas and telephone network. And also cell phone communication line in the area is too low.

4.13 SELECTED TOURISM AREAS IN MEHDISHAHR

4.13.1 Selected Tourism Area in Roudbarak:

Roudbarak is 80km away from north of Semnan and located in Mehdishahr and in the route of Shahmirzad to Fouhlad Mahaleh. Due to wide-leaf forests and fresh climate; a lot of tourists are attracted mainly in summer. Having the various small and large rivers in this area and the view of streams from the lower part of valley has formed the name Roudbarak. There is only one village named Roudbarak with non-habitant population.

Majority of people only live there in summer and in the other seasons settle to Mazandaran and Golestan.

Climate, ecological conditions and natural environment have provided, capacities and different opportunities; including variation of forest and pasture species. Difference in temperature in comparison with Semnan climate, especially in summer, reaches to 20 degrees centigrade.
Figure 4.29: Roudbarak is 80km away from north of Semnan

Source: Semnan Environment Organization

The other attractions of this area made many tourists from Semnan, Damghan and southern border of Mazandaran to visit there. Geographical situations and animal species, hunting birds, springs and various rivers, abundant fresh drinking waters, green lands, beautiful perspectives, topographical conditions in the area, variation in medical plants, edible mushrooms and forest fruits are attractions for tourists too. Roudbarak lacks facilities; but only drinking water is available in the village and electricity network is being operated there. The only available road to this area is graveled roads which need to be repaired.

4.13.2 Darband as Selected Tourism Area:

In the north of Semnan between Mehdishahr and Shahmirzad, s small village with a nice view named Darband is located. Fresh air and drinking water is available for tourists there. Darband as a tourism area is located 18km away from north of Semnan. The distance from Mehdishahr is 2km and from Shahmirzad 3 km. The climatic condition is similar to central Elburz Mountains with low rain in summer and heavy rain in winter. Along with the spectacular area like Hikoo historical path, and old castles such as Kafar Ghaleh, Shir Ghaleh, Reza Abad Ghaleh and Ebrahimkhan Ghaleh, Golerooudbar River, farms and trees in the village, mountainous and nice climate with beautiful nature form a
beautiful perspective for environmentalists and tourists. In addition to these places and more importantly in the whole, Darband cave, located 3km away from northwest of Mehdishahr, with rare features can be a background to develop tourism industry in this area.

Darband Cave with a 140 million year-old history, the second great calcareous cave in Iran, is about 150 meters long, 30 meters wide, and 30 meters height. The great stalactite and stalagmite monuments, calcareous and cauliflower-like walls and also small calcareous rocks with abundant, regular and round skulls in big and small patterns astonish each viewer. Being the major road of Semnan of Sari near this area, it has a special situation. Beautiful perspectives attract everybody passing from desert road. Recently, access to Darband from outside Semnan province through Tehran-Mashhad communication route has been provided. On the other hand, Darband is linked to Sari and the north cities via Fouladmahaleh and Kiasar.

This area is near the Tehran-Mashhad railroad and this has increased the tourism advantages. Darband has linked with electricity network, drinking-water pipes and gas pipes through Shahmirzad.

**Figure 4.30: Darband is village with a nice view between Mehdishahr and Shahmirzad**

*Source: General Office for Cultural Heritage Handi Crafts and Tourism*
4.13. 3 Parvar as Selected Tourism Area:

Parvar, a village without any inhabitants, is located in the northeast of Semnan. However, including an area with some villages named Parvar, Kaverd, Taman, Talajim, Finesk and Molladeh. The whole of this area on the basis of the higher council approval of game keeping and supervising on hunting has been announced as a protected area.

Plant covering has special variation of forest, including forest fields, pasture and areas planted with trees.

The most important communication road in this area is Semnan-Fooladmahaleh road. It has been covered with asphalt at the entrance of Parvar area and is the only, suitable communication route for this area. There are graveled roads which link, the villages to each other.

Basic facilities such as electricity and telephone are available but no gas pipes are laid there. However, for each village, drinking-water supply has been provided.
Due to the various springs, the village in this area prospers with drinking water supply. Mobile lines in some areas are available but needs installation of high beams to amplify.

Totally, Parvar area contains various natural attractions. Variation of forest species and pastures, and variety of animal species; one fourth of mammal species throughout the country are found in this area, temperature differs with Semnan, mainly, in summer, having different higher areas from mountainous cliffs, and hills, various springs with different country sides along with variation of the medicinal plants are the attractions. The suitable communication road (Semnan-Sari) can account for investment in tourism industry.

**Figure 4.32 Parvar area contains various natural attractions located in the northeast of Semnan**

*Source: General Office for Cultural Heritage Handi Crafts and Tourism*
4.13.4 Selected Tourism Area in Chashm:

Chashm village is a part of Shahmirzad and located 19km away from northwest of Shahmirzad, 48km far from north of Semnan, 30km away from Mehdishahr and located at the foot of Neizova peak. Chashm is a mountainous village and the drinking water is originated from springs and aqueducts. Geographically, Chashm is a mild and cold area.

The most important tourism attractions in the area are natural ones like the beautiful and spectacular heights of Neizova and Chashm tribe's summer resorts along with tribe's traditions and life with making dairy products.

Proximity to the beautiful areas like Rouzieh spring, the beautiful ‘Kahesh’ village and minor roads to Firouzkouh along with proximity to some nice area for Sangsari tribes can be an ideal and considerable area for tourists. Also, Neizova peak is one of the attractive places for mountain climbers coming to visit there throughout the country. To reach Chashem, an asphalt road is used via Shahmirzad route.
Figure 4.34: Chashem is a village with a nice view in the north of Shahmirzad

Source: Semnan Environment Organization