Abstract—this study mainly aims to investigate the role of information technology (IT) and communications in tourism. Today we can see main changes in the tourism. Meeting the tourists’ needs better and fast for making them more satisfied by technological facilities and displaying and introducing the facilities and capabilities of host to foreigners as well as providing them with facilitated transportation is the main objective of tourism industry. In this paper by a descriptive method, and using documentations and reviewing the findings of other studies and papers, we will investigate and determine the role of IT and Communication in tourism.

Keywords—Information technology, Tourism, communication,

I. INTRODUCTION

By considering the very rich facilities and characteristics of our country in Tourism Industry, it is necessary to use new methods for attracting and maintaining the current customers with its development in near future. During recent years, information technology (IT) changed practical methods in all organizations, particularly tourism industry. According to the definition of IT by Pepard, “Information technology includes mechanisms for empowering resulting in facilitated processing and flowing the information inter- and intra-organization; these information includes ones that produced, used and stored by organizations” [1].

Modern day is called “global village”, “information age”, “age of speed” and “world of changes and opportunities”. In such situation, ignoring new advances in IT may force irrevocable damages on development of regions and relate organizations. Therefore, only organizations can be succeeding who and regions can be developed where providing better, faster and high quality services by using IT [2].

Tourist & Tourism

According to the recommendation of International Transport Conference on 1964, UN defines tourist as below: “Tourist is who visiting sights for recreation or visiting a country except the one he / her residing in, for the purposes of treatment, study, business, sports and or pilgrimage provided he reside ins such country not less than 24 hours and not exceeds than 6 month” [3].

Information Technology and Tourism

Role of It for development of this industry can be investigated by two dimensions: first, applying IT in data sharing and providing tourism services, meaning general usage of potentials of IT industry for development of infrastructures of tourism industry and second is virtual tourism meaning e-traveling. Virtual tourism is a tool by which people interested in tourism can recognize the tourism capacities of a country by minimum facilities and cost saving with some knowledge of tourism capacity of related country and travel to a specific region by a targeted and guided program provided by state and tourism agencies. Virtual tourism, on the other hand, means presence in a digital territory of IT and appearance on World Wide Web with possibility of seeing media and text information from physical world surrounding him. E-tourism means e-business in e-tours including three sets- business management, information systems and tourism management. Astonishing capabilities of IT results in increased demands of citizens for providing new services with properties such as fast and efficient services; additionally, the higher profitability from e-commerce in economic sectors -particularly private sectors- led states towards using IT and communications [4].

Information Technology and Communication-Contemporary Needs

Today, the importance of IT can be made clear by increased speed and accuracy of different activities of organizations and relation of its different components to each other followed by their increased efficiency. Organizations who having different parts distributed in different geographical regions far from each other and or institutes with responsibility of conducting various works can promote most of their problems by such technologies. Information and Communication Revolution is an expression conceptualized by

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development information technologies besides industrial revolution. The same as industrial revolution era when a set of factories, tools and machineries, automobiles, etc., helped human being and took on many human tasks, types of IT products, such as computer software and hardware, telecommunication networks, satellite systems, etc., raised and developed to help those people who are dealing with information [5].

Some applications of this technology includes types of calculations and daily processing, commerce, information sharing, scientific issues, management, telecommunications, etc. Various experiences of different organizations through the world indicate that IT can easily remove most of informational systems problems. IT has many capabilities and advantages for removing the organizations’ problems some of which includes increased accuracy, because in human-based businesses, there are different accuracies for doing a job, while IT can ensure a high and invariable accuracy for any job. In types of processing and calculating activities, computer’s accuracy is higher than man’s. Increased speed is another advantage of information technology; fast calculation and processing of information and immediately transferring the results will provide us with fast searching time and accessing to information. One of the best advantages of IT is reduced physical size of data storages, because by development of IT and using it, it is no longer needed to conducting and maintaining high size of reference specific books. One can store the data of many books in any CD. Computer Researching Center of Islamic Science of Qom is one of such centers where is doing this important job. Using IT can increase conducting the works with removing many intermediaries. Both, as key advantages, result in removing some administrative corruptions, particularly in low levels. Mot inquiries for references and others can be computerized and automated by IT. Therefore, one can benefit from such services 24/7 days. Telecommunication, telephone, teleconference, video conference and similar are some of such applications of IT. According to what mentioned above, particularly increased speed of technology, resulting in conducting more size of jobs in full time, the system efficiency will be increased followed by cost savings [6].

Challenges of Using IT in Tourism Industry

1- Human Factors

Human factors include absence of IT specialists in Tourism Organization, lack of employee’s motivation in using new methods, lack of any related training courses for employees, users resistance to change in organizational-structural factors, lack of funding for software and hardware equipment, low financial power of units to benefit from IT.

2- Environmental Factors

Environmental factors include lack of any integrated network nationally, lack of necessary legal regulations in the country, lack of transparency in IT policy, lack of coordination and cooperation between different sectors and units of tourism industry.

3- Organizational Factors

Organizational factors include weak communication network in the structure of tourism organization, budget shortage for software and hardware equipment, low financial power of units to make benefit from IT.

4- Managerial Factors

Managerial factors include lack of awareness among tourism managers from modern technology, lack of knowledge of managers from PC, IT advantages, lack of motivation and supports needed for managers, lack of adequate commitment of senior managers for establishing IT, short managerial life span.

5- Technological Factors

They include lack of strong and extended software facilities, non-conformity of systems with users, lack of proper broadband internet, network and telecommunication problems, not easily using of IT.

6- Cultural Factors

Cultural factors include lack of developed culture of proper usage of IT, not familiarity of tourists with performance of IT, unfamiliarity of people and authorities with IT function [7].

Alternatives for Development of Virtual Tourism

Some alternatives for development of virtual tourism includes making an institute called “Virtual Tourism Center” in National Touring Organization, revising, improving and managing the information sites for tourism centers in internet, interfering the weight of virtual tourism in the perspective of Tourism Industry Development, attending to official electronic information of potential tourism in international media, preparing and holding e-training courses, tourism development in national university centers, advertising official tourism sites in all public sites in the web, launching an inter-urban database, making e-credit cards for using tourism centers and selling it by websites for national and international tourists, interaction between ministry of foreign affairs and other institutes with National Touring Organization for development of virtual tourism beds such as e-visa [8].

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper used descriptive methodology, documentation and reviewing the findings of other studies and papers exist in the electronic databases as well as library sources investigate and determine the role of IT and Communication in tourism.
III. Conclusion

Information technology and tourism both play key role in economic development and attracting the investments as well as wealth making and justice in the community, particularly in the rural tourism development in different regions through the country. Along with, the speed of IT development is such that all countries though the world are using it optimally and properly to be adapted with IT by better management. Accessing of people through the world to great sources of knowledge by internet could provide great transformation in the field of tourism communications, data sharing to tourists and making familiar with situation of tourism destinations on one side and situation of tourism market on the other side. Using IT in this industry provides tourists with targeted and classified information about places interested by tourists and this is one of the advantages of e-tourism having no problem for tourist with no damage to environment.

References


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Born in Mashhad on Sept, 3, 1966, Holder of Master Degree in Training Management and chosen as a prominent citizen by Islamic Council of Mashhad on 2003 with a citation in the field of training and education. I have also many citations by Ministry of Training and Education and other public organizations nationally. I also could be rewarded an official citation by Islamic Council Assembly of Iran due to my training and educational activities nationally.
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