

## *Tourism and Rural Development in Yemen*

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## **Summary:**

The future stage in Yemen requires getting out of the current situation and focusing on development and activating it in all vital areas in the country in order to improve the standard of living of the Yemeni population, especially the rural population, who represent 71.15% of the general population. Tourism is considered one of the areas with an investment orientation aimed at achieving development. Therefore, the current research aims to identify the pillars of activating tourism for the development of the countryside in Yemen, and to present a proposed vision to activate those pillars to achieve that development.

The research was based on the descriptive survey and the comparative approaches, whereby the components and manifestations of tourist attraction were identified in rural Yemen. The concept of tourism and its requirements for the development of rural communities as well as the role of tourism in the development of the countryside were discussed. The research found many results, the most important of which are: Tourism in the countryside contributes to increasing economic returns by providing foreign currencies, opportunities for tourism investment and various job opportunities. The research also found that tourism development in the countryside requires strategic planning, marketing, tourism security, in addition to providing hotels and transportation. By comparing Yemen's tourism situation with the Kingdom of Morocco, the research confirmed that tourism in Yemen depends mainly on the pillar of the environmental dimension consisting of archaeological, historical and natural sites more than on other pillars. The research determined that the pillars of reviving the tourism to develop the rural are based on the economic, societal, cultural, urban, institutional and environmental dimensions.

**Key words:** Tourism, touristic development, pillars of tourism, rural development

## ***Introduction:***

Tourism of all kinds represents one of the sources of economic growth for countries that have various tourism potentials. In fact, tourism is a human activity that measures behavior in light of the available and varied resources. It is considered a means of intellectual, cultural and social communication among different peoples, and its importance is highlighted by attracting foreign currencies and capital to the country for investment in the tourism field, while it plays a prominent role in the process of employing manpower, eliminating unemployment and moving forward with the wheel of development in various developmental areas (Abdulaziz, 2008, 32). So, many countries revealed interests in rural development, describing it as one of the comprehensive economic and social development objectives due to its role in improving the economic returns and providing job vacancies, in addition to its role in improving cultural and social lifestyles in communities' individuals (Ahlam and Suriya 2018, 225).

Tourist countries have turned to the tourism industry, including tourism in the countryside, which reflects the amount of natural tourism assets that countries possess, and since Yemen is one of the developing countries that are making strenuous efforts to achieve comprehensive development in all fields, with the various components it possesses, especially in the field of tourism, as it is considered one of the countries in the world that possesses various tourist attractions. If it is effectively invested, it will achieve wide development revitalization in various economic, social and cultural fields which will positively affect the lives of the population, especially the rural population, as their rural areas represent a tourism and investment project. Therefore, this research was directed towards developing rural tourism in Yemen, in order to achieve comprehensive development for the population of rural areas, and to improve their different levels of life.

## ***Research problem:***

The rural population of Yemen represents 71.15% of the total population. They depend on agriculture as the main source of daily income, and it is no longer commensurate with their basic needs due to the increase in the population in the countryside, which in turn has created many social and economic problems. These problems have emerged more with the ongoing conflict and poor conditions that Yemen has been going through since 2015. Among the most important problems:

- ♦ Low level of per capita income.
- ♦ High rate of migration from the countryside to the city.
- ♦ Emergence of the unemployment problem with the spread of the phenomenon of poverty.

All these problems have been manifested in the Yemeni countryside despite the availability of the components of many economic activities, the most important of which is the tourism. Most of Yemen's villages represent various forms of tourism, but they have not been effectively exploited in the development process, which has negatively affected the rural population and their needs. In fact, the rural tourism is one of the modern economic trends that are achieving tangible success in the development process in the societies. This has raised questions as follows:

1. What are the components of the tourism attractions in Yemen?
2. What are the aspects of tourism in rural Yemen?
3. What is the concept of tourism and its importance?
4. What are the requirements of rural tourism?
5. What is the role of tourism in the countryside development?
6. What is the experience of the Kingdom of Morocco in tourism for the countryside development?
7. What are the pillars of activating tourism for rural development in Yemen?
8. What is the proposed vision for activating the pillars of tourism for rural development in Yemen?

### **Research hypothesis:**

- ♦ There is no relationship between the economic boom in Yemen and the constituents of tourism in rural areas.

### **Research goals:**

To achieve the strategic goal of the research represented in identifying the basic pillars for activating tourism in rural Yemen and working to put them in a proposed vision to activate them for the development of the countryside, the research sought to achieve the following procedural goals:

1. Determining the components of tourism attractions in Yemen.
2. Multipliciting of tourism aspects in the countryside of Yemen.
3. Clarifying the concept of tourism and its importance.
4. Determining the requirements for rural tourism.
5. Clarifying the role of tourism in the process of rural development.

6. Determining the pillars of activating tourism for rural development in Yemen.
7. Presenting the tourism experience of the Kingdom of Morocco in the development of the countryside.
8. Presenting a proposed vision to activate the pillars of tourism for the development of the countryside in Yemen.

### ***Research importance:***

The importance of this research multiplies in its attempt to present a theoretical aspect about the components of tourism in Yemen and its countryside, to clarify the most important current pillars on which tourism in rural Yemen depends, to identify the pillars that tourism needs to achieve development in the countryside of Yemen, and to present a vision to activate these tourism pillars. The importance of the research can be determined as the following:

1. Clarifying the multiple roles of tourism in developing the rural population.
2. Developing the tourism sector in Yemen to achieve comprehensive development in all economic, social and cultural fields for all rural people.
3. Determining the pillars of activating tourism in Yemen for the sake of developing the countryside and achieving comprehensive development for the community of the rural population in Yemen.
4. The present study draws the attention of those in charge of tourism in formulating the necessary policies for interest in tourism in the Yemeni countryside.
5. Yemen keeps pace with the global tourism progress that is invested in all the fields.
6. The novelty of the current topic of research, as there is no Yemeni study that dealt with the topic of research and combining tourism and rural development in Yemen, as far as the researcher knows.

### ***Terms of the research:***

The current research adopted the following terms:

- 1- Tourism:** the tourism is defined as “the movement of individuals from one place to another for various purposes for a period of time greater than 24 hours and less than a year” (Ahlam and Suriya, 2010, 266).

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) defines it as an industry that consists of a group of activities that produce goods and services and provide them directly to tourists (Sapra, 2014, 4).

- *The procedural definition of rural tourism:* is the move to rural areas for the purpose of entertainment and enjoyment of seeing ancient and historical monuments, natural areas, treatment and hospitalization, or for the purpose of education.

**2- Tourism development:** It is a complex process that includes many interconnected and intertwined elements with the aim of reaching the optimum utilization of the elements of tourism production represented in the competitive and natural tourism wealth, tourism services, and human resources (Osman, 2018, 10)

- *Procedural definition:* It is a set of interrelated activities in the economic, social, cultural and environmental fields, according to which the optimum utilization of the potentials available in rural areas to achieve the desired goals with high efficiency in the field of tourism.

**3- Pillars of tourism activation:** the current research defines it as a set of economic, administrative, social, cultural and urban dimensions in the light of which tourism development in rural areas is carried out, and the identification of various activities that have implications on the development of the rural population.

**4- Rural Development:** The researcher defines it as a set of social, economic and cultural changes that aim to improve the quality of life of individuals in the rural community.

### **Search limit:**

The spatial, temporal and objective limits of the search were defined as follows:

- 1) **Spatial:** The Republic of Yemen and its countryside, Al-Mahwit Governorate (as an example).
- 2) **Objectivity:** Tourism and its role in the development of the countryside in Yemen, and tourism in Morocco.
- 3) **Temporalism:** The research was conducted in 2021 AD.

## **Theoretical framework and previous studies:**

### **First: The theoretical framework:**

This part of the research deals with the theoretical framework, and it consists of several axes:

- ◆ **The first axis:** The components of tourism attractions in Yemen.
- ◆ **The second axis:** The aspects of tourism in the countryside of Yemen.
- ◆ **The third axis:** The concept of tourism and its importance.
- ◆ **The fourth axis:** The role of tourism in the countryside development.
- ◆ **The fifth axis:** The rural tourism requirements.
- ◆ **The sixth Axis:** The pillars of tourism activation for the development of the countryside and the experience of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Each axis will be dealt as follows:

### **The first axis: the components of tourism attractions in Yemen:**

This axis deals with the components of tourism attractions in Yemen (natural and historical), as well as the official efforts in developing tourism in Yemen, as follows:

### **First: The elements of tourism attractions in Yemen**

#### **1- The Republic of Yemen location:**

The Republic of Yemen is one of the most countries in the world that possesses many diverse tourism fields. The area of Yemen is 555,000 square kilometers. Various tourist regions are available in that area and distributed all over Yemen, and it is divided administratively into 21 governorates, which in turn are divided into 333 districts which includes 36,986 villages. Yemen is distinguished by many diverse tourism potentials, including:

##### **A- Natural components**

The natural components are represented in the geographical nature, where the terrain varies between mountains, plateaus, plains, deserts, valleys, mineral water sources, various landscapes, vegetation cover spread over vast areas, different animals and birds. These areas are characterized by a variety of temperatures, humidity and the amount of rain. In fact,

diversity has created many beautiful landscapes and variety of animals in mountainous, plain and desert regions (Al-Aroussi, 2020, 31), and this diversity is attributed to many components as follows:

- **Astronomical location:** Yemen is located between latitudes 12-19 north and longitude 42-35 east. Thus, Yemen lies between the equator and the Tropic of Cancer within the tropical region (the hot tropical region). The temperature is high, the amount of rain decreases in the coastal areas, and the temperature rises in Yemen in the summer, especially in the coastal and low-lying areas close to sea level (Abdullah, 2001, 67).
- **Geographical location:** Yemen is located in the south of the Arabian Peninsula in the southwest of the continent of Asia, and thus it overlooks bodies of water from several sides and is bordered on the west by the Red Sea, and on the south by the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, and this helped the climate variability and its impact on water bodies, which contributed in increasing environmental and biological diversity (Abdullah, 2001, 6).
- **Climate:** The geographical and astronomical location of Yemen had an impact on distinguishing the climate of Yemen, as we find it hot and humid in the coastal strip, moderate in the mountainous heights, and a desert climate in the desert regions.
- **Rain:** Rain falls throughout the year in different regions of Yemen, and the amount of rain varies from one season to another, as it decreases in the winter season and increases in the summer and spring seasons (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2008, 4).



Figure (1): Touristic areas in the Republic of Yemen  
 Source: Central Statistical Organization, Yemen, 2014

## **B- Historical components:**

The human tourism resources are represented by what the ancient man left behind in the previous civilizations over thousands of years, Yemen is home to ancient civilizations such as Saba', Himyar, Qatabān, Awsan, Hadhramaut, and Ma'īn, and many states arose in the Islamic era, such as Ziyadiyya, Rasuliyyah, Banu Najah and others. Yemen has lived for many eras, and this in turn has left a diverse and limitless historical product, such as archaeological sites, temples, palaces, pottery tools, coins and other historical images that most of its features still present today (Al-Aroussi, 2020, 31).

## **C-The components of the cultural heritage:**

The areas in the countryside of Yemen are famous for the diversity of tribal customs, traditions, norms and rituals inherited among generations, and according to the results of the archaeological survey, 600 cultural, artistic and folkloric types and patterns were found, and 4,000 models of Yemeni architecture (Archaeological Survey, 2000, 58).

Yemen is a wonderful and historical diversity, enormous and multi-picture, as we find historical monuments and sites, as well as the natural environment, so we find diversified vegetation such as trees and various and rare plants, in addition to animals, birds, breathtaking nature views and reserves and islands. All those tourist sights make clear that Yemen possesses a lot of investment resources that require a lot of tourist orientations for achieving a comprehensive development in the tourist areas.

## ***2- Tourism development efforts in Yemen:***

The tourism is one of the important sectors that increase the size of the economy through foreign currencies and attract various investment sectors. It also plays an important role in the process of developing tourist areas in various economic, social and environmental fields, the results of which are reflected in the residents of tourist areas. Therefore, the tourism sector in Yemen has witnessed during the past years a growing activity, as some legislative frameworks were defined for tourism institutions, and Tourism Law №. 40 of the year 1990 was amended as well as the Tourism Development Authority was established, and a list of tourist classification specifications for establishments, hotels, restaurants and tourist parks was issued.

Also during the period 2000 AD - 2005 AD, the law of lands designated for tourism development was prepared, and many festivals were carried out, especially in 2004 AD, the year of celebration of Sana'a, the capital of

Arab culture, where many festivals were held, such as the Town Festival and Hawf in Mukalla, and the Seiyun Festival and Qarnwu (situated in Al-Jawf), and the Festival of Tanks in Aden, as well as it has created investments for the private sector through direct investment in tourism projects (Ministry of International Planning, 2010, 107).

During the years 2005-2010, many annual plans of the Ministry of Tourism were drawn up. These plans focused on administrative issues organizing tourism activities, which was reflected in the economic return that was weak, as the Ministry of Tourism indicated that the economic returns from tourism did not reach the required level and only represent (3%) of the country's gross national product.

The development plan of the Ministry of Tourism indicated that the infrastructure of the tourism facilities is very modest in some tourist areas, and is non-existent in many rural areas, and therefore the needs of tourism are not covered in the required manner, especially with regard to transportation, shelters, rest houses and other services, and this is accompanied by a lack of human cadres who are specialized in the tourism sector, and tourism promotion internally and externally, whether for tourist places or for traditional local products, in addition to the absence of a complete information base on tourism, the lack of a tourist guide, poor stability and the insecurity of the situation in the country (Ministry of Tourism, 2008, 25).

**Table (1): Tourism Demand Indicators from 2005 AD till 2010 AD**

Indicator	Measuring Unit	2005	2010	Growth Index
Number of arrivals for tourism	One thousand	336	540	12
Average nights tourism	Night tourism	6	8	-
Total nights tourism	One thousand	1836	4320	19
Total tourism revenue	One million Dollars	239	648	22
Tourism revenue relative to GDP	%	2.4	6.5	-
Total domestic tourism	One thousand	813	1386	11
Number of hotels	Number	578	1018	12
Number of rooms	One thousand	14.5	25.6	12
Direct job vacancies in the tourism establishments	One thousand	6.6	11.5	12
Indirect job vacancies	One thousand	13.1	23.1	12
Total	One thousand	19.7	34.6	12

(Source: Ministry of International Planning, 2010, 110)

The previous indicators indicate the weak growth of the tourism sector in Yemen in a manner that is not commensurate with the various components of Yemeni tourism. Despite the quantitative increase of tourists in domestic and international tourism during 2005-2010 with a growth rate of 11 and 12, it is considered low compared to the natural components that Yemen owned. This decline is accompanied by the lack of services available to tourists that are not commensurate with their needs. Although the total revenue increased during the years 2005-2010 at a growth rate of 22, this increase did not find a way in the process of developing tourism in terms of activities and infrastructure.

It is noticed from the foregoing that tourism in Yemen depends mainly on the natural and historical components to a large extent, with a weakness in the processes of interest in the natural and historical areas and archaeological sites, accompanied by the lack of basic and special services (hygiene, rest, restrooms), adding that the shortcomings in the process of providing other dimensions for tourism development are also evident. On the economic side, we find a lack of job opportunities, and a scarcity in holding various festivals concerning the cultural and popular heritage of various rural areas, in addition to the weakness of providing plans and programs for the development of tourism in the countryside, and the deficiency in the infrastructure of shelter services, transportation, restaurants and other requirements for tourism development.

### ***The Second Axis: The tourist Aspects in the Yemen Countryside:***

#### ***1. The Tourist Aspects in the Yemen Countryside:***

Tourist aspects in the countryside of Yemen vary between natural ones such as mountain landscapes, waterfalls, mineral baths, islands, etc., and archaeological and historical sites such as ancient cities, temples, ancient monuments, castles, forts and others, including, for example:

**Table (2): Clarifies some of the tourist aspects in the Yemen countryside**

Tourist aspects	Their Types
<b>Mountains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jabal Al-Nabi Shu'ayb in Bani Matar District, with a height of 3,666 meters above sea level, and it is the highest mountain peak in the Arabian Peninsula.</li> <li>• Jabal Bani Ahmad in Al-Haymah Al-Dakhiliyah district, with a height of 2,400 meters.</li> <li>• Jabal Shibam, with a height of 2,920 meters.</li> <li>• Jabal Adiyah, with a height of 3,510 meters, is located in Sanhan district.</li> <li>• Jabal Kofen, with a height of 3,244 meters, is located in Bani Hushaysh.</li> <li>• And other mountains.</li> </ul>
<b>Valleys</b>	Wadi Mayfa'ah, Wadi Adas (Shabwa Governorate), Wadi La'ah, Wadi Mawr, and other valleys.
<b>Temples</b>	Temples are among the most important images of ancient Yemeni civilizations, including: The Temple of Sirwah (Marib Governorate), the Temple of Athtar (Al-Jawf Governorate), the Temple of Awal (Marib), and other temples.
<b>Castles and Forts</b>	It is one of the important monuments of previous civilizations, most of which were built on the slopes of the mountains, including: Samara Castle (Ibb Governorate), Al-Qahira Castle (Taiz Governorate), Al-Qaflah Castle (Saada), and concerning the forts: Kahlan Fort (Hajjah Governorate), Al-Manar Fort (Ibb Governorate), Quran fort (Raymah governorate).
<b>The bottoms</b>	Qaa Saada (Saada), Qaa Al-Bun (Amran governorate), Qaa Jahran (Dhamar governorate).
<b>Desert areas</b>	It includes many ancient and historical cities such as Sirwah, Qarnaw and Hajar Kahlan as well as many places, dams and temples.
<b>Natural reserves</b>	Yemen has nature reserves that contain hundreds of diverse and rare birds and plants in the world, the most important of which are: Socotra Archipelago, Hawf Reserve, Bura Reserve, and Atma Reserve.
<b>Mineral baths</b>	The latest statistics recorded the existence of 93 natural baths for healing and bathing, including: Zubair bath, Tabalah bath (Hadramaut governorate), Al-Huwaymi bath (Lahj governorate), Jaref bath (Sana'a governorate), and Ali Aans bath (Dhamar governorate).
<b>Islands</b>	The Yemeni islands are spread over the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea, the largest of which is Kamaran Island, Hanish Islands, and Socotra Island. The islands have a distinctive plant cover; one of the most famous of these trees is the Socotra Dragon tree, which does not exist.
<b>Landscapes</b>	The landscapes are spread all over Yemen between green landscapes (farms), mountain and valley landscapes such as agricultural terraces, and other landscapes.

(Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the tourist guide, Ministry of Tourism)



Agricultural terraces



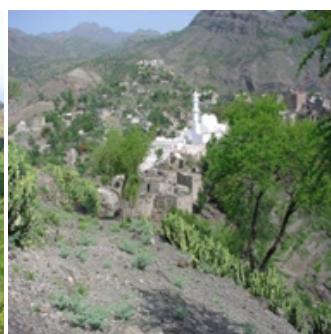
Hutaib village



Mosque of Eshab-El-Kehf  
(the Seven Sleepers)-Jabal Sabr



Jabal Hubaysh



Ahmed Bin Alwan Mosque



Jiblah city



Bura reserve



## **Wadi Bana Waterfall**



## Dar Alhajar (stone house)

**Figure (2): Shows tourist areas in Yemen countryside**  
**(Source: the researcher)**

Tourist areas in the countryside of Yemen stand out in the form of unparalleled and wonderful picturesque, as they vary between green areas, farms of various crops, waterfalls, valleys in all directions, hot springs, and historical and archaeological areas. Yemen as God Almighty described it “a splendid country with all its tourist sceneries”.

## **2- Rural Population in Yemen**

The rural population in Yemen has reached 20,430,000 people, at a rate of 71.15%, according to the statistics of 2015 AD (Central Statistical Organisation, 2015). These population groups were dispersed in many villages which reached 36,986. In fact, this dispersion is due to the geological structure of Yemen's varied topography (mountains, plateaus, plains), in addition to the climatic diversity, and this was reflected in the cultural diversity of the various Yemeni regions represented in the social customs, costumes, folklore, folk cuisine, architectural styles, and ceremonial rituals in social and religious events, as well as the diversity of the archaeological and cultural stock of the various Yemeni villages, which represent areas of origin for many ancient Yemeni civilizations (<https://yemen-nic.info>).

The climatic and geographical diversity of rural areas in Yemen has gained positive and negative features. The natural assets have made the countryside in Yemen an unparalleled national tourism wealth, where we find beautiful landscapes, enormous mountains and diverse farms, while the negative effects lie in the rugged terrain and the difficulty of accessing tourist areas, as many rural areas and their inhabitants suffer from poor basic life potentials (healthy water, education, health), accompanied by the emergence of the problem of poverty and unemployment. Indeed, the Development Goals Indicators for Yemen showed that the rate of poverty

in Yemen is high in the countryside, amounting to 42.49% compared to urban area which is 32.29%. (Ministry of International Planning, 2011, 12).

The national survey report indicated that the percentage of Yemeni families that receive electricity services in the countryside is 67% compared to urban areas which amount to 97%. As for water and sanitation services, the percentage of rural families that receive water inside housing is 23% compared to the urban population of 48%. In addition, more than 75% of rural families do not obtain primary health care due to the low income, while the percentage of rural families' access to health care is 20% compared to 80% for urban areas, and this is due to the remoteness of health centers from the population agglomerations in the villages because of the rugged road and the lack of income of some rural families (Ministry of International Planning and Cooperation, 2014).

The strategy of the Ministry of Tourism for the year 2008 indicated that the weakness of the communications network in rural areas requires improvement of the network of services for transportation and communication in tourist areas (Ministry of Tourism, 8).

The researcher believes that the tourism sector in Yemen in general, and the countryside in particular, is characterized by the following:

- ◆ The natural components of tourism in the Yemeni countryside are characterized by diversity and represent a high attraction for tourism, and this contributed to the diversity of tourism patterns in rural areas such as ecotourism, curative, natural, recreational, and historical tourism.
- ◆ The tourism sector in Yemen countryside suffers from clear deficiencies in many service areas, as there is no infrastructure for tourism, and there are no tourist hotels or suitable shelters in the countryside, in addition to the scarcity of restaurants and restrooms that suit the needs of tourists, the rugged roads, and the lack of providing electricity, sanitary water and other basic services.

### ***The third axis: the concept of tourism and its importance***

This axis deals with the concept of tourism, its importance, and tourism patterns according to the following:

#### **1- The concept of tourism and its importance:**

The tourism is an economic activity that appeared in the form of an intellectual term at the beginning of the eighties of the nineteenth century, as it came back as a modern phenomenon that stems from the increasing need for comfort and recreation, a change of atmosphere, a sense of the beauty of nature, and a feeling of joy and enjoyment available in its different areas of nature (Al-Amrawi, 2014, 97). Rural tourism has emerged as one of the modern tourism trends at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and has gained the attention of many tourist countries such as Hungary, the Netherlands and Britain, where the countryside represents a large part of its geographical area. Therefore, the perception of tourism in the countryside varies according to the type of tourism services provided by these countries to visitors. No matter how many descriptions were given to the tourism, it is considered one of the most important economic sectors in all countries of the world. The tourism is like black gold, this how we described it, as "The oil of the country that has no oil". In fact, the importance of tourism is highlighted in the following:

- ◆ Providing job opportunities for residents of tourist areas (guides, employees, trade in tourist areas ...).
- ◆ Tourism attracts new investments for tourist countries, thus helping to provide hard currency (investments in building tourist hotels, tourism companies ...).
- ◆ Tourism helps in improving health in general by alleviating the pressures of daily life for tourists.
- ◆ Tourism increases the communication among people, which helps the spread of cultures among countries.
- ◆ Tourism contributes to the economic prosperity of tourist countries.
- ◆ Tourism increases the human's knowledge and expands his perceptions (Kazem, Salman, 2016, 354).

Tourism and its activities in the countryside differ from one region to another, some of them depend on the archaeological sites, some on the environmental areas and their landscapes, farms and rural life, and some of them depend on the recreational activities in the rural area, and whatever the percentage of differences is, tourism in the countryside remains an economic resource. In fact, the World Tourism Organization reports indicated that the return from tourism in the countryside is the most growing

resource in the global tourism economy, which is as follows:

- 20.7 % of the total volume for tourist trips.
- 30.20% is the impact of the green tourism growth per year.
- 10.15 % is the percentage of the income generated from international tourism, based on European Union estimations for rural tourism.
- 2 million European beds from rural tourism (Khadra, 2014, 78).

Rural tourism has become an economic activity because the agricultural sector is no longer able to absorb the population increase in rural areas, in addition to the fact that non-agricultural rural activities are a way to reduce poverty in many rural areas because of the ability of the tourism sector to secure good income for agricultural and non-farm families by providing various job opportunities for all categories of skilled workers (Syyd and Essam, 2018, 78).

Tourism in general plays an important role in the economic field which aims at developing the economy of countries, developing the capacities of societies, eliminating many social phenomena such as unemployment, and alleviating poverty. In fact, the tourism is a source of enhancing the national income of tourist countries by providing foreign currencies. In addition, increasing the cash spending of tourists leads to an increase in the purchasing power of the local population. The tourism also affects the balance of payments by relying on the value of tourism spending. It has created a kind of economic balance as it relies on areas far from the industrial field and focuses on: landscapes, historical sites, natural remedies, mountains which leads to a reduction in the disparity among economic levels within a single society (Al-Basrawi, 2000, 209).

## 2- Patterns of Tourism:

The tourism patterns vary in general according to the goal (purpose), or according to the type (geographical area, sample, duration of stay), and despite their multiplicity, it is mainly domestic or international tourism. Subsequently, the goal or purpose of tourism is determined. In fact, the tourism patterns are defined as follows:

- ♦ **Domestic tourism:** It means the movement of individuals within the country itself, and this type needs various services to encourage the citizens of the country to the tourism. The role of this type of tourism is highlighted in the distribution of income among the citizens of the tourist areas and the alleviation of poverty and unemployment in order to provide job opportunities for the residents of those areas, in addition to the fact that the infrastructure of the basic necessities of life is improved in those areas as a result of domestic tourism.

- ◆ **International tourism:** It is the movement from the country of original residence to another country, and many tourist countries seek to pay attention to it because of their high return in foreign currencies. Therefore, attention is being paid to providing various high-quality tourism services (Abdulaziz, 2008, 70).  
In rural areas, the internal or external tourist comes, and the purposes of each tourist are different, but they do not go beyond being one of the following patterns:
- ◆ **Ecotourism:** This type of tourism is one of the most desirable tourist patterns among tourists. It is known as: moving to environmental reserves, green and clean natural areas far from pollution areas in order to obtain psychological comfort through hiking, and enjoy watching landscapes and different types of plants and animals.
- ◆ **Recreational tourism:** It is the oldest and most widespread type of tourism for the purpose of entertainment and recreation to see the diverse landscapes.
- ◆ **Mountain tourism:** It is the movement to mountainous areas, and it is considered one of the best quiet places to relax. Most of the mountainous areas are rich in historical heritage as well wonderful and picturesque landscapes.
- ◆ **Medical tourism:** is the fact of traveling from one region to another with the aim of treatment or hospitalization, and the hot springs represent the most important tourist areas for treatment (Al-Aroussi, 2020, 124).
- ◆ **Scientific tourism:** means traveling or moving from one place to another, whether inside or outside the country, with the aim of seeking education, acquiring knowledge, preparing scientific research and studies, visiting libraries and viewing manuscripts related to scientific research.
- ◆ **Historical and heritage tourism:** Moving from one place to another with the aim of visiting museums and historical archaeological areas (Al-Aroussi, 2020, 124).

### ***The fourth axis: The role of tourism in the development of the countryside:***

This axis deals with the rural tourism and development and the role of the tourism in the rural communities, as shown in the following:

#### ***First: The Rural Tourism and Development:***

Many rural development programs focused on agricultural activity as the main and only entry point in rural areas. However, development in the agricultural field did not bear fruit in alleviating the problems of poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment, which prompted many researchers to create new areas for rural development, with various activities compatible with the rural area's environment aiming at alleviating the difficulties that rural communities face, and work to increase the income of the poor, achieve equity in income distribution, improve the infrastructure for social services, in addition to the economic conditions in the countryside while removing images of poverty and injustice, and preserve the environmental balance (Sapra, 2014, 42).

In light of these goals, the tourism in the countryside has emerged as a way of action for comprehensive development, as the World Tourism Organization stated that tourism development in the countryside will play an important and prominent role in the development of rural areas because it will contribute to promoting economic growth, providing multiple and suitable jobs for all, and eradicating poverty and hunger, achieving food security for all people (World Tourism Organization, 2015).

The tourism development in rural areas is considered a means of developing the lives of individuals and groups as well as improving their economic, educational and cultural levels of life by providing jobs, encouraging job diversification, providing various services, and stimulating arts and crafts (Sapra, 2014, 44).

The World Tourism Organization indicated that the development of tourism is an ongoing process that requires the active participation of all actors in order to make the most of the available resources, while preserving the natural heritage and biodiversity, respecting the social and cultural authenticity of the host communities, providing economic and social benefits to all workers in tourism as well as job opportunities to alleviate poverty (Massoud, 2018, 8), and according to many studies in this field, the importance of the tourism development for rural residents can be determined as follows:

- Providing new job opportunities for manpower in tourist areas.
- Increasing economic income in tourist areas.
- Increasing the quality of life in the rural area, improving public services, and revitalizing local folklore and traditions.
- Encouraging people who live in the rural areas to acquire new skills.
- Preserving the architecture of rural homes in rural areas.
- Maintaining the basic necessities of life, retail, education, transportation and other services needed by the population.
- Increasing general environmental knowledge of visitors and local residents in rural areas.
- Increasing the use of natural, cultural and historical potentials.
- Protecting landscapes and conserving wildlife (Syyd and Issam, 2008, 35).

There are many forms of tourism development in rural areas, such as villages, tourist resorts, farms and parks, and the services vary between basic and recreational services, all of which contribute to achieving development for many residents of rural areas, and they are summarized as follows:

- **Tourist villages:** It is a form of tourism that aims to provide a life characterized by simplicity, away from the pressures of cities, and it depends on the availability of natural sites, archaeological and historical sites, and therapeutic places, along with the provision of some recreational and sports activities.
- **Tourist resorts:** This type of tourism requires the merging of land use programs for resorts with social and economic development programs. This type of resorts needs to be available in tourist areas characterized by attractive activities such as curative and historical activities of archaeological and historical sites.
- **Rural farms:** Rural farms are concentrated in areas that are famous for agriculture, where specialized farms with an agricultural character are established in which shelters, and basic services are provided to tourists, such as the establishment of various cultural programs and markets for traditional products.
- **Isolation resorts:** These resorts are established in uninhabited areas such as islands and mountains, while providing the necessary services for the tourist's life (Ahlam and Suwariya, 2010, 239).

The tourism development is characterized by its comprehensiveness of the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of the tourist areas, and thus it reflects a comprehensive development of all sectors. Therefore, tourist countries seek to achieve the highest level of tourism evolution and development in rural areas.

## ***Second: The role of tourism in the development of the countryside:***

The tourism development in the countryside plays many diverse roles in the economic, social and cultural sphere, and these roles are reflected in the rural areas, and they can be summarized as follows:

**1- Economic field:** Rural tourism plays a prominent role in the economic field for individuals in rural areas as follows:

- Absorbing unemployment by providing various job opportunities for rural residents to work in the tourism field, in rural accommodations, guest houses, and camping sites that are offered to tourists.
- Contributing to the local and urban development of rural areas by caring for the development of new areas for tourist attractions in different places.
- Providing small restaurants and job opportunities for young tourist guides and craftsmen in the tourism field.
- Opening the door to marketing food products in the countryside in a wider way, and marketing the region's products, such as local and agricultural foods.
- Offering rural people various opportunities to increase their income and diversify its sources, as it is possible to practice agricultural work and market it within the region instead of traveling.
- Improving the overall economy and supporting small, local and diversified projects.
- Diversifying the tourism product and directing tourism investments towards rural villages.
- Encouraging the private sector to invest in rural tourism projects and stimulating it, and providing opportunities for investment in this field (Ahlam and Suwariya, 2010, 235)

**2- Social field:** The tourism in the countryside contributes to improving the social conditions of the population through:

- Opening the door to the social integration by providing the opportunity for youth and women to participate in providing some of the tourism requirements, such as: providing food, implementing handicrafts, selling local women's products, hosting tourists in some rural homes, providing job opportunities for educated youth, such as local tourist guidance for the rural area.
- Spreading the culture of respect, tolerance and understanding among members of society by promoting the diverse culture of

rural people, preserving their heritage and respecting their local traditions.

- ◆ Preserving the heritage of the diverse rural areas with their beautiful landscapes.
- ◆ Encouraging local and foreign investment opportunities to support rural tourism.
- ◆ Collective work with the rural population to preserve their heritage, environment and presence that distinguishes them from others (Tourism Strategy, 2014, 20).
- ◆ Supporting the process of providing the components of tourism that are represented in the infrastructure of roads, water, electricity and sanitation in the tourist attractions in the countryside, and this in turn will be reflected in the improvement of the standard of living of the rural population (Ahlam and Suwariya, 2010, 235)

**3- Cultural field:** The rural tourism plays a cultural role in rural areas and this role is evident through the following:

- ◆ Raising the level of cultural awareness among the inhabitants of rural areas about the importance of tourism and its attractions.
- ◆ Contributing to the development of the process of exchanging cultures, experiences and information among tourists and the host community to which we attribute the term “the dialogue among civilizations”.
- ◆ Providing the necessary funding to preserve the heritage of buildings and archaeological and historical sites from the tourism sources of each village (Ahlam and Suwariya, 2010, 235).

From the above, it is clear that tourism development in rural areas plays many economic, social and cultural roles, and this is clearly reflected in the tourist areas and their inhabitants. Therefore, attention must be paid to providing the requirements for tourism development.

## **The fifth axis: The requirements of tourism in the countryside**

The rural areas reflect a tremendous diversity in the tourism patterns, as they possess many of the tourist attractions components, represented by nature, which is one of the most attractive factors for tourists, whether at the level of the country's population or abroad. Therefore, the process of tourism development in the countryside depends on three foundations:

- **The components of attraction**, which are represented in places of attraction for tourists such as landscapes, archaeological and historical sites, folklore, handicrafts and traditional industries and other tourist elements.
- **Places of residence**, which are for tourist accommodation areas, such as hotels, farms, old houses, and others.
- **Activities**: They are the activities that the tourist will practice during his stay, and these depend on the type of tourist area (Syyd and Es-sam, 2018, 79).

These foundations represent basic elements for the emergence of tourism anywhere in the world, but the practice of tourism activities needs many requirements that show the extent of civilization progress available in the tourist countries. The methods for the success of tourism reflect the level of security and stability, scientific and technical progress, and the intellectual and moral development that these countries and their inhabitants enjoy. Therefore, they are linked to many basic requirements, which are as follows:

**I- Strategic planning:** The tourism planning represents the central direction of the competent authorities in preparing a strategic direction represented in various medium and long-term plans that include comprehensive programs and plans for all tourist areas and be in the form of partial planning for the comprehensive development process that the tourist countries seek (Al-Nuaimi, 2018, 352).

The importance of strategic planning is highlighted in the following:

- Controling the authorities concerned with tourism on the various tourism resources and working to employ them properly.
- Addressing solutions and remedies for the various problems facing the tourist areas.
- Promoting tourist areas that did not take the appropriate amount of tourist role.
- Evolving and Developing competencies and workforce that can be used in the tourism development process.
- Working on linking tourism with all sectors that participate in the development process, such as the industrial, commercial

and transportation sectors, and developing them in an integrated manner to serve tourism and its related activities (Al-Nuaimi, 2018, 80).

There have been many orientations of strategic planning in the tourism sector, and this is due to the role of tourism in the development of societies, and these trends are represented in the following areas: Economic orientation: The planning aims to maximize economic benefits in order to increase national income, provide job opportunities, and reduce unemployment.

Physical or spatial orientation: The planning focuses on the specific energies of the environment, the spatial patterns of tourists, and the designation of tourist eco-areas in order to reduce the negative impacts of tourism on the environment.

Social orientation: It aims to maximize social benefits by involving the local community in the tourism development process (Al-Ramidi and Al-Ziqq, 2018, 44).

**2- Marketing:** It is an integrated activity that includes all efforts made to attract the attention of local or international tourists to visit tourist areas (Rayan, 2018, 22).

Marketing is not limited to providing tourism services and programs and presenting them in the country and abroad, but it is concerned with studying the exported tourism markets and determining their needs. Marketing is also concerned with following up the tourist groups, knowing the degree of their satisfaction, their tourist impressions and the problems they faced.

The World Tourism Organization has defined the tourism marketing functions as follows:

- Communication: Marketing aims to raise the level of tourists' interest in the tourism product, in order to raise the material value of the tourism activity.
- Development: It aims to develop innovative products that allow the development of tourism services and make them more attractive.
- Monitoring: It aims to analyze the situation around tourism issues through the use of various methods and techniques, and to search for the required results (Khudairi, 2018, 109).

**3- Tourism security:** It means the administrative and security activities which aims at securing the course of tourism activities in various forms in an atmosphere of tranquility and serenity in a manner that enables the people working in this field to perform their tasks without any obstacles. This matter has a positive impact on the tourists'

attraction which raises the number of tourist nights, and the economic return of the tourist countries. There are many areas of tourism security as follows:

- The architecture tourism field: in which security is provided in establishments, hotel and semi-hotel facilities, and sports and recreational facilities.
- Tourism Security at the level of services and prevention: It is concerned with providing services in the event of pandemics, infectious diseases, injuries, or potential dangers.
- Tourism security at the social level: It is related to the social security components within the community, such as cohesion among community members, living security and stable economic life, and the provision of monitoring bodies within the state.
- Tourism security, customs and traditions: Care must be taken on the part of tourists to preserve the country's tourism customs and traditions in order to maintain the authenticity of society.
- Tourism security at the level of illegal practices: It is the legal protection provided by the state to tourists and their protection from attacks and illegal practices.
- Tourism security at the level of tourism guidance: The tourist countries are obliged to provide tourist brochures or a tourist guide in which they explain complete instructions and information about tourist sites for the purpose of organizing and controlling the issue of tourist density, and educating the tourist about the intended tourism area (Latifa, 2020, 52).

**4- Accommodation services (hotels):** Hotels play a major role in the tourism development process. The tourist is interested in determining the appropriate place to stay, especially in medical tourism. The beginnings of this service were the emergence of khans along the main roads leading to the tourist areas, and then it developed into hotels that took their current form. Hotels have been classified according to a set of specific criteria for the quality of service, number of rooms, space and other criteria, and among those shelters are: hotels, furnished apartments, camps, and resorts.

The diversity of hotels service contributes to increasing income from foreign currency, and it also provides various job opportunities for many young people. Some hotels in some tourist countries have organized tourist trips inside or outside the country in coordination with international airlines companies in other countries, and this in turn increases the role of hotels in managing tourism programs (Abdulaziz, 2008, 44).

**5- Catering services:** Catering services represent an important role for tourists, despite the difficulty of measuring the return from this service due to its connection to more than one side. Restaurants' revenues may increase due to the increase in the demand of the local residents. However, the catering service is related to the cultural characteristics, customs and traditions of peoples. We may find that tourists prefer to eat the type of food of their home country, and some of them prefer to taste the local foods of the tourist destination, and most of the time the catering service is associated with hotels (Sapra, 2014, 13).

**6- Transportation services:** Means of transportation of all kinds represent one of the factors of tourism development, as it represents the link between the country exporting tourism and the tourist destination, and the tourist determines the quality of the means of transportation that is commensurate with him in terms of cost, comfort and safety, and the safer and more comfortable the transport vehicle is for the tourist, the more tourism will flourish (Sapra, 2014, 14). The means of transportation are as follows:

- By road: cars, railways, tourist buses, motorcycles ... etc.
- Aerial: jets, regular airplanes and helicopters.
- Marine: boats, ships, yachts. (Abdulaziz, 2008, 44)

The researcher believes that human requirements play a fundamental and complementary role with the natural components to attract tourists. The relationship is complementary, and there is no tourism without natural and historical components, and no tourism without a structure for tourism activities.

### ***The sixth Axis: Pillars of Tourism Activation for Rural Development***

This axis deals with the basic pillars of activating tourism for the development of the countryside through:

- ◆ Pillars of activating tourism for rural development.
- ◆ Morocco's tourist experience in developing the countryside and comparing it with the Al-Mahwit governorate (as a model).

#### ***1- Pillars of activating tourism for the development of the countryside:***

The success of the different sectors role in the economic field depends on the extent of their contribution to the development of the national economy, and providing the needs and requirements of its members as well as a comfortable life, in addition to raising the standard of life for all. Tourism, in its role in the development of tourist societies, depends on various interconnected pillars as defined by the World Tourism Organization in the following dimensions:

- **The institutional dimension:** so that tourism is placed within the state's programs and activities, and work on tourism planning within the specialized agencies.
- **The social dimension:** Tourism development must contribute to achieving many values for a peaceful life, including: justice, democracy, equity, helping the poor people, caring for women and children, improving people's lives by involving them in presenting their traditional works, holding festivals while upgrading the level of facilities so that the tourist can receive services (Zinedine, 2017).
- **The economic dimension:** work must be done to strengthen and diversify the economy and provide opportunities for investment in order to provide new job opportunities, increase national income, and work to improve infrastructure and public services in host societies, while meeting the needs of tourists and raising living standards in addition to the necessity of effective use of tourist areas in a way that is reflected on the economic situation, in general, and the residents of tourist areas, in particular.
- **The environmental dimension:** the natural systems and their integrity must be respected and preserved by maintaining natural resources, raising environmental awareness, and paying attention to environmental issues of all parties (tourists, workers in the tourism field).

- **The urban dimension:** The cultural heritage must be preserved in the process of creating shelters and preserving the urban pattern in rural areas (Sayed and Essam, 2018, 90).

The International Union for Conservation of Nature gave a clear approach for the tourism development within the framework of the following dimensions:

- **The environmental dimension:** Through the preservation of biological diversity within the tourist areas.
- **The economic dimension:** Keenness to improve and develop the sources of income for the residents of the tourist areas.
- **The social dimension:** Planning for the development of tourism in a way that the residents of the tourist areas benefit in a clear way through communication with tourists.
- **The cultural dimension:** Tourism development must be in line with the culture of societies, and be keen on preserving the identity of societies (Latifa, 2020, 42).

The researcher believes, through the international orientations of tourism development, that the pillars of tourism for the countryside development are concentrated in: the economic, institutional, social and cultural, environmental, and urban dimension. She also believes that these dimensions constitute pillars of the tourism development process, which effects are reflected on the residents of the tourist areas, as they include the basic dimensions of population life through which many job opportunities are provided in support of the development of individuals' lives in various fields.

## *2- A comparative study (the Kingdom of Morocco and Al-Mahwit governorate) :*

Yemen is one of the countries of the Asia continent, while Morocco is one of the countries of Africa, and despite the clear geographical distance, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has made it clear that the two countries represent the most countries that enjoy a lot of tourism potentials in the countryside, through the geographical location of the two countries, as they overlook wide watermark areas. Likewise, Yemen and Morocco are among the oldest countries in which ancient civilizations and at various times. Therefore, the research on Morocco was chosen because of the similarity of the components of tourism in Morocco with the tourism in Yemen, which has many tourist governorates. Therefore, Al-Mahwit governorate was chosen as a model for comparison with Morocco now, and tourism development in the future.

## ***First: The experience of the Kingdom of Morocco in tourism and rural development***

Morocco is one of the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, and it is characterized by the diversity of its climate and terrain, in addition to the fact that Morocco is a country with an ancient civilization. All of these factors made the country one of the most beautiful tourist countries and this can be explained as follows:

### **1- Components of the tourist attractions:**

**A- Location:** Morocco enjoys an important geographical location, as it is located in the north-west of the African continent, with an area estimated at 710,850 km<sup>2</sup>, and it is characterized by a double Mediterranean and Atlantic front through its view of two water bodies, the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, with its coastal strip extending in length 3,500 Km, and land borders with Algeria and Mauritania.

**B- Topography:** Morocco's topography varies by virtue of its geographical location as follows:

- Mountains: Morocco is characterized by the presence of the Atlas Mountains, the Rif Mountains (coastal Atlas), the presence of lakes and waterfalls, and the mountains of Morocco are considered reservoirs of water. Mount Toubkal with a height of 4,165 metres is the highest peak in the Arab world.
- The Sahara: There is a desert in Morocco that extends over 61.5% of the area of Morocco, and is distinguished by its scattered oases, mineral baths, springs and mineral springs, which constitute one of the elements of hospital tourism preferred by many tourists.
- Plains: There are many plains in Morocco, such as the plains of Wadi Drae and the plain of Wadi Sous. There is also a network of rivers that consist of tributaries of the mountain water, as well as the availability of a diverse ecosystem such as sand dunes, rocky slopes, salt marshes and dense forests (Shanhas, 2020, 76, 77).

**C- Climate:** The climate in Morocco varies according to the terrain and location. There is a moderate climate in the north, desert in the south, and oceanic in the west. Thus, coastal areas are moderate, while mountainous areas have a cold and humid climate during winter.

**D- Historical components:** Morocco is considered a land of ancient civilizations such as the Phoenician, Roman and Islamic civili-

zations. This historical diversity created an ancient and diverse civilization, and among its most important effects is the “Thomas Quarry”, which is located west of Casablanca, and the “Dar As-Sultan”, which dates back to the Stone Age, as well as “Thamud site” in the city of Tetouan, and one of the most famous tourist cities is Fez, Marrakech and Essaouira.

**E- Economic activity:** Morocco is a country rich in agriculture, natural resources and tourism, which are the most prominent in the Moroccan economy.

**F- Industries:** One of the most important industries in Morocco is handicrafts and ancient crafts such as carpet and weaving industries.

**G- Folklore:** The natural diversity is reflected in the customs, traditions and folklore that express the originality of the country, as many diverse festivals are held, such as the “Marrakech Folklore Festival”, the “Fez Festival of World Sacred Music”, and the “Kanabira Bel Sadira Festival” (Shanhas, 2020, 76, 77).



Source: <https://www.mexatk.com>



Source: <https://www.hiamag.com>



*Figure 3: Tourist Areas in the Countryside of the Kingdom of Morocco*

Source: <https://www.hiamag.com>

## 2- Orientations of the Kingdom of Morocco to activate tourism for the countryside development:

Morocco sought to pay attention to the tourism sector and the beginning of the orientations was during the years 1980-1990, where the preparation for rural tourism was through the establishment of many restaurants, and the provision of qualified tourism personnel. In the year 2000, a strategic plan was developed called the Blue Plan 2000-2010, which sought to find new tourist stations, develop cultural products, improve land and sea transportation, activate marketing, and support housing energy and infrastructure with the aim of attracting one million tourists to Morocco, increase the country's foreign currency, whereas, it was expected that the increase would reach 480 million dirhams at the end of 2010, with job opportunities estimated at 600 thousand , and one of the most important pillars of that vision is to create an effective and real partnership with the public and private sectors in order to encourage investment opportunities in Morocco. The program for the development of tourism was implemented in two aspects: one side for the deserts, and the other side for the north, as the two regions were chosen based on a pre-planning of the reality of these areas and the market needs, and the project was implemented with the participation of Morocco and France. The planning was based on the following:

- ◆ Relying on various local products.
- ◆ Using technology in the tourism field.
- ◆ Building aerial waterways.
- ◆ Activating the so-called accommodation for tourists among the residents, thereby alleviating the unemployment crisis.
- ◆ Creating natural baths, and providing cultural tourism resorts.
- ◆ Development of the camping program (oases) in desert areas (Bousalem - Al-Ajali, 2019).

In 2010-2020 the second strategy was built to complement the previous plan and address its disadvantages, where new tourist destinations were created to attract 20 million tourists for the year 2020 AD, doubled the size of the tourism sector, increased the capacity of the number of tourists, and worked to increase job opportunities in the tourism sector to 47 thousand jobs, and the national income to 140 billion dirhams at the end of 2020 (Shanhas, 2020, 76).



Source: <https://images.search.yahoo.com>



Source: <https://images.search.yahoo.com>

*Figure (4): some pictures of the development tourism  
in the Morocco Kingdom countryside*

Source: <https://ar.wikipedia.org>

From the above, it is clear that Morocco is a first-class tourist country in which the tourism components vary between natural landscapes, historical sites and archaeological cities. Therefore, there are orientations for tourism development, and work to link them with development areas in tourist regions, and make this among the priorities of tourism development programs and plans, as well as to ensure the existence of effective partnership with the private sector, with the aim of developing tourism and raising the number of tourists to increase economic returns, and work to benefit from them in the development of the tourism sector in the tourist regions.

## ***Second: Al-Mahwit Governorate and Tourism***

Regarding the situation of Yemen, the researcher chose Al-Mahwit Governorate as a model for investigating tourism development in rural areas. Al-Mahwit Governorate was chosen due to its distinguished geographical location between three governorates: Sana'a, Al-Hudaydah and Hajjah, which reflected on its environmental diversity. In addition, the governorate is rich in a huge historical and cultural heritage. For the above

justifications, Al-Mahwit was chosen as a model for comparison with the Kingdom of Morocco.

## 1- Components of tourist attractions in Al-Mahwit governorate

Al-Mahwit Governorate is one of the governorates of the Republic of Yemen, which population constitutes 2.5% of the total population of Yemen, as their number reached 89,094 people (Central Statistical Organization, 2015). Al-Mahwit governorate is about 113 km away from Sana'a, and the number of its districts is 9. They are: Al-Khabt, Ar-Rujum, At-Tawilah, Al-Mahwit, Bani Saad, Hufash, Shibam Kawkaban, Milhan (<https://yemen-nic.info>).

Al-Mahwit governorate is distinguished by many of the tremendous and varied tourism potentials due to its location, climate, and topography, and these components are as follows:

**A- Location and climate:** Al-Mahwit is located on longitude 43-44 in the east and latitude 15-16 north. It is bordered on the north and south by Sana'a governorate, on the east by Hajjah governorate, and on the west by Al-Hudaydah governorate. The governorate is dominated by a varied climate between the mountain climate and the plain, where the mountainous regions are dominated by a moderate climate in the summer and cold in the winter, while the plain areas have a mild hot climate in the winter (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 1999, 4).

**B- Topography:** Al-Mahwit is a high and wide rocky area, the appearance of which is formed by mountain ranges and rocky plateaus, and between these mountains and plateaus, there are small drainage basins, and deep and steep waterways formed by torrential waters, and the topography of Al-Mahwit is distributed between high mountains covered with agricultural heights, and beautifully landscaped sceneries on the banks of deep valleys (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 1999, 2).

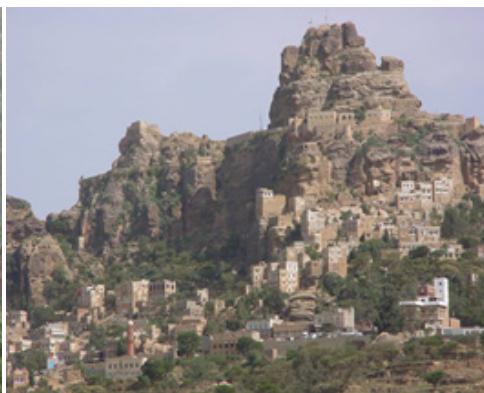
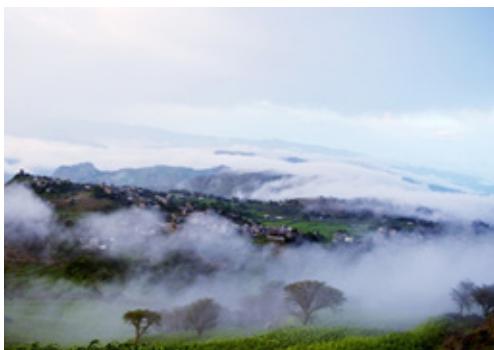
**C- Natural aspect:** Al-Mahwit governorate possesses tremendous wealth resulting from environmental diversity, where we find mountains, valleys, streams, and waterfalls, and it was named that way because the mountains and streams surround them from all directions, and the most famous of those mountains are the mountains of Hafash, Dhakhar, Al-Qarana'a and An-Nabi, and among the valleys of Al-Mahwit: Wadi La'a, Ahjar, Na'wan, Samea , Ayyan, and as for the waterfalls, there is Al-Khabti waterfall.

**D- The cultural and archaeological aspect:** The results of field surveys of monuments and archaeological sites that have been carried out since 1995 AD confirmed the existence of more than 800 archaeological sites and historical monuments, as Al-Mahwit contemplated many ancient states, as well as many ancient civilizations, and from those ruins are the following:

- **Historic cities:** Al-Samsara, Al-Ahjar, Shibam Kawkaban, Tawila District.
- **Archaeological and historical sites:** the city of Shibam Kawkaban, the worship complex in Jabal Al-Lawz, the cemeteries of Shibam Kawkaban, the rock cemeteries, the old central market.
- **Forts:** Radman Fort, Kawkaban, Al-Qarana'a, Hajar Al-Sayed (Dar Al-Hajar), Barash, Rahqa, Shaher, Al-Qefel, and others.
- **Castles:** Al-Ruwad, Al-Qefel, Al-Safken.
- **Religious places:** There are many historical mosques in the governorate, including: Al-Qal'a Mosque, Qidan Mosque, the Great Mosque, Hijra As-Sinfa, and Al-Imam Mosque.
- **Shrines:** There are many shrines in Al-Mahwit for a number of clerics who have gained a certain place in the lives of people, and these shrines include: Al-Mashaqal shrine, Al-Munib shrine in the Bani Saad district, and two shrines in the city of Malhan (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 1999, 51).
- **Popular heritage:** Al-Mahwit Governorate was distinguished by its traditional industries, the most famous of which are Al-Asoub industry (Janabi belts), Al-Janabi (daggers), jewelry and silver (<https://yemen-nic>).
- **Natural baths:** They mean the sulfur water that originates from the ground, where most people go for healing, such as the Surdud Hammam.
- **Popular markets:** There are many weekly markets in the governorate, such as "Souk Al-Rajem" that takes place every Monday (<https://yemen-nic>).

Al-Mahwit governorate has a huge amount of natural and environmental factors for tourism, and thus the governorate, with its tourist areas, is a tourist attraction, but the reality of service or recreational activities is very weak and does not fit with the size of the natural attracting components, and this was confirmed by the results of the archaeological survey of the region, which indicated that the elements of tourism are exposed to many problems, including:

- ♦ The poor availability of basic services at archaeological sites, such as means of transportation and tour guides.
- ♦ The poor availability of basic services for tourism such as rest houses, cafeterias, public baths, hotels ... etc. in most tourist areas, whether natural or archaeological.
- ♦ The poor level of awareness among the population to preserve the cultural heritage.
- ♦ any castles and forts need restoration, maintenance, and preservation of what remains.
- ♦ Weak utilization of green spaces to establish parks or tourist resorts.
- ♦ The roughness of the road leading to the archaeological areas.
- ♦ Weak investment opportunities within the governorate.
- ♦ Lack of tourism investment opportunities within the governorate (Ministry of Tourism and Culture, 1999).





*Figure (5): Natural and historical landscapes in Al-Mahwit governorate  
(Source: the researcher)*

**Table (3): A comparison of the pillars of tourism development between the Kingdom of Morocco and Al-Mahwit**

The Dimension	Morocco	Al-Mahwit
Environmental dimension	The Moroccan environment varies between landscapes, mountains, waterfalls, valleys, ancient cities, and palaces, and this is commensurate with the demand of the tourists on the rural areas in particular and the increase in their numbers.	Al-Mahwit is characterized by a tremendous diversity in the natural environment like mountains, valleys, and waterfalls as well as in the historical and archaeological environment such as ancient cities, forts, and castles, and these are factors that attract tourists from inside or outside Yemen.
Cultural and social dimension	In Morocco, ancient traditions are being revived by holding various festivals in the markets, which support the process of social communication between residents and tourists, encourage ancient industries, revive ancient crafts and festivals, and use old materials in the traditional industry process.	The governorate is distinguished by its cultural heritage and the distinctive folklore that is revived in the popular markets at the level of the local population only, without a tendency to hold festivals for agricultural seasons, and this in turn weakens cultural communication between locals and tourists.
Institutional dimension	The tourism authorities are interested in the process of pre-planning for the development of tourism in rural areas, and they work on the diversified marketing of Moroccan tourism with various means of modern technologies, and the official website is used in tourism advertising and promotion, with an effective partnership between the private and public sectors, and the provision of many diverse guides.	There is an institutional deficiency in the performance of the role that the competent institutions must play to activate tourism for the sake of community development, and this is clearly evident through the strategies that did not reflect the orientation towards developing rural tourism, the weakness of tourism marketing, as well the tourism investment opportunities for the internal and external sectors.

Urban dimension	<p>Diversity in the accommodation system, such as camps, or in farmers' homes, or what is called accommodation for the residents.</p> <p>Diversity in the system of service delivery.</p> <p>The establishment of modern mountain tourist villages for practicing golf.</p>	<p>There is a deficiency in the infrastructure of basic facilities and services in all regions of the governorate in general, as there are no hotels, rest houses, and restaurants for the tourism field, and this coincides with the weak availability of basic services for the residents of the governorate and its districts, as many residents of the region suffer from poor availability of basic services, and this affects the level of tourism in those areas, in addition to the apparent deficiency in the process of restoring historical and archaeological areas.</p>
Economic dimension	<p>High rates of employment in rural areas, both direct and indirect.</p> <p>Encouraging old industries and holding various festivals.</p> <p>Establishing specialized museums in historic cities.</p>	<p>There are no aspects of partnership between the residents and the tourism professionals in the process of encouraging traditional and local industries, despite their diversity, which may contribute to the development of the national economy in the future.</p> <p>Weak participation of people in tourist areas in tourism activities.</p>

(Source: prepared by the researcher)

Based on the foregoing, it is clear that tourism in Morocco relied on multiple pillars and dimensions (institutional, economic, urban, social, cultural and environmental), and focused on investing the natural and historical components for the development of human cadres from the people of Morocco, and included programs and projects for the development of the population of tourist areas in the countryside of Morocco, as well as revived the tourism marketing to increase the number of tourists, which is reflected in the economy, as various job opportunities were provided, and the level of national income increased. In this way, Morocco has eliminated many of the problems resulting from poverty and unemployment, and the latest development in the capabilities of human cadres, all in light of great concern to preserve the authenticity of Moroccan society and support its economy, and thus the Moroccan population has overcome many of the difficulties that hinder a safe life.

As for the field of tourism in Al-Mahwit, which is considered a model for tourism in Yemen, it has emerged completely dependent on the natural and historical factors that have been accompanied by neglect and poor maintenance. The level of services in rural areas is significantly weak, as the tourism planning process in Yemen focuses on the capitals of the governorates more than the countryside, which negatively affected the process of providing basic services such as water, electricity, transportation, hotels, restaurants, and other services.

All of this with weak communication between the residents of the governorate and tourists due to the lack of festivals or carnivals for agricultural seasons and other occasions in which traditional products are marketed in popular markets for local residents and tourists because they take place on specific days, and this may not be commensurate with the visits of the tourists, most of which are in holidays and weekends.

All the above shows that the tourism does not provide job opportunities for the local population, and this is due to the weakness of the planning process for what the tourism needs from the human cadres of the people of the province, as the tourism in that governorate suffers from deficiencies in the process of linking it to the comprehensive development of the governorate, so we do not find a way to activate economic and social activities, and the lack of interest in tourist areas in terms of lack of interest in the maintenance and restoration of historical and archaeological areas, with the weakness of basic services in natural areas.

### ***Second: Previous Studies:***

The previous studies that dealt with the subject of the research were presented in two axes: the first axis is the studies that focused on activating tourism for the development of the countryside, and the second axis is the studies of tourism development in Yemen, and the details of this are the following:

#### **A- The first axis: studies to activate tourism for the development of the countryside:**

These studies focused on activating tourism for the development of the countryside, and were presented from the most recent to the oldest as follows:

- 1- Study (Al-Nuaimi, 2018): proposals for activating ecotourism in Iraq for the purposes of planning for sustainable tourism development: The study aimed to answer the following question:

Can ecotourism be activated and implemented in Iraq for the purposes of planning for sustainable tourism development, and how?

The study found the following results:

- It is possible to plan ecotourism in Iraq to achieve sustainable development.
- The necessity of tourism awareness with the participation of the local population in projects related to tourism and the environment.

2- Study (Syyd and Essam, 2018): Pillars of activating sustainable rural tourism in the Egyptian countryside:

The study aimed to explore the elements and components of rural areas in Egypt, and the extent of their effectiveness for integrating into the system of sustainable rural tourism industry. The study concluded that the most important pillars of activating the sustainable rural tourism system are summarized in:

- The environmental, economic, social, institutional and urban framework.
- That the process of activating the tourism system in the countryside requires the concerted efforts of those interested in the tourism sector and the residents of rural areas.

3- Study (Sapra, 2014): Activating the role of tourism in rural development:

The study aimed to know the role that tourism can play in improving the reality of Syrian rural societies, and to clarify the role of the competent authorities in the success of the role of tourism in the Syrian countryside. It concluded that tourism may play a positive role in the rural development process by diversifying sources of income, while benefiting from the returns of financial tourism in the process of providing agricultural work requirements, reducing unemployment in the countryside, and contributing to reducing the migration of young people to cities, and the tourism supports traditional industries and handicrafts. Effective efforts must be made to involve the competent authorities, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, the local community, and the local cooperatives in order to activate the role of tourism in the countryside.

4- Study (Khadra, 2014): Rural tourism is a development tool in Lattakia Governorate:

The study aimed to analyze the rural environment in the province of Lattakia to clarify the reality of the region for tourism in order to identify the role of the rural tourism in the development process. The

necessity that the practical practices of organizing the tourist atmosphere in the countryside contribute to changing the environmental awareness of the rural population in order to preserve the natural areas and the ecosystem, and to refine the ethical values in the field of rural tourism. And that the tourism development in the Syrian rural areas improves the standard of living through employing male and female workers, engaging the population in developing tourism, providing small projects, and creating special jobs in the villages.

- 5- Study (Ahlam and Suwariya, 2010): Ecotourism and its impact on development in rural areas:

The study aimed to find out how ecotourism affects the development of rural areas. The study concluded that the sources of cultural and natural heritage are among the most important components of tourist attractions in tourist areas of various terrain and climate, and emphasized the need to integrate rural areas in the tourism development process, and this due to the availability of the natural ingredients for tourism, environmental diversity, and green space.

#### **B- The second axis: studies of tourism development in Yemen:**

This axis presents Yemeni studies that dealt with the tourism development in Yemen from the most recent to the oldest, as follows:

- 1- Study (Al-Najjar and Essam, 2017): Regional division and spatial organization of tourism development in Yemen:

The study aimed to assess Yemen's experience in planning for the regional tourism development during the period 1990-2015 AD, and to identify the most important resources that can be found for developing the tourism product, while clarifying the extent to which tourism plans in Yemen take into account the spatial dimensions of tourism.

The study found that the diversity of the tourism environment resources in Yemen, between cultural resources such as cultural heritage, historical resources such as antiquities, and geographical environmental resources such as plains and deserts, all represent distinctive resources that can be relied upon to develop the tourism product spatially. The study also revealed a clear negligence in the process of accurately determining the spatial dimension of the tourist areas. There was a great interest in achieving the economic return without concern for the tourism development in the tourist areas in a fair way. In fact, most of the services for tourism activities were found in

the cities, thus were absent in the countryside. The study concluded that a vision was established for re-dividing the regional and spatial balance of the tourism environment and the mechanisms for its implementation in Yemen.

## 2- Study (Abadi, 2009): The Reality of Tourism Development in Yemen:

The study aimed to clarify the concept of tourism development and its elements, components and its impact in highlighting the tourist sites and their role in alleviating the problem of unemployment while identifying the components of the tourist attractions in Yemen and its importance in tourism development. The study concluded that tourism has become an important requirement for development in all countries of the world, and this requires building integrated plans to define the necessary priorities for the development of the tourism sector in Yemen in light of the legal legislation, the available requirements and the needs for development, while providing opportunities for the private and public sectors to promote tourism of all kinds.

### ***Current research and previous studies:***

Through a review of the previous studies, it is clear that it is consistent with the current research on the importance of tourism in the countryside and the need to pay attention to it as one of the modern orientations for the development of rural areas, and thus it was used in building the theoretical framework for the current research.

**Advantages of the current research:** This research is distinguished from the previous studies with its general objective of identifying means to activate tourism for the development of the countryside in Yemen, and in the study community (Yemen) taking the city of Al- Mahwit as a model, while the societies of previous studies have represented many Arab countries, such as the study of Sapra in Syria and Essam's study in Egypt. In addition, the current research will provide a vision for activating the pillars of tourism for the development of the countryside in Yemen.

### ***Third: Research methodology:***

The methodology includes two axes, namely the research methodology and the research results, which are as follows:

#### **A- Research Methodology:**

The current research relies on the descriptive survey approach in order to collect information from its sources and work to describe and analyze it, and from those sources: statistics, reports, research,

books, as well as scientific sources specialized in tourism and its role in the development process, especially rural societies, in addition to the comparative approach to compare the pillars of tourism development between the State of Morocco and the governorate of Al-Mahwit (as a model). This approach is able to demonstrate the role of the tourism in the development, and to benefit from the experience of the Kingdom of Morocco in the tourism sector for the development of the countryside in Yemen.

### B- Search results

This research reached the following results:

- 1- Yemen and its countryside possess a variety of tourism potentials (natural, historical, heritage). This diversity qualifies Yemen to be the most prominent tourist destination at the regional and Arab level.
- 2- Tourism views varied in the countryside of Yemen, which contributed to the diversity of tourism patterns, including: recreational, medical, historical and archaeological, and environmental tourism.
- 3- The tourism in the rural of Yemen faces many difficulties, the most important of which are:
  - ◆ The poor availability of infrastructure and superstructure for the tourism in most of the archaeological, historical and natural areas.
  - ◆ The weak level of the strategic planning in the tourism sector.
  - ◆ Weakness of the tourism marketing process for all the tourist areas in the Yemen rural.
  - ◆ Weakness of the investment opportunities for the government and private sectors in the tourism field.
  - ◆ Weakness of the tourism sector's ability to invest effectively the available human resources.
  - ◆ Weakness practice of the tourism for its economic role in developing the living standards of the rural population.
- 4- Tourism plays multiple roles in the development of the countryside, the most important of which are:
  - ◆ Raising the level of income at the national and individual level.
  - ◆ Improving the economic, cultural and social capabilities of individuals in tourist areas.
  - ◆ Contributing to alleviating economic and social problems such as poverty and unemployment.

- ◆ Preserving the environmental diversity in the tourist areas.
- 5- The tourism development in the countryside requires many requirements, including: strategic planning, marketing, providing accommodation, transportation, food, and tourism security.
- 6- The Moroccan experience reflects high-level trends, for many years, in developing tourism in rural areas to eliminate the problem of unemployment and alleviate poverty by providing opportunities for cooperation with the private sector in the tourism field, and working on tourism marketing to increase the number of tourists.
- 7- The tourism development in the countryside depends on many pillars and dimensions, which are: the institutional, economic, environmental, cultural and social, and the urban dimension.
- 8- A proposed scenario was presented to activate the pillars of tourism for the development of the countryside in Yemen.
- 9- The results of the research proved that the rural tourism represents one of the tributaries of the economic development by providing various job opportunities, alleviating unemployment and poverty in rural communities, and increasing the country's foreign currency, and it also supports the stability of the population in the countryside. In addition to that, it works to develop the capabilities of the rural population in order to meet the needs of the tourism sector.

#### ***Fourth: A proposed scenario to activate the pillars of tourism for the development of the countryside in Yemen***

In light of the results of the comparison between Morocco and Al-Mahwit governorate, a model of the governorates of the Republic of Yemen, and in light of the results of analyzing the indicators of tourism in Yemen, and by identifying the reality of the tourism in the countryside, and in light of the global orientations for the tourism development, and the preservation of ruins and the environment to achieve sustainable development in all areas of life. In light of all this, this research worked on presenting a proposed vision for achieving rural development in light of the interest in the tourism field. As Yemen is a country rich in various tourism resources and it is assumed that these natural and historical resources are to be exploited for the development of tourist areas and the improvement of the standard of living of its residents, and the proposed scenario is as follows:

## 1- Objectives of the proposed scenario:

- Improving Yemen's level economically and contributing to raising the national income.
- Increasing the tourism revenues and increasing its area of GDP for the tourist area which will be reflected in the development of the level of services that will be provided to the region in the future.
- Raising the standard of living of the residents of the tourist areas in the Yemeni countryside, and alleviating poverty.
- Preserving the ancient monuments and architectural heritage.
- Preserving the environment.

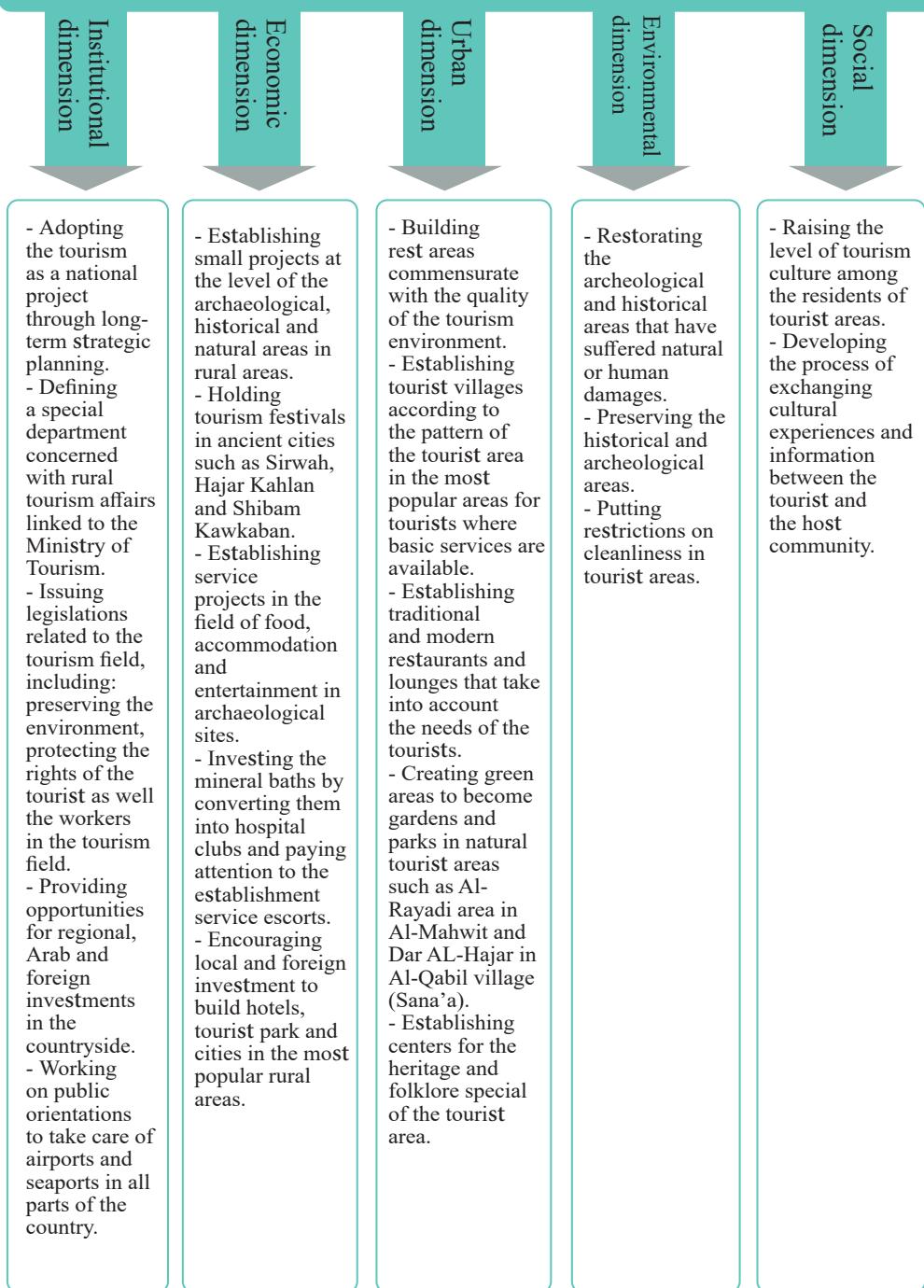
## 2- The foundations of the proposed scenario:

The proposed scenario consists of the following pillars (dimensions):

- ***The institutional dimension:*** supporting leaders in the senior management of the country for the tourism orientation in the countryside
  - Tourism adopts a national project through long-term strategic planning.
  - Defining a special department that is concerned with rural tourism affairs, linked to the Ministry of Tourism.
  - Issuing legislation related to the tourism field, including preserving the environment, protecting the rights of tourists and protecting the rights of workers in the tourism field.
  - Providing opportunities for regional, Arab, and foreign investments in rural Yemen.
  - Working on official directives to pay attention to airports and ports throughout the country.
- ***The economic dimension:*** Employing manpower in rural areas to work on:
  - Establishing small projects at the level of archaeological and historical areas and nature in rural areas, such as: grocery stores, rest houses, Internet service centers, and traditional gift shops, shops for selling popular foods, products of folklore, and agricultural products specific to each region.
  - Holding tourism festivals in ancient cities such as Sirwah, Hajar Kahlan and Shibam Kawkaban.
  - Establishing service projects in the field of food, accommodation and entertainment in the archaeological sites.
  - Investing the mineral baths by converting them into hospital clubs by caring for establishing a service escort.
  - Encouraging local and foreign investment to build hotels, tourist parks and tourist cities in the most popular rural areas.

- **The Urban Dimension:** Preserving the urban heritage of cities and ancient monuments, and paying attention to the urban heritage of each tourist area
  - Building rest areas commensurate with the quality of the tourism environment.
  - Establishing tourist villages according to the urban pattern of the tourist area in the most popular areas for the tourists, so that basic services are available.
  - Establishing traditional and modern restaurants and lounges that take into account the needs of the tourists.
  - Creating green areas (gardens and parks) in natural tourist areas such as Al-Rayadi area in Al-Mahwit, and Dar Al-Hajar in Al-Qabil village (Sana'a).
  - Establishing centers for the heritage and folklore of the tourist area.
  - Establishing private farms for tourism in which all the tourist services are available.
- **The environmental dimension:** preserving the environment of Yemen, including its antiquities, historical sites, and natural areas:
  - Restorating the archaeological and historical areas that have suffered natural or human damages.
  - Maintaining of historical and archaeological areas.
  - Putting restrictions on cleanliness and urban expansion in agricultural areas.
- **The cultural and social dimension:** preserving the originality of society through:
  - Raising the level of tourism culture among the residents of tourist areas.
  - Developing the process of exchanging experiences and information between the tourist and the host community.

### Pillars to activate the tourism in order to develop the rural areas in Yemen



(Source: prepared by the researcher)

### **3- Requirements for activating the pillars of tourism for rural development in Yemen:**

The proposed scenario needs many requirements that can be clarified as follows:

- 1) Achieving tourism security and stability by providing security at the level of Yemen.
- 2) Strategic planning at the state level to focus on tourism in the countryside, and work to build plans and programs aimed at assessing the reality of tourism in the rural areas in order to:
  - Determine the tourism needs in each rural area.
  - Determine the archaeological areas that need restoration and maintenance.
- 3) Establishing tourism rehabilitation institutions for residents of the tourist areas.
- 4) Working to establish a tourist guide center affiliated with the Ministry of Tourism, while providing branches in the most popular tourist areas.
- 5) Providing a tourism information network that depends on units, systems, and specialized skills to provide tourism information to the tourist areas, and to use geographic information systems to preserve, display and invest in the tourism resources for the various regions.
- 6) Activating the authorities associated with the tourism field, such as the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Interior, and Health, in order to play their role in providing what is necessary for the success of the tourism activities.
- 7) Coordinating with the Ministry of Information to carry out campaigns on various audiovisual and print media outlets to educate citizens about the tourism and the need to preserve the natural and historical environment.
- 8) Providing opportunities for the private and public sectors to participate in providing infrastructure, such as establishing hotels, rest houses, paving roads ... etc.
- 9) Encouraging the tourism companies to operate in Yemen.
- 10) Granting facilities for the tourism projects that are established in the Yemeni countryside, such as reducing the value of operational materials when establishing hotels, or exempting owners of the small projects from tax for a specific period of time.

## Suggestions:

The researcher proposes to do the following studies:

- The competitive advantage of the tourist areas in rural Yemen.
- The contribution of tourism to achieving economic development.
- Obstacles to tourism development in rural Yemen.

## Recommendations:

In light of the previous results, the following recommendations can be made:

- Providing security and stability in Yemen as a basic necessity for activating tourism in Yemen.
- Establishing balanced national plans between rural and urban development in order to create a regional balance between rural and urban.
- Providing a human resource department in rural areas to provide job opportunities for people from rural areas to work in the tourism sector.
- Increasing the financial allocations provided by the concerned authorities for the tourism marketing process.
- Paying attention to marketing and media promotion in various media outlets, and participating in international conferences on tourism.
- Finding new ways and methods to attract international tourism companies.

## Conclusion:

The countryside of Yemen represents a fertile field for tourism investment, as tourism images vary in it among landscapes, farms with a variety of crops, hot springs, and waterfalls, in addition to the historical and cultural components that vary in rural areas and reflect the ancient cultural heritage of Yemen. All of these components require concerted efforts from the public and private sector to carry out tourism development in the economic, social, cultural, urban and environmental dimensions, in order to increase economic returns at the country level as well the rural areas, and to contribute to overcoming the phenomenon of poverty, unemployment and immigration, in a way that contributes to achieving a kind of justice in the distribution of natural resources and their returns among the various

tourist regions, and the need to involve the local population in the development process so that they can contribute to activating effectively the dimensions of tourism by encouraging the youth participation in the tourism field, such as establishing various small projects, and implementing them to support the tourism activities, as part of a marketing framework inside and outside the country through participation in tourist conferences.

Yemen is a rich country with all its components, and it needs to unite the efforts of its entire people in various disciplines to carry out a comprehensive economic renaissance in all fields

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