

# LOCAL CITIZEN’S OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP “SAND TOURISM” IN ELSEN TASARKHAI AREA OF MONGOLIA

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**Abstract**— At a time when Mongolia is heavily affected by desertification and is the focus of global attention, the use of sand, especially manganese sand, for tourism may be the most effective way to combat desertification. Environmental protection is one of the most pressing issues in the “Elsen tasarkhai” region, and tourism (especially creative tourism) is seen as a source of revenue to mitigate this. Local people support tourism development, but lack of experience and organization is a disadvantage. The residents of “Elsen Tasarkhai” need professional training, counseling, and cooperation with the community and the protection administration to conduct tourism activities. The survey was conducted in June, July and August 2020 using a questionnaire with 17 questions covering 24 households in the Elsen Tasarkhai area. According to a survey of local households, it is important to support the use of sand for tourism, create local brand souvenirs, establish herder communities and start working in 2022. In order to develop community-based tourism in the vicinity of “Elsen Tasarkhai”, it is necessary to develop “Sand sports, arts and culture tourism” regionally based on regional specifics.

**Keywords**—Community based Tourism, Sand Sports, Sand Art, Sand Tourism, Sightseeing and Objects, National Park

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As tourism sector is considered today as unpolluted industry which became one of the opportunities of human sustainable development, Mongolia is aiming to develop the tourism sector into one of the economic leads and included such aim into “Future vision-2050” policy document.

Therefore, in order to develop the location sites of tourists and new resources of tourism, to determine the tour types and ways by researching, to make new productions of tourism and to contribute in tourism, it was necessary to research the local residents’ capacity and interest on protection and usage of tourism and environment based on the natural sand site into tourism. Sand is not just a construction material or glass or mirror

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raw material rather, it is one of the such important resource of tourism besides it has a great benefit economically.

- Today, as Mongolian land encountered desertification in massive site, using sand and sand dunes into tourism is one of the great effective methods against the desertification.
- Environmental preservation and protection issue is vital question in this Elsen Tasarkhai site and one of the financial incomes to contribute in this site is truly a tourism (Specially, creative tourism).
- It is necessary to research vital problems of local residents who serve for tourism and to analyze the way how to solve the issues.

By raising above issues, this article was proposed as considering the necessities of new productions and services of tourism in this site and to promote local residents and families related with tourism in this Elsen Tasarkhai site.

**Literature:** In 2000, Mongolian and Korean researchers' expedition was conducted brief research in Khugnukhan Mountain. And since 2010, Geo Ecology Institute of Science Academy was established "Practical Research Center to decelerate the desertification" in Elsen Tasarkhai zone in National Park Protected Area and researched the tourism capacity and opportunity in cooperation with Protection Administration. During 2018-2022, evaluations on each recreational condition value, tourism influence and competitive capacity has been conducted on "Management plan of Khugnu Tarna National Park". However, difficulties to run tourism service for local residents were not researched on details.

**Research method:** This research was written by using "Applications survey method", "SWOT analysis method", "Resource researching method", "Random survey method" and "SPSS analysis method".

**Objective and goal of the research:** Through this research paper work, we aimed to raise the issue on opportunities to develop sand tourism by defining confronting difficulties for families who are running tourism service near Sand dune of Khugnu Tarna National Park. Below goals were set based on the above objective. First, to research today's situation developing tourism near sand dune site. Second, to define the difficulties for local residents to conduct tourism service in sand dune site. Third, to determine the methods to develop the tourism based on local families near sand dune site.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. SAND TOURISM

"Sand tourism" is the use of sand for arts, sports, cognition, medical treatment, and recreation in sandy areas. The sand is classified according to the type of tourism used as follows. These include:

- The use of sand cover and unique surface formations as an attraction for tourists (Tenger Uul sand, Great Gobi Khongor sand, etc.)
- Development of sports tours such as sand skating, skiing and sledding using manhant and kidney sand (relatively high)
- Development of rehabilitation and treatment trips using sand sanatoriums and spas
- Development of sports forms such as sand volleyball, football and handball using beach sand and other sand distribution and areas
- Developing "Sand Art" or "SAND ART" using the properties of sand and combining it with music as a means to excite and comfort people.
- Sand sculpture using sand bonding properties, etc.

## 2.2. COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM

“National Park” is a site with numerous benefits of science, education, recognition and tourism with the preference to protect and to preserve the one or more ecosystems concluded from massive land site with natural beauty[1].

As tourism is existed within the aid of different sectors and connections, it is influenced more by human, social, political, ecological, food, legal, cultural and information effects[2].

Tourism based on public is one type of the alternative tourism which is included public Tourism with the aim to increase the local residents’ participation and promotion for tourism service and development and to distribute the income from tourism to local citizens is called as “Tourism based on local residents”.

- Mainly, it’s objective is to aid the local families’ livelihood level through tourism and to protect the natural environment[4].
- “Tourism based on local residents” is developing in different ways due to their local specialty, culture and tradition in Asia nowadays. For example, as there is “Tourism based on local land” in Thailand, “Tourism based on local residents” is developing in Cambodia, Indonesia and Mongolia.
- Public should participate in development, planning, implementation and monitoring of the tourism and local residents should receive more profit from tourism service income[5].

## 2.3. DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN “KHUGNU TARNA NP”

**Local residents:** Pastural grazeland resource land of Khugnu-Tarna National Park is 69720, however livestock more than the grazeland capacity is pasturing through winter and spring year by year. Between 2014-2017, 1.2-2.3 times more livestock was pastured through winter than the grazeland capacity.

Table 1. Survey of Families Number in Khugnu-Tarna NP /by the end of the 2017/

Administratio	Numb er of famili es	Popu lation	Winter and spring sites		Number of livestock					Total
			Allo wed	Not allowe d	Camel	Horse	Cow	Sheep	Goat	
Rashaant	74	57	33	37	116	1404	909	11206	7534	21169
Gurvanbulag	177	549	52	32	49	3916	3102	30345	22003	59415
Burd	36	122	23	12	71	1331	787	11520	7314	21023
TOTAL	189	928	108	81	236	6651	4798	53071	36851	101607

Historical and cultural memorial sites were chosen as one of the valuables in order to develop memorial sites for impressive production to attract tourists, to protect and to inherit. Today’s preservation condition of memorial places was not fully protected which cannot attract tourists. Thus, we have started to handle the memorial places’ protection for companies, organizations and local residents with 100 hundred percent based on contract to make someone in charge.

**Tourism:** Nowadays, there are more than 10 tourist camps which runs seasonally to receive foreign and Mongolian tourists and more than 20 families who develops homestay services in Sand dune site of Khugnu-Tarna NCS [6].

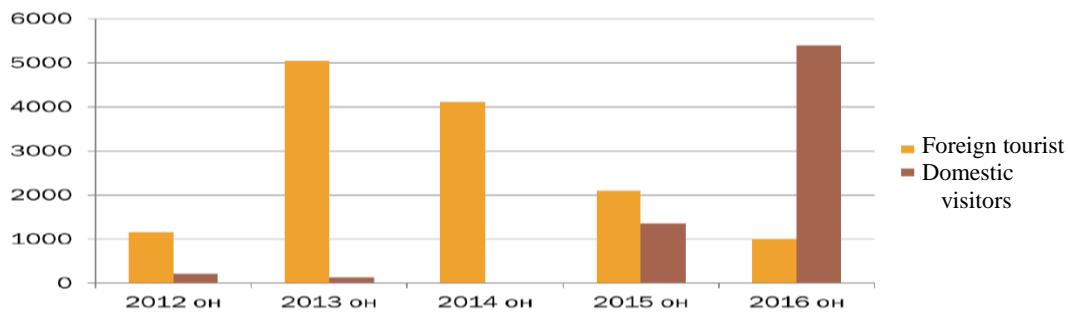


Fig. 1 Number of Total Tourists Visited to Khugnu-Tarna NCS

Site administration was planned the routes for horse trip from Khugnu Khan Mountain to Kharkhorin soum of Uvurkhangai province, hiking trek, horse trek and camel trek in its memorial places and to acknowledge the nomads' life style.

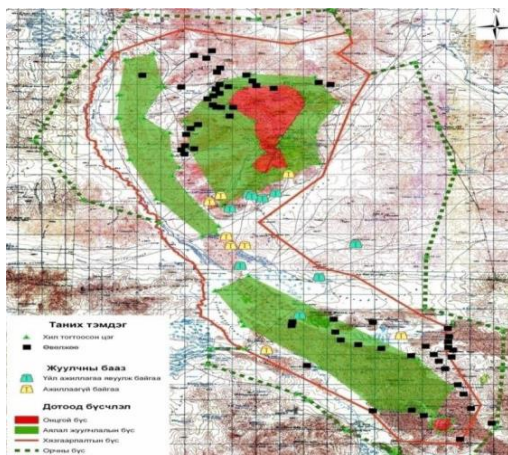


Fig. 2 Tourist Camps and Herders' Winter Places  
 Resources: Management plan of Khugnu Tarna National Park, 2018.

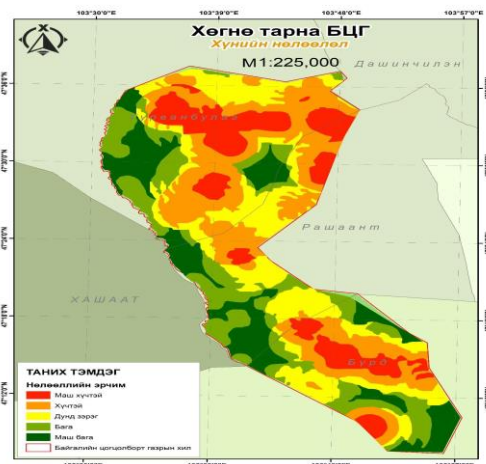


Fig. 3 Human Influence

**Route [7]:**

- Hiking trek and horse trek: Tourists coming to Mongolia from abroad mostly focused and have high interest to have a trip of hiking and horse trek which is actively connected. trips through the area of herders' location near this National Park.
- Eco trips: As Khugnu Tarna National Park covers several natural and geographical zones, it is most appropriate land for numerous mammal animals with different ecological and geographical spread besides its plantation relatively connected between Mongolian original steppe and Siberian forestry zone. Thus, it is fully appropriate to organize natural trips in this region.
- Religious trips: Based on the historical monastery ruins of Khugnu Tarna National Park where Mongolian first incarnation of Bogda Zanabazar was based, it attracts foreign tourists' interest and became one of the main religious places of Mongolians.
- Historical and cultural trips: There are numerous historical and cultural memorials in Khugnu Tarna National Park and it is possible to introduce the historical and cultural valuables to public.
- Tourism based on local residents: Khugnu Tarna National Park is a land which is favorably suitable to conduct traditional livestock husbandry for its natural and

geographical formation and it is possible to develop the tourism based on local nomads to show the nomadic cultural civilization. Also, nomads in this region have more experiences and practices to serve for tourists as they connected tourism from early times.

### **Analysis of tourism development in Khugnu Tarna NP:**

Table 2. SWOT Analysis

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full opportunity to see 3 different natural zones of Forest and Gobi desert</li> <li>- Numerous cultural and historical memorial places</li> <li>- Close to Ulaanbaatar city for its location</li> <li>- Good maintained substructure</li> <li>- On the connection of the trip roads</li> <li>- Workers and nomads' experience and practices to communicate with tourists</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low advertisement for tourists</li> <li>- Gathered tourist camps in small area</li> <li>- Low service quality of tourist camps</li> <li>- Non active processes of tourism</li> <li>- Low activation of marketing</li> <li>- Lack of information base for foreign and Mongolian tourists</li> <li>- Lack of general plan of local tourism</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To develop the cultural, natural, adventurous and religious trips</li> <li>- To broaden its function by cooperating with other State Restricted Natural Site Administrations</li> <li>- To attract Asian tourists into cultural and religious trips</li> <li>- To increase number of tourists by improving the tourism service quality</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Historical and cultural memorials might be damaged by natural and travelers' effect</li> <li>- To lost the number of tourists to other tourism attractions</li> <li>- Environmental pollution</li> <li>- Other negative effects caused by unorganized trips of domestic travelers</li> <li>-</li> </ul>

### **3. SURVEY RESEARCH**

**Objective and operation of research:**

- To make out the research method
- To make an end evaluation and analysis on random researches from nomadic families near Sand dune
- Researches conducted based on random survey ( $n=24$ ) from 24 people (as delegations from 24 nomadic families) and results were produced on SPSS program. General and common methods of researches of analysis were fully executed.

Objects of researches:

- Used the questionnaire survey based on topic of "Survey from nomadic families" between July of 2020 and August of 2020 by creating descriptive method of research.

Survey questionnaires of "Survey from nomadic families":

One member of each nomadic families was filled the survey questionnaire.

**Structure of questions:**

- a. General part
- b. People's understanding about sand dunes
- c. About the usage of sand dunes
- d. About the negative effects on sand dunes
- e. Additional questions
- f. Notes

Questionnaire compromised of total 17 questions divided into two parts which are 11 questions with numerous types answers and 6 questions with open answers in order to reveal the encountering difficulties and to define the participants' opinion.

#### 4. RESULT AND EVALUATION OF RESEARCH

The survey found that people living 19-25 km away were the most involved. These are the people who are most actively involved in tourism services. This is because there are few herders right in the sand dunes [Shows Table 3].

Table 3. Ages of Participants in Research Survey From Soums

	<b>Valid</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Ages	1-3	1	4.2	4.2	4.2
	15-18	2	8.3	8.3	12.5
	19-25	20	83.3	83.3	95.8
	26-80	1	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	

70.8% of the herder households surveyed live near Khugnu Khan Mountain. These are nomadic families living between sand dunes and rocky mountains [Shows Table 4].

Table 4. Locations of Nomadic Families related with Tourism

	<b>Valid</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Locations	Khugnu Khan	17	70.8	70.8	70.8
	Sansar	4	16.7	16.7	87.5
	Not written	3	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	

The largest number of respondents (45.8%) were herders, while the lowest number or 4.2% were engaged in agriculture. Those who do not have a regular job account for 20.8% [Shows Table 5].

Table 5. Works Besides of Tourism Service Employment

	<b>Valid</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Works Besides	Livestock husbandry	11	45.8	45.8	45.8
	Agriculture	1	4.2	4.2	50.0
	Small enterprises	4	16.7	16.7	66.7
	Unemployed	5	20.8	20.8	87.5
	Not filled	3	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	

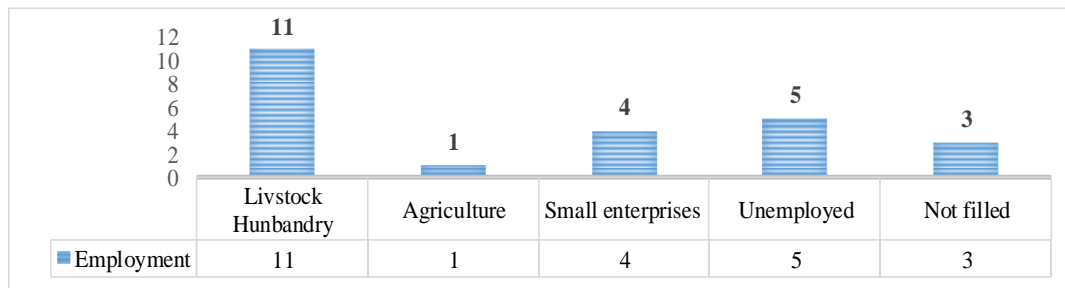


Fig. 4 Employment of Nomadic Families Participated in Research Survey

In order to assess the perceptions of the surveyed citizens about sand dunes, 19 (n = 19) participants 79.2 percent said “Special formation of nature”, 4(n = 4) participants 16.7 percent said “Unfruitful part of nature”. This shows that there are many people who think that sand is a barren part of nature [Shows Table 6].

Table 6. People’s Understanding about Sand Dunes

Understanding about sands	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Unfruitful part of nature	4	16.7	16.7	16.7
Special formation of nature	19	79.2	79.2	95.8
Not filled	1	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Is sand valuable 62.5 percent of the 15(n = 15) respondents answered “Valuable” and 37.5 percent of the 9(n = 9) respondents answered “No understanding” [Shows Table 7].

Table 7. People’s Understanding on How they Assess the Sands

Does sands valuable?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valuable	15	62.5	62.5	62.5
No understanding	9	37.5	37.5	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

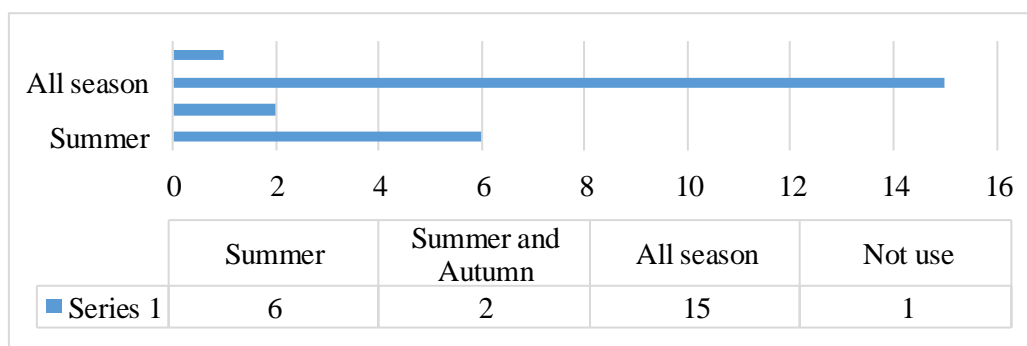


Fig. 5 Usage of Sand Dunes for Local People

45.8% of the respondents said that sand dunes are used for tourism, which is not enough [Shows Table 8].

Table 8. Survey on How Local People Use the Sands

Operational function	Frequency	Per%	Cumulative Per%
By water and oasis near sand dunes	4	16.7	16.7
By rare animals and plants near sand dunes	3	12.5	29.2
By tourism	11	45.8	75.0
Other	3	12.5	87.5
Not filled	3	12.5	100.0
Total	24	100.0	

The majority of respondents said that cooperation between protected area workers and local people was the most important.

Table 9. Encountering Difficulties for Development of Tourism in Sand Dunes and its Opportunities to Solve

№	Recommendations	Number of survey
1	Its necessary to make opportunities to develop tourism	1
2	Environmental workers and officers should focus more in this site	2
3	Environmental administrations should work on wastes and garbage of tourists	1
4	Its time to concentrate on this site with cooperation of administrations and people	1
5	As there are lack of water wells, eco toilets, garbage bins, it is necessary to handle the rest rooms	4
6	There are lack of information and advertisement boards	1
7	Sand shift movement is increasing	1
8	Increase of families year by year. To collect tax from livestock graze.	1

Table 10. Explanations about the Sand Usage Tradition for Your Livelihood

№	Recommendations	Number of survey
1	To let the livestock graze on plants of sands	2
2	To construct and construction maintenance	3
3	It is appropriate to plant potatoes and vegetables and, trees	1
4	It can be used in health medication as warm sand is used for kidney medication	4
5	To use it to plant grasses	1

**Opportunities to develop the “Tourism based on local residents” near sand dune site:** /Operations of “Center of Research and Innovation in Tourism” NGO/

- To research the specialty of regional tourism development, resource and main factors
- To clarify from local residents whether they have interest to participate in tourism



- To research the tourism resource by defining the culture, livelihood specialty and benefit of local residents
- To educate the local resident in tourism
- To establish the communities including local residents
- To broaden the foreign and internal relations of local residents and to connect them with relationships

**Functions of local residents:**

- Residents should unite with their interest and to set up the communities
- Communities should plan the special productions and service ideas based on their resource
- Residents should preserve their traditional culture and livelihood way and, should be away from globalization change
- Residents should contribute their aid to environment by protecting its beauty and original nature
- Residents should learn into culture of tourism service and to gain the communication skills to contact with foreign tourists
- Residents should provide the health and safety conditions for communities

From the table above, it can be seen that the region has no choice but to use sand to create a tourism product that is different from other regions.

Table 11. The Local Residents Near Sand Dunes

№	Some ideas of plan	Opportunities to implement
1	To develop the sand sports tourism and to make the sand dune site favorable	To establish the sport complex center in front of main highway
2	To produce the souvenirs as a brand of this sand region and to conduct the exhibitions through the communities of herders	
3	To have a service for riding a horse and camel in short way with short time	



Fig. 5 Tourism Zone of Sand Dune Site

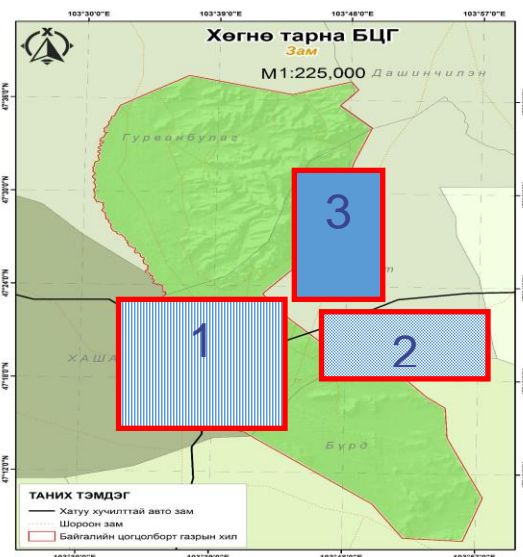


Fig. 6 Division of Tourism in Sand

## 5. CONCLUSION

Following evaluations been estimated by conducting this research.

- It is necessary to create the own productions of tourism and reason of visit in sand dune even though it is located on the road connection tourism and there are numerous passengers who travel through this site.
- However, the local residents are promoting to develop the tourism, it is noticed that there are disadvantages of practice.
- Local residents of sand dune site should cooperate with its protection administration and their communities and to participate into trainings.
- It is important to develop the “Tourism of sand sports, art and culture” in division of zones based on this regional specialty to develop the tourism based on local residents near sand dune sites.
- It is necessary to start implementing the operations from 2021 by planning tourism function and to establish communities of herders, to make brand souvenirs considering the research surveys from families in this site.


**Limitations and Future Research:** This research needs to continue and involve other stakeholders. For example, there are plans to explore opportunities for local people to work with tourist camps and resorts. It will also expand its research into the chemical and physical properties of sand in the laboratory and its use in tourism.

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## AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

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