ECO-TOURISM PLANNING OF MANAVGAT-AKSEKİ-ALANYA REGION

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Abstract

The basic components of Turkey’s tourism potential are its natural, cultural and historical values. As long as these values are conserved in the long term, our share in the international market will continue to grow rapidly. To achieve this, local and central governments should make the right decisions concerning land use and infrastructure in the tourism regions. Forcing the capacity in terms of infrastructure will bring the threat of destroying natural environment. In the stage of giving these decisions, preserving natural, cultural and historical values must be the top priority of tourism. In this study, an important eco-tourism region in the heart of Turkish tourism, Manavgat-Akseki-Alanya region, was evaluated in terms of its touristic products to be presented to the tourism. Besides natural and cultural values, the potential local values of the region were also discussed in terms of eco-tourism.

Key words: eco-tourism planning, Antalya, Turkey

PLANIRANJE EKOTURIZMA U REGIONU MANAVGAT-AKSEKİ-ALANYA

Izvod


Ključne reči: planiranje ekoturizma, Antalija, Turska
A significant change has been observed in recent years in tourism consumption patterns in parallel to fast economic political and technological advancements in the world. The expectations of new type tourists which became clearer by time can be summarized as an active vacation away from the usual tourism centers that sea-sun-sand triangle dominates, in a clean and unspoilt environment surrounded by nature, with a good service and room in unexaggerated facilities.

The essential components of the tourism potential of our country are natural, cultural and historical values. As long as these values are protected in the long term, our share in international tourism market will continue to grow rapidly. Therefore, decisions concerning land use and infrastructure in tourism regions have to be taken correctly by both local and central administrations. Pushing the capacity limits in infrastructures will bring the danger of losing natural values. The necessity of using tourism’s most important task by protecting natural, cultural and historical values has to be understood at the stage of taking these decisions.

THE CONCEPT OF ECO TOURISM

According to the research of World Tourism Organization (WTO) on the subject of “Travel Industry’s New Century Trends”, new investment types and areas will appear in relation to changing consumption tendencies and investment trends of the new century will suit these tendencies. According to the same survey, new types of tourism will come to the scene in different areas which can respond to the needs of tourists in relation to changing customer profile in coming years (Çetin, 2001:18). “Eco tourism” is at the top of the list of these new tourism types.

The concept of eco tourism has been on the agenda and became popular with increase in importance of tourism environment relationships and sustainability discussions, and has been used frequently in recent years. Eco tourism is a more comprehensive subject than the activities of nature-loving tourists sensitive to the environment. In reality this concept is the sum of environmental, economical and social relations (www.turcev.org/aviyayak/ekoturizm, 17.08.2007).

According to the definition of International Nature Conservation Association, ecotourism is a trip and visit which supports protection of nature and cultural resources by understanding them, has a low visitor effect and provides socio-economic benefits to the local people and environmentally responsible to the natural sites (Kurdoğlu, 2001: 4). Eco-tourism in general aims the use of traditional architecture and local resources in small facilities run by families in small groups. When ecotourism is implemented according to its purpose, it is a means for creating resources for protection of sensitive ecosystems and socio-economic development of the population living in and around these regions. When the poverty of the people living in the villages in mountainous and wooded zones, which have a significant ecotourism potential, is considered, it can be understood that ecotourism is a factor that can reduce the inequality between social classes (Altıparmak, 2002: 276).

United Nations Sustainable Development Commission has declared the year of 2002 as International Eco-tourism Year and has assigned the tasks of this issue to World Tourism Organization. (www.world-tourism.org, 15.09.2007).

ECO TOURISM IN TURKEY

Eco-tourism is defined by the Ministry of Tourism as tourism types such as plateau tourism, ornithology (bird observation), photo safari, river sports (canoe-rafting), farm tourism, botanic (plant
Turkey possesses richness incomparable to other countries in terms of its natural assets such as mountains, forests, plateaus, coasts, lakes, rivers; its flora and fauna; and interesting geological formations such as caves and canyons. This richness makes our country very attractive for ecotourism which is in the agenda. In this context, the next section of this study tries to evaluate an important region for our country's tourism, Alanya-Manavgat-Akseki region, in terms of ecotourism and develop an approach with its current potential for sustainable tourism.

TOURISTIC PRODUCTS RELATED TO ECO-TOURISM IN MANAVGAT–AKSEKI–ALANYA REGION

Eco-tourism has a significant potential that belongs to the public for bringing liveliness to local and national economies, creating long term local employment, creating new resources for protection without harming the biodiversity. However excessive visits may start causing serious damages to sensitive region with rich biodiversity. Thus, financial and economical potential of ecotourism cannot be achieved to a large extent.

The tourism activity in Manavgat- Akseki- Alanya region which has proven itself in tourism in our country has been documented in numbers and how tourism is practiced is stated clearly with statistics. However, a neglected condition besides all these observations and statistics is the issue of how this region should be evaluated for eco-tourism. It will be correct to say that the region is suitable for eco-tourism in terms of its geographical location and resources it has. However until today, it has been only promoted as a sea-sand-sun trio and its reflections. In the next section of this study, generally known tourism assets and products of the region are mentioned and in parallel to this, values which can be used in ecotourism and comments on them are stated.

POTENTIAL ECO-TOURISM VALUES IN REGION

Manavgat
The town Manavgat, which is 72 km far from the province Antalya, was founded on the plain that lies on both sides of the River Manavgat. The city center is 4 km far from the shore of the Mediterranean. The Northern part of the town is bordered by the Taurus Mountains covered with beautiful forests. The river Manavgat, which flows through the town, gives the plain fertility and richness. The Manavgat Waterfall and its delta are the most important natural richness of the town. The other natural beauties of the region in the South are the Sorgun Forest with pine trees and the lake "Titreyengöl", which was formed by alluvions that filled the delta of the River Manavgat. In the Northern part of the river Manavgat there are the Lake of Oymapinar and Manavgat Dams (www.side-manavgat.com/English/ManavgatENG.html, 16.09.2007).

Akseki
After Alanya, Akseki is the oldest district in the province of Antalya, and has an appearance that befits its location in the rugged Taurus mountains, in a forested and very rocky area. The developments in the tourism sector in the Antalya region in recent years have been seen in Akseki as well. The area is well known for the snowdrop flower, and every years sees local and foreign visitors coming every winter to see these flowers breaking through the snow, as the first sign of spring. In the Giden Gelmez Mountains, goats are protected and limited hunting is available around the year with the purchase of a license. Another spot frequently by visitors is the trout farming facilities in the villages of Sinan hoca and Gumusdamla. Other areas worth visiting are the Goktepe Highland, Giden
Alanya

With its vast beaches, historic sites, the innumerable fish restaurants of its modern hotel and motels and its cafes and bars, Alanya, is an outstanding holiday getaway. The first thing that greets the visitor is the 13th century Seljuk Castle, which sits like a crown atop of Alanya Peninsula. Besides the impressive castle, there is the shipyard and the Red Tower (Kızıl Kule) with monumental beauty. All along the road which runs beside the port are latenight cafes and bars and boutiques selling handicrafts, leather clothing, jewelry, handbags and local gourds painted with extraordinary colors.

Caves

Damlatas Cave: The cave is located inside the borders of Alanya and is at the coast. It is 3 km away from the city center.

The total length of the cave is 30 m. and is dry and horizontal. It covers an area of total 200 m. The cave is 15 meters high and has a marvelous vision formed by numerous stalactites and stalagmites. With the carbon dioxide gas, high humidity, low temperature and radioactive atmosphere, the cave is extremely beneficial for asthmatic patients. Therefore the asthmatic patients form the most dense visitor groups.

Dim (Gavurini) Cave: The cave is located at the locality of Kuzkaya village. It is at the west slope of the Cebireis mountain (1691 m.) at the east of Alanya. Reaching the cave by walking is possible either via the Dim creek valley or via the Yaylali village at the south. To reach the cave from Yaylali village, a walk of 50 minutes following the watering channels at the skirts of the Cebireis mountain is required. The total length of the cave is 357 meters and the cave is horizontal and dry. There is only a quiet small lake towards the end of the cave. Dim cave is one of the most beautiful caves of Turkey. It is suitable for a visit as is at the vicinity of Alanya and as the environment is covered with forests and picnic sites. Because the cave was used as a shelter by prehistoric and historic periods, the cave was called as “Gavurini Cave” by the local people. In this region, there are some more caves called Kadinini, Hasıhçe, Fosforlu and Aşıklar Cave (www.alanya.az/en/Nature_Environment/86-Asiklar-Cave.html 11/09/2007).

National And Natural Parks

Koprulu Canyon National Park: Northeast of Antalya, at the turn off for Tasagil and Beskonak, is the scenic route that leads to the Koprulu Canyon National Park. The twisting road crisscrosses over mountain streams and passes through virgin forests. It is often a slow drive as the view at every turn is more beautiful than the last. The park, 92km from Antalya, is a valley of wild beauty rich in flora and fauna. The canyon stretches for 14 km along the Koprulu River and is 400 meters deep in some places. The Roman Oluk Bridge, which spans the canyon, and the Küçük Bridge over the Kocadere stream, are engineering feats of antiquity.

Altinbesik Cave National Park: One of the most interesting and well known caves in Turkey is located in Altinbesik Cave National Park situated
especially fascinating. Altinbesik Cave is situated on the western slopes of the Manavgat River Valley and can be reached via the village of Urunlu which is an authentic village that is a must-see when traveling through this area. The 13th century caravanserai, Alarahan, was built by the Seljuk sultan Alaeddin Keykubat on the banks of the Alara River. On the top of a nearby hill the Alara Fortress commands a View of the whole area.

Theaters, Antique Cities, Historical Ruins

Aspendos Antique Theatre: The ancient city of Aspendos (modern city of Belkis, ancient city of Pamphylia) is located on Turkey’s southern Mediterranean coast forty-seven kilometers from the modern city of Antalya. Its spectacularly well-preserved theatre is one of the best examples of Roman theatre construction in the world. While there was probably an earlier ancient theatre on the site, it was completely obliterated by the Roman theatre, which was built during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD). A statue of the building’s architect, Zeno, stands in the south parados. The inscription under the statue records the thanks of the people for the gift of the theatre and says that Zeno was given a large garden near the stadium for his work. Inscriptions in Greek and Latin on either side of the skene read that the wealthy brothers Curtius Crespinus and Curtius Auspicatus built the theatre and dedicated it to "the Gods of the Country and the Imperial House." (www.whitman.edu/theatre/theatre/tour/aspendos/introduction/aspendos.intro2.htm 11/09/2007).

Selge: The city, which was brought to Psidia and then taken into Pamphylia territories, had been reigned by Lydia, Persia, Alexander the Great and Romans, respectively. The theater with 5 gates and 45 stairs at north, is an important monument. At the south of rock engraved theater, stadium and gymnasium, and at west a Ionian type temple, whose ceiling is adorned with eagle décor, draws the attention. At the south of the stadium, there are Fountain and Agora. At the north of the ramparts lying southwest of the city, Artemis and Zeus monuments as well as necropolis present. Seleukia. This antique city, which is 23 km. northeast of Side, and one hour away from Sinler Village by foot, is founded by Seleukos. There is a very beautiful natural appearance of the antic city, which is especially adorned with pine forests.

Seleukia: This antique city, which is 23 km. northeast of Side, and one hour away from Sinler Village by foot, is founded by Seleukos. There is a very beautiful natural appearance of the antic city, which is especially adorned with pine forests. From the city, which is placed on a hill, you can see all plains and sea. Two storey agora, basilica, cistern and sewerage system can be mentioned as the sign of development of the city. Mosaics, which are revealed during the city excavations, are exhibited in Antalya Museum today (www.on-linehotel.com/0eng_manavgat_genelbilgi.htm 11/09/2007).

Etenna: Etenna, which is 29 km. north of Manavgat, is founded on the hill, which is at the upper part of today’s Srt Village. At the top of the city, which is thought as a bishop center during Byzantium period, there is an Acropolis, which is composed of terraces surrounded by ramparts, and at the best preserved and highest slopes of the city. There is a Herron (a tomb for an exalted person) at the south of the city. Basilica, agora, church, hamam and cisterns are important historical ruins other than these (www.on-linehotel.com/0eng_manavgat_genelbilgi.htm 11/09/2007).

Sport Activities

Jeep - Safari: Tourism agencies in Antalya, Kemer, Side and Alanya are organizing Jeep Safari tours to Toros mountains. Daily tours are beginning in the early hours of the day, and continue till to the night with experiencing Offroad emotion.

Horse Riding: There are wide areas for horse riding in some hotels with English, Arab and Haflinger horses. Horse riding and jumping courses are performed for hourly or daily visits.
**Potential Eco-Tourism Values in the Region**

*Ibradi-Akseki Forest*: Ibradi-Akseki Forests are included in the Mediterranean Forests which is one of the ecological regions (Küresel 200 Eko-Bölge) with priority. Its surface structure is characterized by Geyik Mountains exposed to winds coming from southwest. The region is generally divided into two main sections as Akseki and Ibradi basins. While Ürküten, Şerif, Esereyrek and Gidengelmez mountains are located in Akseki basin, Ibradi basin extends from northwest of Uzümde as Kırac, Lök, Pınarcık mountains. Ibradi-Asekı forests are very valuable when “maturity”, “wholeness” ecological evaluation parameters are considered. High amount of rainfall in the region has produced an important diversity in tree species. (www.wwf.org.tr, 15.09.2007).

*Kargi Çay Valley*: Kargi Çay Valley Important Plant Area (OBA), is a deep valley located in the skirts of Middle Toros Mountains, 15 km west of Alanya. Kargi Çay Valley, composed of cretose limestone seen widely in this section of Middle Toros Mountains, has approximately 600 m length and 2000 m width. The area is composed of limestone to a great extent.

*Kizilot, Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches*: Kizilot shore located within the borders of Antalya province, Manavgat district and 75km away from Antalya province center has 16.2km long beach, extending from Manavgat creek in the west to Alara creek in the east. The beach’s general structure is pebbled along the coastline, pebble-sand mixed in some areas towards the back and fine sandy in some areas. The beach in the west of Manavgat creek is flat and covered with sparse flora. The entire area that extends from Titreyen Lake (east of Side) to Kaktüs beach (1 km east of Kizilot) has been designated as Tourism investment area with Tourism Master Plan. The investments in Titreyen Lake region have been completed.
routes which are Kayagıl, Penek Mahallesi, Tokar and Oral Mahallesi. Its flora consists of plants of pine, juniper, spruce, oak and elm species. There were 5 mosques, 2 small mosques, 1 Islamic school and a tomb until recently. Among them, 3 mosques and the tomb have been renovated and are open to prayers and visitors in good condition (www.ormana.com, 14.01.2006).

Geyik Mountain And Akdağ: Geyik Mountain and Akdağ Important Plant Area (OBA) includes two mountain masses composed mostly of limestone rocks in the middle of Toros Mountain ranges. In higher sections, forest flora is replaced by Mediterranean mountain steppe, wide limestone rocks and alpine plant communities developed in stone habitats. Some of the important plateaus between Geyik Mountain and Akdağ are Oğuz Plateau, Umitli Plateau, Çaşır Plateau, Kepir Plateau and Şıruppınar Plateau. Eğri Lake important due to its carp and trout populations is located in OBA

CONCLUSION

Result And Suggestions

This study desires to inform with respect to Manavgat-Alanya-Akseki region which is important in tourism area in Antalya region, about different tourism areas and what can be done for eco-tourism besides its current state and bringing them to tourism in sustainable state within the principles of ecotourism. In this sense, evaluations and suggestions about the tourism values mentioned in this study can be listed as following:

1- It is necessary to determine suitable regions inland and open them to tourism in conjunction with the principles of eco-tourism, besides concentrating on coast tourism particularly in Manavgat Alanya region known as a predominantly mass tourism region. The suggested regions and their qualities are explained above. In addition the following can be added for these regions:

As a result of the conducted studies, Çiimi Plateau, İlvat Lake and area, Salamut Plateau (cedar stand), Gembos Plateau, Bağırca Cave, Çamlık and Kuyucak Cave area, Darboğazdere Basin, Üzümde and Gidengelmez Mountains stand out with their ecological qualities. Sustainable use has to be achieved by placing them under protection.

When determining the boundaries and statuses of the conservation area, awareness level of the public living in that area has to be considered; the participation of local people, NGO and governmental institutions have to be arranged. When necessary protection is provided and measures are taken, these forests can be opened to limited eco-tourism and arranged as suitable region for ecotourism with plant and bird species it harbors.

Kargı Çay Valley is not under official conservation status. The flora has been reduced in settlement areas and plateaus due to farming and livestock production carried out for many years. This region faces the risk of urbanization and uncontrolled development brought by tourism due to its proximity to Alanya. If necessary eco-tourism approaches are demonstrated to this region, it can create a tourism opportunity different from sea-sand-sun trio and become a different tourism region for tourists coming from Alanya, a region close to mass tourism.

Sea turtle nesting beaches in Kızılçe region stands out as a sea turtle nesting area. Opening this region to limited tourism will make a difference in this region, where mass tourism has been concentrated, in the sense of eco-tourism. However it is necessary to give care for the nests without harming the nature. Natural structure of the beach should not be altered. Necessary information about this region should be provided to tourists. Conservation status should be assigned to these regions and they should be made attractive by making necessary warnings about beach beds and umbrellas. Entertainment, light and sound systems of hotels should not harm the nests.

2- The current values in this region can be integrated to ecotourism more intensely. The current values are the well-known values actively included in the tourism at the present time. The neglected
regions in this sense are the following:

Akseki was declared as urban protected zone in 1998 and the houses in Akseki and Ibradi were placed under protection by the ministry. Opening these houses to public in a conscious manner and benefit of the local public and related shareholders from these tourism activities are important for ecotourism. Manavgat is the fastest growing district in the region with Side, Türelyengöl, Çölaklı tourism centers. Alanya is the fruit production warehouse of the region. Alanya fortress is one of the oldest tourist attractions by the integration of the urban life with tourists.

3- By the addition of the regions, explained above with details which are far from the sea shore, especially to the tour programs made by the travel agencies, ecotourism will have an opportunity to develop more in these regions.

4- In master plans, regions related to ecotourism in Manavgat-Akseki-Alanya region should be focused and the new regions should be opened to tourism in a way that would not alter the local structure and ecological stability.

The thought of presenting our country’s tourism in a more different way by considering the developments in world tourism will enable it to find a place in today’s modern tourism understanding more easily. This difference will be achieved in Turkish capital of tourism, Antalya, by eco-tourism concept becoming more widespread. The old tourism habits will not lead to a further development of the current situation. When displaying the differences, we should not forget the sustainability and locality concepts. For achieving the difference in Manavgat-Akseki-Alanya region that we can declare as one of the most important tourism regions in tourism capital Antalya, it is necessary to consider eco-tourism assets stated actively in tourism policies in addition to current tourism assets at hand.

REFERENCES