



AGRO TOURISM IN TURKEY

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Abstract: Nowadays coastal tourism along with the various kinds of tourism has improved. One of those is agro tourism. It features the integration of agricultural areas and country culture. As a sustainable tourism it has an important role. Turkey must contribute to the agro tourism, which is hardly known, by introducing it. In this context, the aim of this study was to investigate the agro tourism issues and assess Turkey in this regard. The importance of the study is to show the shortcomings of Turkey's agro tourism. In this study, observation method was used, and data obtained from secondary sources were compiled. Consequently, government must stimulate to use the agricultural areas of Turkey for agro tourism. In Turkey alternative kinds of tourism must be developed. Agro tourism is essential for the improvement of local people and the area itself. This kind of tourism is important for both Turkish and international tourism. The ability of Turkey to contribute to agro tourism is rather sufficient so the potential of Turkey is great. The study is thought to enrich the literature on agro tourism.

Keywords: Tourism, Agro Tourism, Alternative Tourism, Rural Area

1. Introduction

Tourism is a sector in international field which brings the highest income. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization's estimates the number of people traveling with touristic purposes will have reached 1.5 billion (UNWTO, 2018). This information clearly shows that the tourism sector is quickly developing. The development of tourism caused the development of varieties of tourism. One of these developing kinds of tourism is agro tourism. Agro tourism is not a new kind of tourism. It has been being applied in Europe for approximately 100 years (Ayaz, 2012). Agricultural areas appeal to the needs of city people with their natural and cultural attractions. It is a kind of tourism which is shaped by the desire of city people to escape from the pressure and stress of urban life, to experience country life. They also go on holiday to the country and join some activities there.

In this study the subjects of what agro tourism is, where it is needed, the opportunities people living in the country have, the conditions needed for the forming of agro tourism, the definition of agro tourism, as well as benefits of agro tourism, what must be done for its success, its elements, the subject of agro tourism in Turkey are being discussed.

2. Methods

In this study, primary and secondary data based studies on the subject were used and these data were used in the analysis of the subjects. On the other hand, observation technique was used in the study. The data compiled with the literature review fill the gaps and deficiencies and expand and enrich previous studies (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). The creation of the theoretical structure reveals the background and content of the research problem (Wiersma, 1995: 406). The study conducted by creating a theoretical framework enables to identify certain facts and to classify these facts to reach patterns with some internal consistency (Demirezen, 2019a: 1-26). The theoretical structure forms a skeleton for the entire study (Creswell, 1994: 87-88). The theoretical framework shows how the structure of a research is defined philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically and analytically. In addition, the theoretical study guides the researcher and provides the essence of the researched subject to be examined and examined with different dimensions (Demirezen, 2019b: 36; Adom et. al, 2018: 438). In this context, the study was conducted based on the literature.

3. Introduction to Agro Tourism

Agro tourism means travel organized around farming, small-scale food production or animal husbandry (Jolly, 2012). Agro tourism the idea of bringing urban residents to rural areas for leisure travel and spending (Virginia Tech University, 2009; Demirezen, 2018: 21-55).

The concept of agro tourism is a direct expansion of ecotourism, which encourages visitors to experience agricultural life at first hand. Agro tourism is gathering strong support from small communities as rural people have realized the benefits of sustainable development brought about by similar forms of nature travel (Soykan, 1999).

Agro tourism is also known as a mild form of sustainable tourist development and multiple activity in rural areas through which the visitor has the opportunity to get acquainted with agricultural areas, agricultural occupations, local products, traditional cuisine and the daily life of the people, as well as the cultural elements and the authentic features of the area, while showing respect for the environment tradition (Demirezen, 2018: 21-55).

Agro tourism, created in 1800s, when families visited farming relatives in order to escape from the city and experience the farming. Visiting other country become more popular with the widespread use of the automobile in 1920s. The used of car and vehicle make them easier to move and to explore the other place that required them to do some journey (Özçatalbaş, 2006; Ayaz, 2012).

That make the agro tourism become more popular and it increases not only the agro tourism industry but also the economy of the country because of many people have their own transportation. Rural recreation gained interest again in the 1930s and 1940s by folks that seeking an escape from the stresses of the Great Depression of World War II. These Demands for rural recreation lead to widespread interest in horseback riding, farm petting five zoos and farm nostalgia during 1960s and 1970s. Farm vacations, bed and breakfasts, and commercial farm tours were popular in the 1980s and 1990s. Also as of 2010, an increased interest in food production and organic practices brings travelers out to till the soil (Demirezen, 2018: 21-55).

4. Elements of Agro Tourism

There are three elements of agro tourism; these are farmer, village and agriculture. Farmer, village and agriculture be important factors contributing to the success of agro tourism.

Farmer: Majority cases farmer is less educated, less exposed and innocent for him outsider as guest is treated wholeheartedly without any commercial motive. Farmer entertains the guest while entertaining himself in the process he fills all the service gaps (Gopal et. al, 2008: 513-523; Scribd, 2019; Adam, 2004: 1-6).

Village: Village being located far from the city lacks urban facilities but is rich in natural resources. The investment is the natural resources itself. Investments are made by nature in the form of water bodies, fields, forest, mountains, deserts and islands. The community structure is more homogenous and treating guests is part of the culture rather than a professional activity leading to natural environment required for such form of tourism (Gopal et. al, 2008: 513- 523; Scribd, 2019; Adam, 2004: 1-6).

Agriculture: Each field is unique which adds to the attraction of the urban population. This is the incentive wealth of the rural people. Rich resources in agriculture namely land; water and plants are unique from place to place bringing diversity and creating curiosity. Combination of farmer, village and agriculture creates a wonderful situation which provides unlimited satisfaction to the tourist especially from urban areas (Gopal et. al, 2008: 513- 523; Scribd, 2019; Adam, 2004: 1-6).

This triple factor is the elements that make agro tourism happen. The presence of these factors can make a region suitable for agro tourism. If agro tourism is desired to be developed in a region, these elements should be managed and evaluated.

5. Basic Principles of Agro Tourism

Agro tourism has four important basic principles. These principles are taken into consideration in agro tourism and Agro tourism should provide these principles. These principles include the features necessary for tourists. The activities that attract tourists and the things to do for tourists are included in these principles.

Have Something for Visitors to See: Animals, birds, farms and nature are the few things which Agri-tourism could offer to the tourist to see. Apart from these, culture, dress, festivals and rural games could create enough interest among forest in Agri-tourism (Gopal et. al, 2008: 513- 523).

Have Something for Visitors to Do: Participating in agricultural operations, swimming, bullock cart riding, horseback riding, camel riding, buffalo riding, picking fruits, tending bees,

milking cows, making wine, making cheese, cooking and participating in the rural games (Maetzold, 2002: 84-89).

Have Something for Visitors to Buy: Rural handicrafts, dress materials, local clothes, farm gate fresh agricultural products (organic eggs, natural honey, milk and milk products, natural fruits and vegetables), processed foods are the few items which tourist can buy as memento for remembrance (Adam, 2004: 1-6).

Have Something for Visitors to Eat: Tourists can pick up and eat natural fruit and vegetables produced on the farm. An organic and fresh farm fruits like grapes, sugarcane nutritional vegetable, organic farm products, milk and milk products, natural honey, organic eggs, fresh fish and meat are available to pluck and eat (Scribd, 2019; Adam, 2004: 1-6; Maetzold, 2002: 84-89). Local food is the most important and the best food for tourists.

Such practices attract the attention of tourists, but also generate income for the local people. This is an advantage of agro tourism. On the other hand, these practices should not turn into a commercial relationship, otherwise the relationship between the tourist and the local community may turn into hostility.

6. Benefits of Agro Tourism

Agro tourism has many benefits for the region where it operates. These benefits embrace many people. These benefits are listed below (Demirezen, 2018: 21-55; Adam, 2004: 1-6; Maetzold, 2002: 84-89):

- Agro tourism strengthens the local economy and contributes to the country's economy.
- Develop the local region and ensure the development of the local region.
- Agro tourism provides employment opportunities in agriculture.
- Help diversify local economies and preserve rural life.
- Capitalize on the natural, historical, and cultural resources.
- Opportunities it offers to earn additional farm income diversify products and marketing, build relations within the community.
- Provide employment for family members.

- Adding farm recreational activities and entertainment has been a successful strategy for increasing customer traffic to existing farm retail outlets.
- Agricultural tourism, gives parents the opportunity to introduce their children to something other than the city life.
- Agricultural tourism experiences allow guests to buy food products grown on the farm or handcrafted products made by the farmers' families, purchasing these goods helps provide ranchers who rely on their land with another source of income.
- Cultural transformation between urban and rural people including social moral values.
- Farmers can improve their standard of living due to the contacts with urban people.

The benefits listed above give local people a social, economic, cultural and environmental advantage. These benefits can reach almost everyone. Thus, these effects reveal the importance of agro tourism.

7. Opportunities of Agro Tourism

Agro tourism has opportunities such as outdoor activities, educational experiences, direct agricultural sales, accommodation and entertainment. These opportunities are very important for both tourists and farmers. These opportunities include activities that tourists do in the countryside. It also offers income-generating opportunities for farmers.

Outdoor Recreations: Outdoor activities include bird watching, watching domestic animals, tree climbing, horse riding, birding trails, wildlife trails, free fishing/pay lakes, wagon rides, sleigh rides, bullock cart rides, tractor rides, buffalo rides, off road trails, cow milking, honey making, silk making, rural games. Among these activities are sheep shearing, wool processing, farm tours, ranching, herb walks, rent a fruit tree and camping (Demirezen, 2018: 21-55).

Educational Experiences: Educational experiences consist of school trips, garden tours, agriculture fairs, nursery tours, historical agricultural exhibitions, exotic animal exhibitions and similar activities. Among these activities are the exhibition of handicrafts, demonstration of Agri-activities, arts and crafts demonstrations, educational tours for school children, officers and progressive farmers (Maetzold, 2002: 84-89).

Direct Agricultural Sales: There are farm sales, roadside market, farmer's market in direct agricultural sales opportunity. Also in direct agricultural sales, road stands selling fresh farm products and craft products, souvenir shops, farmer shops, agricultural product stores are very important (Adam, 2004: 1-6).

Accommodations: Accommodation includes village or farm houses, tents or caravans, rural hotels or motels, rural lodgings, rural holiday villages, bed and breakfast, guest trench, rural second homes, relatives and acquaintances (Scribd, 2019).

Entertainments: Entertainment events include festivals and fairs, petting zoos, horse pack team, hunting, concerts, special events, sheep shearing, fishing, hiking, skiing, herb walks, picnic, biking, camping, historical recreations, themes for entertainment farming, corn mazes, pumpkin patch, picking fruits, cow milking, tending bees, making wine and similar activities (Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan, 2008: 513-523).

8. Positive and Negative Aspects of Agro Tourism

There are some positive and negative aspects to consider in developing agro tourism in a region. These positive and negative aspects should be managed well. The benefits of agro tourism increase when these elements are well managed, otherwise negative effects may increase. These positive aspects are given below (Özçatalbaş, 2006; Demirezen, 2018: 21-55; Soykan, 1999; Adam, 2004: 1-6):

- ◆ Agro tourism contributes to the country's economy by helping rural development.
- ◆ Agro tourism prevents immigration from rural areas to urban areas.
- ◆ Agro tourism provides income to people living in rural areas.
- ◆ Agro tourism raises living standards of indigenous people.
- ◆ Agro tourism provides the development of superstructure and infrastructure.
- ◆ Agro tourism improves communication between urban and rural areas.
- ◆ Agro tourism provides for the preservation and sustainability of rural areas.
- ◆ Agro tourism helps people to recognize different cultures.

These negative aspects are given below (Özçatalbaş, 2006; Demirezen, 2018: 21-55; Soykan, 1999; Adam, 2004: 1-6):

- ◆ Agro tourism causes agricultural activities to decrease in rural areas.
- ◆ Agro tourism can increase land and real estate prices excessively.
- ◆ Agro tourism can cause destruction of natural, cultural and agricultural areas.
- ◆ Agro tourism can cause cultural change. Agro tourism causes rural areas to become crowded causing rural areas to degenerate.

9. Agro Tourism in Turkey

Agro tourism has developed around big cities such as Istanbul and Izmir, tourist attractions such as Muğla and Antalya, Bursa, Safranbolu and other historical and cultural riches. Muğla, Samsun, Çanakkale, Burdur, Artvin, Erzurum and Antalya are the cities where agro tourism is intensive. There are farms in Fethiye, Köyceğiz and Datça where agricultural tourism is made in Muğla. Şirince Village of Izmir's Selçuk district is a very important and exemplary agro tourism destination in terms of agro tourism (Türkben et. al, 2012: 47-50).

The examples of agritourism in Turkey are generally in forms of fairs and festivals. There are vintage festivals in Tekirdağ, Çanakkale, Kırklareli and Nevşehir. In Turkey, activities such as tree pruning, cutting adjustment, seeding, garlic and onion planting, summer vegetables seeding, flower collection for drying, sheep grazing, pumpkin festival, vintage festival, picking fruits/vegetables, cow milking, jam making are performed (Demirezen, 2018: 21-55).

Tatuta project started to develop agro tourism in Turkey. Tatuta is the name of the project on "Eco-Agro Tourism and Voluntary Knowledge and Skills Exchange on Organic Farms", organized by Buğday Association for Supporting Ecological Living. Opportunities for organic agriculture in Turkey, financial, volunteer labor living and/or who promote ecological farming by providing information and support to ensure the sustainability of the project the main aim of farmers to the families. Social interaction, creating education and awareness for nature-friendly lifestyles and nature conservation, additional income-model for rural development with human power support, alternative benefits of the tatuta project (Bugday, 2019).

In Turkey, has been made in some areas agro-tourism initiatives, but not successful enough. Agro tourism policy for the evaluation of the areas with agro tourism potential in Turkey and to tourism should be created. At the same time, strategic plans should be prepared and projects should be created in cooperation with private and public institutions. Success can be achieved if these are done.

10. Conclusions, Discussion and Recommendations

Agro tourism provides employment and income opportunities to people who live in rural areas by developing this rural area. In agro tourism, tourist realize a lot of different facilities and this situation helps people who live in this area by providing side income, developing area and helping country's economy. If Turkey want to improve agro tourism, must educate the people who live there and provide a basis in rural areas by giving information about tourism.

Agro tourism enriches rural areas and raises awareness to public by protecting rural areas, sustainability and helping people not to be destroyed authentic tissue. Agro tourism annihilates inequality of tourist distribution around touristic destination and provides to decrease of tourist population near shore thus overusing of shore causes environmental pollution and destruction of nature.

In this context, state must contribute to improve touristic development of rural areas. Firstly, it must raise awareness and educate public about rural tourism. There are a lot of natural, cultural, historical, authentic and exotic places in Turkey. These places are very suitable for agro tourism. If these places are desired to be shown to other people, focus should be on publicity and advertising.

Especially, it can enter the catalog of foreign travel agencies and tours. Government can improve and introduce their destinations of rural areas. For sure, besides that, government support should definitely be taken. Government must prepare by improving the rural areas and develop some of the agro tourism politics. In this regard, especially augmented reality and virtual reality technologies can be used (Demirezen, 2019a: 1-26).

In other words; necessary investments must be done for these areas. By doing necessary investments, natural habitat should not be destroyed, on the contrary, sustainability should be provided. In this connection, Turkey must be in foreign market.

Food, Agriculture and Animal Breeding Ministry, also Culture and Tourism Ministry must be together to improve new projects and politics about improvement of agro tourism. This tourism is a kind of alternative tourism and these destinations must be stirred up foreign countries's interest.

This study is limited to the literature. Qualitative and quantitative studies can be done on this subject. This study is a resource for future studies. Agro tourism in Turkey's policies on research conducted in the future comparable with foreign countries.

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