

## **DEVELOPMENT STATUS of RURAL NEIGHBORHOODS in THE SOUTH AEGEAN REGION in THE CONTEXT of RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In many countries today, rural development has become a priority for governments. Rural development refers to a process that envisages the development of societies not only economically but also socially and culturally. Rural areas often harbor a population that does not have sufficient income, has limited basic infrastructure facilities and opportunities, is generally engaged in agriculture or agriculture-based work as an economic activity, and has limited opportunities in education and health services. Despite all the investments and efforts made since 1923 for the development of rural communities, the large number and scattered nature of rural settlements, the difficulties experienced in transportation to these areas, and the wrong and inadequate decisions taken for these areas have led to the failure to reach the desired level for the development of these areas as a whole in Turkey, which is in the process of development.

Within the scope of this study, the current level of rural development in all rural settlements in the South Aegean Region, which is among the developed regions of Turkey, and what local people see as the most important problem in the lack of rural development have been investigated. This quantitative research, which is specific to the South Aegean Region and covers all rural settlements, is important in that it emphasizes the social dimension of rural development and makes a unique contribution to subsequent rural development-oriented studies.

**Keywords:** *South Aegean, Rural Development, Rural Neighborhood, Social Development*

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## KIRSAL KALKINMA BAĞLAMINDA GÜNEY EGE BÖLGESİ'NDEKİ KIRSAL MAHALLELERİNİN GELİŞMİŞLİK DURUMU

### ÖZET

Günümüzde pek çok ülkede kırsal kalkınma, hükümetlerin ehemmiyetle üzerinde durdukları öncelikli bir husus haline gelmiştir. Kırsal kalkınma, toplumların sadece iktisadi yönden değil sosyal ve kültürel açılardan da gelişmelerini öngören bir vetireyi de ifade etmektedir. Kırsal alanlar çoğu zaman yeterli gelir seviyesine sahip bulunmayan, temel altyapı imkân ve olanaklarının kısıtlı olduğu, ekonomik faaliyet olarak genellikle tarım veya tarıma dayanan işlerin sürdürüldüğü, eğitim ve sağlık hizmetlerinde sınırlı olanaklara sahip olan insanların yaşadığı bir nüfusu barındırmaktadır. Kırsal toplumun kalkındırılabilmesi için, 1923'ten günümüze kadar yapılan yatırımlara ve gösterilen tüm çabalara rağmen, kalkınma süreci içerisinde bulunan Türkiye'de, kırsal yerleşimlerin sayıca fazla ve dağınık olması, buralara ulaşım da yaşanan sıkıntılar ve söz konusu yerlere yönelik olarak alınan kararların yanlış ve yetersiz oluşu, bu alanların bütünüyle kalkındırılması için arzu edilen seviyeye ulaşamamasına sebep olmuştur.

Bu çalışma kapsamında Türkiye'nin gelişmiş bölgeleri arasında yer alan Güney Ege Bölgesi içinde yer alan tüm kırsal yerleşimlerin gelinen noktada kırsal kalkınmışlıkta hangi seviyede olduğunu, yerelde yaşayan insanların kırsal kalkınmanın gerçekleşmemesinde en önemli sorun olarak neyi gördükleri araştırılmıştır. Güney Ege Bölgesi özelinde ve tüm kırsal yerleşimleri kapsayan bu nicel araştırma kırsal kalkınmanın sosyal boyutuna vurgu yaparak kendinden sonraki kırsal kalkınma odaklı çalışmalara özgün bir katkı sağlaması yönüyle önemlidir.

*Anahtar Kelimeler: Güney Ege, Kırsal Kalkınma, Kırsal Mahalle, Toplumsal Kalkınma*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Development is a structural transformation process that includes social, environmental and physical factors as well as economic factors (Oakley and Garforth; 1985:12). Despite this feature of development, the economic dimension has been taken into account in the definition of this concept (Todaro, 2000:14). With the change and conceptual expansion it went through in the 20th century, it has been accepted that the main focus of development is human (Sen, 1999: 18). Emphasis was placed on the importance of improvements for human development. In the Western Countries, the social dimension of the concept of development has been highlighted, and even the identification of development with human development has come to the fore.

Development is not limited to the improvement of material conditions measured by economic indicators; it is also the development of the social, physical and cultural structure (Nafziger, 2006:15; Parasız, 1997: 164). The shift in the definition of development from quantity to quality and the distribution of this quality has brought significant changes in development indicators. New indicators of development aim to reveal the multidimensional relationship between social, political and economic factors (Yavillioğlu, 2002: 65; İsgüden, 1982: 233). As emphasized by Kaynak (2007), the purpose of development cannot be explained only by the economic dimension, but also includes social and physical infrastructure dimensions.

The concept of rural development has similar characteristics with the concept of development. It is an agreed point that rural development, like development, is a process that includes social, economic and physical elements. The aim of this process is to make rural areas more livable and more desirable to live in, to ensure that the lives of people in rural areas are in better conditions, and to provide the best possible opportunities to people. According to the literature, rural development is achieved in at least two ways (Carter et al. 1977);

- a. Rural development is about ensuring that rural people have access to education, employment opportunities, quality health and public services to ensure the "best possible life".
- b. Rural development should be inclusive, affecting as many people as possible.

Rural development has a historical background both in terms of production methods and changes in rural activities and welfare. Rural development has recently come to the forefront again, especially as a result of the development strategies implemented by developed countries and parallel to this, efforts to find a solution to rural unemployment and poverty. Especially after the 1980s, there have been changes in rural development approaches and in developing countries, integrated development searches covering the whole society have been developed. In fact, the fact that sectoral and growth-based development models in the world do not respond to all segments of the society causes the search for rural development that prioritizes people and nature to come to the fore (Gülçubuk et al., 2010: 2).

In 21st century Turkey, it has been revealed in field studies on rural development that rural problems have physical, social and economic dimensions. The omission of any of these dimensions has resulted in the

failure of rural development efforts Güven (1996). The basic approach of rural development policies in Turkey has been that if economic development is achieved in line with economic and physical investments, this improvement in the economy will also realize social development and the quality of life of people can be improved in this way. The main argument of this research is that economic development does not always lead to social development. This research, which is specific to the South Aegean Region of Turkey (TR32 Level 2 Region) and covers all rural settlements, is important in terms of emphasizing the social dimension of rural development and making a unique contribution to subsequent rural development-oriented studies.

## **1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1.1. Rural Development**

Rural development is one of the important concepts related to development. This concept is based on increasing the non-agricultural income and employment opportunities of individuals living in rural areas, developing them economically and socially, and ensuring environmental sensitivity (Gündüz, 2006: 137; Ayanoglu, 2008: 1). Rural development focused on local development is fundamentally human-centered, aiming for an equitable and inclusive development model in economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions as much as possible (Göymen, 2010:133). All activities aimed at improving rural conditions that negatively affect human life are defined as rural development. The concept of rural development is not perceived solely as economic growth and agricultural development. In the rural development process, it is essential to transform rural societies into developed societies with economic and social objectives. While conducting rural development studies, the problems of rural areas are identified and proposals are developed to solve these problems. During rural development studies, the issues of rural areas are identified, and proposals are developed for solving these problems (Tolunay and Akyol, 2006: 121-122). Especially in development efforts, approaches should be human-centered. It is crucial to develop an approach that evaluates activities based on the principle of equality, takes positive discrimination into account, and ensures development from all perspectives (Göymen, 2004: 5).

What is important in rural development or increasing the income of rural communities is to develop rural people in the geographies where they live without changing their social lives. Rural development aims to enhance the production and employment capacities of producer

associations and family-owned businesses, established by the producers. It also aims to improve the existing living conditions and ensure the continuity of rural settlements in the context of combating poverty (Öner, 2019: 653). The handicaps of the capitalist economic system on a global scale have directly affected production and labor markets, causing millions of people to be unemployed and impoverished in cities on a global scale (Jongsan, 2013).

### **1.2. Social Development**

Social development aims to sustainably carry the values, social statuses, social interactions, and socially oriented institutions of society into the future in a positive way (Gedik, 2020; Özcan, 2011). In addition to the indirect and direct factors necessary for growth and development, if material and spiritual values are considered to be an important resource for development, cultural, environmental, scientific, human, and technological values can become important values from the perspective of social capital and social development (Topuz and Yıldız, 2011). When we talk about social development, we mostly understand the provision of a balanced income relationship between individuals. One of the main objectives of social development is to increase the income of individuals, to eliminate income differences between individuals or to reduce them to a reasonable level. Again, providing people with better living conditions and preparing opportunities to meet their basic needs are among the objectives of social development (Özgül, 1988).

### **1.3. A New Conceptualization of Space in Turkey: Rural Neighborhood**

In Turkish public administration, the village represents the smallest and most basic settlement unit in rural areas, while the neighborhood corresponds to the same role in urban areas. These entities have historically maintained their significance as fundamental units in Turkish public administration. Although initially existing only sociologically, these structures later gained administrative recognition. However, despite being granted specific powers through legislation, they have not been able to achieve the expected success due to a lack of careful implementation (Karalezli, 2021: 51, 56, 59). Rural areas are generally characterized by agricultural and livestock activities, a lack of division of labor and specialization, difficulty in finding employment, and migration due to livelihood challenges (Geray, 1999: 12). In the broadest sense, the term "rural area" is used to describe regions outside urban areas (Günaydın,

2010; Nerse, 2014: 168). The term "rural neighborhood" used in this study refers to settlement units that have had the status of villages since 2004, according to local government laws. The transformation of former villages into new neighborhoods has paved the way for the establishment of new units in these areas and throughout the city by metropolitan municipalities to ensure coherence in urban services (Hanikoğlu and Nergiz, 2023: 81).

The rapid increase in internal migration in Turkey since the 1950s has contributed to urbanization and the emergence of major cities. However, this urbanization process has led to distorted and imbalanced urbanization, resulting in regional inequality and development issues (Eraydın, 2008: 33). During the era of the welfare state, steps were taken towards urban and regional development with the financial and technical support of the central government. However, with the end of the welfare state concept and the onset of the liberalization process in the 1970s, the weight of central administration decreased, giving rise to a decentralized governance system. In this period, a new paradigm of local development emerged, emphasizing the central role of local actors (Amin and Thrift, 1994).

Localization and non-centralized policies raised a new question: whether cities should achieve their development with their own potentials and actors. This process led to various theoretical and practical debates between fragmented and multi-actor local governance and a centralized approach. The model of metropolitan municipalities in Turkey evolved through stages in 1984, 2003/2004, 2008, and 2012/2013. The boundaries of metropolitan municipalities were expanded, reaching the provincial borders, and underwent significant changes with Law No. 6360. These changes included the reorganization and governance of rural neighborhoods.

Finally, Law No. 6360 (Official Gazette, 28489, December 6, 2012) expanded the responsibilities of metropolitan municipalities, transformed village and town municipalities into neighborhoods, and decided to establish metropolitan municipalities in provinces with a total population of 750,000. Regulations in 2021 and legislative changes in 2020 regarding the organization and governance of rural settlements defined rural settlement areas and granted them the status of rural neighborhoods. During this process, provincial special administrations were abolished, and

a new structure was created, expanding the service areas of metropolitan municipalities. Law No. 6360 marks a significant turning point in metropolitan governance in Turkey. While not explicitly stated in the law, it introduces a unique model referred to as the "whole city" model in public discourse. Law No. 6360 encompasses more than just adding 14 new provinces to the metropolitan governance model and changing the population criteria for metropolitan municipalities. On October 16, 2020, Law No. 7254, amending the Public Financial Management and Control Law and Some Laws, added an additional article to Law No. 5216 on Metropolitan Municipalities, defining rural neighborhoods as follows:

"Villages or towns that have turned into neighborhoods from village or town municipalities, located within the boundaries of metropolitan municipalities and identified as having rural settlement characteristics based on the decision and proposal of the district municipal council and the metropolitan municipal council within ninety days at the latest, taking into account their socio-economic status, distance to the city center, accessibility to municipal services, current building status, and similar issues, are considered rural neighborhoods. This determination should be made at the neighborhood level. However, in other neighborhoods where the rural settlement area is not determined entirely, rural settlement areas can be designated, provided that they are not less than ten thousand square meters. The rural neighborhood or rural settlement area status can be removed through the method specified in this paragraph."

In this context, the first critical element is the termination of the legal personality of town municipalities and villages in provinces with metropolitan municipality status, connecting them to district municipalities as neighborhoods. Another element is that when districts that transition from "district municipality" status to "metropolitan district municipality" status equalize their municipal boundaries with their administrative boundaries, they are included in the boundaries of metropolitan municipalities (Çolak et al., 2017:15). Additionally, this law has led to significant changes and transformations in administrative, spatial, social, and economic areas. It has not only included 14 new provinces in the metropolitan governance model but also expanded the service areas of metropolitan municipalities to cover provincial borders and those of

district municipalities to cover district administrative boundaries. Furthermore, this law abolished provincial special administrations in 30 metropolitan cities, transforming town municipalities and villages into neighborhoods and connecting them to the district municipalities they are located in. Since 2004, fundamental changes have been made to local governments and, consequently, central governance through basic local government laws (Laws No. 5216, 5302, 5355, and 5393) and other laws that amend these regulations. The entire geography of the province has been considered an urban area, turning provinces into areas without villages (Kavruk, 2008: 55, 57).

## **2. PURPOSE, IMPORTANCE, SCOPE and METHOD of THE STUDY**

The prominence of holistic policies in rural development has gained even more significance today when creating policies that determine the needs of rural areas and formulate practices taking into account the region's conditions. In Turkey, villages have been governed by Law No. 442, enacted in 1924. However, a village law in line with the requirements of the time has not been prepared for a century. Currently, there is a significant centralization in all areas in Turkey, with decentralization being implemented through Law No. 6360. Instead of preparing a new village law, villages have been removed from being local administrative units in 30 metropolitan municipalities. The transformation of villages into neighborhoods has become a common practice, especially since the enactment of Law No. 5216. The most extensive of these regulations was the implementation of Law No. 6360, which turned all villages within the boundaries of 30 metropolitan municipalities into neighborhoods, aligning them with administrative boundaries. A total of 1,076 towns and 16,500 villages have undergone this transformation (Karakaya, 2020: 470). Village administrations were not consulted in any way regarding these changes (Koyuncu and Koroğlu, 2012; Tekin, 2018). This situation is indicative of the persistence of the criticism directed towards rural policies in the 1940s: "against the villagers, without confusing the villagers," which remains valid in the 2020s (Tanyol, 1984: 71).

With the relevant laws, the legal personality of villages was abolished, and they were transformed into neighborhoods. According to field studies on rural neighborhoods, the transfer of rural assets owned by villagers to metropolitan municipalities through Law No. 6360 resulted in a change of ownership for social, cultural, economic, and administrative spaces such as marketplaces, workshops, schools, pasture areas, mills, cold

storage rooms, village halls, and village coffeehouses. Some of these areas have been left unused during this process, as clearly observed in field studies. Participants in interviews and surveys expressed great discomfort with this situation. Additionally, issues related to physical and social infrastructure, such as poor road conditions, garbage collection once a week, lack of sewer maintenance, neglect of village squares, and cemeteries, as well as the absence of social facilities, continue to persist, as revealed in both participant statements and field observations during the research (Hanikoğlu and Nergiz, 2023: 103; Kılıç and İpek, 2022:3-5; Kara and Ezin, 2022: 141-146; Kut and Yörür, 2017: 23-24; Arslaner and Yavan, 2016: 288-289; Küçükoğul, 2017).

Especially in the last 20 years, the differentiation of education and health policies has led to a significant reduction in shared-use areas in rural neighborhoods, indicating an important aspect of social development. The provision of services through a transport system to such shared-use areas may allow these existing public spaces to be subject to different public uses within the administrative boundaries of rural neighborhoods and villages. However, the local authorities responsible for providing these services are mandated to extend the services they offer in urban centers to rural areas with the same efficiency and productivity. Yet, significant challenges have arisen for service providers in terms of limited resources when meeting local needs. From the perspective of service beneficiaries, difficulties such as accessibility, service quality, and timely delivery of services have emerged. In other words, while the number of people benefiting from a service offered in urban centers is quite high, bringing the same service to rural areas has resulted in an increase in costs and a decrease in the number of beneficiaries. Service providers, driven by political motives and the desire to meet the needs of more people, have shown reluctance or indifference to providing services to rural areas beyond essential needs. From the perspective of residents in rural areas, it has been understood that various difficulties are experienced in terms of the quality and effectiveness of services utilized, as well as accessibility to service providers and required services (Akduman, 2023: 112-119; Aydın and Negiz, 2019; Bayar and Karabacak, 2020: 101-104; Berber, 2019: 135; Çavuşoğlu and Lamba, 2020; Çukurçayır et al. 2014: 220-221; Demirkaya and Koç, 2017; Gürbüz and Kadağan, 2019; Karalezli, 2021: 56; Koç, 2018; Şahin, 2018: 159-161; Tuncer and Bakırcı, 2020; Tekçe and Genç, 2019; Yıldırım and Bıçakçı, 2018).

The main aim of this study is to identify the problems and needs of rural areas from the perspective of rural people in the South Aegean

Region, thereby identifying the problems in the field. In this context, the study aims to examine the demographic structure of those living in rural areas, the region's sources of income, the social disadvantageous conditions of people living in the region, and at the same time, paint a picture of service recipients and service providers in the rural development process.

This research is important in terms of sampling in terms of including all rural neighborhoods in the South Aegean Region. In addition, it differs from other rural development-oriented scientific studies in terms of conducting a face-to-face quantitative study with mukhtars, who have functional potential in determining local problems, service needs and monitoring at the neighborhood level.

This research covering the South Aegean Region was conducted under the auspices of the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Industry and Technology and coordinated by the South Aegean Development Agency. All data used in this study were obtained from publicly available data on the yersis.gov.tr web address. The data obtained through the survey application, which is the method of the research, is limited to October-November 2019. This research was carried out in the districts of Aydın, Denizli and Muğla provinces with the participation of 15 data collection experts and 10 working days in each province.

Within the scope of this study, a total of 1401 neighborhood survey forms were applied.

The geographical scope of the study consists of rural settlements consisting of villages, rural neighborhoods and towns. Within the scope of this study, settlements transformed from villages and towns into neighborhoods are called rural neighborhoods. Rural settlement surveys were conducted with mukhtars. The surveys conducted one-on-one with mukhtars lasted 30 minutes on average.

Within the scope of this research, this research has been shaped on 3 questions related to the social dimension of development from the survey conducted in the field. These questions are listed below:

Question 1: Which economic and social facilities, activities and services are actively used in your rural neighborhood?

Question 2: Could you please explain the most important sources of income in your rural neighborhood? Does anyone go outside the rural neighborhood to earn income?

Question 3: What are the most important problems of your rural neighborhood?

### 3. FINDINGS and INTERPRETATION

Within the scope of this research, all metropolitan areas of the South Aegean Region (Aydın, Denizli, Muğla), except for the central districts, were included in this study. The settlements that were towns outside of the central districts and turned into neighborhoods with the Law No. 6360 on the Establishment of Metropolitan Municipalities and Twenty-Six Districts in Thirteen Provinces and the Amendment of Certain Laws and Decree Laws were included in this study. As a result, 1401 villages, settlements transformed from villages into neighborhoods, towns and settlements transformed from towns into neighborhoods were determined as the address frame to be applied in the field study. The distribution of the surveyed settlements and their provincial populations are given in Table I.

**Table 1: Distribution of Rural Neighborhoods Surveyed by Provinces**

Provinces of the Southern Aegean Region	Number of Rural Neighborhood	Population
Aydın	520	361.044
Denizli	422	239.655
Muğla	459	523.272
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.401</b>	<b>1.123.971</b>

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 2.

There are a total of 1401 rural neighborhoods in the South Aegean Region. In the South Aegean Region, where there are 70 rural neighborhoods with a population of 100 or less, the number of rural neighborhoods with a population of 1,000 or less corresponds to 82% of the total number of neighborhoods (Table 2). In terms of population size, Aydın province has the highest number of rural neighborhoods with 1,000 or less inhabitants (445 rural neighborhoods). Since there are important tourism centers in the South Aegean Region, rural neighborhoods of tourism districts have a high summer/winter population change. The districts with "1000 or more increase" in rural population in summer/winter are Bodrum (15 rural neighborhoods), Marmaris (6 rural neighborhoods), Milas (6 rural neighborhoods), Kuşadası (3 rural neighborhoods), Fethiye (7 rural neighborhoods) and Bodrum (5 rural neighborhoods). The increase in population in these districts in summer leads to an increase in demand for health and infrastructure services. When the districts with decreasing

population in summer are analyzed, Seydikemer, Çine, Söke, Koçarlı and Kale stand out. The decrease in population is thought to be due to the movement to tourism regions as workers in the tourism sector, relocation to work in agricultural lands and relocation for vacation/visit purposes in summer. In this case, the process of dissolution, which historian Hobsbawm referred to as the "death of peasantry," considering it as the most dramatic, long-term, and socially transformative change that separated us from the world of the past in the second half of the 20th century, can be considered as an indicator that is increasingly affecting Turkish agriculture (Hobsbawm, 1994: 291).

**Table 2: Seasonal (Summer/Winter Population) Population Change by Rural Neighborhoods**

1000 and Above Decreased	0-999 People Decreased	No change	0-999 People Increasing	1000-4999 People Increase	5000 and Above Increases
8	84	857	364	50	38

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 50.

### 3.1. Economic and Social Facilities/Activities and Services in Rural Neighborhoods of the South Aegean

In this section, the information collected during the fieldwork on facilities and infrastructure services in rural settlements is analyzed on the basis of settlement types, rural service centers and geographical regions. Within the scope of the survey, a question was asked about the existence of social and economic facilities in rural neighborhoods.

#### *PTT (Post Office) Branch Existence*

Looking at the presence of PTT branches (9.28%) in rural neighborhoods of the South Aegean Region, it is seen that there is a concentration in the rural neighborhoods of districts such as Marmaris, Fethiye, Bodrum and Kuşadası (34 in total), whose economies are largely dependent on the tourism sector, which are above the regional average in terms of tourism assets, and where eco-tourism activities are intensively carried out in their rural neighborhoods. On the other hand, 1284 rural neighborhoods do not have a PTT branch (Table 3).

**Table 3: PTT Branch Existence**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with PTT Branch (A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)	Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods with PTT Branch to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)
117	1401	5%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 56.

#### *Chain Market Existence*

There are chain markets in a total of 83 rural neighborhoods in the South Aegean Region (Table 4). 60% of these markets are located in the rural neighborhoods of cities that are brands in tourism (Bodrum, Marmaris, Kuşadası, Fethiye, Datça and Köyceğiz). The majority of rural neighborhoods of districts that have not diversified their economy do not have chain market branches.

**Table 4: Chain Market Branch Existence**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Chain Market (A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)	Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Chain Market to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods(A)/(B)
83	1401	3%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 57-58.

#### *Producer Union or Cooperative Existence*

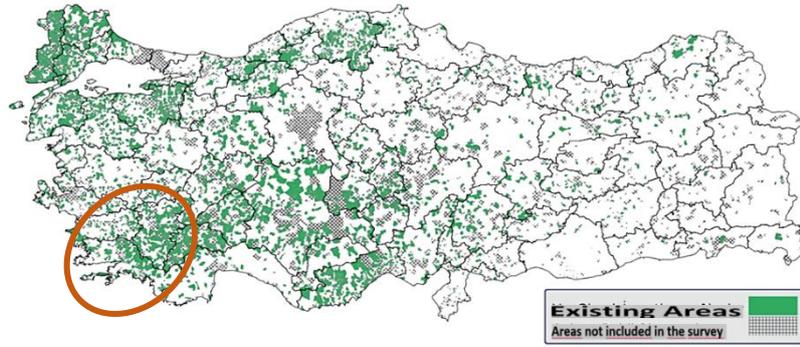
There are producer unions and cooperatives in only 395 rural neighborhoods of the South Aegean region (Table 5). When we look at the distribution of producer organizations in rural neighborhoods in the South Aegean Region, it is seen that they are concentrated in rural neighborhoods connected to traditional economic centers such as Acıpayam, Tavas, Milas, Çivril, Seydikemer and Kale, whose economy is mostly based on agriculture. Especially in Acıpayam and its peripheral rural neighborhoods, intensive milk production and the need to market this product quickly through the cold chain have made it possible for producer cooperatives to operate actively in the region (GEKA, 2016: 40). This is also the case in the rural neighborhoods of Milas, Köyceğiz, Kavaklıdere, Fethiye and Yatağan, where beekeeping and forest products are intensively produced (Map 1).

**Table 5: Producer Union or Cooperative Existence**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Producer Union or Cooperative (A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)	The Ratio of the Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Producer Union or Cooperative to the Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)
395	1401	16%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 59-60.

**Map 1: Distribution of Producer Unions and Production-Oriented Cooperatives in Rural Neighborhoods**



Source: Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, Türkiye’de Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması (YER-SİS) Türkiye’de Kırsal Yerleşimler Saha Çalışması Raporu, Ankara, 2020, p. 122.

#### *Amateur Sports Club*

Amateur sports clubs, which are the basic building blocks of sporting activities, are the smallest organizations in the sporting field and contribute to the world of sports in proportion to their economic, social and legal power. At the same time, these clubs also help to increase the awareness of young people towards sports activities. According to the research data, amateur sports clubs are active in 89 rural neighborhoods of the South Aegean Region (Table 6). The district with the most advantageous rural neighborhoods in terms of the number of amateur sports clubs in the region is Bodrum (11 rural neighborhoods).

**Table 6: Amateur Sports Club**

<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Amateur Sports Club Facilities (A)</b>	<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)</b>	<b>Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Amateur Sports Club Facilities to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)</b>
89	1401	4%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 60-61.

#### *Waste Water and Sewerage Infrastructure*

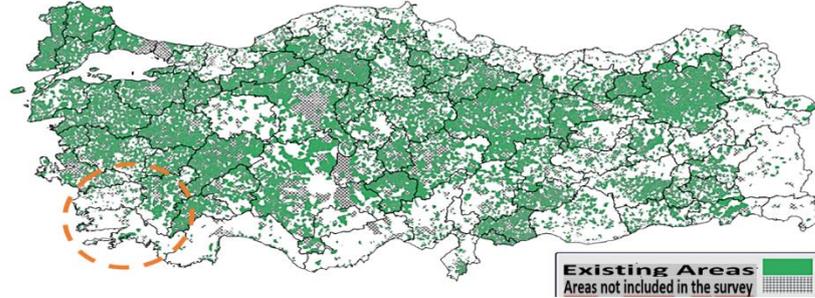
Only 22% of rural neighborhoods in the Southern Aegean Region have sewerage infrastructure (Table 7). Dalaman, Karpuzlu, Yenipazar, Menteşe, Seydikemer, Milas and Yatağan come first in the list of districts that state that wastewater and sewerage infrastructure services are not sufficient in rural neighborhoods in the South Aegean Region. However, it is observed that all of the districts in the region have at least one rural neighborhood with wastewater and sewerage infrastructure problems. Compared to the level of development in Turkey as a whole, rural neighborhoods in the South Aegean Region are disadvantaged compared to other developed regions (Map 2). Muğla, where only 12.7% of rural neighborhoods have sewerage infrastructure, is well below the national average (46.3%). This situation is an indicator that, despite more than ten years since the transformation of settlements into rural neighborhoods with Law No. 6360, they have not been able to access the necessary physical infrastructure services by municipalities (Hanikoğlu ve Nergiz, 2023: 103; Kılıç ve İpek, 2022:3-5; Kara ve Ezin, 2022: 141-146; Kut ve Yörür, 2017: 23-24; Arslaner ve Yavan, 2016: 288-289).

**Table 7: Waste Water and Sewerage Infrastructure Existence**

<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Waste Water and Sewerage Infrastructure Services (A)</b>	<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)</b>	<b>The Ratio of the Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Waste Water and Sewerage Infrastructure Services to the Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)</b>
307	1401	22%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 62-63.

**Map 2: Adequate Wastewater and Sewerage Infrastructure in Rural Neighborhoods**



Source: Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, Türkiye’de Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması (YER-SİS) Türkiye’de Kırsal Yerleşimler Saha Çalışması Raporu, Ankara, 2020, p. 120.

#### *Network and Drinking Water Infrastructure*

The ratio of the number of rural neighborhoods with mains water infrastructure and infrastructure services to the total number of rural neighborhoods is 86% (Table 8). Nazilli, Çameli, Milas, Bodrum, Didim, Çameli, Milas, Bodrum, Didim come first in the list of rural neighborhoods with insufficient network and drinking water infrastructure. However, the network and drinking water infrastructure of rural neighborhoods of the districts in the region is generally better than other infrastructure services.

**Table 8: Network and Drinking Water Infrastructure Existence**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Mains Water Infrastructure and Infrastructure Services (A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)	Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Mains Water Infrastructure and Infrastructure Services to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)
1200	1401	86%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 64-65.

#### *Broadband Internet Access*

Broadband internet connection infrastructure is defined as a telecommunication signal that has a wider bandwidth than an ordinary signal. The ratio of the number of rural neighborhoods with broadband internet access and infrastructure services to the total number of rural

neighborhoods is 58% (Table 9). When the rural neighborhoods with inadequate broadband internet connection infrastructure are examined, the rural neighborhoods of Güney, Pamukkale, Dalaman, Yatağan, Menteşe, Çameli and Milas districts rank first. However, all rural neighborhoods of Baklan, Çardak, Sultanhisar and Serinhisar districts have broadband internet infrastructure.

**Table 9: Broadband Internet Access Existence**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Broadband Internet Access Infrastructure Services (A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)	Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Broadband Internet Access and Infrastructure Services to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)
808	1401	58%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 66-67.

#### *Mobile Communication Infrastructure*

The majority of rural neighborhoods in the South Aegean Region have mobile communication infrastructure (Table 10). When the rural neighborhoods in the region with insufficient mobile communication infrastructure are analyzed, Güney, Pamukkale, Çameli, Germencik and Milas rank first.

**Table 10: Mobile Communication Infrastructure Existence**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Mobile Infrastructure Services (A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)	Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Mobile Infrastructure Services to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)
1082	1401	77%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 68-69.

#### *ATM Infrastructure*

The ratio of the number of rural neighborhoods provided ATM infrastructure services to the total number of rural neighborhoods is 4% (Table 11). Looking at the presence of ATMs in rural neighborhoods in the South Aegean Region, where banking transactions such as withdrawing salaries, sending money, paying debts and making transfers are carried out quickly, it is seen that there is a concentration in the rural neighborhoods of districts such as Bodrum, Marmaris, Didim, Kuşadası, Fethiye and Ula, whose economy is largely dependent on the tourism sector. Moreover,

none of the rural neighborhoods of Güney, Pamukkale, Dalaman, Buharkent, Merkezefendi, Menteşe, Çine, Kale, Bozdoğan, Sarayköy, Çal, Beyağaç, Bekilli, Köşk, Yenipazar, Babadağ, Baklan and Çardak have ATM infrastructure. This situation is an indication that, due to insufficient access to market opportunities in rural neighborhoods relying on traditional agricultural practices, there is a lack of sufficient financial volume. As a result, banking services are also inadequate in areas outside tourism-intensive rural neighborhoods Soykan (2000).

**Table 11: ATM Infrastructure Existence**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with ATM Infrastructure Services (A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)	Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods with ATM Infrastructure Services to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)
100	1401	4%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 69-70.

#### *Primary School*

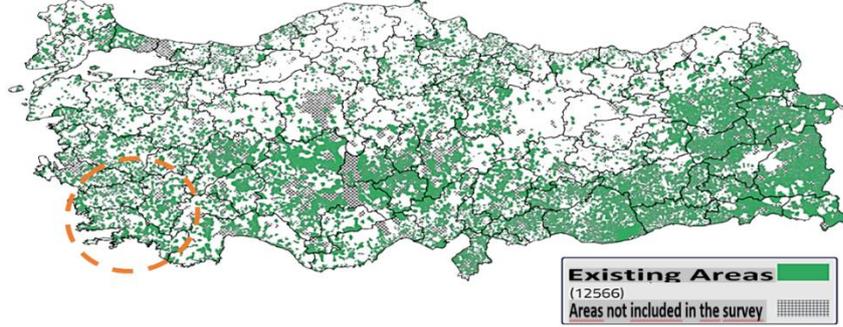
The functions of primary schools, which help children to socialize, adopt new behaviors, and develop social and affective skills, are of great sociological importance in the formation of society and the internalization of social rules by individuals. Across the region, 847 rural neighborhoods do not have primary schools (Table 12). Only 4 rural neighborhoods in the region serve regional primary boarding schools.

**Table 12: Primary School Existence**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Primary School (A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)	Ratio of Number of Neighborhoods with Primary School to Total Number of Neighborhoods (A)/(B)
847	1401	60%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 71-72.

**Map 3: Primary School Existence in Rural Neighbourhood**



Source: Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, Türkiye’de Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması (YER-SİS) Türkiye’de Kırsal Yerleşimler Saha Çalışması Raporu, Ankara, 2020, p. 110.

Although it is a developed region, when we look at the ratio of the number of rural neighborhoods whose students go out for primary school to the total number of neighborhoods, a high rate of 40% stands out across the rural neighborhoods of the region. In particular, the rural neighborhoods of Güney (94%), Bekilli (92%), Bozkurt (86%), Karpuzlu (84%), Sarayköy (80%), Buldan (79%), Çardak (78%), Çal (77%), Karacasu (75%), Koçarlı (74%) and Çivril (74%) are the places where students go out for primary school. As can be seen in Map 3, this situation is predominantly observed in the rural neighborhoods of Denizli province. In the districts of the region such as Kuşadası, Sultanhisar, Buharkent, Marmaris, Köyceğiz, Didim, the number of rural neighborhoods where students go out for primary school is lower.

#### *Secondary School*

Although the districts of the South Aegean Region have an advantage in the (Socio-Economic Development Ranking 2022) ranking compared to other districts in Turkey (excluding Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir), when the ratio of the number of rural neighborhoods whose students go out for secondary school education to the total number of neighborhoods is examined, a high rate of 76% stands out across the rural neighborhoods of the region (Table 13). Due to the lack of secondary school services, students from all rural neighborhoods in Bekilli and Merkezefendi districts of Denizli go to other rural settlements for secondary school education. Apart from these two districts, rural neighborhoods of Çine (95%), Güney (94%), Bozkurt (93%), Karpuzlu (89%), Koçarlı (87%), Yatağan (86%) districts also have high rates of students going out of the neighborhood for secondary school. In the

districts of the region such as Kuşadası, Serinhisar, Marmaris and Didim, the number of rural neighborhoods with students going out of the neighborhood for secondary school is relatively lower.

**Table 13: Secondary School Existence**

<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Secondary School (A)</b>	<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)</b>	<b>The Ratio of the Rural Number of Neighborhoods with Secondary Schools to the Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)</b>
334	1401	24%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 74-75.

#### *High School*

In the South Aegean Region, there are only 42 rural neighborhoods with high school institutions (Table 14). The share of rural neighborhoods that send students to another settlement for high school education is 97% of the total number of rural neighborhoods. In Bodrum, Fethiye, Sedikemer, Marmaris, İncirliova and Çivril districts of the region, the number of rural neighborhoods whose students go abroad for high school education is relatively lower. Similar to other regions in Turkey, in the South Aegean Region, the impact of migration from rural to urban areas results in a gradual decline in the young and fertile population in rural neighborhoods, leading to a decrease in the number of students at all levels of education (Güreşçi and Yurttaş, 2008; Yavuz et al., 2004; Soysal et al., 1998).

**Table 14: High School Existence**

<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods with High School(A)</b>	<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods(B)</b>	<b>Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods with High School to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)</b>
42	1401	3%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 76-77.

#### *Library*

Libraries are service businesses that function to collect, store and distribute information. Established to meet social needs, libraries effectively present all kinds of recorded information resources to the user who needs information, thus providing a connection function. They also

serve as a place where students in rural neighborhoods can repeat their lessons outside of school and find resources for their homework. Within the scope of the research, it was determined that only 3% of rural neighborhoods in the South Aegean Region have libraries (Table 15). Milas (5 rural neighborhoods), Bodrum (4 rural neighborhoods), Nazilli (3 rural neighborhoods) and Bozdoğan (3 rural neighborhoods) are the most advantageous districts in terms of the number of rural neighborhoods with library services in the region.

**Table 15. Library Existence**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Library(A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods(B)	Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Library to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)
44	1401	3%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 78.

*Vocational courses or activities*

As in the world, the migration of the population from rural to urban areas continues in Turkey. Short-term vocational courses have a special importance in terms of ensuring the rapid adaptation of those who migrate to the cities, reducing unemployment and adapting to the rapid differentiation of professions due to globalization. Within the scope of the research, people living in the rural neighborhoods of the South Aegean Region stated that vocational training and courses are needed to minimize this negative impact of globalization and to minimize the migration movement from rural to urban areas (Güreşci and Yurttaş, 2008; Yavuz et al., 2004). In the research conducted, it was stated that vocational course activities are carried out continuously in a total of 57 rural neighborhoods throughout the region. Tavas (8 rural neighborhoods), Bodrum (5 rural neighborhoods), Seydikemer (3 rural neighborhoods), Acıpayam (3 rural neighborhoods) and İncirliova (3 rural neighborhoods) are the most advantageous districts in terms of the number of rural neighborhoods with vocational course activities in the region (Table 16).

**Table 16. Vocational courses or activities**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with vocational courses or activities (A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods(B)	Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Vocational Courses or Activities to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)
57	1401	4%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 80.

### *Vocational School*

The most important aim of the vocational school (associate degree) is to train qualified manpower to increase the competitiveness of the industrial, commercial and service sectors. In addition, it realizes the training of intermediate technical staff needed by the industry and agricultural production. In the research conducted, one vocational school serves in the rural neighborhoods of Koçarlı, Çine, Serinhisar, Çivril, Milas, Marmaris, Sultanhisar and Fethiye districts (Table 17).

**Table 17. Vocational School Existence**

<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Vocational Schools (A)</b>	<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods(B)</b>	<b>Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Vocational Schools to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)</b>
8	1401	0.6%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 81.

### *Handicraft Products Sales Place*

It is a known fact that handicrafts contribute significantly to the promotion of the region where they exist today and to its economic development by providing employment to its tourism potential. While a unique product purchased in touristic shopping is a unique experience for the tourist, it also paves the way for attracting new tourists to the country. In this way, handicrafts not only provide a touristic attraction to the place where they are located, but also contribute to employment by increasing the quality of labor force. Thus, by creating job opportunities for local people, it slows down the migration from rural areas to cities (Bayazit et al., 2012: 902). According to the data obtained within the scope of the research, there are 30 rural neighborhoods with handicraft sales points in the whole region (Table 18). 50% of these outlets are located in the rural neighborhoods of Bodrum district, which has developed with a focus on the tourism sector.

**Table 18. Handicraft Products Sales Place Existence**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Handicraft Products Sales Place(A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)	The Ratio of the Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Handicraft Products to the Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)
30	1401	% 2

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 83.

#### *Development Association*

While the human factor, which is the basis of social transformation, should be brought to the fore at all stages and active participation should be ensured at every stage Weitz (1979), the human factor is ignored in rural transformation studies in Turkey. The number of development associations, which have various missions such as to beautify and develop the rural neighborhood's other common goods such as roads, water, electricity, mosques, schools, which are among the needs of the community, to provide for the construction, repair and maintenance of the neighborhood, to beautify and develop the neighborhood by afforestation, to prepare introductory brochures, bulletins and albums, to convey the customs and traditions of the neighborhood to the growing generation. organizing seminars and meetings in order to convey information, establishing savings fund and providing social assistance to the poor and needy, victimized and incapable of working, elderly, widowed, disabled and orphan children are very few (Parlak ve Ökmen, 2015: 333). According to the data obtained within the scope of the research, there are 109 rural neighborhoods with development associations in the entire region (Table 19). The province with the lowest number of these associations is Denizli.

**Table. 19: Development Association Existence**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Development Association (A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)	Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Development Association to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)
109	1401	7.8%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 89.

#### *Family Health Center*

Family health centers provide health services such as infant and child health, pregnancy and maternity follow-up, vaccination, family

planning, clinic services, etc. According to the survey, family health centers actively provide services in 388 rural neighborhoods throughout the region (Table 20). In the rural neighborhoods of the developed districts of the region such as Marmaris, Bodrum, Köyceğiz, Didim, Yatağan and Ula, the number of people going out for health services is lower than in the rural neighborhoods of other districts (Map 4). On the other hand, due to reasons such as the failure of local governments to provide necessary infrastructure services and low population, all rural neighborhoods in the districts of Bekeilli, Beyağaç, Çardak, Güney, and Merkezefendi lack family health center services. Consequently, all those seeking healthcare in these areas mentioned that they go outside their rural neighborhoods to the district or city center. (Hanikoğlu ve Nergiz, 2023: 103; Kılıç ve İpek, 2022:3-5; Arslaner ve Yavan, 2016: 288-289).

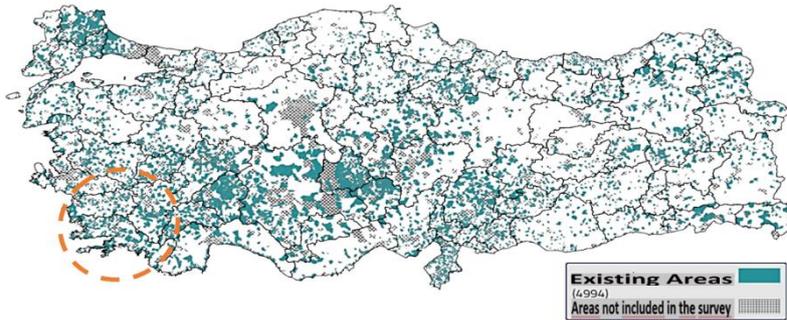
**Table 20: Family Health Center Existence**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Family Health Centers (A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)	The Ratio of the Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Family Health Centers to the Number of Rural Neighborhoods in the District (A)/(B)
388	1.401	28%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 78-79.

Map 4 shows the distribution of rural neighborhoods with Family Health Centers in the region.

**Map 4: Status of Active Family Health Centers in Rural Neighborhoods**



Source: Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, Türkiye’de Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması (YER-SİS) Türkiye’de Kırsal Yerleşimler Saha Çalışması Raporu, Ankara, 2020, p. 110.

*Market (Public Market)*

Markets, which meet an important need in social life and where it is possible to see employees from all strata, are a different reflection of society in terms of the characteristics they carry (Koçak and Uygun, 2014). These markets, which are part of the traditional lifestyle and culture in Turkey, are established in both rural and urban areas as a reflection of natural, cultural and spatial differences. Dryers in rural areas contribute to the sale of surplus products as well as meeting the basic needs of those living in these areas (Özgüç and Mitchell, 2000). It is seen that markets, which assume an important socio-economic role, are in transformation and diversification with the change in consumer needs and expectations and the contribution of developing technology. In the research conducted, it was determined that markets were established in a total of 304 rural neighborhoods throughout the region (Table 21). The ratio of the number of neighborhoods that go out of the neighborhood because the market is not established in the rural neighborhood to the number of rural neighborhoods in the Region is as high as 77%. It is stated that these neighborhoods meet their market needs from the markets established in the district centers to which they are connected. None of the rural neighborhoods in Beyağaç, Buharkent and Yenipazar districts have a market. In the districts of the region such as Bodrum, Çardak, Didim and Merkezefendi, the number of local people going out for the market is relatively lower.

**Table 21: Market Existence**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods Established Markets (A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)	The Ratio of the Number of Rural Neighborhoods Established Markets to the Number of Rural Neighborhoods in the District (A)/(B)
304	1401	22%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 82-83.

### **3.2. Income, Service and Labor Mobility in Rural Neighborhoods of the South Aegean**

#### *Income and Labor Mobility*

Within the scope of the research, the participants were asked what their most important sources of income were and whether they traveled outside the rural neighborhood to earn income. According to the responses received, the main sources of income in rural neighborhoods in the South

Aegean Region are agricultural activities, pensions, 65-year-old pensions and social assistance (96.5%). In these neighborhoods, there are also a considerable number of people who go out of their neighborhoods and districts to work as workers in industry, tourism, mining and forestry sectors (Table 22). Rural neighborhoods of Milas, Çine, Menteşe, Efeler, Yatağan, Bozdoğan, Seydikemer and Koçarlı districts stand out in labor mobility. This rate is very low in Baklan, Ortaca and Datça. In tourism districts such as Bodrum, Marmaris, Fethiye, Milas, Milas, Datça and Ortaca, the seasonal mobility created by tourism labor is intense during the summer months. These tourism centers attract seasonal workers from almost all rural neighborhoods of the region, especially from nearby regions.

The South Aegean Region has an important position in Turkey in terms of agricultural production. As a result of the fact that mechanization in agriculture has not spread to all rural neighborhoods, it is understood from the data obtained within the scope of the research that agricultural activities are significantly labor intensive. In addition, while migration from rural neighborhoods to urban areas is intensely felt, there is a need for manpower in agricultural activities, especially during harvest periods (Güreşçi and Yurttas, 2008; Yavuz et al., 2004). When the most preferred rural neighborhoods for agricultural labor are examined, it is seen that the rural neighborhoods of Baklan, Ortaca, Honaz, Buharkent, Buldan, Çivril, Sultanhisar and Kale districts, whose economy is predominantly based on agriculture, are in the first place.

**Table 22: Labor Mobility**

<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Outward Labor Movement (A)</b>	<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)</b>	<b>The Ratio of the Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Outward Labor Movement to the Number of Rural Neighborhoods in the District (A/(B))</b>
507	1401	36%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 15-17.

### **3.3. Main Problem Areas, Needs and Expectations of People Living in South Aegean Rural Neighborhoods in the Context of Rural Development**

#### *Problems in Education, Health and Transportation Services*

Within the scope of the research, respondents were asked about the most important problems in their neighborhoods. Although the districts of

the region are among the developed districts of Turkey according to (Socio-Economic Development Ranking 2022), it can be seen from the research results that there are some problems in terms of access to basic services such as education, health and transportation services in the rural neighborhoods of these districts (Table 23).

**Table 23: Problems in Education, Health and Transportation Services**

<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Educational Services as the Most Important Problem</b>	<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Health Services as the Most Important Problem</b>	<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Transportation Services as the Most Important Problem</b>
186	312	274

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 100-102.

When we look at the number of rural neighborhoods with health services as the most important problem in the districts of the region, it is understood that this situation is more common in the rural neighborhoods of Milas district of Muğla province, Nazilli, Bodrum, Bozdoğan, Bozdoğan, Acıpayam, Menteşe and Seydikemer districts. The intensity created by the tourism sector can be said to be one of the important reasons for this situation in the rural neighborhoods of Bodrum district, which reaches a population far above the capacity of its urban infrastructure and superstructure, especially in the summer months. For Milas and Bozdoğan districts, it can be said that it is due to the distances of the districts from the center and their underdevelopment compared to other districts. When we look at the number of rural neighborhoods with transportation services as the most important problem in the region due to the distance of the rural neighborhood to the center or the effect of geographical conditions on transportation, the rural neighborhoods of Milas, Nazilli, Yatağan, Menteşe, Efeler and Bozdoğan districts stand out. Looking at the number of rural neighborhoods with education services as the most important problem in the districts of the region; it is understood that this situation is more common in the rural neighborhoods of Bodrum, Milas, Nazilli, Yatağan, Acıpayam and Tavas districts (Akduman, 2023: 112-119; Aydın ve Negiz, 2019; Bayar ve Karabacak, 2020: 101-104; Berber, 2019: 135; Çavuşoğlu ve Lamba, 2020). Despite ranking first in the (Socio-Economic Development Ranking 2022) South Aegean Region, Bodrum ranks first in terms of the number of rural neighborhoods reporting education as the most important problem.

### *Sewerage Infrastructure*

Ortaca, Kavaklıdere, Datça, Beyağaç and Datça come first in the list of districts that identified sewerage infrastructure as the most important problem of their rural neighborhoods. However, it is observed that all of the districts in the region have sewerage problems in at least one of their rural neighborhoods (Table 24).

**Table 24: Number of Rural Neighborhoods Prioritizing Sewerage Infrastructure Problems**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods Considering the Problem of Sewerage Infrastructure (A)	Number of Rural Districts (B)	Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods Considering the Problem of Sewerage Infrastructure to the Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)
786	1401	56%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 104-105.

### *Network and Drinking Water Infrastructure*

The ratio of the number of rural neighborhoods with mains and drinking water infrastructure problems to the total number of rural neighborhoods is 29,6% (Table 25). Buharkent, Sultanhisar, Datça and Babadağ come first in the list of districts where network and drinking water infrastructure is the most important problem of their rural neighborhoods. However, it is observed that all of the districts in the region have at least one rural neighborhood with a network and drinking water infrastructure problem.

**Table 25: Number of Rural Neighborhoods Prioritizing Network and Drinking Water Infrastructure Problems**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods Considering Network and Drinking Water Infrastructure Problem as a Priority (A)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)	Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods Considering Network and Drinking Water Infrastructure Problem as a Priority to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)
415	1401	29,6%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 105-106.

### *Internet Infrastructure*

The ratio of number of rural neighborhoods considering the internet infrastructure problem as a priority to the total number of rural neighborhoods is 15,4% (Table 26). Babadağ, Kavaklıdere and Tavas come first in the list of districts where internet infrastructure is the most important problem of their rural neighborhoods. On the other hand, there are no rural neighborhoods in Karpuzlu, Datça, Köşk, Serinhisar, Sultanhisar, Buharkent districts that consider the internet infrastructure problem as the most important problem.

**Table 26: Number of Rural Neighborhoods Prioritizing Internet Infrastructure Problems**

<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods Considering Internet Infrastructure Problem as Priority (A)</b>	<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)</b>	<b>Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods Considering Internet Infrastructure Problem as a Priority to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)</b>
216	1401	15,4%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 108-109.

#### *Telephone Infrastructure*

The ratio of the number of rural neighborhoods that prioritize the telephone infrastructure problem to the total number of rural neighborhoods is 16,9% (Table 27). Pamukkale, Bekeilli, Baklan, Güney and Honaz districts are at the top of the list when it comes to the districts that state the telephone infrastructure problem as the most important problem of their rural neighborhoods. It is noteworthy that all of these districts are Denizli districts and Pamukkale and Honaz districts are relatively developed districts. On the other hand, there are no rural neighborhoods in Kuşadası, Didim, Çardak, Yenipazar, Karpuzlu, Serinhisar and Sultanhisar districts that consider the telephone problem as the most important problem.

**Table 27: Number of Rural Neighborhoods Prioritizing Telephone Infrastructure Problems**

<b>Number of Rural Neighborhoods Considering Telephone Infrastructure (Base Station) Problem as Priority (A)</b>	<b>Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (B)</b>	<b>Ratio of Number of Rural Neighborhoods Considering Telephone Infrastructure Problem as a Priority to Total Number of Rural Neighborhoods (A)/(B)</b>
237	1401	16,9%

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 109-111.

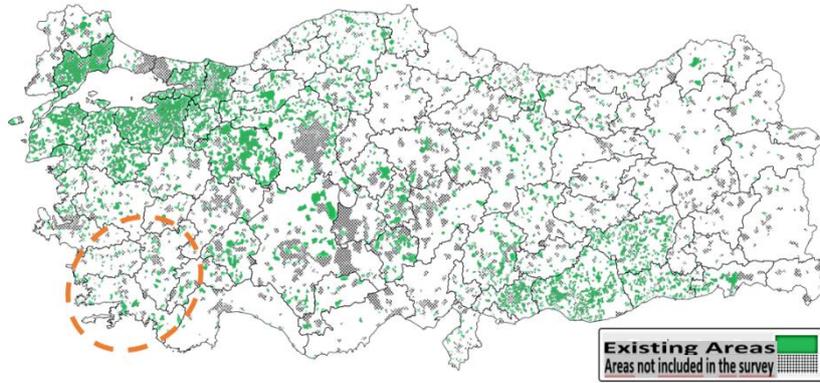
*Landscaping, Social Facilities and Roads*

In rural development studies, making basic infrastructure investments or investments to increase production in rural areas by starting from the regions with development priorities will prevent the formation of rural neighborhoods with differences in terms of development levels within the region (Demirkaya ve Koç, 2017; Gürbüz ve Kadağan, 2019; Karalezli, 2021: 56; Koç, 2018; Şahin, 2018: 159-161; Tuncer ve Bakırcı, 2020; Tekçe ve Genç, 2019; Yıldırım ve Bıçakçı, 2018). In terms of rural development, rural neighborhoods are the settlements to which various infrastructure investments (such as landscaping, land registry and cadastre services, stream improvement, social facilities, roads, etc.) should be provided. While urban settlements in the region generally receive a large share of infrastructure investments, rural settlements may be deprived of these investments. The number of rural neighborhoods with landscape, social facilities and road problems in the South Aegean region is important (Table 28). In the region, Milas, Çivril, Seydikemer, Çine, Efeler, Acıpayam, Çameli and Nazilli are the most problematic rural neighborhoods in terms of transportation and landscaping, while the rural neighborhoods of Milas, Çivril, Yatağan, Buldan, Nazilli and Acıpayam are the most problematic in terms of social facilities (village hall, mosque, playgrounds, sports complex, etc.).

**Table 28: Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Landscaping, Social Facilities and Road Problems**

Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Environmental Pollution Problem	Number of Rural Neighborhoods With Social Facility Problems (Village Mansion, Mosque, Children's Parks, Sports Complex etc.)	Number of Rural Neighborhoods with Road Problems (Village Roads, Intra-Village Roads, Field Roads) Problem as Priority
320	434	853

Source: GEKA, Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması Güney Ege Bölgesi Değerlendirme Raporu, Denizli, 2021, p. 114-116.

**Map 5. Distribution of Social Facilities in Rural Settlements**

Source: Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, Türkiye’de Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması (YER-SİS) Türkiye’de Kırsal Yerleşimler Saha Çalışması Raporu, Ankara, 2020, p. 121.

As can be seen in Map 5, which shows the distribution of social facilities in rural settlements, a total of 115 rural neighborhood social facilities (cultural centers, playgrounds, guesthouses, etc.) are actively serving in rural settlements of the South Aegean Region.

#### 4. CONCLUSION and ASSESSMENT

Rural development is a process in which the aim is to make rural areas more livable and more desirable to live in. Rural development can be achieved by ensuring that rural residents have equal access to education, employment opportunities, quality health and public services in rural areas. Rural development should reflect and include the largest possible number of people. Rural development is not only a short-term, temporary understanding aiming at economic or agricultural growth; it is a set of

multidimensional activities that aim to revitalize the non- agricultural economy, cover all segments of society, have human beings at its center and address the socio-economic structure together. The most important objective of rural development activities should be to minimize the difference in social structure between rural and urban areas. The effects of rural development activities that do not take into account the social infrastructure and basic needs are reflected only in the economic field and the development in this sector is reflected in the quality of life of rural people in a limited way (Gülçubuk et al., 2010: 2; Anríquez ve Stamoulis, 2007: 24; Furat, 2013:595-596; Doğanay, 1993; Ellis ve Biggs, 2001).

In rural development studies in Turkey, the approach that if economic development is achieved, this improvement in the economic field will also realize social development and the quality of life of people can be improved has been a dominant understanding in policy documents on rural development prepared since the 1940s. However, it is a well-known fact that the supports provided to economic sectors are not reflected in social life in the long run and the migration movement from rural areas to cities continues. In Turkey, neoliberal policies have increased the attractiveness of urban areas, which has further accelerated the migration movement from rural to urban areas. The rural settlements of the South Aegean Region are losing population in demographic terms every day, leading to an increase in the elderly dependent population in rural areas. It is understood from the data obtained within the scope of the study that the decrease in the workable population causes only subsistence agricultural activities in rural areas, a decrease in the diversity of production in economic terms, and an increase in the number of people living on pensions and social assistance. Similar to other rural regions in Turkey, the decrease in the working-age population has led to a reduction in economic diversity, resulting in a higher reliance on retirement pensions and social assistance, especially for more individuals. Due to insufficient employment opportunities in rural neighborhoods, 35% of the population continues to migrate outside the neighborhoods to work in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and mining (Güreşçi and Yurttaş, 2008; Yavuz et al., 2004; Soysal et al., 1998).

In this study, the presence and activity of important parameters of rural development in rural neighborhoods of the South Aegean Region were also questioned. In this context, the respondents were asked in the questionnaire whether their rural neighborhoods have a PTT branch, chain market branch, producer association and cooperative, amateur sports club, waste water and sewage infrastructure, network and drinking water

infrastructure, broadband internet access infrastructure, mobile communication infrastructure, ATM infrastructure, formal education institutions (primary school, secondary school, high school, vocational school), library, vocational development courses, handicraft products sales place, development association, family health center, public market. According to the answers received, in all rural neighborhoods of the South Aegean Region, there are 117 PTT branches (5%), 83 chain market branches (3%), 395 producer unions and cooperatives (16%), 89 amateur sports clubs (4%), 100 ATMs (4%), 847 primary schools (60%), 334 secondary schools (24%), 42 high schools (3%), 8 vocational colleges (0, 6%), 44 libraries (3%), 57 vocational development courses (4%), 30 handicraft sales points (2%), 109 development associations (7,8%), 388 family health centers (28%) and 304 public markets (22%). In addition, 307 rural neighborhoods have wastewater and sewerage infrastructure (22%), 1200 rural neighborhoods have network and drinking water infrastructure (86%), 808 rural neighborhoods have broadband internet access infrastructure (58%) and 1082 rural neighborhoods have mobile communication infrastructure (77%).

As indicated in similar field studies conducted in the region, the most significant problems in the rural neighborhoods of the South Aegean Region were found to be the inadequacy of sewage infrastructure, insufficiency of village roads, and lack of social facilities, which participants mostly emphasized (Hanikoğlu ve Nergiz, 2023: 103; Kılıç ve İpek, 2022:3-5; Kara ve Ezin, 2022: 141-146; Kut ve Yörür, 2017: 23-24; Arslaner ve Yavan, 2016: 288-289). Lack of infrastructure for education and health services were also mentioned as other important problems of the region. It was stated that the difficulties in accessing basic services caused people to migrate to the nearest urban centers where they could receive these services. As a result of this situation, it was reported by the participants that with the decreasing population in rural neighborhoods, infrastructure investments for basic services to be made in rural areas are shifted to areas with higher population density and higher demand for these investments.

When the overall study is evaluated, it is seen that agricultural activities are the dominant production activity in the rural settlements of the South Aegean Region. However, it has been determined that industrial and tourism activities in regions where industrial production and tourism are intense in the region have spread to nearby rural settlements, albeit limited. According to the findings of the study, many factors such as the economic structure of the regions where rural neighborhoods are located,

their proximity to urban centers, geographical location, topography and climatic conditions affect the relations of rural settlements with other settlements and access to basic services. On the other hand, it can be said that rural settlements have a prioritized and intensive relationship with their district centers in order to meet many needs, especially basic public services. However, despite a socioeconomic development ranking well above the national average in the (Socio-Economic Development Ranking 2017) and (Socio-Economic Development Ranking 2022) rankings, it has been determined that rural areas outside the coastal areas in the South Aegean Region are quite disadvantaged in terms of access to basic services (health, education, communication, transportation, etc.). In our country, where serious steps have been taken in the process of economic and social development in recent years, inter-regional and intra-regional development disparities still persist as a social and economic problem. Since the first development plan, almost all development plans have included similar objectives and policies. Reducing the differences between villages and cities, enacting a new village law, realizing land and agricultural reform, minimizing regional differences, raising the income level in rural areas, and providing the necessary infrastructure services are some of the issues included in all plans. According to the data obtained within the scope of the research, the legal regulation on rural neighborhoods has still not been realized. Road, water, electricity and communication infrastructure required by rural settlements is not at the desired level. Education and health services are also not sufficient. Migration from rural areas to urban areas is inevitable as employment opportunities diminish. Young population leaves rural areas due to existing problems (Kut ve Yörür, 2017: 23-24; Arslaner ve Yavan, 2016: 288-289). A significant portion of the population living in rural areas consists of the elderly. Since the current rural population cannot earn the expected income in the agricultural sector, they withdraw from the production process. As it has been shown in similar studies on the transformation of villages into rural neighborhoods, as with the Law No. 6360, the transformation of approximately 16,000 villages into neighborhoods in Turkey and 1,400 villages in the South Aegean Region has brought about economic, administrative, sociological, and political problems (Çukurçayır, et al. 2014). In this context, it is obvious that a multi-sectoral, comprehensive and long perspective approach should be adopted in order to realize rural development in the South Aegean Region.

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