THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENT FOR THE TOURISM SECTOR OF TRNC WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

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ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, Akdeniz Bölgesi çevre sorunları kapsamında KKTC (Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti) turizmi için çevrenin önemi ve gerekliğini ortaya koymak ve çevrenin yararlığı pozitif katkıını artırma için önerilerde bulunmaktır.

Turizm sektöründeki çeşitli türler incelendiği zaman, bu türlerin çoğu çevreyle bütünleşmekte, diğerleri ise çevreleye dayanıklılıkta hizmete sunulabilmesidir. Şöyleki, eko, deniz, dağı, çiftlik, avcılık gibi turizm türleri tamamen çevreyle bütünleşmiş olup; sağlık, tarih ve özel ilgi gibi türler çevre sayesinde sunulabilmesidir. Dolaysıyla, KKTC’nin karmaşıkında lokomotif olarak şekilde turizm sektöründeki istikrarı ve maksimum ölçüde faça sağlamanın en önemli yolu, çevrenin bu sektörün ihtiyaçlarına göre korunması, yönetilmesi ve şekillenmesidir.

Bu çalışmada öncelikle dünya ekonomisi için turizmin önemi vurgulanacaktır. Daha sonraki kısımlarda sırasıyla çevre ve turizm ilişkisi açıklanacaktır. Akdeniz Bölgesi ve KKTC’nin çevre sorunları analiz edilecek ve son olarak bu sorunların çözülmesi için öneriler geliştirilecektir.

ABSTRACT

The basic aim of this study is to emphasize the importance and necessity of the environment for the tourism sector of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) within the context of environmental issues of the Mediterranean region. There are many types of tourism such as “sea tourism” (sea-sand-sun), “congress tourism”, “health tourism”, “yacht tourism”, “cave tourism”, “mountain tourism”, “farm tourism”, “hunting tourism”, “golf tourism”, “caravan tourism”, “religion tourism” and “history tourism”.

It is almost impossible to offer any type of tourism product without taking the environmental factors into account. In direct relation to this fact, the environment itself determines the types of tourism that a country may offer to visitors, “eco-tourism”, “sea tourism”, “mountain tourism”, and “farm tourism” are some examples of this. Furthermore, there are types of tourism, which cannot be provided without specific environmental elements such as “health tourism”, and “history tourism”. In conclusion, the environment should be protected, enriched, managed and shaped according to needs of the tourism sector in order to maximize and stabilize the benefits derived. It is the environmental consideration, which carries a great deal of importance for TRNC, because the tourism sector has been selected as a locomotive industry that is expected to give incentive and drive for the development of other industries.

In this study, firstly the importance of tourism for the world economy will be explained. Then, the relationship between tourism and the environment will be examined. In the third and remaining sections, environmental problems of the Mediterranean region and TRNC will be analyzed.

Furthermore, recommendations will also be made to solve these problems and increase the comparative advantage of the sector in order to obtain maximum benefit.
INTRODUCTION

The basic aim of this study is to provide insight to the solution of the environmental problems of the Mediterranean region and TRNC. TRNC is positioned in the center of Mediterranean Region, which emphasizes the importance and the necessity of the environment for the tourism sector of itself. In this respect, current environmental problems of TRNC will be diagnosed and the subsequent relation between tourism and the environment will be analyzed.

As mentioned previously, examining the importance of tourism for TRNC and the globalized world as a whole will start this study.

The second section is devoted to the importance of the relationship between the environment and tourism.

In the third section, the impact of tourism on TRNC in relation to its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), fixed capital investments, tourism revenues and balance of payments will be examined.

Next section covers the Environmental Problems in the Mediterranean Region and Mediterranean Action Plans.

Then, the importance of environment for tourism sector in TRNC will be explained in detail.

Finally, conclusive remarks will be made to emphasize and substantiate the importance of the environment.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM

Eversince, people have felt the urge to travel, tourism developed into an industry. Tourism contributes to the countries economy. "Travel and tourism does not mean just holiday, it is also described as one of the world’s biggest businesses. Travel and Tourism is undoubtedly one of the key economic sectors in the world today and promises to be one of the three super-service industries in the future, alongside telecommunications and information technology”. (Graham, 2001) The importance of tourism for countries and the world economy are discussed below:

The Importance of Tourism For a Country’s Economy

The following headings detail the importance of tourism for a country’s economy.

Contribution to Employment

Employment is one of the basic indicators for the economy of any country. The tourism industry creates employment and is therefore one of the basic economic indicators. For example in 2000, 7.8 million people worked in the USA under tourism sector (World Peace Summit, 2000). According to data of 1998 in Canada 518,000, in France 600,000 people employed in tourism and in Turkey 2.5 million people were directly or indirectly employed in the tourism industry. According to the data of World Travel & Tourism Center (WTTC) at the end of 2000, 192.2 million people were working in tourism sector worldwide. According to the same sources, it is estimated that 251.6 million people will be employed in tourism in the year 2010.

Contribution to the Balance of Payments

Tourism also contributes to the balance of payments. This varies according to the number of tourists and the duration of their stay. For example 173.7 billion dollars in payroll income and 100 billion dollars tax revenues for federal state and local government were determined in 2000 in the USA (Travel Industry Association of America, 2000). Mr. Suleyman Demirel, former President of Turkey emphasized this by saying “The Contribution of tourism to the balance of payments is as important as the national liberation struggle” (Ekonomist Yılığı, 1999: 96). Tourism based income in Turkey was 500,000 US dollars in 1998. According to WTTC, the contribution of the tourism industry to the world GDP was 3.6 trillion dollars in 2000.

Tourism and a Diversified Economic Base

Diversity in tourism creates many advantages for a country, for example:
Cities are normal and natural destination for visitors as are scenic outdoor recreation areas. * Tourism is constantly growing and will probably continue to do so not only because income and leisure time are more plentiful, but also because tourism is largely unexploited. * Since the labor force is essentially in place, tourism requires little or no increase in costly public facilities-schools, hospitals, and the tourist requires few of these. * Tourism is clearly a profitable industry and therefore an attractive area of investment for businessmen and residents (Tourism USA, 1991).

Tourism, Tax Revenues and Government Benefits

As the tourism industry develops, it contributes to tax revenues and benefits government expenditure. Tourists shopping, visiting museums and historical sites, (pay entrance fees) generates a benefit in favour of the state. The state benefits increase in accordance with the number of tourists, the duration of their stay and the volume of their spending.

Tourism and Visibility

Often tourism is a strong weapon for the removal of prejudices, misunderstandings and bad images. For instance there are people who still believe that Texas is a desert in which only cactuses live, and that there are people with guns roaming the streets. There are people who think that gang style killings happen in Chicago, that there are daily military coups in Mexico, that all women wear veils in Turkey and that there are bears all over Moscow. These people are under the influence of propaganda or may be prejudiced by a film that they have watched. Tourism can change all of these, it can aid a better understanding of countries, and cultural beliefs and traditions therefore removing misconceived prejudices and thus restore the honour of the people of that country. A better understanding boosts people’s confidence and psychologically contributes to employees of the tourism industry in providing a better service.

Tourism and Cultural Benefits

It’s possible to gain benefits for tourism by using the potential of the history and the culture of a country, interest towards ethics and historical regions are growing day by day. Many tourists show a great deal of interest and visit historical sites. Therefore many countries restore historical buildings, towns and encourage tourists to visit them. Restoration of historical places creates employment. After the restoration, different units are created which gives services to tourists, and provides benefit for the economy.

The Importance of Tourism in a Globalised World

The contribution of tourism to world economy, economic stability and the relationship between nations and world peace can be seen as topics which emphasise the importance of tourism in a globalised world.

The Contribution of Tourism to World Economy

According to World Travel Organisation (WTO) in 1998, 635 million people travelled abroad for tourism and spend 439 billion dollars. The WTTC estimates that world tourism income was 515 billion dollars in 2000, which emphasizes the economic potential of tourism. In the globalised world of today, travel and tourism activities play a key role for peace and democracy. Tourism reconciles different cultures in order to help people to know each other and creates peace in this way.

Economic Stability

There are a lot of conflict areas in the world. According to the World Bank reports such conflicts take place in poor or developing countries. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the growth of the global economy increased by 4.5% in 2000. It is quite clear that those who will benefit most from this growth will be the countries with economic stability and peace. Countries with a healthy economy are the rich countries.

“Travel and Tourism, perhaps more than any other economic activity, have a special role to play in repairing the difference between the developed and the developing countries, it can be the connection by which prosperity can flow from the developed to the developing economies. As well as generating employment for local people, the travel
and tourism industry can provide capital investments for rural and urban development, helping to build sustainable infrastructure and act as a catalyst for the development of other economic sectors, within a stable environment.” (World Peace Summit, 2000).

Tourism and World Peace

Tourism helps the world peace and it is an important factor for bringing together countries and people. Antonio Guterres, prime minister of Portugal explains this by saying: “Past world leaders such as Gandhi and Kennedy have delivered messages presenting tourism’s role as a political and cultural instrument for peace. Tourism is unique in this aspect and there are few alternatives that can provide the same level of intercultural exchange and understanding between people and nations. The global enemy of today is that values of enlightenment are not respected. Extreme nationalism, religious fundamentalism, racism and xenophobia threaten these values. We rise above these threats by promoting the values of enlightenment and tolerance, by working for peace and democracy. Tourism with its great capacity for building bridges between cultures is an enormous instrument to create tolerance in the world” (WTTC’s World Travel & Tourism Summit, 2000).

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENT FOR TOURISM

In this section, the concept of environment and the relationship between tourism and environment will be explained.

The Concept of Environment

We can define the concept of “environment” which we use quite often in our daily lives, as follows:

The environment is a complicated of factors which ensures life and affects all forms of life constantly. This complexity includes all forms of natural life as well as unliving elements, land and atmosphere, oceans and freshweather, microorganisms and human beings. All forms of life, as well as unliving elements survive within this complex, with extremely balanced relationships (www.britannica.com). The protection of this sensitive balance is a necessary for a world to live in.

The Relationship Between Tourism and Environment

The physical environment carries importance for tourists in deciding where to go and how long to stay. Tourism happens within the physical environment and it is the physical environment, which creates an impact on the demand of the tourism. According to academic estimates, the only options that will determine the demand for tourism in the next 100 years will be the environment (Olali, 2000:185).

THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM FOR TRNC

The importance of tourism for TRNC can be examined under the following headings.

Contribution of Tourism to GDP

According to the fixed prices of 1977, tourism sector accounted for 3.1% of GDP in TRNC. From 1993 to 1997, the value created by tourism increased by 3.47%. In 1993, the value of the sector was 221.9 million TL. The other years distributed as: 241.7 million TL in 1997, 249.5 million TL in 1998 and 277.8 million TL in 1999 with fixed prices of 1977 (Turizm Planlama Dairesi, 2000: 57)

Contribution of Tourism to Fixed Capital Investment

Between 1993-1997 with the fixed prices of 1977, 206.6 million TL fixed capital investments were made. In the year 1999, 77.5 million TL were invested (based on the fixed prices of 1977) and this_amounts to_ 3,469,195.3 millions TL with current prices (DPÖ, 2001:195).
Developments in the Number of Tourists

In 1999 the number of tourists increased by 5% from 1998. Number of tourists increased from 393,027 to 414,015 (DPÖ, 2000: 202).

Tourism Revenues and Balance of Payments

In 1993, foreign currency income of TRNC was 362.9 million US dollars, income from exports was 54.5 million US dollars and net tourism income was 224.6 million US dollars. In 1997, total foreign currency income was 332 million US dollars, export income was 57.7 million US dollars and net tourism income was 192.2 million US dollars. 1999 total foreign currency income was 322.4 million US dollars, export income was 52.4 million US dollars and net tourism income was 192.8 million US dollars. The share of tourism income in total foreign currency income was 59.8%, and its share in comparison with export income was 36.9%. When we look at the net tourism income and the trade deficit between 1995-2000, the ratio of net tourism income to the trade balance was 73.3% in 1995, 70% in 1996, 61.3% in 1997, 55.2% in 1998, and 53.5% in 1999 (DPÖ, 2000: 196).

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Environmental problems of the Mediterranean Region and Mediterranean Action Plans as environmental issues in the Mediterranean Region are examined in this section.

Environmental Problems of the Mediterranean Region

The Mediterranean region embodied the most progressive civilizations ever since the beginning of history. The word Mediterranean comes from the mythology and defines Gods, science and art, philosophy and democracy. Today, Mediterranean region is facing many environmental problems. Human beings have created these problems. The United Nation addressed these problems as in first step towards saving Mediterranean by meeting in Stockholm in 1972 and discussed the UN Environment Programme. This Plan was adopted in February 1975 in Barcelona. 16 Mediterranean countries met in Barcelona in 1975 and created “Action Plan for the Protection of the Mediterranean” This plan called for;

(1) A series of legally-binding treaties to be drawn up and signed by Mediterranean governments,

(2) The creation of a pollution monitoring and research network, and

(3) A socio-economic programme that would reconcile vital development priorities within a healthy Mediterranean environment (UN, 1985: 5).

Mediterranean Action Plans

In order to solve Mediterranean environmental problems, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) had various activities. Mediterranean Action Plans are:

* Action Plan for the Protection of the Mediterranean: This plan adopted in February, 1975 Barcelona and consists of four main components;

1. Integrated planning,
2. Pollution monitoring
3. Research,
4. Legal and institutional/financial.


* Improvement of knowledge of the present situation, information gathering and identification of major trends.


THE BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS OF TRNC

Before pointing out the contribution of the environment to the TRNC economy, it’s important
to mention the basic environmental problems in TRNC. It’s possible to underline the basic environmental problems as follows (Camgöz, 2000: 11-15):

**Clean Air**

The most important natural resource for the human being is the clean air. As in TRNC there is no heavy industry then we don’t have any air pollution just like the air pollution problems of the industrialized countries. We only have the air pollution problems in the areas of the quarry facilities taking place. Also same air pollution problems created by the diesel working machines and Tekneclik Termik Santral which is producing the electricity requirement in TRNC.

**Water**

The need of the water in TRNC is 120 million m³ in a year. The 72 million m³ of this amount is used for agricultural purposes. As in TRNC there are no rivers, then 98 percent of the total water requirement is supplied by the underground water resources, but as in TRNC the draught has been one of the main environmental problem in TRNC the underground water reserves have fallen and the percentage of the saltiness has risen. As the use of the water should be done with a save, then the following steps should be taken.

- The drop watering system should be wided up for all agricultural purposes.
- Collecting of rains.
- Preventing the dirty water to be mixed with the sea and underground water resources.

**Clean Land and Land Products**

In TRNC unfortunately there are a lot of agricultural medicines (hormones) are used, where it’s causing a big pollution problem for the land. Also the quality of the agricultural products is falling. Hence, the required steps should be taken for preventing or limiting the use of the medicines (hormones) in the agriculture sector. This is the only way for keeping the people to eat healthy and clean foods.

**Distorted Urbanization**

For last 15 years unfortunately the city planning projects couldn’t be applied for the Lefkoşa and other main cities. As a result the distorted urbanization is still one of the biggest social problems of the TRNC. As there is no city planning projects, the restaurants, apartments, touristic places and the industry constructions are mixed with each other and because of this people are forced to live with air, and noise pollution. To prevent this unwanted case the city planning project should be realized as soon as possible.

**The Quarries**

The quarries are a must for the construction sector, because they are producing the required materials for this sector, but the working process of the quarries are not suitable for the health environment. Because they are causing a distortion problem on the geographic structure of Kyrenia mountains and also they are causing air and noise pollution for the environment. The worst is when ever the tourists are coming to North Cyprus all the way where ever they go they have to see the distortion in the mountains caused by the quarries. One of the way to solve the pollution problem created by the quarries is, searching the financial project possibilities from United Nations for changing the working system of the quarries which are limiting the negative impacts of quarries on the environment.

**Historical and Visual Environment**

To be able to present the richness of the culture and old remains to the tourism sector, then their repairment should be done in a periodic. The historical and archaeological remains should take place in the modern museums and they have to be presented to the visitors with their mythology historical accounts.

**Institutional planning Event**

Institutional planning event is one of the most important factors for the quality improvement of the environment. However, in TRNC unfortunately the planning event is not improved. The physical planning which will take under the control the development of all the sectors in TRNC couldn’t be achieved as a concept and overall. Then the struggle against the environmental problems in TRNC is given with the limited sources. Then a person in North Cyprus is living with the environmental problems in a rising event. Although these facts, the master plans in tourism and agricultural sectors couldn’t be realized (DPÖ; 2000: 222-224,385, 389; Şafaklı, 1999).
THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENT FOR TRNC TOURISM

Cyprus is located at the heart of Mediterranean Sea. Due to its strategical importance, it has been ruled by many civilizations and has a history of 9000 years. Cypriots have a responsibility not only for the environment but also to their historical inheritance.

Being an Island and Tourism

Cyprus is a small island and therefore has scarce resources. TRNC must use its resources most efficiently. "Islands play a big role in tourism development and many people want to visit and have their holiday there" (Dökmecioglu ve Digeri, 1996).

With the solution of Cyprus problem, tourism will gain dynamism and will be an important part of TRNC's economy. Therefore, tourism investments must be planned and geographical areas should be used effectively and efficiently.

Environmental Factors in TRNC Tourism

Environment and tourism are complementary components. Sand, sea, sun and cultural richness attract many tourists to TRNC, in Cyprus, and Mediterranean region. There is also local flora and fauna, local animals etc. that we see every day attracts tourists. "When local specialties start disappearing the attractiveness of the region to tourism also disintegrates. In order to understand and preserve the capacity therefore creating a good image for example, cheap shopping, casinos etc. are showed as an option but these can also weaken image for tourists." (Inceoglu, 2000). If we want to protect tourism as a hope the historical and cultural environment must be protected in TRNC.

The Economical Effect of Environment for Tourism

Tourism in TRNC contributes to the national income and balance of payments. Since the factor of tourism and environment are inseparable, environmentally sensitive social economic policies must be followed, and problems must be addressed and solved by such policies.

Environmental Balance and Alternative Tourism in TRNC

Cyprus and TRNC have great potential for alternative tourism. In order to make this richness visible and create an advantage, the flora, fauna and animal species must be protected and beaches must be kept clean. In TRNC, there are 300 species of birds, which are becoming extinct. sea turtles such as the carretta-carretta are only seen in a few Mediterranean countries. Cypriot donkeys and mules are also a great richness for alternative tourism. The historical and cultural heritage of TRNC and scuba diving for observation of world of the sea also create options for alternative tourism.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The island of Cyprus due to its geographical structure, its history of 9000 years and its location in the Mediterranean Sea, became as the richness of Mediterranean Region. Therefore, there is no difference between the environmental problems of the Cyprus and those of Mediterranean. In TRNC tourism has been chosen as a locomotive sector and provides economic hope for the Turkish Cypriot community. TRNC is not a country of industry; we do not have an air pollution problem or industrial wastes as in other industrialized countries. Protecting the historical and cultural heritage will attract more foreign visitors and bring income for the country. For these reasons, the national environment and the balance of nature must be preserved. Furthermore, tourist resorts should be in harmony with the natural environment taking tourism, development projects of the Mediterranean region and master plans into consideration. After these conclusive remarks, the following recommendations can be presented:

Establishment of Institutional Planning Event

The master plans in tourism and agriculture should be realized as soon as possible.
The Environment Conscious Should Be Vided

The environment is a very large event. The land, air and sea are included in environment. Also the lives exist in land, sea and air is also the parts of the environment, the factors, which are causing the environmental pollution, is unlimited, so, the struggle against the environment pollution is that much wide. The environment can’t be the topic of only one single country, or the organizations of some countries but the countries of the entire world; so, to improve the environment conscious of the society the environmental education should start from the primary school.

Coordination In Environmental Topic

All the organizations related with environment in TRNC should be in coordination with each other and also with the other organizations of the world.

Land Pollution

For preventing the pollution of the land, then the classification of the trashes should start from the houses. The trashes, which can be reworked, again should be determined. Also the use of the glass should be wided in the consumption of food products.

Trashes

The biological institutions should be established for the food trashes. For struggling against the insects instead of insectisit the biological struggle should be chosen. The trashes of the hospitals, laboratory, and industry should never take in the nature. There should be special institutions to eliminate them.

Water Supply Problem

There is a very big problem in the water resources of TRNC. So, the projects of water supplying with the pipes from Turkey should be realized as soon as possible.

Water Pollution

For minimizing the pollution of the water which is used in toilets, kitchen and in washing the clothes the most suitable soaps and detergents should be used. The use of detergents should be minimized and the required refine systems should be established as soon as possible. Mixing of the drainage water to the water reserves should be prevented.

Air Pollution

For the topic of the air pollution we can see that TRNC has got some advantages. There is no heavy industry, and there is a light industry. The use of the wood for heating purposes is very limited. TRNC is surrounded with the sea. Some new technical methods may be used for limiting the air pollution created by the diesel machines. Also the use of the unleaded petrol must be wided up.

Noise Pollution

Timing is required for taking the necessary steps against the environmental pollution problems. If the price of the electricity can be lowered, then the use of the electricity can be wided up for heating purposes.

Erosion

Planting tree should be increased to prevent the erosion, by this way the erosion can be prevented and also the oxygen resource of TRNC can be increased. At the same time as the number of trees will rise then the rain fall of TRNC will also rise.

Saltiness

For preventing the falling rate and also saltiness of the underground water resources of TRNC the construction of the dams should be speeded up. The technologies which are abling the seawater the be used as drinking water should be established in an early time. It’s known that in Southern Cyprus there are studies in this way, so why not in TRNC.

Animals

As the number and the kinds of the animals living in TRNC has fallen, then the benefits that we should obtain as a result of living mixed with animals is getting less. The first reaction that we show against an animal is killing it. But this habit is causing a high cost for the life quality of the human beings in TRNC. If the number and kinds of the animals rise, then the quality of our lives
will rise as well. It’s true that the goats are harmful for the forests, but if we keep them away from the areas, which are covered with the forests then these animals can’t be harmful for our forests.

**Hunting**

It’s a big massacre to kill the animals because of hunting. It may be logical for the human being to kill the animals for the food purposes, but killing the animals just for enjoyment can’t be a sport but a massacre. Many tourists are wishing to see the different types of birds when they come to our country, but, as the number of the hunters in our country is more than the birds; then tourists unfortunately don’t have this type of a change. If we can’t be successful in educating our children to lower the hunting activities, we may not be able to hear any singing of any bird. It’s for sure that no one of us will wish to live in this type of a nature (Atun, 2000: 134-136).

**Alternative Use of Natural Environment**

According to the weather and geographic conditions of TRNC alternative use of natural resources such as establishments of national parks can be considered (Fisher and the Other: 1976:1-3). In TRNC where the spring season is approximately nine months the establishment of the national parks will be so beneficial for the tourism and education sector. Also the health centers suitable for the weather conditions may have contribution to the tourism sector more than we expect.

**REFERENCES**


