

The Importance of Rural Tourism: Rural Tourism Practices in the World and in Turkey

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Abstract

There have been several changes observed in tourism sector as in many sectors due to the globalization in recent years. With these changes, a trend towards alternative tourism types has begun in line with rapid alteration in tourism demand. New tourism types such as heritage, trekking, eco tourism, agritourism, cultural tourism and rural tourism come into the picture with the increase in tourism demand. One of the alternative tourism types, rural tourism is applied by regions and countries where rural areas are plentiful, with the aim of providing rural development with new tourism policies produced in accordance with tourism demand. This study presents rural development applications in the world and in Turkey performed via rural tourism.

Key Words: Rural Tourism, Rural Tourism Applications, Rural Development

Kırsal Turizmin Önemi: Dünyada ve Türkiye’de Kırsal Turizm Uygulamaları

Özet

Son yıllarda küreselleşme olgusuna bağlı olarak birçok sektörde olduğu gibi turizm sektöründe de birtakım değişimler olmuştur. Bu değişimlere bağlı olarak, başta turizm talebinde meydana gelen hızlı değişim doğrultusunda alternatif turizm türlerine eğilim başlamıştır. Burada turizm talebine bağlı olarak; tarih, doğa yürüyüşü, eko turizm, agro turizm, kültür ve kırsal turizm türleri ortaya çıkmaktadır. Alternatif turizm türlerinden biri olan kırsal turizm kırsal alanların yoğun olduğu yöreler, bölgeler ve ülkeler tarafından ulusal ve uluslararası turizm talebine bağlı olarak geliştirilen yeni turizm politikalarıyla kırsal kalkınmayı sağlamak amacıyla uygulanmaktadır. Bu çalışmada hem dünyada hem de Türkiye’de kırsal turizme bağlı olarak gerçekleştirilen kırsal kalkınma uygulamalarına yer verilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kırsal Turizm, Kırsal Turizm Uygulamaları, Kırsal Kalkınma

INTRODUCTION

With globalisation, a lot of changes have been occurring in tourism industry as well as other industries around the world. As a result of that, it is thought that new tourism trends worldwide are historical, medical, trekking, cultural and rural tourism [1]. Rural tourism, developing rapidly with tourism demand today, is considered as a new strategy for strengthening economic structure in rural areas and as an opportunity for tourists who want to take a vacation while learning about historical, cultural and natural beauties. Tourism development in rural areas introduces economical and sociocultural effects together with agricultural activities [2]. Tourism has been considered as an effective catalyst for rural socio-economic development and renewal for a long time [3]. Among other alternative tourism types, rural tourism can become integrated with rural culture, natural environment and agriculture and also with other tourism types easily; the

notion increases its importance as an alternative or subsidiary to other tourism types [2]. Rural tourism has economically positive effects such as providing income and job opportunities to people living in rural areas, helping rural development and improving investments. Besides these, it can contribute to the development of various handicrafts. Also it can enrich cultural texture by handing down language, customs and traditions of rural areas. Thanks to rural tourism, immigrations from rural areas to urban areas can be prevented considerably. Rural tourism provides rural resources to be used more effectively by contributing product diversity in rural areas. With product diversity, tourism demand for rural areas increases [2]. We see that rural tourism has a significant place in tourism policies of many countries due to its attributes mentioned above. Here the aim is to consider rural tourism as a development tool in addition to its economical effects.

Conceptual Analysis of Rural Tourism

According to Halway and Taylor (2006), rural tourism is not a new phenomenon. It started with returning to nature in England in 19th century and then expanded to the industrialized countries in Europe. The reasons of this fast expansion were that socio-economic conditions of people living in the cities got better and people wanted to escape from air pollution, noise, stress and congestion. As a solution to these problems, the notion of resting in rural areas showed up [1]. However, according to Lane [4], rural tourism was a phenomenon which began to develop at the end of 18th century and spread through romanticism movement giving fame to the motto “natural life” and developed in 19th century.

According to the definition of World Tourism Organization, rural tourism is not just based on agriculture and farming but it includes all the activities done in rural areas [5].

Nilsson [6] states that rural tourism has a different structure than the products of agriculture, forestry and fisheries; it continuously improves; it is labor-intensive; it provides income and it protects service areas within regions.

Chuang [7] considers rural tourism as a good option for rural inhabitants who seek to maintain local agricultural development and to protect their life styles and cultures.

According to MacDonald and Jolliffe [8], along with cultural tourism, rural tourism contains nature, adventure, sports, festivals, handicrafts and tours in rural areas as well as folklore, traditions, cultural heritage, values and life styles of people dwelling in rural areas.

Küçükaltan [9] describes rural tourism as a body of incidents and relationships emerging from temporary accommodations of people who visit rural areas that are remote from the places they are living and demand goods and services produced by local manufacturers in the places suitable for natural fabric of the areas and minimize their desires of increasing money in the region.

According to Olalı and Timur [10], rural tourism is sometimes named as green tourism and agro-tourism. It is developed as a tourism type which is very important in solving economical, psychological and social problems arisen from tourist overcrowding within a place; in providing additional income for low-income agriculture manufacturers; in saving tourism from the dominion of traditional coastal tourism and in providing opportunity for benefiting from relaxing atmosphere of rural areas.

Soykan [11] suggests that rural tourism is a sophisticated and complex activity. Rural tourism is agro-tourism, green tourism or plateau tourism and in addition to that it is also related to nature holidays, eco-tourism, shopping, skiing, biking, nature trekking, adventure, rafting, sports, thermal tourism, hunting and fishing, art, history and ethnicity.

According to Mikaeili and Memlük [12] the purpose in rural tourism is to meet and socialize with rural culture by accommodating in a mountain hut, country house or a farmhouse and to have a holiday. Sharpley [3] states that a lot of popular sun-sea-sand tourist destinations have attempted to spread into rural tourism and to become more rural and traditional locationally and experientially, because a more balanced and sustainable approach should be adapted for tourism development.

To sum up, rural tourism is a tourism type in which agricultural activities are used as a supply source for tourism [1].

To understand this notion better, rural tourism components shown in Figure 1 should be defined. These components are rural areas, rural heritage, rural life and rural activities [2].

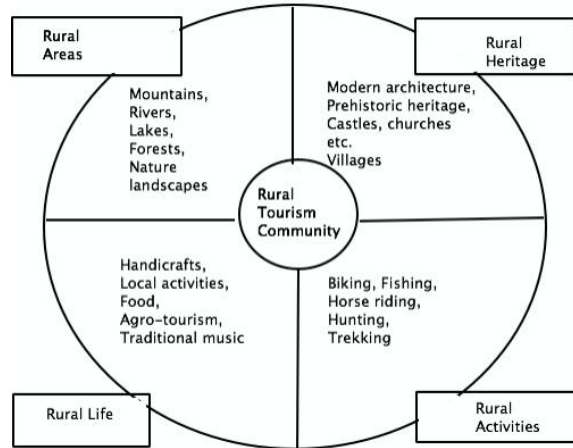


Figure 1. Rural Tourism Components [1]

The Importance of Rural Tourism

All around the world both in developed and developing countries, efforts towards strengthening economies of rural areas by using tourism supply sources for rural tourism have accelerated. Thanks to prominent achievements in this type of tourism, rural tourism is considered as an alternative for development of rural areas besides agriculture industry [2].

The importance of rural tourism depends on the resources, infrastructure, image, and access to market of the area and whether there are other tourism types or not [13]. It is known that rural tourism is one of the most significant sectors for development and it has economic and sociocultural effects on rural development.

As a tourism type relaying protection awareness to tourists and local people, rural tourism presents the protection of folk culture and environment [12].

We can specify the importance of rural tourism as follows [2]:

- In rural areas, demand for products increases due to rural tourism. This increase in demand causes increase in production and therefore product find its real value. So, income level of the producer increases, too.
- In parallel with rural tourism development, sectors providing goods and services for tourism directly or indirectly can be coordinated.
- Thanks to rural tourism, employment, additional income, personal income, living standards and public revenue are influenced positively.
- Tourism values in rural areas can be used effectively due to rural tourism.
- With rural tourism, one can take a more affordable and pleasant vacation. Therefore, people with low income can participate in tourism.
- As a result of rural tourism development and locals' obtaining income from rural tourism, immigration from rural to urban places can be prevented.
- Rural tourism prompts people in rural areas and helps them be organized in a conscious way. Therefore tourism in rural areas is learnt and developed more easily.
- Rural tourism overcomes infrastructure inadequacy in rural areas over time.
- With rural tourism, domestic tourism revives.

- It helps protection, restoration and reinforcement of natural and structural resources. By internationally recognized quality standards, it supplies access to natural resources. It incites quality physical environmental planning which local people can obtain.

- It creates economic value and market for handiworks which can not contribute directly and economically to local people. It generates income for next generations. It presents opportunities for small businesses. It encourages not only for tourism activities but also for supporting activities.

- It causes multi-purpose activities as a result of increase in tourism demand for the area in accordance with tourism supply resources in rural areas. Therefore, it eases the burden of traditional holiday destinations which have lost relaxing attributes considerably.

- Farmers increase their income level thanks to rural tourism and consequently wage gap between urban and rural places decreases in time.

- Rural tourism provides opportunity for benefiting from relaxing attribute of rural areas in resolving economic, social and psychological problems arisen from overcrowding and in saving tourism from the dominion of traditional coastal tourism.

In short, rural tourism is a panacea to the problems in rural areas [3] and a magic wand that will speed up economic progress [14].

Rural tourism is cheaper and easier to implement than other rural economy development strategies. That's why; rural tourism can be improved locally with the participation of local authorities and small businesses. It does not need to be bound to big companies or firms for improvement [15].

Rural Tourism Practises Around the World

Rural tourism practices differ according to tourism supply values and development plans of countries and regions. However, main purpose is to maintain rural development. Thus, many countries around the world use their resources in rural areas in a rational way in the direction of rural tourism.

U.S.A.

Tourism policies focused on specifically rural areas have been developed in 30 states in the U.S.A. Among them, 14 states have included rural tourism in their general tourism plans [16]. Today 70% of American population participates in rural tourism [17].

Cyprus

In 1991, agro-tourism program was initiated by Cyprus Tourism Organization. The aim of the program was to renovate rural areas in Cyprus socio economically. Almost 50 villages were included in the program. This selection was made according to traditional architecture, general attractions of regions and enthusiasm of local people. The focus of program was to restore and convert houses and buildings of traditional architecture into accommodation facilities. Also educational meetings were held in order to raise awareness of local people and generate rural tourism product. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture collected traditional food recipes and distributed to restaurateurs for supporting the promotion of local food. Besides these, when it was understood that an effective marketing campaign was necessary for this program to be successful, in 1995 non-profit Cyprus Agro-Tourism Company was founded. Cyprus Tourism Organization has still provided financial support for activities of this group [3].

Japan

Since the beginning of 1990's, interest in rural living has been increasing. Since 1992, Japan government has encouraged rural tourism, agro- tourism and green tourism covering agriculture, forestry and fisheries [18]. Rural tourism activities in Japan are carried out via small scale businesses called as "farm inns" run by farmers generally. Farm inns give tourists opportunities of accommodating and dining in houses built on farms, taking active roles in fishing, harvesting and farming. After a law enacted in 1995 which anticipated that rural areas could be used for tourism, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has started to support these farm inns financially [19].

Portugal

Besides income from fishery in fishing villages in Portugal, it is determined that there is an increase in the income of families renting their houses as boarding house to domestic and foreign tourists [1].

Finland

Almost 2700 out of 3600 enterprises carrying out rural tourism activities in the country consist of original farms. These places provide services for tourists such as snowmobiles, reindeer, and husky safari, ski walking, fishing, and canoeing. Unemployment in rural areas is a serious socio economic problem. With tourism development in rural areas, this problem has begun to be overcome [18].

Canada

Travel to rural areas in Canada has increased because of two reasons. One of them is the increase in interest of people towards rural areas and historical tourism. The other reason is the support of government for the development of rural areas. In the report of economic cooperation and development organization in 1994, it was stated that tourism would play a vital role in the future of rural development [20]. The provincial department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Alberta, Canada coordinates the program of agritourism development. This department announces its initiatives via its website and performs activities with Travel Alberta and Alberta County Vacation Association for farmer markets, agriculture fairs, museums and ruins, cowboy trails. In Ontario, the Huron Harvest Trail and Explore Ontario's West Coast programs are developed for the promotion of this rich rural areas. Thanks to these programs, visitors can buy and taste fresh products and at the same time they can live farm experience [21]. In Saint-Jacobs in Ontario, historical wheat silos have been turned into art centers and become an attraction for tourism demand [20].

Australia

Tourism authorities within the continent are divided into regional branches. The organization of Australian Farm and Country Tourism tries to develop agro-tourism nationally [21]. In New Zealand, agro-tourism is a tourism type in great demand [21]. One of the attributes which arouse tourists' interest mostly in agro-tourism is farming; the other one is clothes and souvenirs produced by women. Accommodations in farm houses and the local products cause additional income except agriculture [1].

Poland

Rural tourism activities started with effective promotional works and public organizations of Agricultural

Consultancy Centres for farmers in Lower Silesia region in 1990. In 1997, it was determined that 104 farming businesses were carrying out rural tourism activities in this region. As small businesses are less effective in agricultural activities than big businesses, they seek to obtain income by inclining to rural tourism. Almost 90% of the enterprises provide opportunities for tourists to cook for themselves. Most of the foreign visitors consist of German tourists [18].

Ireland

Rural tourism is applied in the places where less than 1500 people are living in the country. Activities on farms and providing accommodation are directly related to rural tourism. It is predicted that rural tourism constitutes 30% of overall tourism movement. Teagasc operating in Ireland is farming advisory board of the country. The quality of activities done within the scope of rural tourism, new approaches and trainings are controlled by this board [22].

England

Lake District region in which there are a lot of lakes is an important rural tourism place. One can see cows near jet-skis under the trees on the lakeside. Also many caves that were abandoned after being used as mines in ancient times have become attractions for domestic and foreign tourists with visual animations [18].

The most recognized rural tourism marketing organization of England is Farm Holiday Bureau. This organization is responsible for cleanliness and service quality of accommodation places in rural areas except marketing and promotional efforts [21].

England published "Rural Tourism Action Plan" in 2010. The aim of this plan is to increase rural tourism demand until 2020 and ensure growth at the rate of 5% in a year. Participants from private sector are assigned as partners within this plan, which is supported by authorities [23].

Malaysia

Tourists experience authentic cultural values indigenous to the region in traditional houses surrounded by tropic fruit trees [1].

Germany

Rural tourism in the country has been carried out for longer than 150 years. Even 150 years before today, people used to take vacation in villages and hillsides. In 1960's and 1970's, main theme in the studies on rural tourism was economic benefits provided by tourism for farmers. As a result of these studies, it was revealed that rural tourism decreased migrations from mountainsides, gave urban people rural life experience and therefore increased their sensitivity to problems in rural areas and diversified rural economy [24].

Scotland

Many tourists from European Union countries come to join festivities in summer days to Inverness region of Scotland. Also a lot of historical castles in rural areas are visited by tourists [2].

Austria

In general, Austria is the leading country in which rural tourism is organized in the best way in Europe. "Green villages" organization consisting of 36 villages can be given as an example for the groups operating in that field. All of green villages are chosen according to certain

standards. Rural tourism in Austria is a tourism type preferred generally by retired or old people. Almost half of the accommodation capacity in this country is consisted of farms [24].

Fifteen towns in Lungau, Austria set up Regional Development Committee. This committee has started to promote the region for tourists by specifying thematic areas. Also a labelling movement called as *Natürlich Lungau* has begun. All the products of enterprises, which want to have this label, should be produced in Lungau. For example, the menus of restaurants should have at least 2 meals, which are made of local products produced in Lungau's farms. This quality label and corporate identity have made Lungau a popular rural tourism destination [21].

Africa

In 1995, a group of scientists, businessmen, tourism experts, sociologists and environmentalists founded Open Africa movement within the scope of The African Dream Project. The purpose of Open Africa was to optimize tourism, employment and environmental protection. Under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, the mission of the group has become to make natural and cultural resources of Africa the most valuable products of the world [25].

Italy

For Italians, rural tourism means to be integrated with nature, silence, landscape beauties; to meet new people and to return to traditions. As rural tourism in Italy is closely related to farmlands, it is generally called as farm-based tourism or agro-tourism. Late in 1980's, agro-tourism developed within green tourism. It has become a tourism type which was created by people who liked rural landscape, were keen on rural culture and different regional cuisines and were interested in local handicrafts. In general, it is considered that agro-tourism is the best tool of utilizing farm products in various regions of Italy such as Alto Adige/ Bolsano, Tuscany, Umbria, Puglia [26].

Spain

One of the rural tourism projects practised in the country was the project developed in Taramundi region on the border of Galicia. In 1983, local authorities came together and analysed development potential of the region; then decided to develop rural tourism. For this aim, outdoor recreational activities and hiking trails were arranged. Storehouses and mills were restored as rural heritage. Private entrepreneurs started to render food and beverage service by making country houses suitable for tourist use. A logo representing handicrafts of the region was designed. The most important function of rural tourism in Spain is to enhance the level of economical status of locals and to protect natural environment. The focus is to develop environment-friendly and ecological rural tourism [26].

In Andalusia, efforts were initiated for the promotion of rural tourism in seven special regions with Plan DIA. With the support of local authorities, a lot of tourism facilities opened within this plan. Also, local government performed as the promoter and advertiser of hotels in the region. This plan determined special activities like wine production and routes based on historical heritage [27].

Hungary

Rural tourism activities mostly consist of folklore programs and performances with horses organized around Balaton Lake in Hungary that has given an important place to rural tourism in regional development plans since

1960's. Also, hospitality of Hungarians, attractive cultural texture in small villages, thermal springs, rivers and lakes are among the attractions of rural tourism in the country [2].

Greece

In 2003, accommodation network called as "GuestInn" was formed for the first time in rural areas with the partnership of France. There are 9 regions, 42 members and 1010 beds in this network. Accommodation types are different from each other such as traditional boarding houses, guest rooms, traditional studio houses, old traditional country houses, traditional hotels and farm houses. Authenticity, environment, quality and warm relationships underlie the philosophy of GuestInn. Four criteria represent quality: friendly welcome, simple but comfortable place, respect to local architecture, authenticity and peaceful environment [11].

France

Rural tourism providing opportunity for utilizing the diversity of rural areas in France and diversification of tourism supplies in coastal areas and mountainsides are supported by public authorities. Contracts drawn up between government and local communities embody efforts for a better distribution of tourism flow. For instance, Jura Mountains Interregional Tourism organization aims to revive tourism by activating a global communication strategy, developing industrial tourism and renovating mass tourist accommodation centres [28]. Rural tourism is organized in the best way by starting from micro (family) businesses to national businesses. Standing Conference of Rural Tourism is an enterprise organizing relations between rural tourism foundations and public administration. This organization is under the protection of the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Agriculture and other ministries. There are 94500 rural hotel beds, 50000 rural houses, 30000 guest houses, 37000 holiday villages, 28000 tourism houses and 308000 camping places which render service for rural tourism in the country. Rural tourism development policy of France is gathered under four titles: (1) To meet local people with tourists, (2) To make actors familiar with each other, (3) To dynamize enterprises and (4) To activate the people in charge [26].

As it is understood from the examples of different countries mentioned above, the factors for rural tourism to be successful are as follows [21]:

- Community participation
- Proximity to an improving market
- Product development
- A visitor center
- Partnership collaboration
- A quality brand and regional label
- Financial support

As a result of a research done with the method of focus group in Illinois, USA [15], ten factors were determined for rural tourism to be successful. There are as follows: A complete tourism package, good leadership, support and involvement of local government, sufficient funds for tourism development, strategic planning, coordination and cooperation between businessmen and local leadership, coordination and cooperation between rural tourism entrepreneurs, information and technical assistance for tourism development and promotion, good convention and visitor bureaus and widespread community support for tourism.

European Union has started projects aiming to develop rural tourism with many funds. The most important ones are IPARD (Instrument for Preaccession for Rural Development), SAPARD (Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development) and LEADER (Links between Action for Development of the Rural Economy) [29]. LEADER program is one of four initiatives supported by structural funds of European Union and targets to help rural actors consider long-term potential of local areas. It is a program supporting the formation of an integrated, high quality and original strategies [30].

On the other hand, according to Barke and Newton [31], although LEADER program initiated by European Union for rural development supports facility supply, have not been so successful in a more sustainable promotion of rural development. Even though almost half of the investments made under LEADER I program are within the context of tourism, the most of these investments are reserved for more tangible and specific projects [27].

Rural Tourism Practises in Turkey

In Turkey rural tourism concept brings outdoor recreational activities such as trekking and nature sports or village excursions for shopping and dining to people's minds. It is seen that this kind of rural tourism has developed in villages near ancient sites in settlements with cultural richness such as Bursa and Safranbolu or in tourism cities such as Mugla and Antalya or around big cities like Istanbul and Izmir. Rural tourism in Turkey has gained importance through projects supported by both local and foreign resources recently [32].

Even though tourism policies and plans are extremely important in our country, there is not any policy or planning related to rural tourism specifically. Rural tourism policies are included in the rural development projects [20]. Yet, in parallel with increased fondness on nature, policies of areas in which tourism activities can be performed, should be formed, planned and implemented [17].

Rural tourism can contribute to the process of rural environment renewal and modernization. In order to implement a dynamic policy on rural tourism development, short, medium and long-term targets should be clarified firstly. According to Sagcan (1986):

1. Short and medium term targets can be summarized as follows:

- To present leisure time and entertainment activities and a real tourist field revival.
- To improve local accommodation facilities.
- To exert efforts for touristic appearance of rural areas to gain value.

2. Long term targets are as follows:

- To support the idea that rural areas be opened for tourism and out door recreational activities.
- To contribute to the development of local enterprises.
- To support marketing and development efforts of rural tourism.

Even though the efforts exerted under the title of rural tourism policy have not been separated as another group specifically, legal regulations on rural development are very important and high in number. One of the oldest regulations is "the Village Law no. 442" which dates back to 1924. Other laws have followed the regulations started with this law. Apart from these legal arrangements towards rural tourism development in Turkey, there are organizational laws of administrations and special

legislations for projects. The aim of rural development projects is to boost welfare by increasing agricultural activities and income in underdeveloped regions [20]. Rural development has taken place in “Five-Year Development Plans” and has maintained its importance. For example, in the “8th Five-Year Development Plan”, it is stated that tourism should be divided into alternative types including eco-tourism and steps should be taken towards this target [33].

Agricultural Development Support Institution, along with the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock constituted Management Authority of Rural Development Programme and announced a project charter about this in 2013. Determined issues of this programme are as follows [34]:

- To improve services of boarding houses, bed and breakfast accommodation facilities and restaurants by micro entrepreneurs or farmers.
- To establish and improve agro-tourism facilities.
- To support the improvement of recreational facilities.

Rural tourism is also frequently mentioned in Tourism Strategy of Turkey-2023 [35] published in 2007 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Primarily, there is a principle among vision-oriented guidelines as follows: “to raise consciousness of public, private and non-governmental organizations about eco-tourism, rural tourism and agro-tourism by promoting sustainable tourism.” There is an item among 2023 targets stated under the title of investment as follows: “sectorial incentive mechanisms are to be developed at the regional level in accordance with level of development and preferential tourism types.” Among the determined strategies on the development of domestic tourism, it is stated that efforts will be exerted in order to increase local and regional capacity. Another strategy mentioned in Tourism Strategy of Turkey-2023 is branding. Spotlighting regional values and branding destinations are among the determined targets. Under the title of “Tourism Diversification Strategy” which mentions the development of new means for alternative tourism types led particularly by health, thermal, winter, golf, sea tourism, eco tourism and plateau tourism, conference and expo tourism activities, it is stated that nature-based tourism types such as eco-tourism and plateau tourism will be developed and for this aim, tourism infrastructure will be enhanced and its quality will be increased. The most important targets stated on this subject are as follows:

- Local people will be taken to instructional courses on touristic product, souvenir making, services, quality and business administration.
- People will be encouraged to open house museums.
- Detailed maps showing various touring routes and rest areas will be established.
- Locals will be given education of guesthouse operation and management.
- “Field management plans” for eco tourism areas will be designed.

There is also another substantial title about local and regional development in Tourism Strategy of Turkey-2023: “Tourism Development Zones”. The determined strategy is as follows: “Tourism shall be used as a powerful tool for local and regional development in tourism development zones which cover more than one city and can be developed as destinations”. In accordance with this strategy, thematic zones will be developed.

It can be seen that rural tourism is one of the overemphasized subjects in Tourism Strategy of Turkey-2023. After rural tourism was included in this strategy, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock has started to take steps by adapting support programs initiated by European Union. As an Instrument for Pre-Accession Rural Development IPARD which went in effect in 2007 [36] was divided into two phases. In the first phase (2007-2009), Amasya, Corum, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kars, Konya, Samsun, Sivas, Şanlıurfa, Tokat and Trabzon provinces were supported. In its second phase (2011-2013), Afyon, Ağrı, Burdur, Çankırı, Erzincan, Giresun, Isparta, Kastamonu, Kütahya, Mardin, Nevşehir, Ordu, Uşak, Van and Yozgat provinces were supported within this program [22].

Some of rural tourism projects implemented in Turkey can be exemplified as follows:

- Küre Mountains and Zümrüt Village,
- Developing eco tourism in Azdavay-Kastamonu,
- Buldan example,
- Rural tourism practices in development program of Eastern Anatolia,
- Eastern Anatolia tourism promotion project,
- Rural tourism efforts in Sirince Village, İzmir,
- Rural tourism development project in Tekelioglu Village, Manisa,
- Göreme example,
- Beypazarı example.

One of the remarkable projects that can be given as an example of rural tourism practices in Turkey is TaTuTa which means Agro Tourism in Ecological Farms, Voluntary Exchange of Knowledge and Experience. Conducted by the Wheat Organization of Supporting Ecological Life with the support of Global Environment Fund of United Nations Development Programme, this project has a website on which there is detailed information about 69 farms in 32 separate areas. Volunteers can learn the location of ecological farms via this website and participate in hard work needed in farms while accommodating in a natural and peaceful place [17].

Dadalı Village of Akcakoca town in Duzce offers tourists a real experience of village life. Guests can milk cows in the morning, gather eggs from chicken coops and feed animals; and also they can wear local clothes and join local and traditional entertainments such as betrothal, engagement or henna nights [38].

Another similar enterprise has been undertaken in Fethiye. Agro tourism business is mostly done by private entrepreneurs in Fethiye. In the farm, there is an accommodation facility and a restaurant. The fresh products from plantations and the products sent from surrounding villages are offered to guests [39].

RESULTS

Today all around the world, people living in big cities or provinces demand various kinds of tourism; so tourism demand has started to change considerably. Alternative tourism types have begun to replace mass tourism or sea-sun-sand tourism. Rural tourism has recently been one of the leading alternative tourism types. The importance of rural tourism has been recognized completely and it is predicted that it will become more and more important with new trends such as voluntourism.

As rural tourism is one of the keystones of rural development and therefore it takes place in the development policies of many countries, it is a very significant phenomenon for especially developed and developing countries like Turkey.

The effects of rural tourism on local people's income, employment and investments are remedy for the development and renewal of rural areas. The effect of rural tourism on social structure and culture of rural areas is undeniable, either. Therefore, in addition to support and incentives given by government or local administrations, rural tourism is a tourism type that is open to improvement with the opportunities provided by bigger organizations such as European Union.

In the light of all this information and model practices, other rural tourism potentials in our country should be determined and master plans should be designed. Unique characteristics of rural areas in Turkey should be spotlighted, improved and promoted.

Especially local administrations should follow these kinds of incentives and support programs and use every opportunity to revive rural tourism in their regions. If these steps are taken, there will not be any reason for our country to get a bigger share from international tourism market and to provide an integrated development in agriculture industry in rural areas.

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