

IMPACTS OF TOURISM PROJECTS OF DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES ON SOCIAL PEACE IN TURKEY

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Tourism and peace are two important concepts which are influencing each other. These concepts are mostly tackled separately at tourism and peace platforms which are isolated. Since international security issues gain more importance, significance of both concepts are more underlined. Tourism is one of the most employment generator sectors of the world economy. Conflicts and tensions in different regions of the world could diminish number of tourists and tourism workers. Even if tourism can rehabilitate itself rapidly after such problems, scientific researches' are getting more interested in crises management (Laws, E., B. Prideaux and K. Chon, 2007). In this study, Do's and Don'ts of tourism projects in less developed regions will be extensively searched with qualitative methods, not after such crises but during the social crises and problems. At the main focus of this study, tourism projects of South Eastern and Eastern Regions of Turkey with high economical and social problem zones will be evaluated. These projects will be especially evaluated in the terms of establishing social peace. Results which are delivered with this study will be used for recommendations for the other problem zones of the world.

Keywords: *Tourism Projects, Development Agencies, Eastern and South Eastern Anatolia*

JEL Classification: *L83, M1, O1*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism related projects in South Eastern and Eastern Anatolia regions could increase the living standards of locals, diminish the poverty and bring social peace to people (Kosan, 2006). At this point, projects must be evaluated according how realistic they are. Increasing number of such projects, high level of financial supports, variety of local participation and increase of NGOs are highly expected. Especially, it

must be observed whether these projects are evaluated or not. Private sector's support is less than expected. Some NGO projects which have different supporters than public sources will be also mentioned.

METHODOLOGY

First of all, tourism projects of these regions will be searched and then these will be outlined. The border of the study will be constricted. Especially, 3 development regions will be evaluated with 8 cities of high social tensions. Every city's project performances which are mostly financed by development agencies will be introduced by the help of tables in details. For each city, there will be critical approaches in order to understand the situation. At the end, comparison will be made. A special approach for tourism and peace relation will be created where qualitative research methods are extensively used.

At this stage of study, projects of 8 different cities with high level of social tensions Bitlis, Hakkari and Van (under the supervision of Eastern Anatolian Development Agency); Batman, Şırnak and Mardin (under the supervision of South Eastern Anatolian Development Agency); Diyarbakır (under the supervision of Karadağ Development Agency) and expected results will be discussed.

PROBLEM AND GOALS

There is not standard social and economic development level among South Eastern and Eastern region cities. Expectations about economical and social development are getting also more differentiated. Hence, delays by dealing with problems have negative effects on social peace. Different incentives and development projects have been implemented since many years. During last 3-4 years, regional supports for sector with priorities have been given by regional development agencies and international agencies. Practical solutions such as preparation of projects, application with projects are very useful but this is not enough. These projects can be also prepared only for financial reasons. This could bring one danger: Participation of local people can be sometimes ignored and they could be alienated.

CITIES AND PROJECT SUPPORTS OF DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

Under this title, cities and project supports of Eastern and Southern Anatolian Development Agencies will be introduced. Some not-agency related projects will be also mentioned.

Eastern Anatolian Development Agency

This agency is responsible of Bitlis, Hakkari, Van cities. Only tourism related projects will be shown.

Tourism Projects at Bitlis

Table 1 Tourism projects of Bitlis

Project Name	Operator
Training project with focus on sector capability in tourism at Tatvan and Surroundings	Tatvan Municipality
Promotion of tourism potential of Bitlis	Bitlis Tourism and Culture Directory
Increasing of tourism income with the help carpet and rug weaving and handcraft	Development Foundation of Bitlis and its Small Towns
Woman-hand project (Financed by EU and Turkish Ministry of Labor and Social Security)	Bitlis Woman-hand Cooperative Woman-hand Project

Source: DPT, 2005

If we look above, there is a balance between project operators: 2 public organizations and 1 NGO. Proposed and accepted project topics show concrete initiatives and steps toward solving problems. Firstly, practical abilities of local people in tourism are tried to be increased, secondly concrete carpet and rug production techniques of people are developed, products are supplied to tourism sector and finally this brings them higher income. On the other hand, there is an attempt to give a new shape to promotion efforts for the city by the public organization. It is very interesting that not only state tries to initiate civil initiative but also there is a strong connection between local NGOs and public institutions.

Tourism Projects at Hakkari

Table 2 Tourism Projects at Hakkari

Project Name	Operator
Diversification of Hakkari rug weaving products and their promotion	Hakkari Culture and Tourism Directory
Promotion of Cilo mountains and Sat lakes with Plateau tourism	Cilo Nature Society
Increasing of tourism income and making profession for women in Kırköy	Kırköy Municipality
Handcraft training for physically handicapped women	Hakkari, Education, Art, development and Research Society

Source: DPT, 2005

Projects which are supported in Hakkari show diverse characters. On the one hand, women are trained to have their own professions; on the other hand, handicapped women are supported. One of the projects is done by an NGO. This makes people easier to join such projects.

Hakkari rugs belong to the best examples of the world rugs. Number of product types will be increased in order to attract the interest of different buyers. It is possible to make cooperation with Bitlis which has similar project. This project has very serious stakeholder attendance. Last but not least, geographically Cilo Mountains are highest mountains of Turkey when volcanoes are not counted. This project is implemented by an NGO. Generally speaking, economical, geographical and social projects have the right balance in this city.

Tourism Projects at Van

Van is one of the most project maker's cities of this region when it is compared with other cities. Project topics are found on a larger scale. On the one hand, geographical and cultural amenities are gaining importance; on the other hand there are managerial skill trainings. Total quality management project in tourism, training of middle level personal in tourism sector and Van tourism training project are some of these examples. Especially, other project topics try to create awareness in certain subjects. Configuration and adaptation of folkloric activities are not new facts in Turkish tourism sector. There will be some researches on

folkloric heritage, diversification will be realized and young people will be directed to folkloric activities. These are mostly hobby activities but that could be a ground stone for entertainment sector of tourism. Projects which are emphasized by natural and historical beauties can also be found here. An Armenian Church renovation is supported by the development agency. This aid aims not only to support tourism but it also gives a good will message for problematic Turkish-Armenian relationships. It is believed that this could give a small momentum to both countries relationships.

Table 3 Tourism Projects at Van

Project Name	Operator
Promotion of natural beauties and historical values of Van and its surroundings in Eastern region	Life, Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative
Total quality management project in tourism	Van City Special Administration
Van tourism training project	Anatolian Sustainable Development Agency Society
Training of middle level personal in tourism sector	Van Chamber of Industry and Commerce
Development and protection of local culture and art: Preparation of entertainment basement in tourism sector.	Van Lake Folklore Tourism Sport Club Society
Uncovering of Van's touristic values	Van Chamber of Industry and Commerce
Edremit Church restoration project	Turkish Service and Education Foundation

Source: DPT, 2005

South Eastern Development Agency

This agency is responsible of Batman, Siirt, Sırnak and Mardin cities. Only tourism related projects will be shown.

Tourism Projects of Batman

Table 4 Tourism Projects of Batman

Project Name	Operator
Lobbying for 4. International Health Congress in order to be organized in Batman	Batman Tourism and Promotion Society (NGO)
Telkari 'Silver filigree' project	Batman Culture and Tourism Directory

Source: DPT, 2010

This society planned to organize congress and got financial aid from the agency. But this congress was planned to organize in Istanbul before the financial aid decision. That means this aid was useless and unrealistic. There are not too many projects in Batman and project topics are not so relevant with tourism.

Silver handcraft works project is not related with tourism directly. This project will give chance young people to have their own profession independently. It is supported by State Planning Institute, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Batman University and private sector.

Tourism Projects of Siirt

Table 5 Tourism Projects of Siirt

Project Name	Operator
Organic Bee Keeping Training	Aydınlar Town Governorship
Telkari 'Silver Filigree' Project	Siirt Governorship

Source: DPT, 2010

Silver filigree is supported here same as in Batman. There is organic bee keeping training in Aydınlar town. Products can be introduced to tourism market in the long term. Generally and specifically, there are problems with tourism project support work in the city. People cannot integrate themselves to such kind project works. Economical and social problems do not let them to be part of project preparation and implementation.

Tourism Projects of Sırnak

Sırnak proposed vast variety of projects without tourism. City has lack of tourism sense. Tourism can be introduced to local people with

some training. This will lead them to prepare some projects within some NGOs. Especially, there are some projects about handcrafts development projects with in small scale NGO works (DPT, 2010).

Tourism Projects of Mardin

Mardin cannot be counted in the group of above cities. There are many concrete private sector projects in the city. There is sufficient bed capacity with the natural architecture of the city. This attracts tourists gradually. It is not realistic to put this city under supervision of south eastern development agency because of different characteristics of neighbor cities. Especially, less developed cities with security problems could not be compared with more secured and slightly developed cities. This could have negative effects on project implementation when there is no differentiated approach to the cities with different characters. But this problem can also be seen under the responsibility of different development agencies.

Mardin Artuklu University has a project which is supported by the agency: Improvement of personal performance in tourism sector. This is radically different from other cities tourism projects which is mainly dealing at the management level of tourism sector (DPT, 2010).

Karacadağ Development Agency

This agency is responsible of Diyarbakir and Sanliurfa cities. Sanliurfa has also social and economical problems. But this does not create social tension in the city. Diyarbakir will be evaluated from the perspective of tourism projects because of its social and economic problems.

Tourism Projects of Diyarbakır

Government and all state agencies give full support to tourism and social projects of Diyarbakir as it can be seen above. Its projects compete with Van. NGO initiatives are really rare. This has no real function for integrating local people to their problems. Local people must be encouraged for planning projects.

Thermal, ecological and cave tourism are supported in 3 different small cities. These destinations can be combined after project completion in certain tour programs. Tourists could visit these places and have an idea about before and after project implementation.

Table 6 Tourism Projects of Diyarbakir

Project Names	Operators
Smiling face of thermal tourism	Cermik Municipality
Historical direction signings project	Diyarbakir Municipality
Museum projects for old two important writers from Diyarbakir	Diyarbakir Museum Directory
Ecological tourism and tourism infrastructure development project	Egil Governorship Society of Service for Villages
Protection of Hasuni caves and opening for tourism	Silvan Governorship, Villages Service Society
Diyarbakir fairs and congress center capacity development project	Diyarbakir Trade and Industry Chamber

Source: DIKA, 2010

There are still many places in South Eastern Anatolia that locals and tourists cannot find right way to historical places because of inappropriate signings. This is going to be solved by a project. Diyarbakir is at junction of four different countries. This city can play a frontier role about meetings and congress tourism. The capacity of congress center could be increased with the help of Trade and Industry Chamber.

RESULTS

Results can be introduced by the help of table. Projects are named, collected and counted under certain topics. Evaluation is made in the terms of income generation projects (Bee keeping, silver filigree, carpet and rug weaving), woman projects, tourism capacity, promotion of cultural, geographical and historical attractiveness projects, tourism management projects, tourism training projects, protection of local culture projects, restoration projects and ecological tourism projects.

1. *Income generating projects*: They can be found in 5 cities. Income generating projects have totally to do with handcraft activities. They have indirect relation with tourism. They will be evaluated with women related projects.

2. *Women Projects*: Women have still problems with archaic family relationships especially in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. In some cities, women are being forced to commit suicide or died because of so called 'honor killings'. This is mostly because of man dominated family understanding. In the first six months of 2011, 105 women have been 240

killed in Turkey. Women are not really free even if they have their democratic rights. Most of the time, they do not know how they use their democratic rights. Only two women-tourism related projects are supported. Carpet and rug weaving is very dominant activity. But this production type is very time consuming. Products are not easily sold. When then, they are sold by little prices. That means there are not newly developed projects. Women have been weaving carpet and rugs since centuries. Income generation is very acceptable results of projects. But do women get their money without any claim of their husbands, brothers or fathers? These projects must be secured women rights in these regions. Real social peace can exist when women can practice their rights. Men dominated areas with high unemployment rates can see a positive change in economic and social life when women do have more freedom of speech and have more materialistic rights in the family. Tourism and other social projects must push these rights forward. But projects which are implemented in these regions are not touching real problems of people. Financial aids are given in order to color the reality. Some projects are prepared by private companies which take commissions from project stakeholders. This is something a silent bargain between local agents and private firms. Everybody knows it and everybody keeps silence.

Table 7 Comparison of Results

	Income	Woman	Tourism Capacity	Promotion	Management	Training	Protection	Restoration	Ecologic
B	X	X	X	X					
H	X	X		X					
V				X	X	X	X	X	
B	X			X					
S	X								
S	X								
M					X				
D				X			X	X	X

Source: Own comparison

3. *Tourism Capacity*: Projects about development of tourism capacity are only 2. Such kind of projects must be encouraged. Weak awareness about tourism sector must be changed to strong awareness. This capacity

can only be increased by awareness trainings of local people. Once, they know the positive and negative characteristics of this sector, they can start to be part of some tourism projects. They can not be pushed to be part of these activities. There is only in Bitlis such kind of projects.

4. Promotion of Cultural, Geographical and Historical Attractiveness: Under this title, there are many projects. But these are mostly projects of state authorities. Promotion of attractiveness is thought mostly for tourists. But there is very crucial point here. Especially local people must have more information about such places. If they do not have awareness about these values, they do not want take responsibility of their surroundings. They become alienated in places where they live. In some historical places, children do work as tourist guides which we see this in various parts of the world as well. Nearly 10 years ago, there were some projects for these children in these regions. They were trained as volunteer guides. They got certificates after their trainings and they were officially recognized. In summer months, they earned their pocket money. They gained awareness of touristic places where they lived. They had contacts with national and international tourists. This created ways to a new world. Author of this paper worked also as a volunteer guide in this region. This helped him very much to understand his own culture and culture of different nationalities. But such activities are now nearly finished. Children are pushed to the hands of social tension.

5. Tourism Management: Tourism management projects could be implemented where the real tourism infrastructure more or less exists. Van and Mardin try their best. Alone, hotels are not enough to serve tourists without managerial skills. Service personal must be trained in effective manner. Especially, universities of this region do not really show interest in such tourism project preparations. Mardin Artuklu University shows here a real exception: Implementation of a project for increasing performance of personal at tourism sector.

6. Tourism Training: This is one of the most important but least supported topic same as at tourism capacity development. Without such trainings, there will be less chance to have tourism in these less developed regions. Tourism high schools must take more initiatives for training local people in order to give them more sense of tourism.

7. Protection of Local Culture: Protection of local culture is not possible with two projects. Folkloric values could be preserved at Van example if it is not going to be much commercialized. Literature museums of two famous poets and authors could have more effect bring people together. Local culture must be protected but at the same time

there must be new researches on them. This could help people understand their own culture.

8. *Restoration*: These projects are very important. It has very special meanings for local people. There are also positive messages for people who lived here before a long time. These renovated holly and cultural places attract people from outside of the region. They come and visit birth places of their ancestors. As tourists, they leave money. This brings welfare to local people. As mentioned before, renovation projects can have also positive effects on border countries relations such as between Turkey and Armenia if there is a mutual understanding. Tourism can play a very crucial role in such conflicts. At least, small steps can start with the help of tourism. People of both countries can visit each region, try to understand each other. This is still problematic but hopefully it will be changed in the future.

9. *Ecological Tourism*: It is one of the most attractive types of tourism in especially economical less developed regions. It is small but it has healing effect on local communities. Infrastructure for ecological tourism must be developed in different regions of the Eastern and South Eastern Anatolian region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Women rights und women income generated projects must be encouraged, number of them must be increased in these regions.
2. Local people must gain sense of tourism. This can be done with the help of tourism awareness trainings.
3. Local people must take tourism initiatives. Therefore, they have to know culture, history and geography of their living places.
4. Children have to be trained as volunteer guides. This will open their eyes to the world of opportunities.
5. Universities must take over more responsibility for project planning with local agents.
6. Tourism management courses must be implemented for places with better tourism infrastructure.
7. More researches must be undertaken about tourism and social tensions. Researches on folkloric heritage have to be done in order to adapt them to tourism. But commercialization must be abandoned.
8. More restoration projects must be taken place. This admires local people. They will be proud of their living places. More tourists will come and visit their places. This will create more income.

9. Development agencies supporting projects must be evaluated whether they are useful for the people of the region. If there are wrong projects, these must be stopped in order to stop empty financial aids.

10. Development agency's responsible cities must be renewed. Less developed cities can not be put on the same list with slightly more developed cities. Otherwise, this will bring wrong solutions to regions. As a matter of fact, working and organizational structures of development agencies must be changed.

These recommendations are not only for a better tourism understanding but also for a peaceful living of different cultures which are eager to live together. Social peace has many facets. It is really difficult to find solutions for regions where there have been many social and economical problems since many years. These must be searched and new findings have to be shared with international community.

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