

## THE POTENTIAL OF RURAL TOURISM IN TURKEY: THE CASE STUDY OF CAYONU

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Preventing poverty and migration will only be possible by enhancing living standards in rural areas and ensuring a fair distribution of income. It is an open question whether rural tourism may prevent migration from rural to urban areas by providing new employment opportunities for the population and may show a positive impact in the development of these areas. This study was conducted to determine the rural tourism potential of Hilar (Cayonu) village, located in an area very close to caves and other historical remnants dating back to Neolithic times. This research showed that the biggest problem facing in this village is the insufficiency of infrastructure and superstructure, which was mentioned by 96.3% of respondents. When participants' level of awareness regarding the tourism potential of the village is considered, the proportion who considered the historic sites to be the most important quality of the village was low, 22.2%, contrary to expectations, whereas agricultural products and traditional foods were seen as most important by 46.4% and 29.6%, respectively. In conclusion, the participants have knowledge on the benefit of tourism, but they cannot take action about vitalization. Therefore, they need to learn to act together with common by founding their own organizations.

**Keywords:** Hilar, rural development, tourism potential, rural tourism

### INTRODUCTION

Employment opportunities for those living in rural areas are quite limited. Indeed, because employment opportunities except those related to agriculture in rural areas are restricted, and even those are limited, poverty is widespread. For example, whereas the proportion of poor households across Turkey was 13.52% in 2008, the rate of rural poor households was 29.83% (Olhan, 2011). In underdeveloped countries, diversification of economic activities has contributed to decreasing poverty in rural areas (Şenses, 2003). Rural tourism may provide a good opportunity for the diversification of rural economic activity. 75% of 1.2 billion poor people live in rural areas in world and their livelihood is agriculture (Öztürk, 2008). Rural poverty is separated from urban poverty by the agricultural activities. The framework of rural poverty, landless peasants, and the amount of landless agricultural laborers and small farmers who's having small scale lands (Dumanli, 1996).

Perceptions and desires of the individual on the touristic products in recent years have changed according to the era conditions. In this regard, instead of the conventional tourism, the rural tourism began to gain importance unusually (Çeken *et al.*, 2012). Although the definition of "rural tourism" varies, a common aim is to increase the well-being of rural society. Rural tourism is defined as visits by people to rural areas other than their area of residence, where

they consume goods and services produced through agricultural practices and events while staying in temporary accommodations in keeping with the area (Küçükaltan, 1997; Soykan, 2006). Within the broad category of rural tourism, agricultural tourism has especially flourished. France, the UK, Germany, and Austria are especially active in agricultural tourism (Busby and Rendle, 2000; Prezezborska, 2003). Agricultural tourism takes two forms: with and without accommodation (Busby and Rendle, 2000). Elements of agricultural tourism unrelated to accommodation include handicrafts, guided walks, and events marking the beginning and ending dates of production periods, festivals, picnic areas, and local bazaars. Agricultural tourism provides visitors with different tourism products and services and increases the number of visitors to the area (Williams *et al.*, 2001).

Despite the need for rural tourism, little funding has been available. Thus, efficient use of existing resources, assuring sustainability, and protecting natural, cultural, and social structures are important. Many non-governmental organizations such as UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), the World Bank, and UNDP (United Nations Development Program) support rural tourism. The "IPARD Program (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in Rural Development)." supported improvements in rural tourism in several areas, such as

Amasya, Çorum, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Hatay, and Kahramanmaraş, in 2007–2009 and 2011–2013 (TKDK, 2013). Despite the potential for rural tourism in Diyarbakır, it is not presently effective. The failure to highlight the Çayönü Tumulus situated near Hilar, in the district of Ergani, Diyarbakır, as a tourist attraction is a good example of this situation. Hilar village is only 6 km away from the district of Ergani. Sources of income in the village are dry farming, viticulture, and livestock. More serious poverty is seen on the areas where the dry farming systems dominated (Oğuz, 2010). There has been much migration from the village since the 1970s. In 1995 as a mandatory government forces evacuated the village due to act of terrorism, but the permission was given to the villagers to return back their own land in 2000. Political instability and civil conflict is known as a cause of rural poverty (Khan, 2000). A significant proportion of migrants did not return to the village. The returnees were the villagers who cannot find work and do not have income enough to meet the cost of living in urban areas.

This study examined the potential for improvement in rural tourism at Hilar village based on the fame of the nearby Tumulus. By ascertaining the extent of desire and readiness of the local community to participate in rural tourism activities, we tried to assess the practicalities of rural tourism in the area. It is thought that findings from the participants will reveal the strong and weak sides that support rural tourism activities in the area.

Research question:

- What are the obstacles to activate the rural tourism in the Hilar village?
- Hypothesis of research:
- Are the awareness of the villagers sufficient on rural tourism?
- Need to increase the awareness of the villagers?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

54 questionnaires was selected between the ages 18-60 for the research material among 200 people living in village. As it was possible to reach this number, the complete inventory method was used without any need to use a separate sampling method (Gökçe, 1988).

During the application of the questionnaire, the participants were interviewed on face-to-face basis, and they understood the questions well and answered them accordingly.

The findings of Mukhtar Unit and Provincial Directorate of Tourism have also been utilized.

Semi structured interview technique maintained based on pre-prepared interview draft enables the researcher to get systematic and comparative information (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2004). In the light of this information, semi structured interview technique has been used to ensure the qualitative dimension of this study.

The frequency distributions of the findings obtained from the questionnaires have been made. For the purpose of understanding the relations of the findings, chi square test ( $X^2$ ) (95 per cent confidence interval) has been applied (Kesici and Kocabaş, 1998). The findings have been evaluated on SPSS program.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study conducted from 54 residents of Hilar village, Ergani, Diyarbakır, are presented. About 48% of the respondents were women, all of whom were housewives. The age range of the participants was 18–55 years, with the largest group (20%) being 46–55 years old. The educational levels of the participants were identified as illiterate (33%), high school graduates (20.4%), and primary school graduates (42.6%; Table 1). Generally, the education level was higher in Hilar than the average of the south-eastern Anatolia Region (39.1% primary school graduates) (Bakış, 2009). The reason for this is thought to be the effects of the former Ergani teacher training school, which was organised as an education campus and founded near the village in the 1950s.

The results of semi-structured interviews showed that 42.6% of the participants owned no land, and the vast majority of those were women (Table 1). This situation is interpreted as an indication of the continued ownership of wealth by the head of the family. Likewise, in a study by the Hacettepe University Institute for Population Studies, it was determined that there was a significant difference between women in rural areas (27%) and women in urban areas (40%) in the use of income with regard to the acquisition of property (Kulak, 2011).

It was also found that 74.5% of the respondents did not have calves, although a majority of participants had some cows. Overall, 54.2% of participants had 1–15 head of cattle.

Because 76.6% of participants had no knowledge of rural tourism, the rest of the questionnaire was answered by participants after the pollsters provided an explanation of rural tourism (Table 1). Compared with the other problems of the village, insufficient investment was identified as an important problem by 96.3% of respondents (Table 2). The percentage of those who perceived unemployment as a problem was 66.6%.

When the participants were asked to rank the problems of the village, migration was noted by 88.8% and the absence of a young workforce by 57.7%. The percentage of those who perceived insufficient publicity for the village as an important problem was also high at 55.5%.

During semi-structured interviews, participants indicated that because the village is in a protected area, no houses, barns, or other kinds of construction were permitted in or near the village, and as a result, the village cannot develop and has become fossilised. This situation was caused by the

**Table 1. Demographic information on participants**

Age			Educational Status			Occupation		
	Freq	%		Freq	%		Freq	%
18-25	9	16.2	Illiterate	18	33.3	Farmer	26	47.3
26-35	10	18.0	Primary school	23	42.6	Officer	2	3.7
36-45	15	27.0	High school	11	20.4	Housewife	26	48.0
46-55	20	36.8	University	2	3.7	Artisan	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>
Gender			Marital Status			Land amount		
	Freq	%		Freq	%		Freq	%
Woman	26	48.1	Married	36	66.7	None	23	42.6
Man	28	51.9	Single	15	27.8	1-50	9	16.2
			Widow	3	5.6	51-100	11	20.4
						101-200	7	12.6
						201-300	3	5.5
						Over 300	1	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>
Number of bovine animal			Number of small cattle			Do you know rural tourism?		
	Freq	%		Freq	%		Freq	%
None	16	28.8	None	41	74.5			
1-15	30	54.2	1-15	5	11.5	Yes	42	76.6
16-30	5	11.5	16-30hip	4	7.0			
31-50	3	5.5	31-50	4	7.0	No	12	23.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2. Perception levels of the problems of the village**

Problems of the village	No problem		Could be a problem		A problem		A very important problem		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Migration	48	88.8	3	5.5	1	1.8	2	3.7	54	100
Absence of Young labor force	31	57.5	4	7.4	3	5.5	16	29.6	54	100
Insufficiency of Publicity	21	38.8	2	3.7	1	1.8	30	55.5	54	100
Disinvestment	-	-	-	-	2	3.7	52	96.3	54	100
Unemployment	11	20.3	3	5.5	4	7.4	36	66.6	54	100
Lack of Awareness	31	57.5	2	3.7	3	5.5	18	33.3	54	100

nearby historical areas, and the prevalent opinion was that these historical sites had harmed, rather than benefitted, the village.

Among respondents 38.8% perceived a lack of awareness about the village's potential as a very important problem, whereas rest of them by 57.5% did not accept it as an important problem (Table 2). Awareness about the potential of the village was assessed by asking respondents about the most important aspects of the village. Participants perceived agricultural products (46.4%), traditional foods (29.6%), and the nearby historical sites (22.2%) as the most important qualities of the village (Table 3). Of all respondents, 46.4% believed that the most important quality of the village was agricultural products, although more men (27.8%) than women (18.6%) were of this opinion.

The answers given by residents, however, suggest that the local community does not see that they have received any benefit, at least so far, from the historical sites, although awareness on the issue is low. Although rural tourism cannot be determined solely by the local community, we conclude that there is potential for such tourism in Hilar because the residents have already undertaken some activities that can improve rural tourism.

It was observed that women have a priority place carried out in many studies in the rural tourism. Because rural tourism content and activities are in compliance with the woman. For the development of qualitative tourism potential compatibility between women and nature of rural tourism is the developer and promoter. In fact it was seen clearly in Table 3 as the most important feature of local dishes from the activities of the women (Fidan and Nam, 2012). The

**Table 3. Qualities of Hilar based on gender and education**

The most important quality of the village		Women				Men		Women				Men	
		Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%		
Traditional food	16	29.6	14	25.9	2	3.7	Education illiterate	16	61.5	2	7.2		
Agricultural food	25	46.4	10	18.6	15	27.8	Primary school	7	27.0	16	57.1		
Vegetation	-	-	-	-	-	-	High school	1	11.5	10	35.6		
Historical remains	12	22.2	2	3.7	10	18.5	University	-	-	2	7.2		
Traditional Handcraft	1	1.8	-	-	1	1.8	Total	26	100	28	100		

Notes:  $\chi^2=15.147$ . $P=0.0017$ **Table 4. The tourism potential of the village and current situation**

Is there a benefit of Hilar Park to the village?			Should Hilar Festival be activated?			Is there a benefit from incoming tourists?			What type of tourist would you like to have?		
	Fre	%		Fre	%		Fre	%		Fre	%
Yes	44	81.5	Yes	42	77.8	Yes	7	13.0	Foreign	9	16.6
No	9	16.7	No	12	22.2	No	47	87.0	Local	30	55.6
Partly	1	1.8	Partly	-	-	Partly	-	-	No difference	15	27.8
Total	54	100	Total	54	100	Total	54	100	Total	54	100

advocates of this point seems to be the overwhelming majority of the women.

It has been seen that the participants regard agricultural products and local food as the most important qualities of Hilar and they care about this issue. It is thought that rural tourism will not provide improvement on natural rearing techniques in the district. This situation may lead to the disappearance of factors which cause pollution (fertilizer), and increases in the earnings obtained through producing health local food and the marketing of produced local food.

Of those who perceived traditional food as the most important quality of the village (29.6% total), most were women (25.9% vs. only 3.7% men). This is due to women are seen their activities more valuable than the others activities.

Of those perceiving traditional food as the most important quality of the village (29.6% total), most were women (25.9% vs. only 3.7% men). This was likely the result of the women's regarding their own activities as more valuable.

The historical sites were seen as the third most important aspect of the village, although the proportion was low, 22%, with women constituting only 3.7% of that 22% (Table 3). There was a significant correlation between level of education and the opinion that the historical sites were the most important quality of the village ( $P=0.0017$ ).

A park opened in 2010 near the village, is the first in the villages near the city of Diyarbakır. This is an area where visitors can go to the caves, and day visitors can be accommodated. The park is a recreational area organised by a private enterprise. The concept of recreation is closely related to tourism because it is one way that people spend their free time (Serarslan and Bakır, 1988). In terms of tourism, parks organised for events, where cultural and art

activities and general open-field activities can occur, can enhance tourism (Shivers and DeLisle, 1997).

We sought to learn the perspectives of the study participants on the park and related tourism by asking whether the park had brought any advantage to the village. A large majority (81.5%) of participants thought the park was useful to the village, and only 16.7% found the park useless (Table 4). The semi-structured interviews revealed that the availability of a parking lot in the park contributed to this perception, as this meant that cars did not need to be parked within the village itself.

Festivals defined as activities organized with the aim of providing publicity and economic, artistic, cultural and social intimacy between people and communities contribute to the improvement of tourism (Atak, 2009). The opinions of the participants on the activation of the festival which is organized four times in Hilar but was not realized in last six months have been received. The reason for asking this question is to search the practicability of rural tourism in the village and specify the readiness and willingness level of local community in taking part in rural tourism activities. The participants were substantially (77.8%) determined to be in favour of the activation of the festival (Table 4). Similarly, Yemenoğlu *et al.* (2012) stated that local community in Honaz has the opinion that Cherry Fest contributes to local tourism. Plans made without considering the values and expectations of the local people cannot be successful (Alaeddinoğlu, 2008). Even as shown in Table 4, if they have ever benefit from a low level from rural tourism, it is seen that positive attitude towards the festival and recreation area that to be served tourism.

According to the information received from Diyarbakır Provincial Culture Directorate and Mukhtar of the village,

the average number of visitors to the caves is 5000 annually. It is remarkable that only 7 participants (13 per cent) make use of this tourism activity. In semi structured interviews it was revealed that, those who benefited were gate-keepers and workers of the car park who are paid by Provincial Culture Directorate. The view that tourism on that field do not provide enough income yet. Despite all the villagers wish the tourists arrive their village to visit. It was indicated that the majority of participants (55 per cent) was in favour of local tourists and 16, 6 per cent of foreign tourists and others seeing no difference between these two groups (27.8 per cent). In semi structured interviews, with reference to the easiness of communication with local tourists, it was seen that they preferred local tourists to a large extent (Table 4).

When asked about the alternative suggestions which may contribute to the development of tourism in the village. Participants are not willingly relating to opening their homes for accommodation by 79,6%. The awareness of operating pensions at homes, which is an important element of rural tourism, was considered a foreign concept for Hilar village. In fact, home pensions is very important activities to increase the employment opportunity and develop tourism in rural areas (Aksoy, 2012 )

The possibility of guided walks was regarded as unfavourable by 48,1 per cent of the participants whereas the percentage of those thinking about the feasibility of this was indicated to be 12,9 per cent (Table 5). In semi-structured interviews, it was concluded that this situation is mostly seen in tourist areas and is learnt and adopted as far as is known via TVs. (documentary and advertisement) Agricultural tourism, which is a component of rural tourism, is depicted as a phenomenon which people experience the daily farm conditions of people (Mitchell, 2006). When considered the viewpoints of the participants related to the marketability of the activities such as animal raising, plant production and baking bread as the main livelihood of the participants, it was observed that milking the sheep and baking bread were not good activities for tourism for 74 % and 90% respondents respectively. In a study in Şarköy, in the city of Tekirdağ, which has more experience in tourism, the feasibility of tourism supporting rural progress and the role of local community on this were investigated. For 67, 1% of

the participants, agricultural activities aimed at collecting and merchandising greengrocery by joining in garden trips were regarded as a good idea (Kiper and Yılmaz, 2008). Especially, in Europe, gastronomy trips centre on Spain, Italy, Portugal, France and Ireland. During these tours, activities like baking bread and cheese works are done widely (Kivela and Crotts, 2005). The participants look favourably to vintage festivals instead of milking sheep and baking bread activities. This is because the TV news and documentary film focus on "festival of vintage". The disparity among the responses of the villagers for alternative options on what activities might contribute to tourism in the village was founded to be scientific on the level of  $X^2=31.637$   $P=0,0016$  (Table 5).

To improve tourism in Hilar, participants thought that advertising would be definitely (55.5%) or somewhat (31.4%) effective; only 5.5% expected that such advertising would not be effective. This is consistent with results reported by Kiper and Yılmaz, who found that 73.7% of participants expected good advertising to be effective (Kiper and Yılmaz, 2008).

Most participants (81.4%) believed that an association concerned with enhancing tourism would be ineffective and opposed the establishment of a tourism association. However, in Latvia, improvement in rural tourism began with the establishment of a tourism association in 1993 (Şerefoğlu, 2009). Similarly, an organisation called "green villages," founded by villagers, has played a major role in the development of rural tourism in Austria (Williams and Shaw, 1996). However, a 2010 study of Aydın and Selvi in Düzce, Turkey, found that, contrary to previous reports, local organisations and non-governmental organisations were not very effective in activities related to rural tourism (Aydın and Selvi, 2012).

In the present study, 51.8% of respondents thought that state institutions could definitely have an impact in improving tourism in Hilar village. This suggests that the local community is looking for benefits from the public authorities instead of their own internal dynamics and their entrepreneurship is limited.

Certainly, the fact that there is no construction in Hilar village due to its protected status causes problems.

**Table 5. Things to do for rural tourism and contributions of them to tourism**

Activities to do for tourism?	I suppose not		Possible		Ok		A must	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Village houses may be opened for accommodation	43	79.6	2	3.7	3	5.5	6	11.1
Natural guided walks	26	48.1	7	12.9	5	9.2	16	29.6
Milking sheep	40	74.0	1	1.8	-	-	13	27.7
Baking bread	49	90.7	2	5.5	2	3.7	1	1.8
Grape-harvest	25	46.2	-	-	1	1.8	28	51.8

Notes:  $X^2=31.637$

$P=0.0016$

**Table 6. Determining what to do to improve tourism in Hilar**

What to do to improve tourism	Not effective		May be effective		Effective		Definitely effective	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Advertising via media	3	5.5	4	7.4	17	31.4	30	55.5
Establishment of a tourism association	44	81.4	4	7.4	1	1.8	5	9.2
Offering training on rural tourism	30	55.5	6	11.1	7	12.9	11	20.3
Improvement of substructure and superstructure	25	46.2	3	5.5	2	3.7	24	44.4
Efforts of state institutions	20	37.0	5	9.2	11	20.3	28	51.8
Efforts of private enterprise	44	81.4	1	1.8	4	7.4	5	9.2

Notes:  $\chi^2=113.182$  P= 0.0001

Correspondingly, the percentage who thought that improvements in substructures and superstructures could be effective in the development of tourism in the village was 44.4% (Table 6). The differences in the rates at which participants endorsed the various alternatives as means for improving tourism in the village were statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 113.182$ ;  $P = 0.0001$ ).

The participants have knowledge on the benefit of tourism however it is observed that they cannot take action about vitalization. They need to learn to act together with common by founding their own organizations. So it is thought to be useful to offer education and consulting service on the issue by state institutions and local administrations. It is necessary for the improvement of rural tourism in the village to improve substructure and superstructure. Taking the village into the scope of a protected area either completely prevents these investments or causes the public to abandon because it takes long time. In order to develop rural tourism in the village, it is necessary to improve the infrastructure and superstructure. Inclusion in the scope of the protected area of the village prevents these investments either completely or cause people to give up that takes a very long time. To respond to the local needs of the legal regulations for the removal of these local structure disruptions certainly needs to be rearranged in order to allow the upper and lower structures comply with the condition. A well organized and applicable advertising and tour program will help to view this cultural heritage which is necessary to be protected for present and future generations more consciously. It is necessary for state institutions and municipalities to support this situation.

**Conclusion:** The results of this study indicate that, with assets such as the historical caves and artifacts near Hilar village, the colourful rural culture, and the variation in agricultural patterns, Hilar has good potential for rural tourism. Finally, when the sort of Hilar's strengths and weaknesses for tourism; The world-accepted historical property, the agricultural production, local food culture of wealth and the lack of locality is possible to count a negative outlook to tourism as the strengths of Hilar. Local people have low awareness about the historical features of Hilar.

The state and local government organizations do not pay attention relating to renewing of Hilar rural tourism potential, and it is possible to sort the failure to organize because of the low ability to act the local people together can seen as the weakness of Hilar.

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