

# DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF RIVER TOURISM IN TURKEY: THE CASE OF ANTALYA\*

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**Abstract:** The development of river tourism in a region and its transformation into a development economy must be within the framework of certain plans, programs, policies or strategies. In principle, sustainability approach should be adopted in these plans and policies. The purpose of this study is to propose solutions for the development of the river tourism in Antalya, the sustainability and the protection of the resources. In this study, firstly a general theoretical framework about river tourism will be presented. In sample of Antalya, the general situation and potential of river tourism in Turkey will be examined. It will focus on the policies and strategies that need to be done in order to contribute to the development of river tourism in Antalya and the development of the region and the country. SWOT analysis will be carried out in order to determine the situation and potential of the rivers of Antalya and to contribute to tourism opening and development; strong and weak points; threats and opportunities will be determined.

**Keywords:** River Tourism, River Sports, Environment, Sustainability, Antalya

## **Türkiye’de Akarsu Turizminin Gelişimi ve Sürdürülebilirliği: Antalya Örneği**

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**Özet:** Bir bölgede akarsu turizminin gelişmesi ve bir kalkınma ekonomisine dönüşmesi belli planlar, programlar, politikalar veya stratejiler çerçevesinde olmalıdır. Prensip olarak, bu plan ve politikalarda sürdürülebilirlik yaklaşımı benimsenmelidir. Bu çalışmanın amacı Antalya örneğinde akarsu turizminin geliştirilmesi, sürdürülebilirliği ve kaynakların korunması açısından öneriler ortaya koymaktır. Çalışmada öncelikle akarsu turizmi hakkında genel bir teorik çerçeve sunulacaktır. Antalya özelinde Türkiye’de akarsu turizminin genel durumu ve potansiyeli incelenecektir. Antalya’da akarsu turizminin geliştirilmesi, yörenin ve ülkenin kalkınmasına bir katkı sağlaması için yapılması gerekli politika ve stratejiler üzerinde durulacaktır. Antalya İli’nin akarsularının durumunun ve potansiyelinin tespit edilmesi, turizme açılması ve kalkınmaya katkı sağlaması amacıyla SWOT analizi yapılacak, güçlü ve zayıf yönler; tehdit ve fırsatlar belirlenecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Akarsu Turizmi, Akarsu Sporları, Çevre, Sürdürülebilirlik, Antalya

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

While the global economy is experiencing rapid developments, the sectors have to keep pace with this change. Important developments have also been experienced in the tourism sector which is affected by this change. In addition, as the cities become more crowded and stressful, the expectations of people living in urban areas for vacation, rest and leisure have changed. In

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recent years, alternative tourism types, which aim to commune with nature and get to know different lifestyles and cultures, have begun to see increasing demand in the face of mass tourism. In addition to classical tourism types and products, alternative tourism types and new products (concepts) have emerged.

River tourism is an alternative type of tourism that includes nature trips and walks, swimming and sports activities such as amateur fishing, rafting, canoeing, river kayaking. The use of rivers for recreational activities is called river tourism. Like other types of nature-based tourism, river tourism is closely related to the principle of living in harmony with nature, integrating with the environment.

Sustainability, a concept which has gained importance in agriculture, tourism, urbanization or ecology, almost every area in recent years, is a principle for all economic activities. Sustainable tourism means that the values and resources necessary for tourism activities are protected so that future generations can benefit from it. Although alternative tourism types, and especially eco-tourism, are generally seen as environmentally compatible tourism, sustainable tourism in fact represents a valid principle for all types of tourism.

## **2. TOURISM AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Tourism is a sector closely related to the level of development and economic prosperity of nations and countries. World countries, which are aware of the inputs that tourism provides to the economy, have started to invest more in this area. However, it is important to continue or complete the development of the tourism sector without harming the environment. In this respect, the concept of sustainability gains importance (Baykal and Çimen, 2015, p. 12). With the development of alternative tourism types, virgin natural beauties have begun to be offered to tourism and to people's interest. However, the rapid depletion of these resources in this process has brought the danger of loss of values to the agenda. Sustainability stands out as an important and vital concept at this point.

Sustainability or sustainable development is a concept that has become widespread since it was used in the 1987 "Our Common Future" report prepared by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development. According to the report, also known as the Brundtland Report, sustainable development represents a development or process that meets today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (The Brundtland Commission, 1987, p. 54). Sustainable development requires the establishment and operation of a balance between economic, social and environmental policy and objectives. However, it requires that the demands and needs of the present generations be met without narrowing the demands and needs of future generations (Aktan and Vural, 2007). The sustainability approach is one of the key concepts at the point of conservation and transfer of resources to future generations such as economic activities, development, urbanization, agriculture, tourism, and environment. Tourism is also a sector that develops and contributes to the development of the country thanks to its natural resources and cultural values, and of course, it needs the preservation of these resources and values.

It is known that tourism is an important sector for developing countries. These countries benefit more from tourism by using their natural and cultural values. In this way, they both overcome their economic problems and have great advantages in the way of development. Of course, there are social, cultural and economic benefits of tourism. However, as a result of unplanned initiatives that cause damage to natural and cultural resources, some negative environmental

effects are also emerging. Recovery of contaminated, damaged or depleted resources requires a long time. Sometimes, recovery is no longer possible. These natural and cultural resources are the most important elements of tourism activities. By protecting these resources and transferring them to future generations, tourism activities can be sustained and can continue to contribute to economic development. Countries in this consciousness adopt the concept of sustainable tourism and implement the appropriate policies. The conscious use of natural and cultural resources will help to minimize the negative effects arising from the general structure of the tourism sector, to increase the level of benefit from tourism activities and to sustain development (Alkan, 2015, p. 6692).

Sustainability concept in tourism is expressed with sustainable tourism concept. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines sustainable tourism as "*tourism that takes full account of current and future economic, social and environmental impacts that meet the needs of visitors, sector, host communities, and environment*" (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2018). Sustainable tourism certainly stands out as a new understanding in the economy. This is because the continuous consumption of natural resources is the main source of revenue for touristic regions (Bella, 2011, p. 151).

Sustainable tourism is not a separate or special form of tourism. On the contrary, all types of tourism should try to be more sustainable. Making tourism more sustainable is not just about controlling and managing the negative impacts of the industry. The tourism industry is in a very special position to provide economic and social benefits to local communities and to raise awareness and support for the protection of the environment. In the tourism sector, economic development and environmental protection should not be seen as opposing forces. On the contrary, these two forces must support each other and be strengthened by this purpose. Policies and actions should aim to increase tourism benefits and reduce costs (United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization (UNEP and WTO), 2005, p. 2).

When the concepts of environment, tourism and sustainability are mentioned together, the concept of eco-tourism comes to mind. However, there is a very important distinction between eco-tourism and sustainable tourism: Eco-tourism is a relatively small part of the tourism industry, although it is widely defined as an alternative nature-based tourism type. It is also one of the fastest growing tourism segments and is expected to grow faster in the future. Sustainable tourism requires commitment to sustainability principles for all stakeholders in all types of tourism and the tourism sector (Neto, 2003, pp. 7-8).

Sustainable tourism refers to the preservation of natural and cultural values, which are the basic elements of tourism for all types of tourism, and the realization of tourism activities with a sense of responsibility towards the environment. It means that the efforts of tourism to contribute to economic development and to protect environmental values must be carried out in harmony with each other. Of course, achieving this requires a mutually supportive relationship between economic interests and the protection of environmental values. Because the interests for increasing the revenues are based on the use of natural and cultural values and even exploitation, the plans, policies and programs in this area should aim to minimize the harm that these environmental values will suffer. Considering the definitions related to sustainable tourism, the following factors and functions stand out for sustainable tourism such as eco-tourism and nature tourism, as well as the types of tourism that are compatible with the environment (Erdoğan, 2014, p. 179):

- Nature / Environment Protection: Nature protection function

- Environmental Education: Training function
- Local Development and Participation: Local participation function
- Sustainable Management: Sustainability function

In order for a tourism activity to be evaluated in the context of sustainable tourism, it is important that these functions are fulfilled. In order for tourism activities to be planned and carried out without neglecting the protection of the natural and cultural resources used, in order to increase and adopt this sensitivity, tourism workers should be educated and the beneficiaries should be informed. Since tourism is an important sector for local development, it is necessary to establish a sustainable management structure in order to ensure that local people and all stakeholders participate in tourism-related planning, decision-making and implementation processes, and coordinate all these factors.

The protection of the environment and natural-cultural resources is necessary for all economic activities carried out by these resources. The same is true for the sustainability of tourism activities. In the world, it is known that many tourism activities consume, pollute and even destroy natural resources. Air, water and soil pollution are observed in the natural areas used for tourism purposes.

### **3. RIVER TOURISM IN TURKEY**

Turkey is a country with various natural and cultural values. In the country, there are certain potentials for many of the alternative tourism types. People who work throughout the year and who want to get away from the stress and tiredness of modern urban life are keen on tourism activities such as nature walks, winter sports, water sports. Rivers from these alternative tourism demands are also affected. The rivers are prominent in the tourism sector with sports activities such as rafting, canoeing and river kayaking, which are expressed in the form of river tourism. A large part of the rivers in Turkey are suitable for river sports tourism. In Turkey, the river in which this tourism type begins is Çoruh River. River sports have been here for the first time. For many years, rafting has been done in this river thanks to foreign tour organizations. This situation is important in that it shows that this tourism trend can be done in the country. In addition, the tourism sector has also encouraged its members to resort to river tourism (Akova, 1995, p. 394). The Çoruh River, known as one of the fastest flowing rivers in the world, is world-renowned. In 1993, the river hosted the 4th World River Championship. 300 athletes, scientists and press members from 28 countries participated (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018b).

Most of the rivers in Turkey are very convenient for rafting, canoeing and river kayaking, which is defined as "river tourism". It is important to develop this great potential for river tourism and promote it to appeal to large masses. River tourism does not require large investments. It forms an integral part of its surroundings with its historical, archaeological, cultural, authentic values and other types of tourism. For this reason, while the rivers are being examined for tourism potential, other tourist values around them should be examined. Tourism types should be developed in an integrated way. The rivers suitable for river tourism in Turkey and especially for rafting are: (Yeşil, 2015, p. 21; Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018a; Hürriyet, 2004):

- Altıparmak (Barhal) Stream (Artvin),
- Çoruh River (Artvin, Bayburt),
- Fırtına Stream (Rize),

- İkizdere River (Rize),
- Köprüçay (Antalya),
- Manavgat River (Antalya),
- Dalaman River (Muğla),
- Göksu River (Adana, Mersin),
- Anamur (Dragon) Stream (Mersin),
- Zamantı River (Kayseri),
- Melen Stream (Düzce),
- Munzur River (Tunceli),
- Bekili Stream (Denizli) and
- Part of the Fırat (Euphrates) River (Elazığ).

The presence of the rivers with a regular amount of water in Turkey is an important advantage in terms of river tourism. These rivers also did not gather in a certain region of the country. There are in a balanced way to the whole of the country.

It identified a specific region for a better examination of river tourism in Turkey. This study investigates the river tourism in Turkey, on the example of Antalya.

Before going on to study river tourism in Antalya, it is useful to give information about current and internationally accepted levels of difficulty in rafting, which is the most known activity of river tourism. In rafting, streams are classified according to their difficulty. There are different classifications in the USA, Russia and the EU. The accepted classification in the world is the classification of rivers from easy to difficult (1-6). This classification of these six degrees is as follows:

1. Class: Basic skills required for rafting are required at first class difficulty. There is very little flow and maneuvering in this degree.
2. Class: Second Class difficulty, rowing and maneuvering skills are required. There may be a certain rate of discharge and in some places some small rocks.
3. Class: In the third class of difficulty, the need for rowing and maneuverability is required. Although it does not require being an expert, there is a need for a professional guide. The flow will be a little more and the obstacles will be larger. However, this class is not considered dangerous.
4. Class: The fourth grade must be carried out under the supervision of an experienced rafting guide, which should not be continued only by inexperienced ones. It requires passing through a few large rocks in medium flow and bubbling waves. Sharp maneuvers are needed.
5. Class: In the fifth grade difficulty, the discharge increases and creates very foamy waves. It requires careful and challenging maneuvers. Advanced skills are needed to avoid large rocks, hard obstacles and the danger of falling.
6. Class: The sixth grade level is the most challenging in rafting. It is considered impossible to pass. The trying of unprofessional people is very dangerous in terms of life. There are huge rocks, high fall risk and severe obstacles.

#### **4. DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF RIVER TOURISM IN ANTALYA**

According to the 2017 statistics of the Turkish Statistical Institute, approximately 2.5 million (2.364.396) people live in Antalya (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (TÜİK), 2018). The surface area of the province of Antalya is 20,723 square kilometers. South of the city is surrounded by the

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Mediterranean. Burdur, Isparta and Konya are located in the north of the city. There are Karaman and Mersin in the east, and Muğla in the west.

Antalya is one of the biggest tourism centers of Turkey. The length of the coast is 630 kilometers. Antalya and its surroundings have many historical values and natural beauties. There are many rivers in Antalya Province: Aksu, Köprüçay, Manavgat, Düden, Gazipaşa, Alara, Dim, Alakır, Korkuteli, Kargı, Karpuz and Karaman. But the rivers that are suitable for river tourism are Köprüçay, Manavgat, Dim and Alara Streams.

There are many large and small streams in Antalya. Some of the names are not mentioned in some sources (Atabey, 2015, p. 1; Çobanoğlu, 2012, p. 71). In this study, the figures of 2017 Environmental Status Report of Antalya Province, which was prepared in 2018 by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization and based on the data of the "Regional Directorate of State Hydraulic Works (DSİ)", will be taken into consideration. According to this report (in Table 1), the rivers, lengths, flow rates, intended uses, start and end points in Antalya Province are shown (Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2018, p. 18):

**Table 1.** Rivers of Antalya Province

Name of the Stream	Total Length (km)	Flow rate (m <sup>3</sup> / sec)	Start and End Points	Purpose of the Stream
<b>Düden Stream</b>	14	15.192	Aşağı Neighborhood Mediterranean (Antalya)	Tourism
<b>Aksu Stream</b>	112	16.163	Eğirdir Lake Mediterranean (Aksu)	
<b>Köprüçay River</b>	119	88.017	Yeşilbaş Neighborhood Mediterranean (Serik)	Water Sports, Tourism, Fishing
<b>Manavgat River</b>	93	66.200	Simyon Tableland Mediterranean (Manavgat)	Water Sports, Tourism, Fishing
<b>Alara Stream</b>	82	25.336	Dereyurt Tableland Mediterranean (Alanya)	
<b>Karpuz Stream</b>	30	1.446	Değirmen Taş. Mediterranean (Alanya)	
<b>Kargı Stream</b>	45	1.883	Sıçanlı Tableland Mediterranean (Alanya)	
<b>Oba Stream</b>	12	0.823	Avcılar Neighborhood Mediterranean (Alanya)	
<b>Dim Stream</b>	28	0.327	Alacami Mediterranean (Alanya)	Tourism, Fishing
<b>Sedre Stream</b>	21	0.862	Tekne Mountain Mediterranean (Alanya)	
<b>Bıçkıcı Stream</b>	27	3.073	Soğuk Oluk Mediterranean (Gazipaşa)	
<b>Salamur Stream</b>	20	0.435	Taşkesiği Korkuteli	
<b>Alakır Stream</b>	22	3.990	Göksar Mediterranean (Finike)	Fishing
<b>Başgöz Stream</b>	30	1.201	Başgöz Neighborhood Mediterranean (Finike)	
<b>Eşen Stream</b>	112,4	48.230	Karaçay Mediterranean (Kayadibi)	
<b>Korkuteli Stream</b>	35,5	0.405	Söbüce Tableland Korkuteli Dam	

**Source:** Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2018: p. 18

#### 4.1. Köprüçay River

Köprüçay, which is very suitable for river sports, has a flow rate of 88 cubic meters per second and a length of 119 kilometers (Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2018, p. 18). This river rises from the İdris Mountain near Eğridir Lake. In the following sections, Ayvalı, Karacahisar, Kuzu Kulağı, Sarıca, Çayıçı, Boyalı, Gerizle and Etlar streamlets are mixed with this river. Then, it flows from a deep canyon with the very steep edges, southward at a great speed. The depth of this canyon valley, which is approximately 14 kilometers in length, exceeds 100 meters and reaches several hundred meters in some places. Köprülü Canyon National Park was established in 1973 in order to preserve the natural and historical values of the canyon through which the river passes. When the river reaches the plain, it passes by the famous Aspendos Antique City and flows into the sea (Çobanoğlu, 2012, p. 73).

The most important of the rivers, which are suitable for tourism and especially for rafting in Antalya, is the Köprüçay. Köprüçay, born of the Taurus Mountains and passing through the high canyons, is poured from the south of Serik to the Mediterranean. Köprüçay, which is fed by underground waters in the canyons, whose sides are steep and almost impossible to escape, is one of the most beautiful natural recreation areas of Turkey. Besides, the historical Selge (Zerk) city located in the mountainous western part of the river. Many archaeological sources such as the ruins near the river, aqueducts, Roman bridges and historical roads are increasing the importance of Köprülü Canyon (Uğurlu, 2005, pp. 72-73). The rafting route in Köprüçay starts on the field where the water is relatively stagnant 100 meters south of the historical Roman Bridge (Olukköprü). The route with a difficulty level of 3 and a length of 11 to 12 kilometers ends when a concrete bridge in the south of Beşkonak is reached (Akova, 1995, p. 402).

#### 4.2. Manavgat River

Manavgat River, which is the largest of the rivers in the Antalya region, has a flow rate of 66 cubic meters per second and a length of 93 kilometers (Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2018, p. 18). It is formed by the merging of streams from the slopes of Mount Devil Mountain (2,120 meters) which is connected to the Western Taurus Mountains and is directed to the southwest. It passes through mountainous and forested areas and flows in a canyon-shaped narrow valley. Akarsu enters a less hilly area near Oymapınar (formerly Homa) Village. In this part of the stream, Oymapınar Dam has been completed in 1984. It comes into existence an artificial lake of 50 square kilometers in this zone. The water of the Altınbeşik (Düdensuyu) Cave, which is one of the important caves of the Western Taurus Mountains and which have underground lakes, is also mixed with the Manavgat River (Çobanoğlu, 2012, p. 73).

Manavgat River is born from the eastern slopes of the Western Taurus Mountains. Before coming to the plains, the river pass over the hard conglomerate (gravel aggregate) layers and forms the Manavgat waterfall and flows into the Mediterranean from here. The speed of the Manavgat River, which is fed with underground waters in canyons that have become clearer in the spring, is being cut off by the Oymapınar Dam. The Manavgat River is a region that provides a rich variety of tourism opportunities. The lakes in Altınbeşik Cave are worth seeing with their stalactites and stalagmites. Ormana Village and İbradı are suitable for mountain biking, trekking and paragliding. Şahab Bridge is the starting point for rafting (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018c). The rafting route in the Manavgat River takes place on three separate sections, 19 km between Şahap Bridge and Sevinç Village (Akova, 1995, p. 404; Uğurlu, 2005, pp. 74-75):

Stage 1: It consists of the canyon between Şahap Bridge and Altınbeşik Cave. The stream flows faster and more exuberantly with the mixing of groundwater. This etap ends in the vicinity of Altınbeşik Cave.

Stage 2: After Altınbeşik Cave, the second canyon is in progress until Sinanhoca Village. There is a difficult cascade to cross the canyon. Since water is poured over a large rock, the rafters must continue the racecourse after passing from overland this obstacle. The stream valley expands towards the end of the canyon and the stage ends.

Stage 3: This step, which starts from the place where the expanding stream valley forms again and forms a steep canyon, is completed at the place where the "Sevinç Village" ends.

#### **4.3. Dim Stream**

Dim Stream is one of the most favorable rivers for rafting, in the region. The rafting course starts from Akköprü, which is 2.5 km away from Değirmenönü and is completed after 5.5 kilometers. The difficulty of the racecourse is between 1-2 degrees. It is very suitable for beginners. It is possible to make this sport by buying services from tourism agencies located by the river (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2019).

Dim Stream is born from Kirazlı Mountain at an altitude of 1,630 m, and after taking the stream from Alakilise, it is poured into the sea in the south of Oba (Atabey, 2015, p. 4). The flow of Dim Stream has decreased in recent years due to climate change and drought. In the summer, it is exposed to the risk of drying out. This fact is mentioned in the Environmental Status Report of Antalya 2017. It is stated that flow rate of Dim Stream is below 1 cubic meter per second (0.3) and its length is 28 kilometers (Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2018, p. 18). There are different figures in other sources (Atabey, 2015, p. 1; Çobanoğlu, 2012, p. 7). According to data from the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, Dim Stream has become an increasingly unfavorable stream for rafting.

#### **4.4. Alara Stream**

The stream has a flow rate of 25 cubic meters per second and a length of 82 kilometers (Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2018, p. 18). The Alara Stream, which originates from the foothills of the mountains in the Köprülü region of Antalya, flows into the sea near the village of Boztepe in Manavgat. Spring months are the best time for rafting. The racecourse starts at the east of Güzelbağ and ends in the Alara Town and Alarahan region, which is one of the most important places of the historical Silk Road after a road of about 20 kilometers. The difficulty level of the racecourse is in the second and third degree (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2019; Sarkım, 2007, p. 267).

Although Antalya is a region with many streams, the first reason for the low number of rivers in which rivers tourism is made is that the stream flow rates are irregular. Especially in the summer, the amount of water is reduced or even depleted. Secondly, there are no infrastructures and facilities required for these tourism activities in many rivers. Moreover, the lack of entrepreneurship for this type of tourism and the unconscious activity of the existing entrepreneurs seem to be one of the important problems.

Despite the advantages of being a tourism region with its classical and alternative tourism possibilities, Antalya is extremely weak in river tourism activities. The activities carried out in this type of tourism can be mostly evaluated within the scope of activities offered to tourists visiting the city for mass tourism. Although approximately 500 thousand people visited the

Köprülü Canyon during the rafting period, this situation does not contribute to the branding of the city in the field of river tourism. Because the vast majority of people who visit here are not those who come for river tourism, but those who rafting while they are on vacation. In other words, people coming to do this sport especially in Antalya are in the minority. This situation may lead to activities carried out by unauthorized persons and some people who do not have tourism management ability (or establishment) and do not serve the purpose (Yeşil, 2015, p. 132).

The works to be done to develop the river tourism potential and promote the region is important. But besides this, the things to be done for the sustainability of this tourism type are also important. According to the SWOT analysis, which reflects the present situation of the Antalya province in the river tourism, the following points have been identified:

*Strengths:*

- Rivers are suitable for tourism
- There are entrepreneurs who invest in river tourism
- Access to rivers is possible
- There are many natural beauties in the area

*Weaknesses:*

- Transportation, infrastructure, superstructure, health, safety and other basic services are not enough
- The knowledge of local people about river tourism is insufficient
- The publicity of the river tourism in the region is not well done
- Human resources are inadequate and education levels are low
- Reduction or even depletion of water in some rivers during summer periods

*Opportunities:*

- Accommodation facilities near the river tourist areas are available
- The rivers are close to other tourism destinations, especially the sea
- There is a chance to see the natural beauties and historical-cultural values of the tourists coming for the river tourism
- Emergence of new job and employment opportunities

*Threats:*

- Natural resources and tourism values are gradually disappearing
- Climate change and drought cause a decrease in the amount of water in rivers
- Destruction of some archaeological sites
- The rivers and their environment become increasingly polluted; garbage is being thrown

According to this analysis, it seems that these rivers primarily require a strategic plan for the development and sustainability of river tourism. Unplanned tourism activities lead to an inadequate use of resources and therefore a poor economic return. Moreover, as a result of "irregular exploitation", there is a risk of pollution and even destruction of resources.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

As a result, in the light of the Tourism Strategy 2023 Action Plan prepared by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the following points stand out:

- Eliminating deficiencies in terms of transportation, infrastructure, superstructure, health, safety and other basic services is a necessary condition for achieving sustainable development goal.

- For the development of river tourism, it is necessary to ensure that the central government, local governments, the private sector and non-governmental organizations work harmoniously within the framework of good governance principles.
- Development goals expected from river tourism should be consistent with sustainable environmental policies. It will be a good strategy to monitor global trends and requests so that policies and targets related to river tourism are in line with national and international policies and targets.
- The planning and implementation of river tourism should be carried out in such a way that it can be integrated with other tourism types (rural tourism, hunting tourism, highland tourism, sports tourism etc.). Extension of the tourism season by product diversification and even the establishment of tourism cities which can be reached to different tourism products will provide an advantage.
- It is necessary to develop accommodation facilities suitable for individual or small group tours and to support guest house management. Establishment, preservation and development of a certain quality and standardization in services are important.
- People living in the region need to be educated about tourist products, souvenir production, service, lodging, quality and business management. The standardization of the labor quality and the application of the certification system will provide the standardization. It is necessary to cooperate with the universities or professional organizations that provide training to tourist guides.
- Admission points should be established at the entrance to the tourism areas. Maps showing recreation and accommodation, tourist routes and destinations, walking routes should be presented. Information and directional signs should be placed.

In addition to these, other tourism values and especially the environment need to be protected in order for the rivers to continue to contribute to the local and national economy as a touristic and economic value. Natural beauties, historical artifacts, architectural structures, plant and animal species, water resources should be protected. Before anything else, it is necessary to provide a clean environment around the rivers. Measures against water, soil and air pollution must be taken. Establishing an integrated and sustainable solid waste management system will prevent the contamination of the environment. In addition, recovery of recyclable materials is important for development and sustainability.

Once these basic structural problems have been solved, the rivers need to be opened to tourism and advertised. In this phase, the principles of advertising management, image management and vision management should be utilized. Social media networks, local and national media should be seen as an opportunity to promote river tourism. Opportunities to integrate with other types of tourism should be assessed and prepared package tour with various tourism activities should be prepared. In tourism activities organized in Turkey and even in the world, it is necessary to introduce the tourism values, culture and lifestyle, local tastes and the rivers. Information books, detailed region maps and brochures should be prepared to introduce tourist attractions and rivers of the region. In all these studies, target group should be determined. Region-country-world oriented promotion and marketing should be done in a gradual way.

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## **GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET**

### **Giriş**

Yıl boyunca çalışmanın ve modern kent hayatının stres ve yorgunluğundan uzaklaşmak isteyen insanlar, alternatif turizm etkinliklerine rağbet göstermektedirler. Bu alternatif turizm taleplerinden akarsular da etkilenmektedir. Akarsular, giderek yaygınlaşan spor aktiviteleriyle, turizm sektöründe öne çıkmaktadır.

Akarsu turizmi, doğa gezisi ve yürüyüşlerini, yüzme ve sportif olta balıkçılığını, rafting, kano, nehir kayağı gibi spor aktivitelerini içine alan bir alternatif turizm türüdür. Akarsuların rekreasyon amacı taşıyan etkinlikler için kullanılmasına akarsu turizmi denilmektedir. Diğer doğa temelli turizm türleri gibi, akarsu turizmi de çevreyle bütünleşerek, doğayla uyum içinde yaşama ilkesiyle yakından ilgilidir.

Tarımdan turizme, kentleşmeden çevreye hemen her alanda son yıllarda önem kazanan bir kavram olan sürdürülebilirlik, bütün ekonomik faaliyetler için bir ilke konumundadır. Sürdürülebilir turizm de, turizm faaliyetleri için gerekli değer ve kaynakların, gelecek nesillerin de faydalanabilmesi için yaşatılması anlamını taşımaktadır. Alternatif turizm türleri ve özellikle eko-turizm genellikle çevreyle uyumlu turizm olarak görülse de esasen sürdürülebilir turizm bütün turizm türleri için geçerli bir ilkeyi ifade etmektedir.

### **Problem ve Motivasyon**

Turizm doğal ve kültürel değerleri kullanarak yürütülen faaliyetlerden oluşmaktadır. Ancak bu değerlerin yoğun ve sorumsuzca kullanılması, kaynakların kirlenmesine, azalmasına ve uzun vadede yok olmasına sebep olmaktadır.

Çevrenin ve doğal - kültürel kaynakların korunması, bu kaynaklar sayesinde gerçekleştirilen bütün ekonomik faaliyetler gibi, turizm faaliyetlerinin sürdürülebilirliği için de gereklidir. Dünyada, birçok turizm faaliyetinin doğal kaynakları tükettiği, kirlettiği hatta yok ettiği bilinmektedir. Turizm amaçlı kullanılan doğal alanlarda hava, su, toprak kirliliği görülmektedir. Bu kaynakların korunması ve uzun yıllar turizme ve insanlığa hizmet etmesi, ekonomik getiri sağlamaya devam etmesi için turizmde sürdürülebilir ilkesinin benimsenmesi gerekmektedir. Sürdürülebilir turizm ise, bütün turizm türlerinde ve turizm sektörünün bütün paydaşları için sürdürülebilirlik ilkelerine bağlılığı gerektirmektedir.

### **Amaç ve Yaklaşım**

Sürdürülebilir turizm, ayrı veya özel bir turizm biçimi değildir. Aksine, bütün turizm türleri daha sürdürülebilir olmaya çalışmalıdır. Turizmi daha sürdürülebilir kılmak yalnızca sektörün olumsuz etkilerini kontrol etmek ve yönetmek değildir. Turizm endüstrisi, yerel topluluklara ekonomik ve sosyal olarak fayda sağlamak ve çevrenin korunması için bilinç ve destek sağlamak için çok özel bir konumdadır. Turizm sektöründe, ekonomik kalkınma ve çevre koruma karşıt güçler olarak görülmemelidir. Aksine bu iki güç birbirini desteklemeli ve bunu amaç edinerek güçlenmelidir. Politikalar ve eylemler, turizmden sağlanan faydaları arttırmayı ve maliyetleri düşürmeyi hedeflemelidir.

Bu çalışmada, Türkiye’de akarsu turizminin genel bir fotoğrafı verilerek, bu turizm türünün geliştirilmesinin kaynaklarının korunmasıyla yani sürdürülebilirlikle doğrudan ilgili olduğunun altı çizilmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Antalya örneğinde akarsu turizminin geliştirilmesi, sürdürülebilirliği ve kaynakların korunması açısından öneriler ortaya koymaktır.

### **Yöntem**

Çalışmada, sürdürülebilir turizm yaklaşımının önemi üzerinde durulmuş, kırsal ve bölgesel kalkınmanın sağlanması ve istihdamın artırılmasında turizmin öncü bir sektör olduğu vurgulanmıştır. Turizmin bu misyonu yerine getirmesinin ve sürdürülebilirliğin sağlanması için bazı hususlara ve ilkelere değinilmiştir. Bu hususlar ve ilkeler göz önünde tutularak, Antalya’da akarsu turizminin geliştirilmesi, yörenin kalkınmasına katma değer sağlaması ve turizmin sürdürülebilirliği için bütün paydaşları ilgilendiren noktalar belirlenmiştir.

Bu çalışmada öncelikle akarsu turizmi hakkında genel bir teorik çerçeve sunulmuştur. Antalya özelinde Türkiye’de akarsu turizminin genel durumu ve potansiyeli incelenmiştir. Antalya’da akarsu turizminin geliştirilmesi, yörenin ve ülkenin kalkınmasına bir katkı sağlaması için yapılması gerekli politika ve stratejiler üzerinde durulmuştur. Antalya İli’nin akarsularının durumunun ve potansiyelinin tespit edilmesi, turizme açılması ve kalkınmaya katkı sağlaması amacıyla SWOT analizi yapılmış, güçlü ve zayıf yönler; tehdit ve fırsatlar belirlenmiştir.

### **Bulgular**

Türkiye çeşitli doğal ve kültürel değerlere sahip bir ülkedir. Ülkede, alternatif turizm türlerinin pek çoğu için belli bir potansiyel bulunmaktadır. Türkiye’deki akarsuların önemli bir kısmı "akarsu turizmi" olarak tanımlanan rafting, kano ve nehir kayağı için çok uygun durumdadır. Ülkenin, akarsu turizmi için sunduğu bu büyük potansiyelin geliştirilmesi ve geniş kitlelere

ulaşmak için tanıtımının yapılması önem taşımaktadır. Akarsu turizmi, büyük yatırımlar gerektirmediği gibi, çevrenin doğal, kültürel, tarihi/arkeolojik değerleri ve diğer turizm çeşitleriyle entegre olabilmektedir. Bu sebeple, nehirlerin akarsu turizmi potansiyeli incelenirken, çevresinde yer alan ve entegre bir şekilde geliştirilebilecek diğer turizm değerleri de göz ardı edilmemelidir. Ülkemizde akarsu turizmi ve özellikle rafting sporu yapmak için uygun akarsular: Altıparmak (Barhal) Çayı (Artvin), Çoruh nehri (Artvin, Bayburt), Fırtına Deresi (Rize), İkizdere Nehri (Rize), Köprüçay (Antalya), Manavgat Çayı (Antalya), Dalaman Çayı (Muğla), Göksu Nehri (Adana, Mersin), Anamur (Dragon) Çayı (Mersin), Zamantı Irmağı (Kayseri), Melen Çayı (Düzce), Munzur Çayı (Tunceli), Bekili Deresi (Denizli) ve Fırat nehrinin bir kısmı (Elazığ) sayılabilir.

Bu çalışmada, Türkiye’de akarsu turizminin geliştirilmesi ve sürdürülebilirliği konusu, Antalya örneği üzerinden incelenmektedir. Antalya İli’nde çok sayıda akarsu bulunmaktadır: Aksu, Köprüçay, Manavgat, Düden, Gazipaşa, Alara, Dim, Alakır, Korkuteli, Kargı, Karpuz ve Karaman. Akarsu turizmi için uygun olan ırmaklar Köprüçay, Manavgat Irmağı, Dim Çayı ve Alara Çayı’dır. Antalya’da kitle turizminin halen gelişmiş olması ve başka alternatif turizm imkânlarının bulunması, akarsu turizminin geliştirilmesi ve tanıtılması için büyük bir fırsat olarak görülmelidir.

Ancak akarsu turizminin geliştirilmesi ve tanıtılması için yapılacaklar yanında, bu turizm türünün sürdürülebilirliği de önem arz etmektedir. Antalya’da bulunan nehirlerde akarsu turizminin gelişimi ve sürdürülebilirliği için öncelikle stratejik bir planlamaya ihtiyaç duyulduğu görülmektedir. Plansız yapılan çalışmalar, kaynakların optimum kullanılmamasına ve dolayısıyla yeterince ekonomik getiri sağlanamamasına sebep olmaktadır. Ayrıca “düzensiz yararlanma” sonucunda çevrenin kirlenmesi, hatta kaynakların yok olması tehlikesi bulunmaktadır.

### **Sonuç**

Ulaşım, altyapı, üstyapı, sağlık, güvenlik ve diğer temel hizmetler bakımından eksikliklerin giderilmesi, sürdürülebilir kalkınma hedefine ulaşmak için gerekli şartların başında gelmektedir. Akarsu turizminin geliştirilmesi için, merkezi yönetimin, yerel yönetimlerin, özel sektör ve sivil toplum kuruluşlarının iyi yönetim ilkeleri çerçevesinde uyumlu çalışmalarının sağlanması gerekmektedir. Akarsu turizminden beklenen kalkınma hedeflerinin sürdürülebilir çevre politikalarıyla uyumlu olması lâzımdır. Akarsu turizmiyle ilgili politika ve hedeflerin ayrıca ulusal ve uluslararası politika ve hedeflerle uyumlu olması, küresel eğilim ve taleplerin takip edilmesi iyi bir strateji olacaktır. Akarsu turizmi planlama ve uygulamalarının diğer turizm türleri (kırsal turizm, av turizmi, akarsu turizmi, spor turizmi vb.) ile entegre olabilecek şekilde yürütülmesi, ürün çeşitlendirilmesi yapılarak turizm sezonunun genişletilmesi, hatta farklı turizm ürünlerine bir arada ulaşılabilen turizm kentlerinin oluşturulması avantaj sağlayacaktır.

Akarsuların bir turistik ve ekonomik değer olarak yöre ve ülke ekonomisine katkı sağlamaya devam etmesi için, diğer turizm değerlerinin, doğal güzelliklerin, tarihî eserlerin, mimari yapıların, bitki ve hayvan türlerinin, su kaynaklarının ve özellikle çevrenin korunması gerekmektedir. Akarsular ve etrafında her şeyden önce temiz bir çevrenin sağlanması, su, toprak ve hava kirliliğine karşı önlem alınması, entegre ve sürdürülebilir bir katı atık yönetim sisteminin kurulması, çöplerin doğayı kirletmesinin önüne geçilmesi ve geri dönüştürülebilir maddelerin ekonomiye geri kazandırılması önem arz etmektedir.