

Full Length Research Paper

Potential ecotourism in the protected area: A case study at Kazdağı (Mt. Ida), Turkey

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Kazdaglari (Mount Ida) is one of the important mountain chains situated on the provincial borders of Çanakkale and Balıkesir, on the South of Biga peninsula. Part of the region, which possesses rich resources in terms of natural and cultural aspects, within the borders of Edremit District of Balıkesir Province has been announced as a “National Park”. National Park and its immediate surroundings demonstrate quite rapid developments for tourism perspectives because of diversity and visual value of natural and cultural resources owned. For this reason, prevalence of ecotourism understanding and to realize investments with this goal is very important for a sustainable use of resources of the National Park and its vicinity. In this study, the eco-tourism potentials of Pınarbaşı (Uçurumoba), Beyoba, Mehmetalan and Kızılkeçili villages in terms of their natural and cultural resources are determined. These villages in Balıkesir-Edremit are the nearest settlements to the Kazdaglari National Park entrance. It is determined that these settlements have the potential to meet all the needs of the users who are interested in the natural and rural areas and therefore head for the national park. When the area is opened to tourism after ensuring the development of ecotourism activities in these settlements, not only the natural and cultural values will be protected but the locals will also be provided with an alternative source of income.

Key words: Kazdaglari (Mt. Ida), ecotourism, natural and cultural environment, protection.

INTRODUCTION

Turkey is very rich for biological diversity and cultural structure aspects because of forming a natural bridge between three continents (Europe, Asia and Africa), difference of its geological structure, owning climatic zones and ecological wealth (Yücel and Babuş, 2005). Transferring these key values intact to future generations and sustainable use of areas acting in accordance with nature conservation approaches and determining managerial strategies are inevitable requirements. First studies regarding nature conservation in Turkey has started during the 1950s (Yücel and Babuş, 2005). From that date, various measures have been taken and conservation areas have been announced aiming at protecting the nature through several laws, regulations and international agreements signed. Kazdaglari National

Park is one of the most internationally important protected areas in Turkey. Kazdagi National Park has been announced as a National Park by the Decree of Council of Ministers number 93/4243 dated 17.04.1993 (Anonymous, 1995).

With its rich natural resources and housing its geomorphological structure, climate and rich biological diversity, the area has an important place in the continuance of the ecological cycle. In addition, the historical and cultural characteristics of the national park area and its immediate surroundings have an important potential in terms of tourism-recreation. National Park zones become as well the most significant destinations of tourism movements because of having rich resource values. Including ecotourism developments when preparing management plans of these zones and determining development strategies, will ensure using such zones without exceeding their bearable capacity. National park zone and rural settlements in immediate surroundings

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form also important potentials in terms of their resource values. But, tourism movements in this region have been determined to be at the orientation of hard tourism, especially in settlements close to the Aegean coasts.

Therefore we aimed in this study, to determine the rural settlements closest to Kazdagi National Park, establishing ecotourism potentials of these areas and developing some suggestions for development of ecotourism in this zone. With this study, at the same time, we aimed that tourism activities of persons arriving to Kazdaglari National Park perform tourism activities at immediate rural settlements of the national park and within the framework of existing local living possibilities. Consequently, local people will acquire an alternative source of livelihood, the region will develop economically and migration of the young population determined in studied villages to close cities will be reduced. This study is expected to provide guidance to local administrations responsible for the region and concerned ministries for studies to be done jointly with non-governmental organizations in this direction.

The definition and scope of ecotourism

Ceballos-Lascurain (1991) is one of the first people to define ecotourism and he defines ecotourism as traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas rich in cultural characteristics as well as their wildlife. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines ecotourism as an environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature and any accompanying social and cultural features that promotes conservation, it has low negative impacts, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). While the term ecotourism is defined by several researchers, the common point is that ecotourism is a kind of tourism in unspoiled areas where the natural and cultural resources of the region are protected and at the same time the local people have socio-economic gaining (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1991; Kurdođlu, 2001; Ozaner, 2002; Erdođan, 2003). In rural settlements local people may have difficulties owing to the cost of living. Several ecotourism activities that will be done in settlements having natural and cultural beauties can also be an alternative source of the local people (Turođlu and Uludađ, 2006). In this respect, ecotourism is a source of living which may be an alternative to activities such as intensive farming, hunting, forest-cutting and mining which can harm rural areas (Açıksöz et al., 2010).

Today, there are a number of ecotourism activity types, such as wildlife viewing/observation, walking/hiking/trekking, visiting protected areas, highland tourism, bird watching, photo safari, fishing, bicycle tourism, balloon tourism, scuba diving, agricultural tourism, natural horse

riding, camping and caravanning tourism, cave tourism, mountaineering, rafting, canoeing, hillside parachuting (Erdogan, 2003). Unless the ecologically sustainable activities like ecotourism are managed rigorously, they will probably have a negative environmental effect (Demir and Çevirgen, 2006). The basic source of tourism and recreation activities is the land. Therefore, it is important not to conflict farming lands and those to be used for tourism. If it is desired to develop tourism as a productive sector of the economy, there should be coordination among all the works to be done (Çelik and Polat, 2002). Taking this into consideration, tourism development management in natural areas has been started to be handled widely in tourism literature since the 1960s. Carrying capacity has been an easily accepted idea as a managerial material for the development of tourism in natural areas. However, since 1980 the validity of this criterion has been questioned and alternative tourism management techniques have been developed.

In this regard, ecotourism is evaluated in a different form from the other nature based tourism activities. Thus, by developing special management techniques for the development of ecotourism, the objective of the development of sustainable tourism has been achieved (Bi, 2005). The trilogy of "sea, sand, sun", the most important part of tourism until recently, is gradually losing its popularity and health tourism- being in the first place, nature, culture and history tourism are developing and finding approval (Aydın and Kelçeođlu, 2002). From this point of view, national park areas and also their immediate surroundings are the new targets of tourism. If the areas are used over their bearing capacity and there is no protection approach in tourism activities that will be done in these areas having a susceptible ecosystem and cultural resources, the resources will definitely be deteriorated.

Tourism Strategy of Turkey - 2023 and Action Plan 2013 aim at using the natural, cultural, historical and geographical assets of Turkey more wisely, with a balanced perspective addressing both conservation and utilization needs and increasing Turkey's share in tourism by improving the tourism alternatives (Anonymous, 2007). This approach intends to minimize the negative impact of tourism in the natural areas in future.

In ecotourism approach, not only the visitors' making use of the natural and cultural resources, but their visual aesthetic satisfaction of the area is also important. For this reason, Kazdaglari and its immediate village settlements are also a resource of ecotourism in terms of their visual landscape value. According to Gobster et al. (2007), people cannot directly see and feel the ecological quality of a visual landscape which gives them an aesthetic experience and satisfaction. Therefore, it is believed that it will be useful to activate eco-aesthetic concept, which is a new approach, in ecotourism and the protected areas. Eco-aesthetic approach aims at the identification of the aesthetic satisfaction people get from

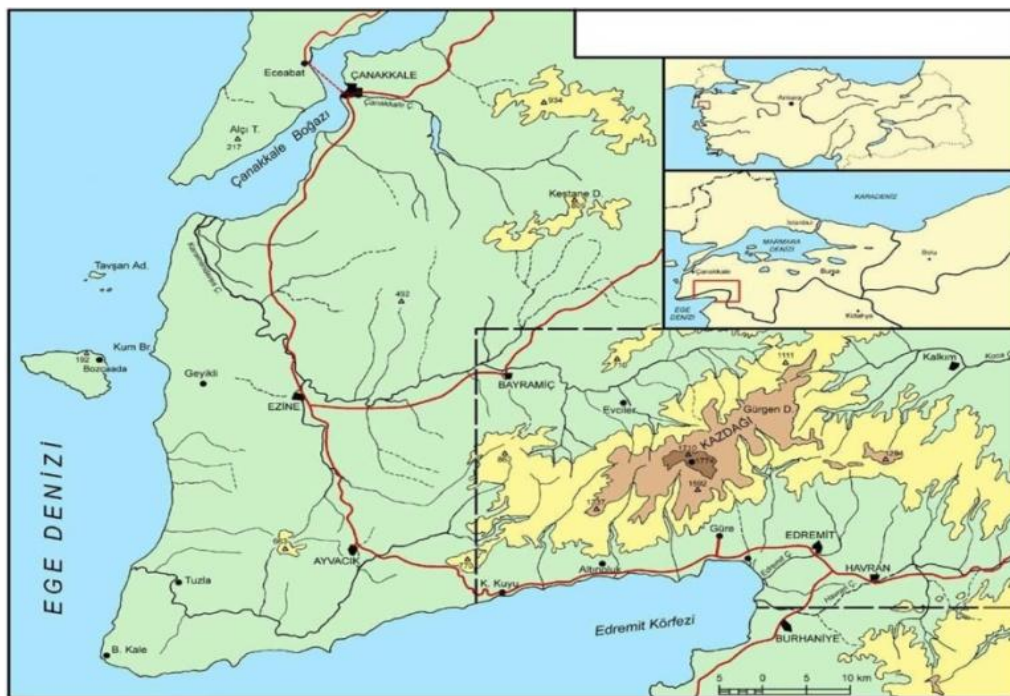


Figure 1. Geographical position of Kazdaglari (Koçman et al., 2007).

visual landscape, with the use of its ecological functions. For instance, it is intended that people who participate in ecotourism activities not only have aesthetic satisfaction from the visual landscape, but they also get information about the structure of the landscape, its ecological functions and uses (Gobster et al., 2007).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Kazdaglari are in the Marmara region, in the south of Biga Peninsula, in the provincial borders of Çanakkale and Balıkesir, and in the north of Edremit bay in the Aegean region (Figure 1). It is one of the most important altitudes between the two regions in the northeast-southwest direction. Karataş hill is the highest point of Kazdaglari with its 1774 m height. The other important altitudes are Babadağ (Mt. Baba) with 1765 m, Sarıkız hill with 1726 m and Kırklar hill with 1712 m height. Its dense and healthy forest and geographical formation and climate create a flora and fauna richness. Kazdaglari forests are important across the world in terms of their germplasm (Anonymous, 1995). The main material of the study is the rural areas at the entrance of the Kazdaglari national park, very close to the border of the area. These settlements which have a high ecotourism potential with their local life and natural-cultural characteristics are Kızılkecili, Beyoba, Pınarbaşı (Uçurumoba) and Mehmetalan villages (Figure 2). Besides this, the observations made in the area, photo shoots, documents about the area and several books and articles on the topic are evaluated as the auxiliary materials throughout the study. The study was conducted by three experts between September 2009 and May 2010 through on-site review of the region, observations and interviews. As the study method, in the first stage, the literature is reviewed, the natural and cultural resource values of Kazdaglari were obtained; the possible ecotourism activities in the area were

ascertained by determining the concepts about which activities can be done under ecotourism and the ecotourism approach in the protected areas.

In the second stage, in the determined village, headmen (mukhtars) and local people are interviewed. Rather few people were living permanently at Pınarbaşı and Beyoba villages and has been a limiting factor for interviews and to conduct interview with only 6 persons sharing information, at each of these villages. Mehmetalan village is the nearest village to the entrance of the national park and because of the existing organization here and with the higher number of young people, oral interview has been possible with 17 persons. Interview with a group of 24 persons has been possible at Kızılkecili village because of its location closest to the center and having broader social facilities. Oral interviews have been conducted in the direction of forms prepared by researchers and covering all characteristics of the region. Characteristics inquired in the area with these forms are: history, cultural features of villages where the study is conducted, agricultural activities done, socio-economic status, educational backgrounds, folkloric properties, infrastructural possibilities of villages, tendencies of local community about ecotourism applications, finding suitable spaces at villages for ecotourism and environmental and other problems of settlements. At the same time, as a result of the study, observation and on-site monitoring, the 4 village settlements included in the research area are evaluated with the SWOT analysis by researchers. SWOT analysis has considered Kazdagi National Park, specified villages, districts to which the villages are dependent and coastal region as a whole. As well as the strength and weaknesses of these areas in terms of ecotourism, the possible opportunities and threats to the area have been determined.

In the third stage, the general features of 4 village settlements and their ecotourism potentials in terms of their natural and cultural sources are determined as a table. Since number of settlements is few, features are explained in the table, no scoring has taken place. These established features were explained and written in order to

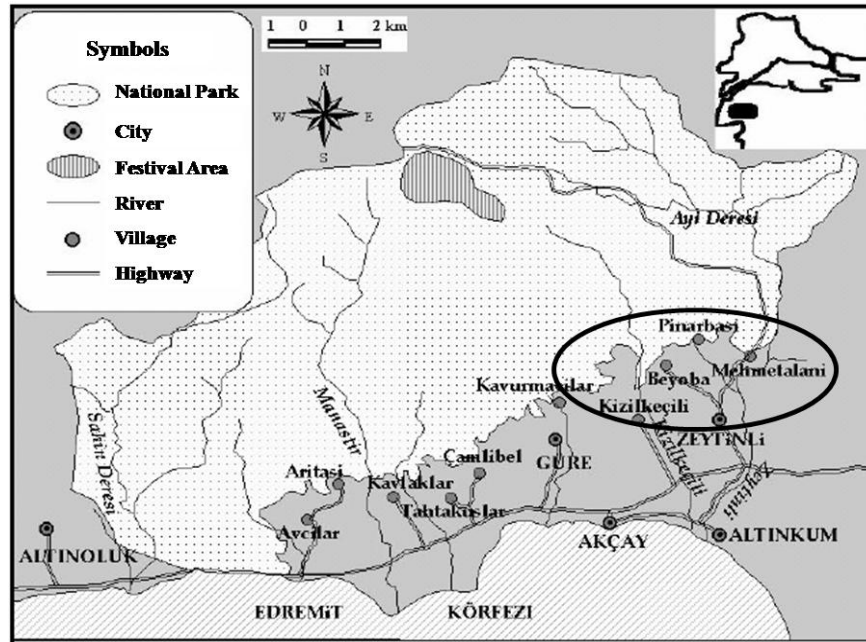


Figure 2. The location of the villages in the research area, formed by using (Arı and Köse, 2009).

form a basic data for planning activities to be conducted in the region in the future. As a result of this, the activities that might lead to ecotourism in Kazdağları are determined and classified. Several suggestions are made, so as to what kind of things should be done to develop and support ecotourism in the selected villages.

Research area

The research area villages Pınarbaşı (Uçurumoba), Beyoba, Mehmetalan and Kızılkeçili are in the south-east and just at the entrance part of Kazdağları National Park and they are a part of Edremit in Balıkesir. They are the closest settlements where visitors to the National park can meet all their needs. They are also important resource areas for ecotourism activities due to their natural-cultural potential. In Edremit plain, there is a high density of rural settlements on the small plateau areas and the hills slightly riven by the alluvial structure and fans surrounding the plain base.

The region of the survey area is in the geographical structure in the form of topographic contour lines which form the transition to the Edremit plain from Kazdağları. A large number of people are engaged in agricultural activities in this area (Mutluer, 1995). The Çanakkale border of Kazdağları in the northern part of Edremit has been declared a national park.

Natural resources of Ida Mountains

In order to prevent the deterioration caused by recreation and tourism in the natural environment and to protect and develop the natural environment as it is, a 21 453 ha area of Kazdağları within the borders of Balıkesir was granted the "National Park" status on 17.04.1993. In addition, in order to save the Kazdağı Fir (*Abies nordmanniana* subsp. *equi-trojana*) a 250.0 ha area has been separated as "Natural Conservation Area" (Durukan et al., 2006). Although the climate of the area is similar to the Mediterranean temperate zone, it is in a transition zone between the

Mediterranean and Black Sea climates (Anonymous, 1995). The southern slopes of Kazdağları have been broken deeply by Şahindere, Manastır, Kızılkeçili, and Zeytinli streams and they stretch down the coast steeply. This geomorphologic structure enriches the unique form of the area by offering spectacular natural shapes like the ones on the Şahindere Canyon in the North of Altınoluk and "Manastır (Monastery) Canyon" on the Manastır stream (Soykan, 2003). One of the most important geomorphologic units in the national park are the valleys.

Especially the canyon type valleys continuing in the north-south direction which are common and they directly control the field properties such as flora, atmosphere circulation, transportation and accommodation. There are also hot water springs and spas in Güre in the south of the national park (Anonymous, 1995). Kazdağları flora consists of plants having 24% Mediterranean floristic elements, 17.6% European-Siberian elements and 1.3% Iranian-Ural-Altaic (Turan) elements (Dirmancı et al., 2007). The plants commonly found in the national park area are: *Pinus nigra*, *Pinus Quercus* ssp., *Platanus* ssp., *Abies* ssp. and *Castanea* ssp. *P. britua* continue for about 800 m from the boundary of the national park and as the elevation increases toward the north there are *P. nigra* and *Quercus* ssp. trees. Kazdağları provides living space for many endemic plants as well as for Kazdağı Fir (*Abies equi-trojana*) which derives its name from the region and which is very important for being a unique and an endemic endangered species (Anonymous, 1995). Its rich flora creates a more suitable habitat to many wild animals such as the roe-deer, bear, chevreuil (*Capra aegagrus*), pig, weasel, and puss.

Cultural resources of Ida Mountains

Besides their richness in natural resources, the National park area and its immediate surroundings also have important historical, archeological and mythological resources as they have been a settlement area since the ancient ages (Anonymous, 1995).

The goddess of love and beauty Aphrodite was chosen as the

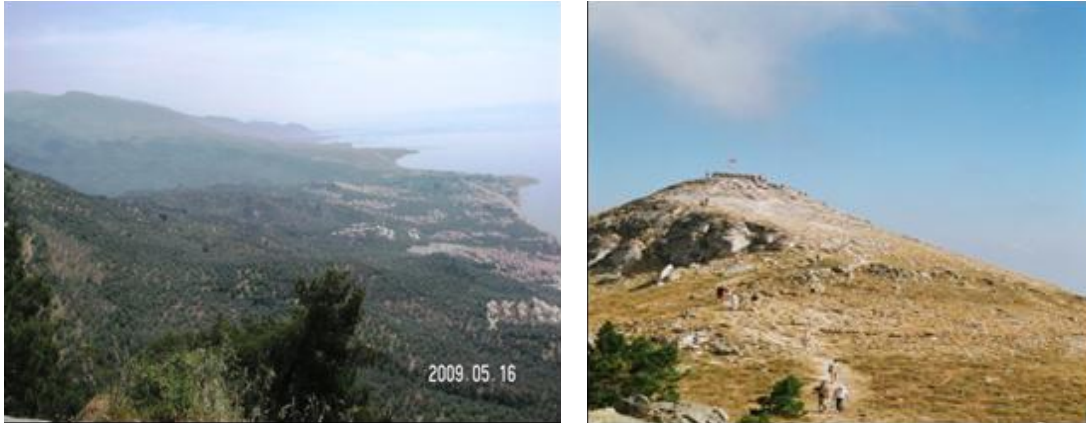


Figure 3. Kazdaglari (Mt. Ida) and Sarıkız hill (2009).

beauty queen in Kazdaglari, which has an important place in the Greek Mythology, where it is called Ida. Kazdaglari and its surrounding area is one of the regions where the Turkish tribes have settled down in parallel with the Turkification and Islamization of Anatolia (Duymaz et al., 2008). According to Ayaşlıgil (2006), that the traditional life styles have survived until today without any breakdown is the most important factor enabling Kazdaglari National Park to be an ecotourism area. In the settlements in the immediate surrounding area of the national park, there are potentials for traditional architecture, material choice and usage, stonemasonry, wall and drip decorating, walling, crafts, light form an important cultural resource value (Güzel, 2008). Especially the Antandros ancient settlement, which is currently being excavated, is an important cultural potential in the region. The other important cultural assets around Kazdaglari are Zeus Horses in Adatepe village which belong to the Roman Times and at the entrance of the Behramkale (Assos) ancient city, the Behramkale Bridge which is built on Tuzla stream and which belongs to the Ottoman Period.

Besides these, it has some features peculiar to only Kazdaglari such as olive trees and the first class olive oil obtained from them, its air and its clean natural water springs (Cengiz et al., 2006). Also, Yeşilyurt, Adatepe, Çamlıbel, Tahtakuşlar, Avcılar and Narlı in the immediate surrounding area are the important settlements which have ecotourism activities and which allow migration and thus have population mobility. On the summit of Kazdaglari, there are some sites rumoured as the place where Sarıkız was buried and thus accepted as holy. With this legend, Kazdaglari have become a holy place, not an ordinary one (Duymaz et al., 2008). Kazdaglari National Park is also visited for this feature and there is a festival on Sarıkız hill every August (Figure 3).

Potential for ecotourism in Kazdağı (Mt. Ida)

Many ecotourism activities such as camping, trekking and canyoning in particular can be done in Kazdaglari which houses an important naturally, culturally and visually rich area in terms of ecotourism (Erdoğan, 2003). With their natural water springs, Pınarbaşı, Şahinderesi canyon, Sütüven fall, Hasan Boğuldu, Ayı stream, Kızılkeçili stream enable visitors to commune with nature. The cultural and art festivals and several other activities organized yearly in Altınoluk, Akçay, Güre, Zeytinli and Edremit contribute to tourism in the region greatly. The first residential area/settlement the visitors pass through while entering the area is Mehmetalan village. This village is scattered on the skirts of the mountain and it is the busiest settlement in the region in terms of recreation. Pınarbaşı and Beyoba villages also have borders with the park and

they are in close contact with the area. Kızılkeçili village, reflecting the character of the region, is on the same line and it is the biggest village settlement in the region in terms of area and population. The existing potential of the villages and their important features in terms of ecotourism activities are charted in detail, taking the interviews made with the village headmen into consideration, besides the survey and observation made in the village settlements in the research area (Table 1).

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of research area

The strengths and weaknesses of Kazdaglari National Park and rural settlements subject to the study, opportunities they will provide and potential treats in the area for the aspect of ecotourism studies in order to be helpful for planning studies to be conducted in the field of study are established by experts and given in Table 2.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The existing natural and cultural potential of Kazdaglari and its environs can support the ecotourism activities that will be applied to the villages selected as the field of research. In determining the development potential of ecotourism in the village settlements in the research area, as well as the existing natural-cultural characteristics of the area, the factors such as the population structure of the villages, socio-economic status and ecotourism attitude are important. Villages within the immediate surrounding of the national park are forest villages and their basic sources of living are forestry products, agriculture and stockbreeding. For these villages, plant gathering is an important activity and source of livelihood. However, after announcement of national park a prohibition has been brought for any kind of plant gathering. Gathering agaric, walnut, chestnut and a wide range of curative herbs numerous has been prohibited. In these villages, especially in the population named Yoruk (nomadic origin) breeding goat is a traditional activity. The following announcement of the national park grazing in the forest has been prohibited. Owners of cattle were

Table 1. The existing potential of the villages*.

Parameter	Pınarbaşı	Mehmetalan	Beyoba	Kızılkeçili
Founding Date	It used to be called Kömürcü Village. It was founded after people had adopted a sedentary life after a nomadic one	It was founded about 200 years ago by a man called Mehmet who came from Ayvacık. It's a Turkmen village.	It was founded by Somakçioğulları between 1500-1600.	It was founded by Kızılkeçili Yörüks coming from the Central Asia between 1200-1300.
Population	1935:111;1970:156;2000:137; In 2010:131 people; 70 houses.	1935:323 1970:495 2000:546; In 2010-502 people,156 houses	1935:177; 1970:292; 2000:216; In 2010-188 people, 80 houses	1935:613; 1970:775; 2000:2056; In 2010-5000 people; 1000 houses
Education	Rate of literacy is approximately 95%. Primary education is given in Zeytinli via mobile teaching system.	Rate of literacy is 99%. There are university graduates. 4-8th grade primary education is given in Zeytinli via mobile teaching system.	Rate of literacy is approximately 95%. Primary education is given in Zeytinli via mobile teaching system.	Rate of literacy is approximately 98%. There is a primary school. 4-8th grade primary education is given in Güre via mobile teaching system.
Health	Zeytinli health care center (village clinic) offers service to the people.	There is a health clinic but no staff. People go to Zeytinli and Edremit.	Zeytinli health care center (village clinic) offers service to the people.	There is a health clinic with a doctor and a midwife.
Infrastructure Substructure	/ There is inadequate drinking water. There are sewerage, telecommunications and electricity systems.	There is. There is drinking water, sewerage, telecommunications and electricity (transformer is inadequate).	There is drinking water, sewerage, telecommunications and electricity.	There is drinking water, sewerage, telecommunications and electricity.
Accommodation	Local facilities are limited	Village's common property guesthouse is available. Villagers operate pension.	Local facilities are limited.	Good accommodation facility.
Solid waste	Isn't collected at a particular area.	Garbage is collected by Zeytinli Municipality.	Garbage is collected by Edremit Municipality.	Garbage is collected by Edremit Municipality.
Transportation	It is 13km far from the county center. There is 4km long hot asphalt.	It is 12km far from the county center. There is 2km long hot asphalt.	It is 9km far from the county center. There is 3km long hot asphalt.	It is 11km far from the county center. There is parquet, stone and asphalt road.
Source of income	Forestry, mushroom, herb gathering, hunting, beekeeping. Olive and vegetable farming. 1 person breeds animals.	Olive farming. 1 person breeds animals. There are people who work at Zeytinli lumber mill. Guidance and safari in Kazdağ National Park. Forestry, mushroom, herb gathering, hunting, and chestnut growing.	Olive farming. They sell handmade soap, olive and olive oil on the booths near the village and in national park. Breeding animals, forestry, mushroom, herb gathering hunting, beekeeping, fishing.	Olive farming. A few families breed animals. 4-5 families do hand work. It is village with a high income level. Forestry, mushroom, herb gathering hunting, fishing.

Table 1. Contd.

Animal Existence /	There are about 500 breeds animal before being declared national park, in 1990. There are 25 of small ruminants after being declared national park. But in 2010: 3-4 people have animal. There are about 30-40 of small ruminants.	There are about 100 of small ruminants before being declared national park, in 1990. But in 2010:30 goats, 5 donkeys, 4 Horses, 25 head of cattle.	In 1990: 650 small ruminants; in 2005: 220 small ruminants; in 2010: 40-50 goats.	In 1990: 650 small ruminants; in 2005: 50 small ruminants; but in 2010: 30 head of cattle, about 125 of small ruminants.
Production range	Agricultural production is limited. They supply their household needs.	3 people farm vegetables; 5 people produce tangerine and 1 person keeps bees (apiculture).	The land is infertile. There is little agricultural production.	There is a small scale agricultural production to supply their household.
Ecotourism Facilities	Picnic area, bungalows, pancake house.	There are olive trees and forestland around the village. It's 3km from the National Park entrance. There are 3 picnic areas near the small stream and bungalows. 1 hostel. Touring groups come during the summer. About 1500 vehicles go to the National park a day. In the village there is an ecotourism club with 16-17 members.	There is the Hasan Boğuldu (Hasan got drowned) Recreation spot. There might be local dishes service. Village houses are suitable to hostel management.	There is an 850 year old monumental tree. Çağlayan is a daily picnic area. Semaver family garden. Çınaraltı family café. ² Restaurants, 10-15 Bungalows. A hotel under. Tourism may be an alternative income source for village people.
Ecotourism attitude	Positive. People in the village lean towards the idea of renting the empty houses as hostels.	Positive. Level of education is high and there are tourism activities in the village.	Positive. Village people should be guided.	Positive. Village people earn Money from tourism now. There are constructions intended for tourism.
Cultural activities	They organize Sarıkız Festivities once a year. During this period it is free for 12 days for the village people to enter the national park. They visit Şıpsıp Dede.	On 6th May, they organize the traditional Hidrellez (spring celebration) Festivities. Among the olive trees, there is a pine tree which is thought as holy by villagers.	Every year between 25-30 August, they have Traditional Sarıkız Charity Works And they deliver food.	They organize poem concerts and mass feeding/dining activities during summer months..
Problems	There is a problem with the electricity and gold mine search. Since there isn't public transportation facility, it's an unexplored village. Agricultural production has decreased.	Sources of income are limited. There is no open space for children to play. Village square is small.	Unemployment. Village income is limited. As it has borders with the National Park, people cannot make use of the forest and breed animals.	There is unemployment. As it has become a National Park, the authorities do not let people breed goats.
Migration	There is migration to Zeytinli.		When Kazdagi became a National Park, the village people had problems and migration started.	No migration out of the village. It allows migration from the Black Sea and the Eastern regions.

*Has been formed from the meetings/interviews with the Village headmen and the local people; <http://balikesir-edremit.gov.tr> website (Anonymous, 2009; Arı et al., 2005; Arı and Köse, 2009).

Table 2. SWOT analysis findings about the research area.

Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Being close to Kazdagi National Park -In the transit-point of important tourism areas -The existence of many streams and falls in the immediate surroundings of the research area -Having a lot of scenery watching points - The existence of wildlife and living spaces - Belonging to 5 familya, 10 spesies freshwater fish, 82 spesies of bird, 18 mammals, 21 amphibians, 100 reptiles live in area (Arı and Köse, 2009) -Flora diversity and the endemic flora unique to the region -Enabling a resource for recreational activities, especially the ones done with water -The natural and cultural richness of the region for ecotourism -The presence of areas suitable for photography, bird watching, wildlife watching and jeep safari -Hospitable and tolerant population -Leading the traditional way of life to some extent - Being sites of myths, existence of antique residues and settlement sites. -Benefiting from plantations existing on Kazdaglari by using knowledge accumulations of the past and production of mixtures and blends. - Existence of geological and geomorphologic diversity and extraordinary natural forms including canyons. - Restorative water sources and Spa's. -Closeness to the coast. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of introduction of ecotourism -Lack of infrastructure and ecotourism facilities -Lack of advertisement of the most important ecotourism resources such as Sütüven Fall, Hasanboğuldu, Kızılkçeçili Stream, Pınarbaşı, etc. -Lack of information about ecotourism -Lack of traditional production methods -Too much emigration to big cities - Kazdagi National Park is a conservation area and limiting benefiting of local community who use the sources of park from the area because of conservation.
Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Having a high opportunity of different tourism activities -Enabling different ecotourism activities -The local people's being eager to join the ecotourism activities and their positive attitude toward it -Being able to improve the cultural and natural fabric of the villages with restoration and protection works -The village settlements and the surrounding areas' having suitable places for ecotourism -The microclimate-like climate of the region -The interest of the headmen to ecotourism practice -The easy transportation to villages and the completion of the double lane road works -The natural produce potential of the region - Organizing several celebrations and festivals in the region by including myths and beliefs. - Conducting ecotourism studies by local administrations, ministry of forestry and the directorate of national parks aiming local people. -Establishing cooperative companies and planning recreation activities by local people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The risk of spoiling the natural structure of the area with unplanned ecotourism activities -The spoilage that might occur in the natural areas when there are festivals and cultural activities -Unconscious hunting in terms of wildlife -That the villages incorporated in the study are not under protection status as they are not within the borders of Kazdagi National Park -That people coming from the neighboring settlements are picking up healing herbs secretly -Emigration to other places -Putting an end to traditional stockbreeding because of the national park - Locations of some activities and celebrations remain in the national park area and consequently performing these activities less - Inability of conveying local culture coming from the past to the new generations and loss due to migrations. - Loss of traditional stockbreeding culture after announcement of national park and changes in living styles.

promised jobs and their cattle were sold but the promised jobs were not given (Arı et al, 2005). The most important problem determined also during inquiries conducted in

the area of research is economical difficulties and migration of the young population suffered by local population following announcement of national park.

Providing tourist guide training in Mehmetalan village close to the entrance of the national park by the administration of the national park and informing them has ensured small size positive developments in the village about ecotourism. Kızılkeçili village is socio-economically more active due to being close to the center of the district and advantages of transportation and has greater possibilities of accommodation for the aspect of ecotourism.

Taking the interviews made with the village headmen into consideration, besides the survey and observation made in the village settlements in the research area, it is determined that as the villagers in Pınarbaşı and Beyoba villages have some communication problems and disagreements, the development and support of ecotourism activities is difficult in terms of the local people's approach. Very intense migration to provinces and districts close to these two settlements limits as well as existing accommodation possibilities. For these reasons, the possibility of developing ecotourism is higher in Mehmetalan and Kızılkeçili villages than in Pınarbaşı and Beyoba villages. In these two villages, the local people are having high income and education level and no migration out are important factors that have a positive effect on this situation. Due to their having a younger and more entrepreneurial population, these villages have been thought as being more suitable for ecotourism activities and getting the necessary support from the villagers.

By enabling the development of ecotourism in the village settlements near the national park, the sustainability of the natural and cultural fabric will be maintained. However, the organization and management of all kind of ecotourism activities in the region is as important as their planning. As stated by Kuter and Unal (2009), in order to realize ecotourism in accordance with its purpose; it is significant to conserve local values and introduce through diverse events. During any activities to realize in the region no intervention must be to nature. Furthermore, visitors to participate in ecotourism activities and persons of local community must be informed about all resources of the area and how to conduct ecotourism activities, and results of any possible misuses. As the villages examined are near the Kazdaglari National Park, villagers there cannot breed animals which are their important source of income and thus have economic troubles. With the development of ecotourism in the area, the increasing demand for tourism in the area will be met and an important source of income for the region will be created. Supporting the findings of the study conducted by Turoğlu and Uludağ (2006) in Kırklareli-İğneada, a region similar to this study area, it is seen that ecotourism will be an alternative source of income in these rural areas.

Ecotourism has multiple interactions with the physical, economic and socio-cultural environment of the regions where it makes progress. Besides being the best way of

sustainable development, as in the other activities, ecotourism will also have positive and negative effects on the environment. However, with the principles it has brought about based on the protection of the ecosystem, ecotourism has a development potential which will have the lowest negative effect on the environment (Demir and Çevirgen, 2006). In this regard, in the region where it is planned to do ecotourism, the choice of the activities is a very important issue which should be laid emphasis on. In Ok's study (2006) called "Multiple Criteria Activity Selection for the Ecotourism Planning of İğneada", besides mentioning that ecotourism can be seen as an opportunity to introduce the values in the protected areas and to create finance to the concerned ones, it is emphasized that ecotourism is also one of the factors that threatens the ecosystem. For this reason, it is essential to take ecological, economic and social dimensions into consideration while choosing the ecotourism activities.

According to this information, important activities supporting ecotourism in the region are as follows: Active ecotourism activities: 1) Activities such as swimming, picnicking, trekking etc which are done at Hasanboğuldu, Sütüven Fall, Pınarbaşı and Kızılkeçili Stream; 2) Festivals and festivities in the research area and its immediate surroundings; 3) Mountain climbing, camping and caravan tourism. Potential ecotourism activities: Bird watching, wildlife watching, trekking, scenery watching, flora tourism, outdoor photography, agriculture and farm-based tourism, horse trekking, agricultural activity.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, after examining the existing facilities of the village settlements in the research area and the SWOT analysis, it has been confirmed that these settlements have an important potential for the development of ecotourism. Benefiting from this potential, the suggestions below have been offered to enable the visitors coming to the national park area to use these settlements within the scope of ecotourism.

- 1) First of all, the infrastructure and transportation problems of the villages in the research area should be solved. Because the areas where ecotourism activities will be held need to be accessible and able to meet the basic needs of the visitors. The inspected villages have limited public transportation facilities and in some regions the quality of some roads are not convenient.
- 2) Making the other settlements apply the area guide and ecotourism club practices of Mehmetalan village will meet this need to a great extent. In Pınarbaşı and Beyoba villages, if the returns of ecotourism are told to the village people with concrete examples and hands-on training is given by doing on-site and broad participated trainings and workshops, they will probably participate in it.
- 3) One of the most important problems of the area is lack

of accommodation. Although there is not a serious organization in the villages regarding this situation, the village people have a positive attitude to hostel management. The necessary support should be given to the villagers for hostel management which will bring in a lot of money. The village mansion which will be built as a common property will be an important support to the village development.

4) Another thing that will contribute to the development of ecotourism activities in villages is the introduction of local culture and the other sources using different means. Large scale introductory activities and guidance should be provided in order to orient visitors to the area. At the same time a local products bazaar should be arranged in each village for the visitors and here all kind of products and handmade items symbolizing the region and grown and produced in it should be trademarked.

5) If the village people are guided and supported to introduce the local dishes and to give a chance to visitors to try them, it can be easy to introduce the regional food. During the interview had in the area, it was determined that women can offer this service. Thus, it will be possible for women in the region to make more contribution to the production.

6) One of the biggest problems in the villages is that the people coming from the surrounding settlements pick up plants both in the national park and the villages in an uncontrolled way. Legal solutions should be found because there is the danger of harming the natural vegetation and causing the extinction of some species.

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