

## Village Museums as an Attraction Element in Rural Tourism: Samples from Turkey

Özcan ÖZDEMİR<sup>1</sup> Suat AKYÜREK<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Institute of Social Sciences Doctoral Program, Department of Tourism Management, Muğla

<sup>2</sup>Gümüşhane University, Department of Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Services, Gümüşhane, Turkey

\*Corresponding Author

E-mail:suat.akyurek@gumushane.edu.tr

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### Abstract

Village Museums offer an insight into past lives of the people from the region they are located and give a touristic attraction to that region. In this study, village museums which have become widespread in rural areas today were examined and general condition of the village museums in Turkey was evaluated. The study was designed in literature survey form and secondary resources were utilized during data collection process. Within the scope of the study, it was observed that village museums have given a touristic attraction to rural areas, become effective in protection of the region's cultural heritage and provided an economic benefit to the region.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Rural tourism, Museum, Village Museum

### INTRODUCTION

When traveling reasons of the people participating to tourism today are evaluated; elements such as to seek for adventure, to see different places, meet with new people, have different experiences are in the foreground. In order to meet people's such kind of demands, alternative tourism types have come to light in recent years. Especially with the increase in number of persons who prefer to move away from intense urban life and have their holiday in touch with nature, several alternative tourism type have come to light i.e. eco-tourism, nature tourism, rural tourism, agro-tourism, village tourism. Besides, that the unemployment increasing in rural areas today and the migration rising gradually towards urban centers have led to concentrate on plans and projects for development of rural areas [1].

Although the share of natural attractions in tourism is high today, the interest in cultural attractions is also rising day by day. Museums which have an important place within culture tourism are also significant in terms of increasing the tourism income, creating touristic attraction source in the region and most importantly, documenting our past and who we are [2]. On the other hand, development of museum studies and increase in museums today have led to occurrence of various museums i.e. gastronomy tourism, rural tourism, nature tourism, dark tourism as well as culture tourism. Examples of such kind of museums are gastronomy museums, nature museums, village museums and dark museums. Thus, no studies were found concerning village museums as a result of the relevant literature review. In this regard, it is considered that this study is important in order to meet the deficiency in that field. In this scope, the research subject consists of village museums which are considered to be effective in development of rural tourism and in creating a source of attraction to rural areas. In this context, village museums in various regions of Turkey are reviewed by document analysis. In the conclusion part of the study, some recommendations are offered to tourism sector and local

authorities with respect to village museum.

### RURAL TOURISM

Today, it is observed that popular tourism destinations become increasingly overbuilt and that most individuals prefer to stay away from such overbuilt urban environment and visit more virgin places. In this respect, rural tourism offers important opportunities [3]. Rural tourism appears as a kind of tourism which integrates with natural environment, rural culture and agriculture as well as can easily adapt with other types of tourism [4]. This rural tourism type, which is preferred as destination by people is a kind of tourism that brings innovation to people as well as a developing type of tourism as it draws increasingly more interest [5]. As a concept, rural tourism is considered as a minor tourism activity which the individuals are able to find places to have holiday in natural zones i.e. in small villages and towns or at tablelands [6]. According to Yaylı, rural tourism are long vacations or daily excursions which the urban people in the same or different countries made to rural areas to spend their spare times, for recreation or business [7]. Rural tourism is the most prominent type of tourism under touristic product diversification and sustainable tourism. Rural tourism, incorporates different models such as ecology tourism, agriculture tourism and farm tourism; and thus supports regional development [8]. Almost every country use their touristic supply resources to develop their economy in rural areas and reconstruct rural tourism. In this context, they try to catch an opportunity for alternative economic development in rural areas with the incomes they will obtain from rural tourism [9]. Rural tourism is quite important in terms creating a profit for national economy as well as reducing unemployment and providing women employment in rural regions. Besides, rural tourism provides many contributions by developing the spirit of entrepreneurship, bringing input ad dynamism to local economies, prompting economic sectors, improving rural development at regional

and national level in terms of economy and spread tourism activities throughout the whole year [7]. As a result of development of rural regions by rural tourism; sources in the region are utilized in the best way, socio-cultural and economic development between urban and rural areas are minimized and life standards of people in rural regions are increased by reducing the migration to cities with the created employment opportunities [9].

Development of rural tourism in a region helps further protection of cultural heritage. With the locals stake a claim on their cultural heritages; these values are recognized, presented to visitors and transferred to future generations; and thus a sustainable structure is created. Besides, the development of rural tourism in a region contributes to being more sensitive to region's environment and to building of infrastructure and superstructure investments to be made in an environmental friendly way [10].

In Figure 1, determinants of rural tourism are presented. As seen in the figure, determinants (products) of rural tourism are collected under four topics which are rural region, rural life, rural heritage and rural activities.

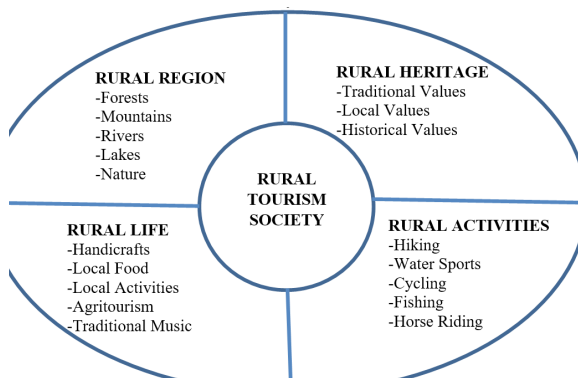


Figure 1. Determinants of Rural Tourism Society [11]

As seen in Figure 1, cultural heritage has a lot of contribution in rural tourism. Therefore, in development of rural tourism, it is important to protect traditional values in rural areas which are sunk into oblivion and present them to the visitors participating rural tourism [10].

The intangible cultural heritage [12], which is defined as the group of moral values formed by the local people's adoption of cultural values, equipments and beliefs of societies since the ancient times and by their transfer to future generations, is a source of touristic attraction. In this context, the exhibition of elements in village museums i.e. old production tools, old household goods, traditional clothes which form the basis of this study, can be considered within the scope of a touristic product.

## THE CONCEPT OF MUSEUM AND VILLAGE MUSEUMS

Museums are generally defined as the places which continuously serve the society and enable the development of society; present, collect and preserve material evidence and create education and entertainment opportunities for people and environment [13]. According to Ministry of Culture and Tourism, museums are defined as the places in which any kind of object belonging to civilization history are exhibited under scientific rules, that enrich the people's liking and cultural background and where the historical data that facilitate and develop the studies of researchers

are transferred to future generations [14]. Karataş defines museums as the places in which any kind of object belonging to civilization history are exhibited under scientific rules, that increase the liking and cultural background of the people, offer data for the relevant researchers, that the historical data is transferred to future generations and finally, create a touristic demand towards the region [15]. As can be understood from the definitions above, gathering elements such as old tools, equipments, clothes etc. peculiar to local people in previous years and presenting them by creating museum or exhibition may be considered within the scope of museum.

Museums perform three important functions in general which are preservation (saving, storing, accumulation, repair, use, architectural design), research (scientific studies, articles, interviews, presentations) and communication [16]. In our country, 331 visitable units active under Ministry of Culture and Tourism - Directorate General of Cultural Assets and Museums, 193 of which are museums and 138 are landscaped archaeological sites, also provide service as an education and scientific institution [14]. Besides, there are museums under private museum status in Turkey which are generally run by municipalities, chambers of commerce, governorates, district governorates and private entrepreneurs [17].

Although there is no final consensus regarding the types of museum in the related field literature, museums can be classified as general museums, archeology museums, art museums, history museums, ethnography museums, nature/history museums, geology museums, science museums, military museums and industry museums [18]. Apart from these types of museums, there are also private museums types today. Some examples of private museums which include works gathered by individuals or institutions in various subjects may be given as [19] gastronomy museums, dark museums, village museums and eco museums.

In order to help people know each other and the region they visit, it is quite important to protect cultural and natural heritage consisting of common values and prevent this heritage consciousness from disappearing. With this purpose, there are important international organizations and contracts formed in order to protect the cultural heritage in universal extent. The most important one among those organizations is UNESCO. [20]. During their 32nd General Conference in 2003, UNESCO determined the applications, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills and relevant tools, materials and cultural places as intangible heritage, and signed a contract for their preservation [21]. In this scope, village museums can be considered as the places where tangible and intangible cultural heritages of the region they locate are exhibited.

Rural tourism does not only consist of activities such as village and farm excursions. Along with those, presentation of local food, handicrafts, customs and traditions are considered within the scope of rural tourism [6]. Based on that, the old production tools that local people of the rural region use in the past and their old goods, which offer an insight into their past daily lives, are presented to visitors coming to that rural region and thus a rural tourism attractiveness might be created.

Various life diversities in Turkey's rural regions and existence of different cultures by regions offer important opportunities in terms of development of village tourism. On the other hand, rapid increase in globalization and technology leads to disappearance of that cultural diversity, traditional

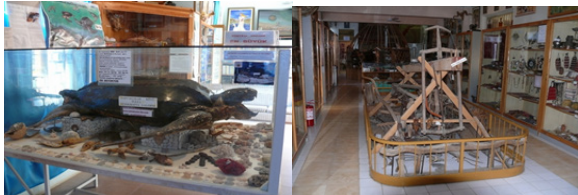
production methods, traditional household goods, traditional clothes etc. Thus thanks to village museums, these cultural values are preserved, transferred to future generations and bring a touristic dynamism to the region by offering various places of attraction in rural regions. In this context, examples of some village museums having an important position in Turkey are as follows.

◆ **Yuruk Museum:** The Yuruk Museum located in Kargı Village of Fethiye-Muğla is a unique individual museum which presents visitors around 2500 pieces of traditional old production tools and goods peculiar to the region. The Museum provides service to rural tourism within Yalçın Apart which describes the region specific Yuruk culture in the best way and offers a different experience to its visitors. The services are offered in region specific culture concept and an effective sample of initiative in development of the region[22]. In Photograph 1, ironsmiths working in previous years (the left side) and the goods used in previous years are exhibited in the Yuruk Museum.



**Photograph 1.** Fethiye Yuruk Museum [23].

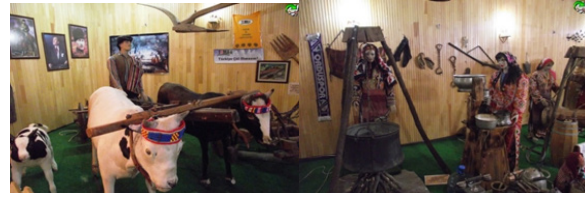
◆ **Tahtakuşlar Ethnography Museum:** Tahtakuşlar Ethnography Museum is a private ethnography gallery located in Tahtakuşlar village within the boundaries of Güre Municipality of Balıkesir province, which was found by a Primary School teacher named Alibey Kudar in 1991. In the gallery; cultural assets, clothing, household goods, tools, carpets and tents, any kind of artworks, manuscripts, necklaces, charms etc. and a sea turtle which has been exhibited in the world with the biggest leather back is exhibited [24]. In photograph 2, the sea turtle which has been exhibited in the world with the biggest leather back (on the left) and a general view from the inside of the museum (on the right) are presented.



**Photograph 2.** Tahtakuşlar Ethnography Museum [25].

◆ **Bizim Köy Museum:** Bizim Köy Museum is a dynamic museum which was established on a 300 square meter area in Burhaniye county of Balıkesir. It presents the old village life to its visitors in a movable way. It is a unique museum as the exhibited artworks are voiced and moving. The museum, which is founded by a private individual thanks to saving collections for long years, reflects the various lives of Anatolia [26]. In Photograph 3, a plowing man in previous years (on the left) and women cooking in

traditional way (on the right) are presented in Bizim Köy Museum.



**Photograph 3.** Bizim Köy Museum [26].

◆ **Derebağı Village Museum** It is a museum created in Derebağı Village of Yerköy county of Yozgat by the village people. The 'Village Museum', in which old agricultural tools, household and working goods are exhibited, attracts quite much attention. The museum which is created by the village residents, provides an insight into history, traditions and culture of the village. In the museum which was established through the villagers' own means, approximately 500 artworks take the visitors back to 70-80 years ago by allowing them to have an idea about the region's old culture. According to the statements of local authorities, thanks to those production tools and old goods which are sinking into oblivion, the number of visitors coming to the region increases which contributes to promotion and development of the region [27]. In Photograph 4, agricultural tools exhibited in Derebağı village museum (on the left) and the village people who established the museum (on the right) are presented.



**Photograph 4.** Derebağı Village Museum [28].

◆ **Mehmet Şahin Museum:** The museum which was found by private individual in Okçular village of Dinar county of Afyonkarahisar, is established on a 150 square meter section together with the supports of villagers. In the museum; many local tools, goods and clothes are presented to its visitors [29]. In Photograph 5, a local dining table (on the left) exhibited in Mehmet Şahin Museum and the museum's signboard (on the right) are presented.



**Photograph 5.** Mehmet Şahin Museum [29].

◆ **Budakdoğanca Village Museum:** In the museum which was established in Budakdoğanca village of Edirne, it is seen that old agricultural and household tools as well as village's any kind of object related to past are presented to visitors. The aim of this museum which was found through the village's own means is to increase the interest towards

the region and transfer those goods and tools sinking into oblivion to future generations [30]. In Photograph 6, tools and materials of previous years which are exhibited in Budakdoğanca Village Museum are presented.



**Photograph 6.** Budakdoğanca Village Museum [31].

◆ Erzincan Kemaliye Ocak Village Ali Gürer Museum: The museum was established by personal attempt and contributions of Ali Gürer. The Museum is the only one bearing private museum status established in Erzincan under control of the Ministry of Culture and hosts approximately 1300 artworks [32]. In Photograph 7, a general view of Erzincan Kemaliye Ocak Village Ali Gürer Museum (on the left) and the exhibited goods (on the right) are presented.



**Photograph 7.** Erzincan Kemaliye Ocak Village Ali Gürer Museum [32].

◆ Kabakça Village Museum: It is located in Kabakça village of Çatalca county of Istanbul. In the museum, region specific old production tools and old daily goods are presented in general [33]. In Photograph 8, goods belonging to previous years exhibited in Kabakça Village Museum (on the left) and a general view of the museum (on the right) are presented.



**Photograph 8.** Kabakça Village Museum [33].

◆ Gümüşhane Kocayokuş Village Museum: It is a museum which is established in Kocayokuş village of Gümüşhane center. In the museum established by private individual, various production tools, work and household goods which were used by local people in previous years are exhibited. The museum provides an insight into recent history of the region [34].

In addition to the above village museums, old goods and 50 year old agricultural tools are exhibited in a museum created by a private entrepreneur in a section of his house who lives in Dodurga town of Bozöyük- Bilecik. [35]. Likewise, a museum is present which is created by an individual living in Islahiye county of Gaziantep. He exhibits 500 pieces of century-old goods in two rooms of his house which includes handmill, wooden plow, big plow, suction and force pump

etc. Another example of a village museum was created as the residents of Ildızım village of Korgun-Çankırı transformed the unused village mansion into a museum which includes region specific agricultural tools and old goods [37].

## CONCLUSION and SUGGESTIONS

Today, the demand towards museum tourism and the income obtained in this field is on the increase. Along being places in which artworks are saved, kept and exhibited; museums have increased their functionalities recent years as being the places which the visitors come and see, have fun, get information and gain experience as well as provide economic profit, support tourism, positively contribute to training at any age and contribute to socio-cultural changes [16].

With globalization, it is observed that a uniform culture has appeared as the people show similarities in many fields i.e. lifestyles, apparels, eating and drinking habits, behaviours with the developments in technology, the effect of globalization is observed particularly in big cities and people travel to rural regions in order to stay away even a bit from artificial environments of such big cities. However, developments in technology show that life models, production techniques and customs-traditions change rapidly. Under these circumstances, visitors traveling to rural regions are not able to find the environments they are looking for in rural regions. At this point, village museums and galleries become important. Cultural heritages of the past i.e. old production tools, household goods, kitchen equipment, local clothes, old folk dances etc. are brought together, and they are quite important to provide more information about the region, not to allow old traditional elements to be forgotten and to create a touristic attraction in the rural region they are located. Village museums can be presented as touristic product under rural tourism by collecting the tangible and intangible cultural values of local people in one field. Consequently, those values are provided to make an economic source of income and be transferred to future generations.

Based on this study, some suggestions are made below:

Village museums are important in terms of developing tourism consciousness in the region they are established. In this context, village museums can be supported and promoted through provincial directorates of tourism and local authorities. Number of village museums can be increased throughout the country.

◆ Current village museums can be identified and measurements can be taken to preserve and improve them.

◆ Travel agencies (particularly local travel agencies) may contribute by organizing tours to village museums or including those museums in the current tours.

◆ Various tourism activities, festivals, activities in the related field may be organized to increase the promotion of region's artefacts to attract the attentions of local and international tourists.

◆ Incentive activities can be performed to increase such museums, galleries and exhibitions in rural regions.

◆ At a common point of villages located close to each other, opening such kind of museum, gallery and exhibitions may be encouraged under the control of village authorities and also by the support of local people.

◆ Village museums can be created in rural regions of destinations where there is an intense mass tourism, and short excursions can be organized to those regions.

◆ As a result of literature review, it was observed that academic studies related to the field are not adequate. In this context, academic studies related to village museums may be increased.

◆ Finally, it is stated that Turkey's number of museums, number of museum visitors and museum income are far behind the European countries and the USA (Kervankıran, 2014: 364). In this regard, it is considered important that museums should be diversified as well as such kind of museum concepts should be supported to make our country reach the place she deserves in museum field.

The most important limitation of this study is the review of subject within conceptual frame. In the next studies, it can be recommended that the subject is supported with an empirical study. Another limitation is the inadequacy of local and international academic studies in the related literature. In the literature review, it is seen that there are not so many studies on village museums in the academic field. In order that the study provides an insight into similar studies to be carried out in the future and such kind of places are increased in rural regions to help development rural tourism, it is considered important as being a pioneer study.

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