

THE BLUE ECONOMY APPROACH: AN ASSESSMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF COASTAL AND MARINE TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is an important sector for each country due to its economic and socio-cultural benefits. However, it is known that tourism has caused some non-ignorable environmental problems (air, water, noise and visual pollution, climate change, bioturbation etc.) as well as economic and socio-cultural benefits. Since the economic system based on more resources and investments is useless anymore, it has begun to seek a new paradigm towards an answer to the question how can efficiently be benefited from existing sources and changed the system. In this regard, one of the paradigms is "blue economy" revealed by Gunter Pauli in 2010. According to his paradigm, more profits and social capital can be created with less investment. In other words, the paradigm of blue economy is based on an economic model aiming to draw on economy of scope instead of scale, to meet sustainably the needs of the world with current resources. In brief, blue economy looks for an answer relating to how monetising more than one with current resources and meeting the basic needs. Sustainability which has been put forward in order to prohibit the eco-destruction for the sake of consumption and to take measures is also an approach that aims to reduce negative impacts of tourism on nature. In this context, main purpose of the study is to scrutinise importance of ecotourism in Turkey via relationship blue economy paradigm and sustainability. In addition to that, how it should be realized economic, environmental and social capital was also revealed in the study within the context of sustainability.

Keywords: Blue Economy, Marine Tourism, Sustainability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an important sector for each country due to its economic and socio-cultural benefits. However, it is known that tourism has caused some non-ignorable environmental problems (air, water, noise and visual pollution, climate change, bioturbation etc.) as well as economic and socio-cultural benefits. Since the economic system based on more resources and investments is useless anymore, it has begun to seek a new paradigm towards an answer to the question how can efficiently be benefited from existing sources and changed the system. In this regard, one of the paradigms is "blue economy" revealed by Gunter Pauli in 2010. According to his paradigm, more profits and social capital can be created with less investment. In other words, the paradigm of blue economy is based on an economic model aiming to draw on economy of scope instead of scale, to meet sustainably the needs of the world with current resources. In brief, blue economy looks for an answer relating to how monetising more than one with current resources and meeting the basic needs.

The latest strategy to build economic, environmental and social capital and ensure sustainable economic development is the Blue Economy (Ababouch, 2015; Pauli, 2010). Sustainable productivity and growth can be achieved for every segment of the economy due to the Blue economy which takes the source of inspiration from nature, focus primarily on regional development, and embraces zero waste understanding. In this understanding, a product waste becomes an input to create a new cash flow and it is aimed to establish social

capital and to renew the ecosystem by creating new business areas. Blue economy was design by taking into consideration the following points (Blue Paper 1, 2015):

- ✓ Build a sustainable economy,
- ✓ Renew ecosystem,
- ✓ Provide prosperity for everyone,
- ✓ To ensure that resources and waste recovered
- ✓ Create locally new business areas,
- ✓ Ensuring sustainable growth and productivity,
- ✓ Build economic, environmental and social capital

Sustainability which has been put forward in order to prohibit the eco-destruction for the sake of consumption and to take measures is also an approach that aims to reduce negative impacts of tourism on nature. In this context, main purpose of the study is to scrutinise importance of coastal and marine tourism in Turkey via relationship blue economy paradigm and sustainability. In addition to that, how it should be realized economic, environmental and social capital was also revealed in the study within the context of sustainability. Turkey has significantly created attractions for many domestic and foreign tourists with the beauty of the Mediterranean, Aegean and Marmara coastal regions where have tourism businesses. It is suggested that the practices should be accomplished within the framework of the blue economy concept by converting each environmental waste into input to create a new cash flow. Thereby, it will be possible to contribute developing coastal and marine tourism within ecotourism by protecting the natural structure of tourism regions and increasing tourism income.

2. METHODOLOGY

Coastal and marine tourism within ecotourism is a large industry with a very complex relationship between many different actors and sectors and has particularly a key proposition for developing countries such Turkey. In this study, Within the scope of the blue economy, The current situation of ecotourism of these areas had determined. Literature study had be done in this study. Also statistical data had be utilized.

2.1. Blue Economy – Tourism Relationship

The blue economy paradigm and sustainability relation are very important. Blue economy also covers a wide range of activities including coastal and marine tourism which is not limited to rural areas. A large portion of global tourism is focused on the marine and coastal environment and it is set to rise.

The oceans cover 72% of the earth's land and constitute more than 95% of the biosphere. Thus, life has been mostly originated from the oceans that has been still importance in terms of preserving the ecosystem for the benefit of future generations, producing oxygen, absorbing carbon dioxide, recycling nutrients, and regulating the global climate and temperature. In this context, the importance of oceans for sustainable development has been reaffirmed in the outcome document of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Implementation Plan (2002), Rio + 20 (2012) Conference, United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris in 2015 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in New York with the participation of over 150 world leaders from the outset of the UNCED process. But the exploitative and deteriorating trends of marine and coastal ecosystems have already shown that the efforts are insufficient and much more needs to be done. The Blue economy paradigm creates a sustainable framework for developing countries to address access to marine resources, equality in development and benefit sharing, to provide coverage for human development reinvestment and to mitigate national debt burdens. Accordingly, a sustainable blue economy framework includes the following principles (Blue Paper 1, 2015):

- ✓ Inspiration – Engagement – Inclusiveness
- ✓ Comprehensiveness
- ✓ Measurability and Transparency
- ✓ Clarity and Shared Mental Model
- ✓ Credibility and Integrity
- ✓ Flexibility and Responsiveness

- ✓ Stakeholder Impact
- ✓ Localisation and regionalization to complement globalization
- ✓ Effective ocean and coral reef management

The Blue economy approach is based on the assessment and inclusion of the true value of natural (blue) capital with all aspects of economic activity (conceptualization, planning, infrastructure development, trade, travel, renewable resource use, energy production/ consumption). Along with respect for environmental and ecological parameters, the effectiveness and optimization of resource utilization is very important.

2.2. Blue Economy – Coastal & Marine Tourism

Tourism has become an important sector that has an impact on development of country economy. The main benefits of tourism are income creation and generation of jobs. For many regions and countries it is the most important source of welfare. Tourism is a vital part of the global economy.

Cruise tourism is the fastest growing sector in the leisure travel industry. Despite the global crises in various forms, the tourism sector is a rapidly growing sector.

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism has continued to grow in the last 60 years to become one of the world's largest and fastest growing economic sectors. International tourist arrivals were 278 million in 1980 and 674 million in 2000, while the number of tourists in 2016 reached 1 billion 235 million and international tourism receipts reached 1.220 trillion US \$ (UNWTO, 2017).

Tourism is one of the favorite activities of people around the world, but sometimes it can have a harmful effect on the environment due to time and space condensation. Therefore, tourism has possible threats to a lot of natural resources from across the globe. The large increase in population during the high season results usually in an increase in the amount of waste water produced. If the necessary infrastructure for handling these wastes is not available, the sea is polluted, causing serious problems.

Tourism has made significant contributions to the country's economy, as well as increasing environmental problems such as greenhouse gas emission, water consumption, waste production, deterioration of biodiversity and ecosystem. It can lead to a lot of major problems that could totally harm the environment, such as natural habitat loss, increased pollution, soil erosion, and more. If the pollution continues this way, it is expected that the fish stock will be depleted up to 2050 and with population growth, the water that meets about 15% of the food need will face the danger of disappearance. Every country is responsible for its own resources and sustainable development. It is vital to realize that the current economic paradigms in the world are lack of the mechanisms to protect the ecosystem and to recognize the importance of national policies and development strategies. In this context, the development of the blue economy approach, which includes both national and international strategies within it, has been become crucial. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), one of the organizations that provides this awareness, will work together with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Maritime Organization (IMO), WorldFish Center and IUCN (Global Marine Program) published a report called "*Green Economy in a Blue World*". According to the report, it is emphasized that coastal tourism is increasingly becoming a threat to the seas and the oceans, and that a sustainable economic understanding is required not only by environmental sensitivity but also by the combined action of economic, social and natural capital.

Tourism activities should be developed without harming the environment. This would constitute the essence of sustainable tourism. The Blue Economy offers a suite of opportunities for sustainable, clean, equitable blue growth in both traditional and emerging sectors. Efficiency and optimization of resource use are paramount whilst respecting environmental and ecological parameters. It is suggested that the practices should be accomplished within the framework of the blue economy concept by converting each environmental waste into input to create a new cash flow. Thereby, it will be possible to contribute developing coastal and marine tourism within ecotourism by protecting the natural structure of tourism regions and increasing tourism income. The concept of blue economy and the protection of marine and ocean ecosystems are very important. In particular, the conservation of biological diversity in the oceans and oceans and the control of water quality are important for achieving sustainable ecotourism.

It can be said that the reason why the blue economy should be taken into consideration when it is thought that 5% of the total carbon emission produced in the world is caused by the tourism sector. Climate change, which will have more impact in the next decade, is also very closely related to the sector. For this reason, UNEP

(2015) aims to bring bio-cultural politics into action by developing blue carbon and sustainability strategies between 2011-2020.

2.3. The Importance of Blue Economy for Tourism in Turkey

Blue carbon (Poseidon grassland) represents sea meadows, carbon stored in coastal ecosystems such as a salt marsh in the tidal zone or Mangrove forests (saltwater resistant trees) (Nellemann, 2009). These ecosystems are responsible for capturing and storing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Blue carbon, which supports biodiversity, also plays an important role in protecting the food chain and water quality. Therefore, blue carbon is also extremely important in terms of the sustainability of coastal and marine tourism, and is often mentioned in the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) report for this reason. In addition to this, it is revealed that one of the countries with a rich potential of blue carbon is Turkey. According to the project called "Strengthening the Marine and Coastal Protected Areas System of Turkey" (2012), which is the implementation partner of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Turkey's marine protected areas (Fethiye, Göcek, Köyceğiz, Dalyan, Gökova and Datça) has an annual blue carbon value of approximately US \$ 11.5 million.

The Convention on Biological Diversity adopted by 193 countries of the world and signed by Turkey in 1992 and ratified in 1996, is based on a requirement against the threats to biological diversity such as industrialization and urbanization. The aim of the convention is to safeguard biodiversity and ensure the sustainable use of biodiversity components, and to fairly share the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

In recent years, various methods have been developed to control the increasing loss of biodiversity. It is possible to divide them into natural protection (in situ) and artificial protection (ex situ) (<http://www.ilketkinlik.com>). Turkey has important features in terms of biodiversity. In summary, Turkey has agriculture, forest, mountain, steppe, wetland, coastal and marine ecosystems and different forms and combinations of these ecosystems. At the same time, biodiversity is the common wealth of the whole world. For this reason, it is a necessity to be protected.

Sustainable tourism is a powerful tool to raise awareness on biodiversity and to protect it for present and future generations. This is the spirit of the Cancun Declaration, adopted at the Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Mexico in 2016, which states: "there are pathways for ensuring the long-term sustainability of tourism while also ensuring that it contributes positively to biodiversity". For more than 70 years, UNESCO has been working to foster scientific knowledge and cooperation on biodiversity and ecosystems, such as tropical forests, oceans, mountains. In recent years, the effect of human activities magnified by population growth and global climate change has reduced deeply biodiversity in ecosystems around the World. (<http://www.unesco.org>). Erick Solheim, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), said "Tourism is one of the biggest job creators on planet Earth. So if we protect biodiversity, we are creating jobs." (<http://media.unwto.org>). This statement constitutes an important conservation approach.

A great deal of global tourism has concentrated on the coastal and marine environment and has started to rise. Trends in aging population, rising incomes and relatively low transportation costs make coastal and maritime areas more attractive. It is estimated that the coastal and marine tourism sector is worth an additional 159 billion euros (2006) about one third of the total marine economy. Coastal and marine tourism income in 2016 was USD \$ 3.4 billion and its share in general tourism revenues is estimated as 20% in Turkey (DTO, 2017). At the same time, one of the most demanding tourism sector is also the coastal and marine tourism. Approximately 90% of the tourists visit Turkey for this purpose. Turkey has a very favourable position for coastal and marine tourism thanks to its long coasts, clean sea and beaches, its natural and historical attractions and suitable climatic conditions (Kozak and Kozak, 2000). It is suggested that these regions should be implemented within the framework of blue economy approach to transform each environmental waste into input to create a new cash flow by giving importance to environmental and social elements besides contributing to the development of coastal and maritime tourism and obtaining more tourism income.

3. CONCLUSIONS

From a sustainability point of view, the blue economy approach is crucial that the tourism products are nourished on the natural surroundings and that the resources needed for tourism are not exhausted without the environment being destroyed. Especially, sufficient production of touristic product which is a source for coastal and marine tourism in accordance with demand will be less harmful to the environment and waste of

resources can be prevented. Therefore, taking the necessary measures to protect biodiversity from the most important natural capital resources and adoption of a sustainable blue economy approach, it is important that both economic and environmental benefits are provided and the tourism sector is built on these values.

Tourism can significantly contribute to environmental protection, conservation and restoration of biological diversity and sustainable use of natural resources. Recognizing the important interconnection between tourism and biodiversity, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) promotes sustainable, responsible, and universally accessible tourism.

Urgent efforts are needed to protect seas and oceans. The aim is to safeguard the long-term productivity of economic and social activities such as fisheries, maritime transport, agriculture, industry, tourism, and coastal and regional development.

Scientific research from around the world supports the concept that marine reserves are one of the best ways of protecting marine biodiversity.

Especially, A boost to develop all types of local eco-tourism should also be among the key targets of local socio-economic development as a way to improve awareness on the importance of sea environment protection.

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