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Land use alterations in Kusadasi coastal area

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Abstract

Excessive land demand around the coastal zone causes diverse problems. The Tourism Investment Law of 1982 led excessive development of tourism establishments around the coasts. The Law also caused rapid migration to the coastal areas that put more pressure over the natural resources. Factors causing land degradation are disobeying land use plans, lack of investigating the capacity of resources and disobeying the carrying capacities. Most of the agricultural land in Central Kusadasi and Davutlar was covered by the second homes. Further, unplanned development of these homes is also a threat to the forest area nearby (which is also a national park) and the recreational site used particularly by daily visitors. This research investigates the alterations in the land use of Kusadasi. Data were obtained from 1/100 000 scale map of Aydın Province Land Wealth (1997), Kusadasi Tourism Directorate, the Municipality, the Land Use Report of Aydın Province and also the building development schemes. The results indicate some increase in tourism related construction and improper land use in the coastal zone.

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1. Introduction

Ecological point of view demands equilibrium among its determinants. Any alteration in any determinant provokes detrimental effects on the environment. While human being is the first to suffer from these detrimental effects he/she may also be the cause. Tourism as one of the economic activities of human uses the stagnant elements of nature. With this respect tourism is an industry interdependent with the environmental values. Therefore, the existence of tourism depends upon the protection and sustainability of the environment [1], [2]. Environmental sustainability is the core element for sustainable development [3]. Environmental quality is more important for tourism sector compare to the other industrial activities [4]. Therefore, while tourism depends upon the environmental assets, it is also a cause for any alteration [5].

It is discussed if tourism is a “blight” or “blessing” for a region [6], [7]. Fast and unplanned tourism activities may shortly bring economic income, but they may cause serious damage to the environment in the long run. When there are environmental problems, then the number of tourists decreases. Therefore, tourism revenues may be lost. Moreover, quality of life of residents eventually diminishes due the deterioration of environmental resources [8]. Some examples in Türkiye can be

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given to decreasing quality of the environment from Bodrum, Marmaris, Fethiye [9], [10]; Belek [11]; Edremit-Küçükkuyu [12] about over construction, traffic congestion and pollution problems.

Coastal areas are the places where mild climate, scenery, land and sea ecosystems are accommodated therefore, they are attractive. Coastal areas between the coastal line and coastal edge line [13] have attracted people and they have become intensively used tourism areas. Doganer [10] draws attention to human activities' effects on the coastal land use. Coastline areas have a complex structure with tourism regions, yacht harbours, accommodation establishments and second homes. These coastline regions are usually used over their capacity by other sectors and industries. Problems between the various uses of coastal areas arise from their limitedness. For example, Akyol, Tufekci, Seyhan and Demir [14] indicate that coastal areas have been the places where tourism demand made excessive pressure in the last years. Therefore, many researchers suggested using carrying capacity concept in order not to exceed the environmental limits [15].

The most important problem in using coastal areas for tourism purposes is related to the selection of a location [10]. Second homes particularly on the coastal zone spoil the natural state of the environment [16]. Atalay [17] indicates that together with the tourism establishments built on the shoreline the more the number the more the area get urbanised. Today, over construction in the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts of Türkiye is one of the most problematic results.

Another point is that inaccurate land use causes decrease in the arable land. The agricultural areas may have no use in accordance with the land capability level and a considerable amount of the arable land is under buildings' occupation or construction due also to internal migration. Therefore, tourism investments with irregular development make agricultural land and produce reduced. There are of course some initiatives to protect these sources. However, protected areas as in Kusadasi and Alanya are only the central places limited with few streets and local traditional houses and leaving greenhouses, olive, citrus and banana groves outside the protection zones. Therefore, due to this urbanisation process the core areas of the resorts have become diminished in proportional base [18]. Natural vegetation, pastoral landscape, the forest areas and recreational zone where fast urbanisation occurs change irreversibly.

Municipalities have the right for authorising the development plans from 1985 in Türkiye. Nevertheless, agricultural produce were mostly ignored after this date [19]. Thinking about the low occupation rate of the second homes on the coastal fringe [20] (i.e. only half the season they are attended), thus agricultural crop has been spoiled due to the occupation on the arable land.

2. Research significance

Places like Kusadasi where tourism potential is high it is important to understand the sensitive relationship between the tourism product and other economic activities. This is particularly important for a planned development. However, the urge for gaining quick profits somehow shadows the need for a sustainable development of the industry. For example, local authorities may sometimes see shoreline areas as an income generator and they may see these areas as places for instant return [21]. Nevertheless, the result of this perspective might be the deterioration of the coastal resources.

This study investigates the coastal land use and environmental effects in Kusadasi where intensive tourism activities are taken place. It discusses the effects of geographical structure on tourism and the effects of tourism on the natural environment of Kusadasi, while giving examples of inaccurate land use and land use changes. 1/100 000 scale map of Aydın Province Land Wealth (1997), Kusadasi Tourism Directorate, the Land Use Report of Aydın Province and also the building development schemes were used to find out the structure of land use in Kusadasi. Relationships between the existing structure of the settlement and natural environment attempted to be scrutinized in order to find out the peculiarities in the coastal land use.

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