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A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON ACCESSIBLE ECO-RECREATION

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Abstract

Difficulties in work and normal life in recent times, tiredness and stress have led individuals to natural outdoor areas in the city or outside the city where recreational activities can take place. For this reason, the demand for nature-based recreational tourism activities has increased. Day-to-day or long-term ecotourism activities have contributed to the sustainability of rural development and natural habitats by increasing their share in tourism and creating significant investment areas. The recreation element has an important place in the concept of ecotourism as well as in relation with other tourism types. This is the concept of eco-recreation, which is carried out in ecological areas, which does not harm the integrity of nature in any way and contributes to the conservation, development, development and support of natural areas. Eco-recreation activities provide important contributions especially to small settlements such as villages and towns which are close to natural areas. The participant involved in such activities is called eco-recreationist. Eco-recreationists benefit from a wide range of sports and recreational activities such as camping, trekking, climbing, scouting, etc., which are made in natural areas. However, the fact that the activities are outdoors, the fact that the sports and activities are carried out under difficult conditions, the difficulty of Access to the region makes participation in eco-recreation activities difficult. Particularly for disadvantaged groups and people to participate in such activities, it seems impossible to take part in such activities. From this point of view, the concept of accessibility is important for reaching the centers and activities of the ecorecreation sites, using the fields and taking the active part in the tourism for the disadvantaged groups. In this research, it is aimed to examine ecorecreation activities with a concept of accessibility from a holistic point of view.

Key words: Ecotourism, Ecorecreation, Accessibility

Introduction

The life processes of the individuals are divided into two as time of work and the time remaining from work (leisure time). Recreational activities are defined as events that take place in the leisure time, that are efficient and active in time as well as activities that entertain, rest and satisfy the individual from all directions. Eco-recreation is the name given to the realization of recreational activities in

ecological rules. In non-disabled or non-disabled individuals, eco-recreational activities bring about common outcomes such as happiness, entertainment, skills development and socialization. In this respect, it is very important to ensure participation of all disabled people in eco-recreational activities carried out in open areas. In this way, the socialization of individuals with disabilities, being intertwined with society and rehabilitation can be realized. In the recent days, people with disabilities can easily reach the regions where eco-reactive activities are carried out, while individuals with disabilities experience difficulties in reaching the eco-regional activities carried out in open areas. From here, it is very important to find applications that can be realized in order to enable disabled people to easily access eco-recreational activities. Therefore, this study also tried to look at the event through the eyes of people with disabilities.

Recreation and Ecorecreation

The monotony and tiredness of the working life has resulted in people paying more attention to their free time and turning to recreational and entertaining recreational activities. Recreation as a social community and a professional field of study; it is a full and happy means of life that is valued in its own independent from working life, meeting the needs of the individual. Recreation; are the activities that people participate in order to relax and restructure the body and spirit that the working environment has given them. This concept is called "create"; creating and "re-creat"; deriving from the English roots, which means re-creation (Demir, 2001). In another sense, recreation can be defined as activities in which people participate voluntarily in their free time and provide individual satisfaction (Köycü Öpözlü, 2006).

Recreational activity preferences include open areas in the city and more activities in the natural areas outside the city. Urban recreational resources, also referred to as eco-regional resources; natural environments intervened by human hand, national parks, nature conservation areas and monuments, wildlife development areas, such as protected areas consists of (Karaküçük and Akgül, 2016). Eco-recreation contributes to increasing the environmental awareness of individuals participating in recreational activities through "eco-re- cognition awareness" (internalizing ecological awareness as eco-region or eco-physics) and practices. On the one hand, this enables activities to be carried out in more environmentally friendly environments, while on the other hand, the environmental sensitivity and consciousness of the individual are carried to other areas of life (Peker, 2017).

However, it should be noted that recreational organizations realized outdoors thanks to the technology and facilities developed in our time can be maintained in closed spaces as well as many activities that have been carried out in enclosed spaces can now be realized also in open spaces. For example; Activities such as tennis, basketball and soccer can be performed in open space as well as in indoor spaces. (Özgüç, 2015). Eco-recreation is precisely the realization of all activities and leisure activities of leisure time with the sensitivity and awareness of "environmental protection" and "sustainability" (Karaküçük and Akgul, 2016).

In eco-tourism, which is a leisure activity and is carried out inside with nature;

- Observations in the environment of untouched wildlife and natural resources in leisure time periods where people are free from work and daily life, or participate in recreational activities in different environmental characteristics,
- To be able to benefit from the positive innovations gained by the natural environment (exploration, relaxation, adventure, excitement) and many activities under the name of the name, artificial or natural environments, instrumental-toolless, vehicle-vehicle-free areas to evaluate,
- Adaptation to the ecosystem of individuals participating in recreational activities and benefiting from natural resources,

- In the recreational activities carried out by individuals in leisure time, they maintain the ecological balance, contribute to them and participate in the activities with the logic of sustainability (Karaküçük & Akgül, 2016).

The social, economic, environmental and personal benefits and effects of participating in nature-based eco-regional organizations have been examined by many researchers from past to present. The benefits that individuals with eco-orreational qualifications earn for individuals can be listed as follows (Karakcuk, 1999, Yerlisu Lapa and Ardahan, 2011);

- Introduces the behavioral and psychological processes that occur between the groups,
- Teaches the leader and leadership spirit,
- Develops decision-making skills on its own,
- Provide the ability to identify and manage risk targets,
- Teaching to recognize and assume responsibility for self and environment,
- Increase physical, psychological and social development,
- Increase confidence in yourself and others around you,
- It feels happy, peaceful and healthy,
- Provide interaction and socialization with other people,
- Gives morale, motivation and self-confidence in terms of mental health,
- Provide mental development with practical activities to be done,
- Prevent and / or reduce the mental and physical stress that may occur in the future,
- Develop imagination (creativity)
- Develop personal skills and competence,
- Providing positive impact on personal success and productivity increase,
- The most effective natural method of talent selection
- Bridges the given special education and social life.
- Accelerates and influences the rehabilitation process.
- Drama, games, sports and organizations are the first application areas of rehabilitation education and the first step in social life.
- Contribute indirectly to the morale and motivation of the family.

Recreation Needs

Maslow classifies human needs in a hierarchical structure as five levels. Maslow has put a hierarchical order of motivational needs in each other and started the order of importance at the bottom. Needs explained in five steps According to the hierarchy theory, it is stated that people have some wishes, expectations and needs to realize their goals and they can be categorized in a different way. It is told that people's needs can be cascaded and moved to a higher level only if the lower level needs are satisfied at an adequate level, that is, the level of self-realization of the individual can be achieved by the completion of the levels in the hierarchy (Kula and Çakar, 2015).

The first goal of a man is to get rid of his most intense needs. In case of not fulfilling the requirements of eco-recreational needs in the individual, he / she can develop reactions such as unhappiness, frustration, shyness, introversion and aggression. This can create communities of unhappy individuals, and can also create disagreements in society. The need for self-realization refers to the need for one to realize all the potential within one's basic sense, to be full of life and to be in harmony with nature. This is synonymous with the purposes of recreation activities. Clearly, self-realization raises the same emotional concepts as eco-learning experience (Karaküçük, 1999).

Eco-recreation should not be regarded as a goal but as a means of raising and regulating quality of life, strengthening learning, improving health, improving physical and mental integrity, changing the angle

of view towards nature, increasing motivation and reducing crime rates (Reader et al., 2006). The evaluation of free time in an effective and positive manner to eliminate the needs is also very important for the hurdles. In this way, the integration of the disabled with the society and rehabilitation can be achieved. Rehabilitation aims not only to provide the freedom of movement but also to be a person who is totally independent in his daily life and who can continue without needing anybody (Öcal, 2012). As a general feature of sports and games, the angles of view of the disabled who participate in eco-recreational activities, actively participate in games and activities are changing. As a result of this, the faults are connected more tightly and sincerely. For this reason, extra-recreational activities in the handicapped can be regarded as one of the most important ways to ensure that the obstacle communicates with the world.

Accessible Eco-Recreation

Currently, there are various recreation facilities where people spend their spare time. However, people have started to prefer outside of the cities for their recreational activities and these facilities are generally ecologic. Eco- recreation is an eco- based concept that preferred by people who live in city centres for meeting the nature, resting, escaping from the stressful daily life. These eco-recreational areas offer a wide range of activities and untouched wilderness areas but the most important thing is all about equality, social integration and inclusion in these areas what is indicated in this study. All eco-recreational areas must provide equal opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Facilities must be used by all people. According to World Bank of disability topic, it is indicated that one billion people or 15 % of the world's population experience some form of disability and between 110 million and 190 million people experience significant disabilities (The World Bank, 2018). This shows us why accessibility is important in eco-recreational areas. While protecting the natural resources, it is also significant to challenge for accessibility. It means more than need because all people must have opportunity to use this facility. So using the principles of universal design in order to integrate accessibility is stated as the best way (Zeller, J., Doyle, R., & Snodgrass, K., 2012).

Accessible Eco-Recreation areas should include universal design facilities, adapted recreation programs, and accessible equipments as below (www.toronto.ca, 2018):

Universal Design Facilities

- Interpretation is for everyone on direction boards
- Accessible golf facilities
- Recreational boating facilities
- Wheelchair storage space
- Accessible routes serving fishing piers
- A trail built on universal design principle
- Accessible beach
- Accessible Swimming pool
- Suitable food courts, tables, order system devices
- Accessible washrooms
- Accessible parking area

- Doorways having a minimum of 32 inches (815 millimeters) clear width.
- Outdoor recreation access routes
- Hand rails
- Edge protection
- Accessible camp units
- Play areas
- Audio information devices
- Accessible picnic units (Zeller, J., Doyle, R., & Snodgrass, K., 2012)

Adapted recreation programs

- Adapted Arts
- Adapted Camps
- Adapted General Interest Programs
- Adapted Sports
- Adapted Swim
- Adapted Instructional Swim
- Adapted Diving
- Adapted Hiking

Accessible Equipments

- Aquatic chairs and lift chairs
- Adapted bicycles
- Wheelchair platform swing
- All-terrain wheelchairs
- Sport wheelchair
- Adapted sun beds
- Beach wheelchairs

Discussion

From the study the above discussion suggests that best practice in accessibility should include the provision of accessibility information to patrons, in alternative formats, recognizing persons with visual, hearing or cognitive impairments. Accessible Eco- Recreation should be promoted more than now. Facilities should be designed inclusive and accessible and programmes, activities should be organised in the scope of inclusive concept. There should be periodic trainings for staff and volunteers regarding accessible and inclusive approaches. Accessibility always is more difficult and costly to implement but it can be supported by project especially tourism project. Thus the more projects can create the more inclusive outdoor recreation opportunities.

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