

PRO POOR TOURISM IN MARDIN

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Abstract

We did our best to meet the benefits of pro poor tourism based on a series of aspects. On the one hand, the theoretical studies which try to explore pro poor tourism as a concept, to define it, find its theoretical roots in the specialized literature referring to growth and development, and to evaluate the ability of tourism to be pro poor by using its own characteristics. On the other hand, the empirical studies, which are very scarce, tried to measure the role of tourism in poverty alleviation both at a macro and micro level. At the micro level, they studied the activities which had the formal task of being pro poor. However, no one tried to measure the extent to which tourism activities are pro poor by themselves, without any formal task or plan.

Keywords: *poor, tourism, concept, theoretical, plan.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In economics there are three questions that make its challenges: what, how and for whom. In other words, achieving growth and distribution of its output, and the relationship between them, are the questions of economics from its starting point. However, there were many ways and approaches for giving an answer to this question. There were too many differences between economic systems, countries, economics schools and the levels of economic development. There were many different viewpoints about the relationship between growth and distribution. Some scholars assured that the growth output will be distributed automatically without any special arrangements; others assured the need for special mechanisms and regulations.

After the Second World War the basic task in developing countries was under the title economic development. These countries used many strategies for catching up with developing countries, contained, between other things, concentrating on some economic sectors as more beneficial tools for achieving economic

development. In the 1970s there was some recognition for tourism as a tool for economic development and poverty reduction, but the term of "pro poor tourism," PPT surfaced in the second half of 1990s. (HALL, 2007; HARRISON, 2008; BOWDEN, 2005; ROGERSON, 2006).

According to Ashley and Haysom (2006) PPT is „an approach to tourism that increases net benefits to the poor,“ which means its benefits should be more than its cost, including the economic as well as the environmental and social dimensions. PPT is based on the idea that there is an important role for tourism in pro-poor economic growth. Pro-poor growth is „growth that enables the poor to actively participate in and significantly benefit from economic activity“. Therefore, PPT does not represent a special kind of tourism. Every kind of tourism may be pro poor, as poverty does not only refer to a low level of income, but also to the lack of opportunities (SINGH, 2001). Accordingly, the PPT should unlock opportunities for poor people, empower them and give them the ability to build their future (BOWDEN, 2005; CHOK et al., 2007).

In developing countries and poor areas, there are many economic problems that get in the way of economic growth and more equitable income distribution, such as the lack of financial resources, high levels of unemployment and low levels of labour skills. Tourism as a sector has many characteristics, such as the low level of capital intensity, the high level of labour intensity, strong multiplier and weak leakage; It is a suitable sector to be used in order to combat poverty (BOWDEN, 2005; ROGERSON, 2006; MEYER, 2007; ROGERSON, 2012).

Until now, the studies regarding pro poor tourism are of two kinds: theoretical studies which try to explore pro poor tourism as a

concept, define it, find its theoretical roots in growth and development literature, and to evaluate the ability of tourism to be pro poor by its own characteristics and empirical studies, which try to measure the role of tourism in poverty alleviation both at the macro and at the micro level. At the micro level they studied the activities which had the formal task of being pro poor. However, no one tried to measure the extent to which tourism activities are pro poor by themselves, without any formal task or plan.

This paper tries to answer two significant questions: to what extent is tourism by itself is pro poor and to what extent could tourism be developed in order to become more pro poor. It is divided into four parts: introduction, methodology, results and conclusions.

2. METHODOLOGY

Our study was conducted on six hotels -mostly boutique hotels - in Mardin city in Turkey, symbolized by A, B, C, D, E and F letters. We chose Mardin as it is a less developed area in Turkey. Moreover, the general managers of the hotels had no idea about pro poor tourism. Hotels in general, as a part of tourism sector, represent its forefront, based in destinations. As so it should take a high level of responsibility towards the local communities, which may include: suppliers, employees, or the other community development initiatives (MEYER, 2007).

According to Meyer (2007) there are four channels linking the accommodation sector to the local economy: employment, sourcing and procurement, SMME development and support to the informal sector and other types of partnerships. To evaluate this linkage we used a questionnaire with open-ended questions used by Spenceley and Seif (2003). The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part is about the levels of local employment

and contains two questions: the first related to the rate of local employees and the second measures the rate of their wages to the total. The second part is about the levels of local procurement of products and services and contains two questions: the procurement of products made within Mardin and the procurement local services within Mardin. The third part is about the types of support for local development and contains three questions: contribution to local producers (training programs etc.), contribution to local infrastructure and superstructure and contribution in sponsorship or in cash.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the first part of the questionnaire related to levels of local employment the answers are summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Levels of Local Employment

Proportion of age bill going to local people	Proportion of staff employed from the local area (the Mardin district)	Accommodation Establishments
100%	100%	A
90%	92%	B
100%	100%	C
95%	93%	D
99%	98%	E
No answer	No answer	F

As we can see from the table, there is a high level of local employment, which was between 92-100%. This refers to a strong linkage between the hotels and the local people, which mean a high level of pro poor in this dimension.

For the second part of the questionnaire related to levels of local procurement of products and services the answers are summarized in table 2.

Table 2. Levels of local procurement of products and services

Local Services within Mardin	Local Products <i>made within Mardin</i>	Accommodation Establishments
100% of the services purchased in Mardin	100% of the products that the hotel purchase are made in Mardin	A
Tours, shuttle bus, and uniforms of the staff.	20% (only food and beverage)	B
80%	10% only food	C
Tours around Mardin	10% only food for breakfast	D
only disinfection service within Mardin	50% of the foods from Mardin, but 10% of overall revenue	E
Travel agency (tours)	70% of food only	F

According to the table 2 for products that are produced in Mardin the level of linkage with local people varies from one hotel to another. The highest level is in hotel A that buys 100% of the products locally. The lowest level is for hotel D that buys only 10% of breakfast food locally.

In addition, the basic local products that are bought by hotels are food. For services, again the

highest level is in hotel A that buys 100% of the services locally. The other hotels procured some travel and tour services in different levels.

Relating to the third part of the questionnaire, which is about the types of support for local development, a summary of answers can be seen in table 3.

Table 3. Types of support for local development

Contribution in sponsorship or in cash	Contribution to local infrastructure and superstructure	Contribution to Local Producers (training programs etc.)	Accommodation Establishments
They were sponsors for some entertainment programs like traditional dancing night	Yes. Street lighting, pavements, landscaping	Yes. Training the shopkeepers.	A
Free rooms for some artists, singers and famous people coming for a special event.	No	No training program, but they have relations with local shopkeepers and they give advice.	B
No	Contribution to landscaping and lightning, cleaning the surrounding	No	C
Free rooms in some organizations, for special events. Sports uniform for the school team.	No	No	D
They organize a social responsibility project every year. It might be a donation to orphans, or donation for elder people living in a nursing home. They organize free lunches or dinners for elder people. They make donations to some primary and elementary schools.	The place where the hotel is constructed was idle and unserviceable. It was rocky. After the hotel was constructed, the surrounding was refined, new roads were established. New apartments were built around the Hotel, and the prices of the flats increased.	They organize training programs for taxi drivers and local travel agencies	E
They arranged many organizations. They have been sponsors for special events both in Mardin and in other cities.	Contribution to landscaping.	No	F

As we can see from the tables above there is a good role for the hotels in these dimensions: training, infrastructure and superstructure and sponsorship. However, the contribution varied, two hotels had three activities, and other two had two kinds of activities while the final two had only one activity.

Because there are no standard measures to scale the extent of pro poor, we can say that boutique hotels in Mardin present a considerable level of being pro poor tourism. As we stated before, the contribution of hotels varies to a large extent from one to the other, so we can say it is possible for the accommodation sector to be more pro poor by changing the behaviour of the hotels with a lower level of contribution in order to catch up with the highest levels of contribution.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of the pro-poor tourism approach focuses not on expanding the total size of the tourism sector but on how and what kinds of opportunities can be developed for the poor in this sector. The direct effects of tourism on poverty are the incomes of the workers and other benefits from the tourism sector. In addition, the direct impacts of the tourism sector on poverty include non-financial livelihoods, for example, infrastructure developed through tourism in places where poor people live.

This paper aimed to reveal whether the hotels in Mardin – on purpose or unwittingly - have any strategies to contribute to pro-poor tourism in regard to the financial or the non-financial welfare. According to the analysis, a number of implications of pro-poor tourism have been supported by the hotels. The most significant contribution of PPT arises from direct employment in the hotels. There is a high level of local employment, which is more than 92%. The wages of the hotel staff represent almost 95% of the total wages. In addition, some of the respondents (hotel managers) indicated that the hotel owner supports the hotel staff financially for child birth and in the important dates like the Ramadan feast, or in the Eid-Al-Adha (Bayram). The level of local procurement of products and services differs from one hotel to another. The hotel managers claim that they want

to buy almost all of their products made in Mardin. However, the level of local products bought from Mardin is not high. The reason –that the hotel managers claimed - is that it is really hard to find hotel goods in Mardin. They somehow have to buy most of the products from outside of Mardin. On the other hand, the level of local services within Mardin is high in comparison to the products made in Mardin. Hotels indicated that almost 80% of outsource services are from the local community. As mentioned before tourism may have an impact on the poor. Thus, hotels in this regard play a crucial role in the local development. These dimensions are basically the following: training, infrastructure and superstructure, and sponsorship.

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