Tourism potential of Gazipaşa (Antalya - Turkey)

Şenay Güngör & Recep Bozyiğit

*Meram Anatolian Vocational Trade High School, Meram/Konya, Turkey

bSelçuk University, Ahmet Keleş的道理 Faculty of Education, Geography Education Department, Meram/Konya, Turkey

Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine natural, historical and cultural attractions of Gazipasa district and to suggest the possibilities to add the attractions like caves, water sources, flora and faunas to the tourism. Its historical and cultural attractions include antique cities, ruins, tombs and graves, plateaus, hand arts and traditional clothes. Inspite of all these attractions role of Gazipasa in the tourism sector is not on the right level. Therefore tourism potential of Gazipasa district was investigated in order to bring it to a better level in Turkish tourism sector and suggestions are made for necessary investments in this connection.

Keywords: Gazipasa, Tourism, Natural Attracts, Historical and Cultural Attracts.

1. Introduction

The town of Gazipaşa is full of natural, historical and cultural attractions. However, it is not benefiting from this richness at a desired level. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine tourism potential of Gazipasa and steps to be taked for activating this potential. Such a study on the potential of a touristic place helps both in the touristic development as well as sustainable use of natural environment. Gazipaşa town with an area of 921 km² is situated in the Adana District of Mediterranean Region. It lies between 36° 13'-36° 34' north latitudes and 32° 15'-32° 38' east longitudes. It is bordered by Anamur on the east, Sariveliler on the north, Alanya on the west and Mediterranean Sea on the south. Kaledran Brook, which constitutes a boarder between Antalya and Mersin, also separates the towns (Fig. 1).

2. Material and Methods

All literature concerning the study area was reviewed. Moreover, interviews were done and observation
made. The information from published documents, interviews and onspot observations in the area were evaluated in the light of geographical principles.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Historical and Natural Attractions

The tourism attractions in the study area include natural attractions. These are mountainsides, rivers, caves, beaches, Koru Natural Pools, underwater scenery, Evliya Tepe Natural Protection area, flora and fauna (Fig. 2). Sütlük (2,187 m), Kanlkaya (1,947 m), Akbelen (1,811 m), Hüyük (1,926 m), Çakşır (1,947 m), Gölyalağı (2,088 m), Akçağ (1,893 m), Cula (1,987 m) and Pınarlık (2,064 m) mountainsides in the study area have important potential for trekking and climbing. These mountainsides which are rich for vegetation and forest can be thought for skiing also. If the potential of mountainside has planned consideration, they can have important place for the tourism of town.

Rivers in the town are not appropriate for water sports such as rafting, canoe and river skiing because of their morphometric and hydrological characteristics. However, especially in winter when the rains are much and in spring after snow melts rafting and canoe sports can be done in Buğrıcı and Gökceler brooks. In addition to this, amateur fishing and recreational activities can be done near the river. On the other hand Ilica and Sansı mineral water spring is attractive for health tourism. It rises from only one spring in Ilicaköy (Gevinde), Sinad Brook Valley. Measurable flow of Ilica spring is 2 l/s. The spring water is saline with hydrogen sulfide smell and temperature is 24,5 °C [1]. Ilica Spring is said to be good for treatments like
gynecological diseases, ulcer and rheumatism.

The “Sarısu Mineralwater Spring” arises from a spring east of Tufan Hill and near Sarısu Brook Valley. The flow rate is 0.5 l/s and temperatures are 18 °C, it is colourness and clear [1]. There are travertine collapses present here. The “Spring Waters” are said to have curative power for digestive system diseases because of the minerals present in the water. The area is well known to the local inhabitants but is not used for tourism.

Caves in the study area possess an important potential for tourism. If this potential is assessed, it will be beneficial for the area. Some of the attractive caves are; Yalandunya, Korsanini and Sırtlanini. Yalandunya cave lies in the south of Asar Hill (619 m) situated on the north of Beyrebucak Village, 10 km southeast of Gazipasa. The ground has soil, gravel and debris, there are stalactite formations inside the pendant, dickite and column (Fig. 3). These shapes have completed their formation and evolution and have combined in many parts thus separating the cave into the rooms. The cave is dry in all seasons, water dropping from the ceiling makes small backwater. Besides these features, easy transportation and natural environment increase its touristic value. It has been opened for tourism recently. But due to a lack of qualified projects and simple organizations, the cave has got damaged [2]. There is need for an application project with architecture and electricity arrangements done cautiously and cave can be used better for tourism. The wet and warm “Korsanini Cave” is exposed to waves, 4 km west of the town, near Kocas Hill İncirliyayla next to the sea. The enterance is only from the water side passing under a rough cliff. It has two openings which were formed at different times and occurr in two parts. The length is 297 m. The temperature inside varies between 23°-29 ºC and humidity is 65-85 percent [2]. The town dwellers call it Kızılkaya Cave or Pirates Love Cave. The legend goes that there is love water at the bottom of this cave. The atmosphere smees iodine and is said to be curing for asthma patients. It is also breeding place for Caretta Caretta turtles and Mediterranean seals [3]. It cannot be used for tourism because of transportation difficulties and its physical characteristics. A small application project is ready for people when weather is good. It can be a good alternative for the tourists who like adventure. Sırtlanini Cave is near Karalar Village at an altitude of 1100 m, approachable after 30 minutes climbing. It is a fossil cave which shows horizontal characters. There are also Mavi, Yeniköy (Yeniköy), İnal (Yakacık Köyü), Kullin (Çayryakası Yaylası) and Kızılin (Selinus Beach) in the area (Fig. 3a, 3b). There are lots of caves and dolines which wait for discovery in the mountainside area (Fig. 3c, 3d).
Coastline of Gazipaşa town is full of suitable beaches for swimming, although rocky. There are ideal places for swimming among the rocks (Fig. 4a). The depth of sea is almost 30-40 meters so it is an advantage for sea tourism. Selinus, Koru and Kahyalar beaches are marvellous because of their attractiveness. “Selinus (İskele) Beach” is 3 km far from city centre in the east of Pazarcı beach and west of Gazipasa. It is the most preferred beach by holiday makers and has bungalow houses (Fig. 4b). “Koru Beach” is in the east of Selinti Beach and between Kale Hill (176 m) and Selinti Cape. The beach is 2 km long and 50 m wide. Beach-rock formation is remarkable here (Fig. 4c). The rocks make three natural pools, which present remarkable beauty to the town. When there is no wave, water in these pools is warmer and serves as an enjoyable game pool for children (Fig. 4d). The sea water coming in the form of waves after splashing with beach-rocks and pool, is clean. The pools are like natural treatment facility and help in the natural cleaning of beaches in Gazipasa. “Kahyalar (Pazarcı) Beach” is in the boarders of Kahyalar side, between east of Domuz Cape and Karadağ (Kocaş Hill, 194 m). It is 2 km long and with dominant position towards the Mediterranean. There are also Yakacık Beach and Halil Port, which are remarkable in their natural look.
Underwater in Gazipasa is very remarkable. In ancient times this site was an important port city and there was heavy sea traffic as such, underwater is very full of archaeological remains. Comparing with the other coasts in Mediterranean Gazipasa coast is really very clean. It abounds in fishes like; White Grouper, Red Coral, Malabar Grouper, Pink Dentex and Dentex. The coasts at some places have sea depth varying between 30-40 meters and even 300 meters. Also, it can be seen Under the rough and bluff side of the rocks one can find rich fish population. There are natural pasturelands and underwater caves [4]. The town has a rich geography for both free and scuba diving. There are lots of places to dive because of its long coast. Water and Nature Sports Club is trying to determine diving sections to make a new center for diving tourism. Investigations have been done in Mavi Cave where people can dive and follow a 63-meter underwater cave and go ashore in Deniz Feneri region. Mavi Cave is a rare formation where people can dive and go ashore. Gazipasa is waiting for discovery of underwater attractions and it will be very important place for diving sports in near future.

“Sugozu river resort” field is a very popular place in the town. One has to follow Beyobası, Küçüklü, Öznurtepe and Sugozu way from the town. There is a small hydroelectric power station here and it supports salmon production by sending trout lets. In the resort place there are some small restaurants. If one wants to get cool in the hottest days of summer, one can swim in cold water of Sugozu.

“Evliya hill natural protection area” is a part of Toros Mountains towards Mediterranean is a forest rest area where one can see nature with its variety of fauna and flora. It is 5 km far from city center and has 50 hectare usage area. This is the most ideal place to go for a picnic, with trees and a marvellous view. Kızılin Rocks, Pirates Love Cave and Forest Camp Water Springs are around this.

The study area is rough and mountainside and altitude changes at short distances together with the climatic characteristics thus we come across variable plant diversity. There are calabrian pines and maquis in the coastal side. In the inner parts fir, black pine, cedar and juniper can be seen. Fauna of the area is also remarkable. Some of the animals found here are; boar, fox, wolf, red squirrel, bat, Toros lizard, ouzel, quail, partridge, Eirenis modestus (a kind of snake). One of the special reasons about study area for fauna is that Gazipasa coasts are one of the 17 coasts where Caretta Caretta turtles leave their eggs. The endangered Mediterranean seals (Monachus Monachus) also are found on Gazipasa coasts, which stresses the fact that these coastlines are clean. Mediterranean seals one of the 12 kinds are under protection by IUCN and according to the scientists there are almost 200-300 Mediterranean seals all over the world and
50 of them live in Turkey [5]. This potential in the biodiversity of the town can support eco tourism and help improve economy and social life in the area.

The historical and cultural values of a place together with physical features and natural sources are most important factors in the assessment of tourism potential in an area [6]. New generations all over the world have tendency to learn and search history and cultural values of past. This tendency has caused cultural tourism which is a fast developing kind of tourism in the world [7].

The history of habitation in Gazipasa goes back to the time of Sumerians, over 3000 BC. This area was ruled by Hittites, Phoenicians, Persians, Hellenes, Byzantine, Egyptians, Romans, Seljuks, Teke Beylik, Karamanogullari Beylik and Ottomans. All this historical richness coming from different civilisations adds to the value of Gazipasa. There are ancient cities, resorts, aqueducts, tombs and graves.

“Selinus Ancient City” is near Kale Hill where Hacimusa Brook flows into the sea in the town. Selinus was a good subject for researchers in ancient times, many archaeologists and pilgrims visited Selinus. It was the most important city of mountainside Kilikia (Kilikia Trackheia) Region, and history dates back to 6th century BC. Recent studies show that the name of the city was Sallune in Assyrian references and it was within the borders of Prin newline King and had connection with Cyprus by sea. The remains seen today are some parts of city wall, church dedicated for Thekla, vats and aqueducts (Fig. 5a). Many other buildings have got damaged. Sekerhane Villa is a mausoleum for Emperor Trajanus situated in the Selinus ancient city [8]. “Nephelis (Muzkent)” in Muzkent village is the “Nephelis Ancient City” reached by 5 km long stabilized way from 15th km on the south of Gazipasa Mersin motorway. “Cestrus Ancient City-Macar Resort” is 6 km east of Gazipasa. The remains cover 400 m². According to the scriptures, it was localized as Cestrus Ancient City and dates back to 1 BC and 2 centuries [8].

“Julia Sebaste Ancient City” is in Gocuk Village. Heavy damages in the city create difficulty in understanding the function of the buildings. However, there is a building that has some platforms in the east of the city. One of these platforms has a scripture and the name of the city is written on it. Totally three scriptures are found. One of them is dated for Hellenistic period [8]. “Antiocheıa Ad Gragum” is 18 km far from the city center and is in Guneı Village. It is known as pea place. This city has taken its name from Kommogene King Antiochis IV and region is a mountainside place, with rough rocks descending to the sea. The altitude is 300 m. The city was used in Roman and Byzantine periods [8]. “Aydap (Iotape)” is on the west of Gazipasa. It took its name from the wife of Kommagene King Antiochus IV’s Iotape in 37-72 AC. Gazipasa-Alanya motorway divides this ancient city into two parts (Fig. 5b). The small village has the ancient port which is an ideal place for swimming. Its name today is Halil Port and has a clean sea for swimming [3]. “Adandalamos Ancient City-Adanda” is 15 km in the northeast of Gazipasa, situated on a high mountain in Cile Village. The name of the city means “Mother Goddess Worshiper”. The city is surrounded by city walls and on the south of entrance door of the city there is a big tower. There is agora, taps chased into natural rock and chapels [3]. “Altıkapı Karavansariı” is in Yakacık Village. It was build in a rectangular shape with debris stone and soil mixture. In front of it there are belted doors. Three of them are well but others are damaged [3].

“Bıçkırı Monastery” is 3 km in the northwest of Selinus beach. Remains date from Byzantium period. Monastery remains have been converted to a vat today. “Orta Çağ (Middle Era) Tower-Bıçkırı” is in Kâhyalar. It is a building with debris stone braid. The “Tombs and Graves in Hasdere Village” are 5 km far from Gazipaşa. It is said that this village is the first habitation place of Gazipasa and reflects local public architecture. It is not known whose tomb is it. There are other graves around here. “Tumulus of Ekmel Village” is in the centre of Gazipaşa. Its length in the southeast-northwest direction is 27 m, northeast-southwest 25m, and altitude is almost 6 m [1]. “Gevinde” is 3,5 km northwest of Sivasti (Karatepe) of Gazipasa. It is one of the habitations of Pre-Byzantine period and is called İlıca. [8]. Other resorts in Gazipaşa are Alacadağ, Asar, Asar Tepe, Asarboynu, Asartaş, Büget, Dedebeleni, İlıca, İnceğiz, Tepeçukur, Karatepe, Kızılgün, Kömürlütepe, Neke Kale, Yalmanentepe and Yüлуk Hill.
3.2. Cultural attractions

These are “Transhumance”. The stressful life conditions and city life press us for a choice for nature holidays. Therefore, plateau with rich flora, clean and fresh air, variable animals, surface and underground sources, traditions, carnivals and festivals are important tourism centres. Transhumance in the study area is continuing for centuries as a traditional part of life. Plateau houses are heavy on the east, northeast and north. These are located on places higher than 1000 m (Fig. 6). In the study area, the popular plateau places are in the east at Sütülü (2 187 m), Kanlıkaya (1 947 m), Akbelen (1 811 m) mountainside mass; in the north at Hüyük (1 926 m), Çakşır (1 947 m), Gölyalağı (2 088 m) mountainside mass and Akça Café Mountain (1 893 m); in the west on Cula Mountain (1 987 m), Pınarlık Mountain (2 064m) and Akdağ Mountain (1 836 m). There are 52 plateaus in the area. Some of the main plateaus are Belbaşı, Maha, Gökkuzluk, Topsekisi, Örcün, Yarcağınar, Ekinçali, Gavurkırıldıği, Cimbiti, Çataș, Yunt, Berem, Murtlin, Çörüş, Gevinde, and Çobanlar.

Transhumance in Gazipaşa can be explored under two groups; a) on nomadic breeding and b) recreational. Former has lost its old importance. Many nomadic tribes have got settled. Today in the town transhumance mainly for recreational purposes. Plateaus are ideal places for clean and fresh air and cool weather especially in summer. Because of this, especially in summer there is migration to these places. As a result, transhumance has changed. In the past, transhumance was made first for the animals but today it is only for holiday. In recent years the holiday items have started to change from sunny sea beaches to the high altitude plateaus, which are unique places for ecotourism.

The “Festivals and carnivals” in the town are important touristic activities. These are; “Gazipasa Atatürk and Seedless Punic Festival”, “Agriculture Fair” and “Gökkozluk Plateau Carnival” (Table 1).
Table 1. Festivals and Carnivals in Gazipasa (2010), [9]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of activity</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atatürk and Seedless Punic Festival</td>
<td>Gazipaşa</td>
<td>21 October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture Fair</td>
<td>Gazipaşa</td>
<td>Last week of April and the first week of May in odd years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gokkuzluk Plateau Carnival</td>
<td>Gazipaşa - Göküzluk Plateau</td>
<td>Last week of July in even years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agriculture fair for supporting agriculture activities in the area includes "Ataturk and Seedless Punic Festival" for celebrating the name of the city from Atatürk and production of seedless Punic, organized in the town. The Gokkuzluk Plateau Carnival starts in the town where cultural activities are limited. This carnival is important for sharing all beauties for transhumance and reflecting this culture to the next generation.

The “Handcrafts” in the town include rugs, gunny bags and saddle bags with variable designs and patterns. These are made from wool, fibre, hair and also fabric on hand looms. Taffeta (canfes) are weaved from the silk made from seri-culture in recent times. Belts used by the community were made from this fabric. Lately these handcrafts have got lost because of the technological developments. There are a few people who continue to make these handcrafts. The spoons made from wooden are used today.

Gazipasa is on the Mersin-Antalya motorway having connections with other cities. It is possible to reach the town at anytime. Transportation facilities are developing. Airport was opened in July 2009. In near future when marina and ferry port opens, except railway transportation, Gazipasa will have all kinds of transportation facilities. In spite of these developments, many touristic, historical and cultural places are away from tourism. Tourism centres of Gazipaşa are almost in the town centre. Today the town serves the tourists with touristic hotels, Gazipasa Governor Business Bungalows and one holiday site (Table 2). There are also motels here.

Table 2. Room and Bed Numbers with Certificate from Gazipasa Governor (2008), [3]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation Name</th>
<th>Rooms</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selinus Hotel</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baysal Apart Hotel</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Güven Hotel</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nil Apart Hotel</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kent Hotel</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delfin Pension</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yalçın Camping</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

Gazipasa has great potential for tourism with its nature, culture and history. Although it has all richnesses, it is not on the desired level in this sector. As an agriculture city Gazipasa it is not on the desired level in the industry and trade as well. So it is very important to develop tourism in the town for economic development. Presently transportation, accommodation and infrastructure facilities are not enough for tourism. These negative situations must be developed immediately. The climate of the area is highly favorable for tourism. Winters are warm and rainy; summers are hot and dry. Annual average
The study area has served as a centre for different civilizations and cultures for centuries; it thus embodies rich cultural and historical values. The town can be visited yearround due to its favorable climatic conditions, as well as cultural and historical values. This richness should be evaluated through cultural tourism. Archaeological sites should be restored keeping in view the environmental conditions of the area and should be done with environmental organizations. Before opening several places for tourism, suitable transportation facilities should be developed; maps should be prepared and given to the tour companies. Gazipasa should become an alternative tourism place with trekking, cycling, horse riding, observation of nature and photography. Effectiveness of festivals and carnivals should be developed. Handcrafts should be developed. Hobby courses should be opened and tourists should be attracted to such activities. For determining the tourism potential of Gazipasa, investigations and presentations should be done by planned organizations. Some of the tourism potential of Antalya can be diverted to Gazipasa which will have important results.

References