

SAVING NOMADIC CULTURAL HERITAGE: CARPETS FOR TOURISTS WOVEN BY TURKISH WOMEN

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Cultural heritage fosters local economy, creates employment opportunities, builds national identity, increases social cohesion and links the generations in a society. The post-industrial society of modern times revisit the roots to cope with the consumption culture and use cultural heritage as a tool for sustainable development. The gender plays a considerable role in cultural heritage. Some cultural heritages are mainly produced by women. In Turkey; the carpet weaving tradition is considered mostly as a feminine activity. This traditional handcraft has origins from nomadic times. In today's modern life like many types of handicrafts and old jobs the carpet and kilim weavers are getting rare in Turkey. Rural areas, once producers of abundant amounts of woven textile confront various challenges.

This study aims to discuss the importance and role of Turkish women in the production and sales of carpets in Turkey. The historical roles of nomadic women and the current problems encountered by contemporary women will be discussed. The growing role of tourism in the economy and the relation between tourism and feminine cultural heritage production will be analyzed. The problems faced by women carpet weavers in marketing their handmade products to tourists will be clarified. This study follows the qualitative methodology to collect primary (via interviews with carpet weavers) and secondary data (literature) for interpretation. The results and inferences drawn will be converted to recommendations for public and private sectors.

Key words: cultural heritage, tourism, women, Turkey, carpet weavers.