

RURAL TOURISM – NEWS AND PERSPECTIVE

Morna Anamaria

Abstract

Rural tourism can be defined as a wide range of ways of accommodation, sports, festivities, activities to pleasantly spend the spare time, all carried out in a typical rural environment [Mitrache, Șt. (2000)]. The rural tourism is a good alternative for economic diversification, since, on the one hand this form of tourism is booming worldwide, and on the other hand, because Romania holds a giant attractive heritage intended to capitalize the following items: architecture; traditional costume; popular music; artistic and crafty creation, with specially equipped workshops where tourists lead by popular experts and artists can initiate in: sacred image paintings on glass, naive painting, ceramics etc.; attractions of fishing and hunting interest; climatic and landscape conditions from the villages on hills or mountains with scattered households, ideal for those who love peace and solitary walks.

Key words: financial crisis, rural tourism, rural environment, infrastructure, services.

INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism will turn from an occasional concern into a permanent one, with a tendency to become a need, a necessity to escape felt by the modern man, because tourists prove that they are still preoccupied with those offers based on tradition, authenticity and are refractory to what globalization of urban lifestyle means. The solution to overcome crisis is given by agriculture and services, especially the tourism, by its complexity.

The problem today in Romania is to find new solutions, in order to exceed the financial crisis, using alternative ways of development, to "attack" the European or world market, where competition is more and more fierce. Without development progress is not possible. Surprisingly nowadays, an alternative, despite superficiality, is represented by the rural tourism, that is tourism held in the rural area.

The rural tourism is also an alternative for people from society wanting to spend their leisure time traveling, singing or dreaming of quiet shelters in nature, seeing towns and villages in the country in order to meet new people, to find places and Romanian village civilization, by all its ethnographical components or in order to take care of their health, a solution against the adverse effects industrialized society has on people, manifested in the form of biological aggressiveness - pollution, lack of movement – and

also of nervous kind – psychical stress, constraints in social and professional life etc.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In our country, rural tourism has acquired contour during the interwar period, has developed a little during the communist period, but its spectacular development is a characteristic of our century.

Rural households – first forms of organized systematic management of the countryside, are classified at a national level, according to the endowment and comfort, in: households with low level of comfort and endowment; households with mediocre level of endowment and reduced comfort, i.e. they have no running water, indispensable facilities are of poor quality in the following areas: the Apuseni Mountains, Danube Delta, Transylvania Plain; households with a satisfactory endowment and acceptable comfort; households with considerable comfort and endowment, mostly found in the rural areas near the large towns; households with high comfort and endowment.[*Benedek, J., Dezsi, Șt. (2000)*]

Rural settlements located in extremely varied places, in terms of landscape and the way in which resources and household areas are used, may facilitate the structuring of various tourist products and clientele segmentation, depending on preferences. Diversity of rural households and originality, if they are brought to an acceptable level of endowment and comfort, represents a potential factor of attraction.

Tourist behavior in the last period reveals holidays' targets, i.e. tourists' desire to meet rural cultural traditions, to spend their leisure time and holidays in an authentic rural environment, where they seek peace and clean air. Since this is a complex tourism, it takes different forms [*Gavrilescu, D. (1998)*]:

- ✚ tourism for pleasure is often practiced, by spending spare time or vacation alone or together with family, in an accommodation place from the rural area: either to friends or relatives, or by renting a holiday house, in order to observe nature, birds, to collect medicinal plants, fungi, to walk or consumption of traditional foods;
- ✚ curative tourism, for health, is practiced for the atmospheric peace, the lack of pollution, the presence of mineral-water springs having therapeutic properties, thermal and saline waters, and also for the possibilities of applying the remedies from the “popular medicine” (phytotherapy, apitherapy, hydrotherapy), being also a source for medicinal plants procurement;
- ✚ cultural tourism consists of visiting some objectives of anthropic origin, such as historical monuments, museums, memorial homes, or

participating in traditional celebrations, religious pilgrimage or social events in community life: weddings, patrons of churches, religious related celebrations;

- ✚ sport tourism can be achieved in rural areas to support some sports activities: alpine climbing, paragliding, winter sports, tourist guidance, knowledge of the rural heritage, fishing, hunting etc.;
- ✚ religious tourism has a particular impact in developing rural tourism, by increasing church prestige, respectively the attraction exercised by some monasteries.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Although rural tourism is a recent reality, there are enough reasons to stimulate the development of the rural tourism [Coccean, P., Dezsi, Șt. (2001)]:

- ✓ increasing number of pensioners, either as they reached the retirement, or due to the redundancies of this period, which will opt for vacations in rural areas, for health, or to establish in the country area;
- ✓ psychic comfort and peace are sought the most often by tourists, because of the daily stress, with their desire to spend their spare time in a pollution-free environment, away from the hour constraints of the daily life;
- ✓ authenticity, natural features of life in the country, affection of the rural communities, are more and more appreciated by tourists, who want to get rid of the highly industrialized products and impersonal collective relationships;
- ✓ interest in health maintaining records a high growth, because the malfunction and pollution from the cities has a more and more negative impact on the population health status;
- ✓ increasing time intended for pleasure, which represents a very important factor for tourism, because spending the holidays or weekends in rural areas is cheaper and also allows maintaining family or emotional ties with the place of origin;
- ✓ extending modernized roads, because they are certain special rural areas which cannot be visited due their precarious technical status;

In addition to these causes and motivations that stay at the foundation of rural tourism, it is also necessary to identify the following features [Buciuman, E. (1999)]: “rural tourism” activity to be defined in the spirit of European regulations, adapted to the specific Romanian realities; to adopt new legislative facilities that authorized agents to operate under the real conditions and requirements of the rural tourism; the legal framework

for the rural tourism conduct to be improved by developing of tax and sanitary regulations related to the direct marketing of household products; rural tourist potential to be identified and evaluated from the perspective of the regional development programs; peasants and guides to attend courses and seminars by demanding a minimum professional formation for the tourist service providers; cooperation with international organizations in rural tourism on multiple plans: adopting higher standards of quality, promoting mutual bid.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we can appreciate that the changes occurred in socio-economic, legislative and political field, in conjunction with the various and original features of Romanian countryside, are able to ensure the relaunch of rural tourism, in a new, effective and vigorous manner, within the wider framework of the tourist phenomenon, at a national and international level.

The solution to overcome crisis is given by agriculture and services, but among these tourism in particular, due to its complexity.

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