

THE ROLE OF THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGROTOURISM

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Abstract

The Romanian rural environment is not a serial product, because it bears the imprint of the unhackneyed, of the original and as a result it arrives itself in front of the urban communities.

Romania has great possibilities for agro-tourism development which can be a way of increasing the standard of living and civilization of the Romanian village, and its inhabitants, through hospitality, can compete with the inhabitants of other European states.

Key words: agrotourism, rural environment

INTRODUCTION

In the rural area an economic activity has appeared complementary to the agriculture called agrotourism, a form of manifestation of rural tourism.

Many tourists are hesitating in spending a holiday in the countryside, although here we can also find a natural environment characterized by value and landscape variety to which is added a valuable cultural, historical and ethnographic heritage. On the other hand, the rural localities through the less degraded environment, through the tourist resources it has can represent a space for the discharge of the big tourist agglomerations.

Spending a holiday in the rural area can also be financially attractive because the agro-tourism respectively the rural tourism is addressed to the population with average and modest incomes. In Romania, tourists with incomes above average practice agro-tourism and rural tourism on the occasion of the two major religious holidays over the year (Christmas and Easter) because the Romanian rural environment is the preserve of the traditions and customs of the ancestors.

The rural environment and the agrotourism support each other through the following aspects:

- agrotourism offers the inhabitants of rural areas jobs;
- the rural environment represents the support for new businesses, including agro-tourism;

- by practicing agrotourism, the anthropic tourist resources of great value of the rural environment are emphasized: handicrafts, gastronomy, customs and traditions;
- agrotourism determines the increase of the income of the inhabitants of the rural area;
- the rural environment through the infrastructure it has determines whether or not the agritourism is practiced.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

For agrotourism the rural environment plays an important role. In order to be able to capture the close connection between them it is necessary to do an x-ray of the rural environment so that we can capture the interdependence between the two.

In Romania many villages can constitute spaces for practicing agrotourism because they have natural, ethnographic and socio-economic qualities that turn them into tourist products of great originality.

In order to become a tourist village any rural locality must benefit from minimum conditions such as:

- location in a picturesque natural environment, without sources of pollution;
- accessibility by various means of transport;
- water supply, electricity, sewerage, ie the presence of municipal facilities;
- the presence of households with comfort.

The lack of the "modernism of the urban civilization", the aging and conservative population, are elements that have led to the preservation of a well-defined cultural identity by which the Romanian village differs from the tourist villages in other European countries.

Agrotourism in Romania in its current meaning can be practiced because we still meet isolated traditional villages with dominant agricultural activities compared to the rural localities in the EU that have changed much their appearance and functions.

At the national level agrotourism can be practiced in many geographical areas and regions, respectively where the organization of the peasant household, the architecture and the popular creation, the customs and traditions are kept unaltered by the rural communities: Apuseni Mountains, Maramureș, Bucovina, Mărginimea Sibiului, Transilvania, Dobrogea etc.

The identification of the Romanian rural potential that is suitable for the development of agrotourism is achieved through two aspects:

1. conducting a study on the natural and cultural heritage of an area;
2. identification of peasant households that can be introduced to the agrotourism circuit.

The specificity of an agro-tourist area or region is given by the **traditional architecture** that puts its mark on the aspect of a household. Any peasant household comprises several categories of construction, each with a well-defined utility: housing construction, food preparation and consumption, water resources, agriculture practice (barns), grain storage, animal shelter, etc. (Cândea M, Simon T, Bogan E, 2012)

By attenuation of the urban, modern influences, the peasant farms are kept and preserved as original as possible, so that they can enter in the circuit of agrotourism and rural tourism.

Some peasant households in the Apuseni Mountains still have **traditional technical installations**, true objects of national heritage: mills, hand tools, pives.

At the national level, we find beautiful peasant households in Bucovina (wooden furniture, woolen fabrics), Maramures (icons on wood and glass, rugs, high wooden gates), Bihor (dowry boxes, wall covers), etc.

In Romania, agrotourism and rural tourism are successfully practiced in rural areas of Transylvania too, where **cultural diversity** has an important role. In this segment can be noticed rural localities from Cluj, Sibiu, Braşov, Bistriţa-Năsăud counties.

In Transylvania, multiculturalism gave birth to village cultural landscapes that are identified by the way of organizing the peasant household and specific forms of cultural identity.

The special attraction of rural communities is the social life where we encounter various human concerns and phenomena related to the terrestrial and cosmic environment. All these are materialized through **multiple celebrations and rituals** characteristic of the Romanian people.

CONCLUSION

In the future for the Romanian rural environment, agrotourism and rural tourism can be ways of economic development, having an important role also in stopping the migration from the village to the city.

Agrotourism and rural tourism allow the conservation of rural areas and their ways of life.

Agrotourism, component part of rural tourism, plays an important role in capitalization of local tourism resources and consequently in raising the standard of living of the inhabitants.

The households must be promoted on geographical and ethnographic areas and regions, because by presenting the local and regional specific, are achieved a better knowledge and promotion of the Romanian cultural, ethnographic and historical heritage.

Agrotourism and rural tourism can stimulate the growth of the activity of other branches of the village environment: handicrafts, crafts, local industry of agri-food products.

Agrotourism and rural tourism play an important role in the development of the rural area, both locally and regionally.

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