

HIGHLIGHT THE MAIN DISPARITIES OF APUSENI MOUNTAINS AREA

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Abstract: Apuseni Mountains is the place where there is a range of disparities. Specific for Apuseni Mountains residents, especially those from rural areas is poverty, and one of the causes of this situation is insufficient enhancement of the resources of the area. However, in the future, Apuseni Mountains will begin to be perceived not only as an geographical individuality but as an economic one.

Key words: highlight; disparities; Apuseni Mountains

INTRODUCTION

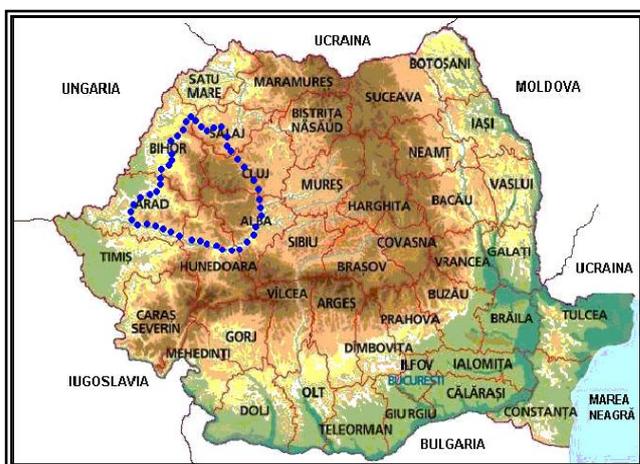


Fig. 1 Placing Apuseni Mountains surface on Romania's territory

According to experts, the total area of the Apuseni Mountains region is about 16,200 km² or 1,598,100 hectares (about 7% of the country) and stretches across six counties, Alba, Arad, Bihor, Cluj and Salaj Hunedoara. Largest share, about the distribution by counties of Apuseni Mountains area belongs to Alba County (26.7%), followed by Bihor County (21.2%), Cluj County (20.5%), Hundoara County (14.4%), Arad County (11.9%) and smallest in Salaj County (5.3%).

The region is characterized by a low degree of urbanization, about 30%. The eight largest urban centers located within this mountain region (Nucet viscous Campeni Baia de Aries, Abrud Brad Zlatna Geoagiu) are all small towns with less than 10,000 inhabitants (three of them being in 5000 inhabitants). Unlike other Carpathians units, in Apuseni Mountains permanent settlements climbs up near the highest peaks (hamlets placed on the shelf at Districts-Scărișoara to 1200 m are among the settlements located at the highest altitude from the country). As human habitat, Apuseni Mountains have some obvious differences from other major compartments of the Romanian Carpathians. Here are grouped 16 cities, 163 communes and 1253 villages. Characteristic for Apuseni Mountains is the absolute dominance of small and very small villages, namely 348 villages under 100 inhabitants, of which 42 villages with less than 20 people. Number of villages with 100-499 inhabitants is 578.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The authors of the paper were used as methods of work: data collection, processing, analysis, observation and their interpretation. *This work was published during the project POSDRU/89/1.5/S/62371.*

RESEARCH RESULTS

Apuseni Mountains is the place where there is a range of disparities concerning the level of production, income, unemployment and provision of infrastructure elements, opportunities for education, environmental quality, etc. These problems occurs both within Apuseni Mountains and surrounding areas and beyond.

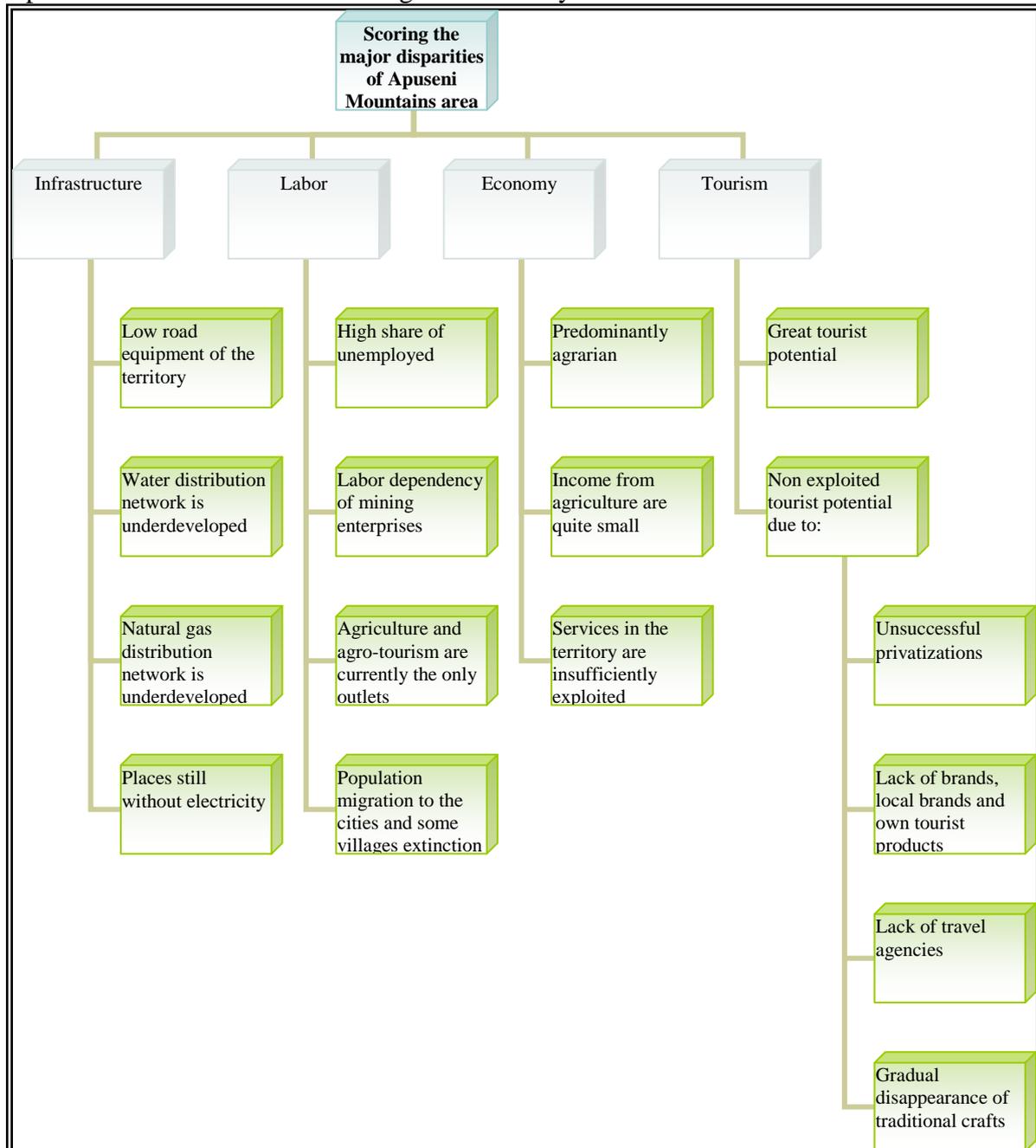


Fig. 2 Scoring the major disparities of Apuseni Mountains area

In terms of *infrastructure* the Apuseni Mountains presents serious disparities, evidenced by the low level of territory equipment. The area has significant water resources offered by a rich hydrographic network. But water quality is strongly affected by untreated wastewater discharge properly from people, businesses agents and mining. Water distribution network is underdeveloped and has a total length of 1420.6 km, is divided in proportion of 35% in urban area and 65% in rural area. The majority of municipalities do not currently have water supply network in a centralized system. Even where water supply is made in centralized system it is necessary rehabilitation and expansion of this. Electricity distribution network is the most poor from the country, due to the high degree of dispersion of households, and the cost of connecting to the distribution network witch is very large. Natural gas distribution network is underdeveloped, in the area are connected to the gas network a small number of locations: city Zlatna, Geoagiu Bai Spa and some of the villages located in the lowlands of the area. A positive element recorded in the area is housing. Appreciated is the fact that most houses were built as cottages in the tourist area, and some of them went into the tourist offer of the region.

As regards *employment*, the high share of unemployed is one of the most serious issues. Labor dependence of mining enterprises in the area and the few units of light industry in the area, which decreased activity, is reflected in higher levels of unemployed reported to the active population. Labor specialization in mining and non-ferrous metallurgy, under drastic reduction of production conditions, can reduce the level of employment at odds unable to provide livelihoods for a relatively large population. Inability of towns or rural centers to take in the services field the surplus of possible labor makes that only agriculture and tourism outlets.

Difficult living conditions in rural agricultural areas, coupled with the lack of jobs, cause not stabilization of young people in rural areas, and appears the phenomenon of migration to developed cities. Although in recent years the level of professional training greatly increased young people are not encouraged to return to the area, which is why there is a lack of trained personnel.

Although *the economy* of the area is predominantly agrarian one, focused on livestock and crop production, forestry, wood processing and building materials industries are well represented in the economic spectrum, but insufficiently exploited. Even if the agricultural area per capita is quite high, incomes from agriculture are quite small. Cause? Practicing subsistence agriculture, where own consumption is excessive weight. Therefore peasant is forced to seek various pay formulas to complete their income.

In terms of *tourism*, although there is mountainous relief, with a high tourist potential, a rich cultural natural heritage witch offers wide possibilities for the development of agro-tourism, known resorts and nature reserves, existing tourist capacities have not the necessary equipment, tourist heritage is in degradation process and lack adequate tourist advertising. Not exploitation of tourist potential is due to several issues:

- Privatisation failed;
- Lack of tradition, innovation inertia and diversification of the rural economy;
- Lack of brands, local brands and their tourism products;
- Lack of travel agencies;
- Gradual disappearance of traditional crafts in competition with industrialization of 1960-1970 years.

CONCLUSIONS

For the years to come, Apuseni Mountains will begin to be perceived not only as an geographical individuality but as an economic one. Therefore, the purpose for all actions must be to achieve a regional identity based on a strong partnership and a sustainable and effective tourist promotion of the specific tourist items for the area.

To this goal will contribute also the agro-tourist activities. Favorable factors for agro-tourism development, in the future, are:

- Natural tourist potential, the physical-geographic conditions, specific to the area represents strengths when it comes to agro-tourist sector of this area.

- Anthropogenic potential can help increase revenue and attract young people in rural areas, taking into account also the agro-tourist activities, behind this statement standing the fact that much localities of the rural area are great preservers of traditions.

- Another positive aspect is that in the last time has realized the idea that there is a great tourist potential and began to undertake certain measures: it has been done some courses with guesthouses owners to improve the quality of tourism products, began to be promoted, still quite shy, the area.

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