PERSPECTIVES OF DURABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN JIU VALLEY

PERSPECTIVELE DEZVOLTĂRII TURISMULUI DURABIL ÎN VALEA JIULUI

GABRIELA CORINA SLUSARIUC[1]

[1]University of Petrosani, Faculty of Science, Petrosani, Romania; ellaslusariuc@gmail.com

Abstract**:** *Tourism in Jiu valley represents nowadays the main alternative, for socio-economical launching of the zone. Being in the inchoate faze, no by far exhausted, tourism constitutes the most favorable and optimist option for drawing out from a standstill situation of all mining localities, hardly overtaken by reduction in force that begun in 1997 and with horrid forecasts that all mining units must be closed by 2017. The idea that tha tourism represents an viable alternative for mining industry is very relevant, because in nowadays context, mountain tourism has new valencies taking into account massive investments that are placed in every city of Jiu Valley.*

Key words: *tourism, strategies, development, restructuration.*

INTRODUCTION

Situated along the Carpathian mountains, surrounded by Parang and Retezat mountains, Jiu Valley represents the entrance gate to Retezat National Park and other Carpathian destinations. Coal resources made that the main job here to be the mining.

The microregion has a total length of 60 km, a triangle shape and it's oriented to WSW-ENE, between the Campa-Rascoala locality to the East and Campul lui Neag to the West. With 9 km in width near Livezeni and Petrila cities, the width decreases down to 1.5 km at Campul lui Neag.

At the same time with restructuration in mining industry is desirable and must accomplish a development of other economical fields, because this area, extraordinary spectacular, wild and virgin – touristicaly speaking- to be exploited at its maximum potential.

The inhabitants of Jiu Valley have passed over a difficult economical and social period and for the first time in postrevolutionary history, there can be seen a hope because of European funds, government and local funds for project implementation concerning comunitary infrastructure (sewage, water, telecomunications), road infrastructure and touristic infrastructure.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Tourism in Jiu valley represents nowadays the main alternative, for socio-economical launching of the zone. Being in the inchoate faze, no by far exhausted, tourism constitutes the most favorable and optimist option for drawing out from a standstill situation of all mining localities, hardly overtaken by reduction in force that begun in 1997 and with horrid forecasts that all mining units must be closed by 2017.

The idea that tha tourism represents an viable alternative for mining industry is very relevant, because in nowadays context, mountain tourism has new valencies taking into account massive investments that are placed in every city of Jiu Valley.

Mountain tourism, represents an important solution and of certain actuality for developing Romanian tourism. Unfortunately, accepting some area, did not represent a priority for the progress of turning into profit of natural resources in tourism. The mountain has been perceived many years long as a place where you have to recreate for a short period of time, limited in geographical perimeter, a fact proven by the “investments” that took place during last years. Relatively low degree of equipment of mountain areas, in quality and quantity, also in infrastructure and other adjacent domains, in accommodation and leisure units, proves the indifference and recklessness of decision takers in post revolution period for development of touristic field in our country.

The opportunities that unveil at the moment are focusing to reconsideration of mountain area, as representing a competitive component of our tourism. Under given circumstances the touristic resort has to represent a well organized spatial unity and endowed with high quality equipment, that can offer a diverse assembly of touristic services with a climate favorable to recreation and leisure areas.

From many points of view, touristic areas offers a variety of activities based on turning into profit of natural and antrophic resources, also representing the nucleus of efective deploying the tourism activities, that can draw a new economical value by recording expenses but also revenues. The variety of products and services, of huge amounts, make the touristic market an important field of our coutry's economy.

At the moment, globaly, the volume of touristic fluxes records a significant growth above previous years, and predictions proves the fact that the process will be in full ascent till year 2020.

But, to be able to speak certainly about a tourism with high standards, of faultless quality, there must be made massive investments in all moutain areas that favour touristic activity and also must be founded solutions and projects to implement for developing the entire infrastructure in this domain.

All these must be realised to assure a favourable climate to durable tourism. Durable toursim means the ability of tourstic destinatin to remain competitive against all the problems that appear, to attract visitors for the first time and to make them loyal , to stay unique in cultural aspects and to be in a permanent equilibrium with the environment. To be competitive, durable tourism must reflect maximum quality to community life, continuity to natural resources and equilibrium between touristic industry needs of environment and local community supporter. At the same time, durable tourism propose itself to assure cultural integrity and social cohesion of social community, must generate high quality experiences for visitors and specify equity inside and between generations.

In paralel with durable tourism must develop communitary tourism, that is centered on involving local population in a localised touristic development and in their profit: the build and manage accommodation units, and also services offered to the tourists locally.

Local population excerts a complete control upon revenues obtained from tourism, an important part of them being destined to improving life conditions of the community, giving a higher attention to respect for the nature and customs of local population. This way of developing the tourism is often combined with developing production activities, like workshops for transforming foods or handicrafts, whos products are sold usualy to the tourists.

Starting with year 2007, have been launched operational programms for attracting european funds, money that are assigned for restarting national economy, funds for which local communities have applied at Regional Development Agency West, intermediary organism for Regional Operational Programm 2007-2013. Submitted projects had been elaborated based on the strategy of development of Jiu Valley, strategy that had as a support The Strategic Plan of social and economical development of every city. Development and modernization of communities in Jiu Valley, in the context of development and modernization of the microregion, constitutes a priority for every decision taker factor envolved. Important is the fact that have been identified the priorities and that their necesity have been justified, reason for which have been signed financing contracts for economical and social relaunching of Jiu valley.

The well underlained strategic plan and agreed by the entire community lead to envolvement of state authorities for financial sustenation of these projects. Also, county authorities, decided their envolvement in developing road infrastructure and implicit in touristical development of Jiu Valley microregion.

RESULTS AND DISCUTIONS

Well aware of the fact that mining industry is at its end of the road, strategies, predictions and all projects are aimed on launching of a new economical field that can offer social and financial stability to the inhabitants of the 6 cities in Jiu Valley . This alternative to mining industry is tourism. To benefit of a tourism at european standards, is necessary to create road infrastructure that will facilitate the access in mountain areas. In this context, local, county and governmental authorities are making efforts to finalize investments of modernization of acces roads to Parang, Vulcan, Straja and Dobraia resorts. There are needed high amounts of money that these objectives will not remain to the stage of project. The road that connect the West of the microregion, Campul lui Neag with Baile Herculane, must be continued to open new horizon to this area and to create more jobs.

The region represents an area with an important touristic potential. Also, road number 666 Dealu Babii – Merisor which connects Vulcan with Tara Hategului area, constitutes a priority for county and local authorities,

the extraordinary landscape of this area proving once again touristic capacity of the mountains. Government investments which started in Pasul Vulcan, at the same time with the implementation of 'Ski in Romania' project, leads to modernization of the road that connect the city of Vulcan and Pasul Vulcan area. From the future resort, which will have approximately 150 lodges and a hotel, the road can continue till Gorj county in Schela locality, a road that also goes along a dreamlike landscape. Constructing road 664, to Schela, will facilitate access to and from Jiu Valley, avoiding the road on Jiu defile and shorting it by 25 km. Still at transport section, road infrastructure, we note modernization of European road 79, that crosses our region through Petrosani and continues to Jiu defile in Gorj till Calafat. Defile area welcomes us with a wildly but also spectacular, therefore represents a region with an important touristic potential.

Straja resort has benefit of a massive investment in infrastructure, the road that leads in the resort being entirely modernised, giving the opportunity for mountain lovers to get in the resort with private automobile.

Parang resort awaits its visitors on a future rehabilitated and modernised road that connects the resort with Petrosani city, while in the East of the Jiu Valley is wanted to open a new mountain resort in Petrila city, Dobraia area. Here the authorities have applied to the Ministry and awaits financing for arranging ski slopes, ski cables. From the local budget have been allocated funds for modernization of the road that conects the city with the resort. With infrastructure investments are created new jobs and are opened new road connections from Jiu Valley to other counties.

Starting from West to East, if we take a picture we discover the touristic potential in all its splendor and the real value of the area and conclude with the necesity of the investments in this domain.

At the base of Retezat Mountains, Uricani city expands to the West with its component localities Valea de Brazi and Campul lui Neag. Further away from here we reach Cheile Butii, a leisure area, where during the winter ski lovers can relax on the existent ski slope, or those who like the mountains can follow the touristic itinerary till lodge Buta. Here is forecast development of the tourism in territorial profile, in a systematic vision – a touristic complex, multivalent resort, with summer and winter functionality, for leisure and recreation, winter sports, mountain trips.

Going down the stream of West Jiu we get to Lupeni, a city known due to the strike from 1977 of miners, but also because of Straja resort where can be accomodated in 176 cabin and touristic pensions, a total number of 3700 persons. This touristic complex is situated at 1380 m altitude, and ski slope surface has 40 hectares. The acces in the resort is made by chairlift with a capacity of 2 persons for each bench, and in the resort there are 7 ski slopes to use.

Forwardly, Pasul Vulcan resort has received a major investment in tourism, a gondola was constructed here with 72 units, that starts at level 776,1m and reach at Pasul Vulcan at level 1304,1m having a total cord length of 3098,58m. At level 1300m has been constructed a ski installation with a length of 327,13 m, 40 traction devices suspended on 5 piles. The lift serves homologated ski slopes. And to speak about durable development of the tourism in the area, we estimate that in the near future will be constructed a new gondola that will get near to Straja summit, a place from where 5 ski slope will begin. Is predicted that, at a certain poin, Pasul Vulcan resort, to be united with Straja resort by a gondola. Accomodation units from Vulcan and Pasul Vulcan resort are 59, respectively 55 cabins, o motel, and 3 cottages.

Cabins that are going to be constructed in Pasul Vulcan area will respect an urban plan well organised, and then will be accomplished all conditions for deploying of true tourism.

Going to east of the Jiu Valley, we get to Aninoasa, a former mining town, whose chance to survive on the map of Romania is constituted againg by tourism and massive investments that to be realised for the proposed objective of local authorities. We are talking about a coal mine – museum from Aninoasa, which will attract many visitors and tourists. The idea of finalising this museum constitutes a priority for entire community of Aninoasa and not only, because it represents a solid base for what means durable tourism. The city of Aninoasa has 3 accommodation units.

The foray in the touristic circuit of Jiu Valley continues at Petrosani, where the skiers benefit of 7 ski slopes, out of which 2 have nocturnal lights, 5 have lifts, and one slope for sleighs. The wonderful landscape of Parang area has a crest with summits reaching 2518m, with view to Valcan, Sebes and Retezat mountains, creates all the premises for the tourists to come back, to become loyal to this mountain location.

It will be constructed a gondola that will conect the resort, in Rusu zone, with the city. Accommodation structures in Parang resort and in Petrosani are 142 – 5 hotels, 3 cabins, 1 motel, 1 touristic villa ANEFS, a touristic complex CSS and 132 lodges, and the the number is still growing.

At the other end of Jiu Valley, the project team from Petrila has made all necessary that Dobraia area to enter in touristic circuit, completing this way the number of touristic resorts in Jiu Valley and seriously contributing to tourism development around here. Will be constructed ski slopes, gondolas, ski lifts , new cabins, necessary infrastructure for a serius competition in tourism domain with other resorts in the county and Romania. At the south of the city, there are many glaciar lakes, with access from Jiet valley at 11 km from Jiet locality, passing a beautiful landscapes, through Jiet gorge, nature reserve of IV degree, area where can be found Groapa Seaca cabin, situated on DN 7A , at 1598m level, surrounded by coniferous hardwood forests, with accommodation possibility of 33 places.

Besides investments in tourism, there are investments in road modernization. At Petrila all road will be modernized with European funds, at Petrosani many streets have been and will be modernised also with money from European Union. Central road system in Vulcan is in full construction for modernization with financing from Regional Operational Program.

In parallel with investments in infrastructure, there are investments in modernization of water and sewage instalations, in unsing alternative energies, investments in school infrastructure. There is layed emphasis on public-private partnerships concerning profesional reconversion of the inhabitants from the 6 cities, for proffesions that have a future here like: manager for touristic pension, asphalt worker, electrician, worker in touristic field.

CONCLUSIONS

With a well organised strategy, by involving all factors, can be accomplished the aim of development of the tourism in an important economical sector that should bring a major contribution to productive activity and occupying workforce in Jiu Valley.

This need coordinated approach of touristic activity organisation and participants, and also a clear prediction and a specialised and efficient implementation of development plan.

REFERENCES

1. **BĂLTĂREȚU ANDREEA** (2007), Ecoturism and durable development Prouniversitaria Printing House, Bucureşti, 2007;
2. **MINCIU RODICA (**2004) Tourism economy, Bucuresti, Uranus Printing House, 2004;
3. **SLUSARIUC GABRIELA** (2006), Regional development and perspectives of monoindustrial zones, Focus Printing House, Petrosani, 2006;
4. *** Local Development Strategy Of Jiu Valley Microregion, Artpress Printing House, Timişoara, 2007.