

TOURISM IN THE SMALL REGION OF FEHERGYARMAT AND ITS TOURISM VALUES

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***Abstract:** The level of economic development depends on the traditions, education, culture and needs of a population living in the same area. However, it is important what kind of culture is born or being strengthened in a region. Regarding the traditional folk culture, some areas, namely the less-developed regions can be in a better situation: it is more difficult to drift away from the roots, from the precious traditions. It can happen in this case that despite globalization, sometimes even traditional values are supported, too. Thus, they are not destroyed but the old scenes and customs of life are sustained making a balance between old and new. It is important to keep lasting values alive, which have proved something, and also to intermediate knowledge for others, even for the new generations. This article is aiming to describe the Small Region of Fehergyarmat as one of the most outstanding bases of rural tourism, and also to show how opportunities can be enlivened in the border village tourism.*

Introduction

„One of the determinant elements and trends of Hungary’s future can be the network of tourism-centered small regions which reestablish not only society but also life world thus becoming more intelligent.” (Czinkota 2002) In this context, it can be said that the tourism, recreation and leisure services are playing important or increasingly important role in the rural economies. (Kis 2006)

It is not enough to state the intention and the will since the realization itself depends on the conditions and possibilities of each region, all in all, on the small regions. In addition, chances of the small regions depend on partly their role in space structure, their natural and social-economic positions. Those who come to this area today or visit their paternal home can hardly recognize it. Once it brought up writers and poets like poets Kolcsey, Moricz and Petofi who willingly passed their time here, in this land.

This world is a different world now but people living here could remain themselves. Though, it is true that the space of living and the look of the settlements have changed, the nature’s beauty stayed there unchanged

and perhaps that is why it became one of the favorite recreation destination of tourists.

Today tourism is said to be the voyage to future which became present where in several places the new world makes interactive participation possible. (Varga 2002)



Picture no 1, Geographical position
Source: www.feheryarmatiterseg.hu

People need to get to know the life in a village which has brought rural tourism into life, as today's obvious tourism product and which operates it as an important element of rural development.

We are planning to examine tourism and tourism values of the Small Region of Fehérgyarmat and to put it into the public attention.

Description of the small region of Fehérgyarmat

This region is shown on the map as a part of the Upper Tisza Area. The people living here also call „Erdohat” the area with gallery forests between the former Ecsedi-marsh to the river Tur. (The integrated program of regional development, rural development and environmental management in the Small Region of Fehérgyarmat (2005).

People, the local community have always attached to the natural surroundings. In this respect, rural tourism gives the opportunity to live on, thus improving life quality for people living in villages. It also intends to

make values of the families in villages visible and available for the environment. Moreover, it offers a chance of co-operation. It provides those interested in rural tourism with the feeling of value-experience. This study also refers to the tradition-centered tourism of this small region. It examines what importance the tradition-preserving and developing program have in protection and formation of identity in the cultural complex which survived different periods of history and which preserves the importance of the village. (Csorgo 2002) On the other hand, rural tourism reveals the natural beauty of the border areas and the one beyond them, too. It gives the chance for mutual presentation of villages which preserve and develop traditions. It helps them sell their products, promotes international meetings and strengthens co-operation.

In order to maintain themselves in the period of financial problems the settlements of the small regions have united which resulted in the birth of the Small Region of Fehergyarmat. This region abounds in both natural and tourist sights; it is a paradise for water-lovers. The crystal clear water of the Tisza, the monuments of tiny villages hidden in the bends, the romantic atmosphere of the river Tur all offer the opportunity for an active recreation for tourists flying from the noisy towns. (Sights in County Szabolcs-Szatmar-Bereg 2004)

The number of settlements of the small region situated in the eastern part of the country is 49. It is typical that in this group of small villages the number of population does not reach 500 in 17 settlements. Its only small town is Fehergyarmat, which is the centre of the small region, the population of which is 8800 people. The second largest settlement is Tunyogmatolcs with its population of 2700. Only other 5 settlements exceeds the level of 1000 inhabitants. This kind of group of settlements is unique on the Hungarian Plain. (Regional development program of the Small Region of Fehergyarmat, 2005)

The biggest problem of the region is the low level of employment. Though the proportion of the unemployed shows a decreasing tendency at the county level, but actually it is well over the national one.

Regarding the educational level this area has the highest proportion of those who could not complete their primary education, the rate of those who finished the 8 grades is the lowest in the country, and finally, the proportion of those who have a school-leaving exam is also the lowest here. (Regional development program of the Small Region of Fehergyarmat, 2005)

In Fehergyarmat a hospital with 237 beds attends the inhabitants of the region. People living here can reach the capital, which is 300 km away, from Fehergyarmat in 4 hours, by train it is 4 hrs and 45 min with changing the

trains once. There is no direct train or coach line from Fehergyarmat to the capital.

Each settlement is provided with system of water and gas-pipes. The electricity-provider is EON Zrt. The network of fixed telephones is provided by T-Com Zrt. The mobile telephone service is fully covered. Most settlements have cable television, internet access.

At county level the sewage disposal is the least solved here. The waste management is solved only partly. It is not typical here to collect selectively. (Szucs K. 2010)

Tourism in county Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg

The most frequently related expressions are „dark Szabolcs”, „the black train”, unemployment. The poorest and the most underdeveloped region of the country. Flooding, inner waters, prejudices all can be found here.

However, those who make a visit here, in the easiest part of the country are surprised very much. Dynamic, developing small towns, a prospering county seat, clean, neat tiny villages, almost untouched nature, population welcoming tourists. (Sights in Hungary, 2001)



Picture no. 2, Natural values

Conditions of tourism can be considered as average ones. It is far from the capital and the western border so it is in a disadvantageous situation. The traffic across the border is lively and busy but the main motivation is neither tourism nor recreation but shopping. It involves short time of staying here, and it is of low tourism spending. So do not give the transit of tourism revenue, a significant part (Zsoter B. 2007).

Rivers (Tisza, Szamos and Tur) are significant factors in the tourism of the county building on which water tourism of increasing significance is forecast.

Tourism situation of the small region of Fehergyarmat and its intention for rural development

In Hungary rural tourism got a new push at the end of the 80s. Nowadays people in villages are getting more and more interested in tourism in the small regions. The tourists' desire, which is not at home. Love nature and peace and quiet (Zsoter B. 2006). This „feeding” to rural tourism has more reasons: on one hand, unemployment is very high and this form of tourism offers some employment, on the other hand, people who live on farming can complete their income with it. Thirdly, even ventures try to gain benefit from rural tourism.

People running away from their everyday life look for their physical-mental recreation in the frame of tourism. They feel that life in the countryside provides town people with mental refreshment. The experience shows that the future is in the hand of people living in regions which preserve and improve traditions. In this region the tradition still preserves the collective memory of communities, and also it is the treasury of material, spiritual and cultural resources.

What we call tradition industry is getting shape: conscious improvement of traditions, what is more invention of new ones. Thus promotion of traditions is realized in parallel with establishment of traditions. These people not only utilize the advantages of globalization but also they are able to reorganize, reconstruct themselves grabbing to their cultural roots. They are striving to inform other people about holidays, events, local folk costumes, craftsmen's traditions: Gyarmati Vigassagok (Jolly Days of Gyarmat), Szamos Parti Talalkozo (Meeting on the Banks of Szamos), Nemzetkozi Retestalalkozo (International Strudel-Festival), Nemzetkozi Halaszlefozo Verseny (International Fishsoup Competition), Nemzetkozi Szilvalekvar Fozo Verseny (International Plum Jam Competition), Nemzetkozi Diofesztival (International Walnut Festival), Penyigei Szenteparti Nagyvasar (Fair of Penyige on the Banks of Sente)

etc. Exhibition of products, goods typical to the region: embroidery, home-made dogwood berry or plum jam, ornaments made from textile or wood (Korosi 2005). Local gastronomy: doughnuts, „lapcsanka” (local specialty), fried dough („langos”) with dill and cottage cheese, etc. These all have not only tourist but also economic pulling force.

Typical sights: Memorial House of Moricz Zsigmond in Tiszacsecse, Water-mill in Turistvandi, Cemetery in Szatmarcseke and the Sepulchral Monument of Kolcsey, Saint Peter and Paul Church in Fehergyarmat, Kisszekerkes Church, Luby-castle in Nagyar, Jam Museum in Penyige, etc.

The inhabitants have covered the old market and built programs on it. These mean regional attractive force which would be useful to transform into a complex system of offers. It can be experienced that there are settlements which made profit from tourism. With their products they can offer famous specialties for visitors.

Nowadays the untouched natural environment is a rare phenomenon. The historic sights preserve traditions for the new generation.

It can be seen that global tourism is going under transformation. The complex service is put in the foreground: only one traditional program does not satisfy the visitor's need. An interest towards a certain information service can be experienced. Today it is essential to be on the world-wide web, one of the means of inviting visitors is the internet.

Those can prosper who decided to form their ideas together with the service sector.

The new direction of development of tourism should be built on the conditions and opportunities of the region, besides, the results should be utilized, too. Certain houses provide special experiences; landscape architecture strengthens the feeling of being close to nature which offers an imperishable experience.

Since 2005 the venue of the International Meeting of Millers (Nemzetkozi Molnartalalkozo) has been the watermill in Turistvandi, as a unique sight in Europe.

Between 1990 and 2000 the starting point of the international Tisza-tours was Tiszabecs. 1230 people of 10071 tourists were foreigner in this period. There were tourists from America, Far-East, Argentina and from other countries, as well. (Egri 2000) The International Tisza Tour is the least frequented tourist event in the region, though it is one of the favorite places of water-lovers. They have been returning for years but they can hardly see any changes in the area. As a connecting tourism development cultural, religion and eco-tourism, hunting, fishing, riding and cycling tourism can be mentioned, too.

Conclusions

This region is really attractive and beautiful. What mean the real appealing forces of the region are the untouched beauty of nature, clear, winding rivers? The experience proves that those who visit this land can return fresh and relaxed. Some of the inhabitants know and hope that tourism can become one of the sectors of success in the region. There are many tiny villages with various sights, attractions which are unique. Churches, mansions, natural rarities all can be found in this region. Most of the settlements have their own water banks a part of which is navigable, too. It attracts water-lovers and fishermen, as well. People can get to know the old, traditional products, their production, folk costumes, old foods. These events give a good example of co-operation of village councils. They showed that it is possible to live well even in the „backward” area, and not only live from day to day. I hope that Tiszahat will soon become a frequented holiday destination for tourists in our country.

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