

TOURISM, THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT AND THE NATIONAL HERITAGE ARE THE PRIORITIES FOR AN ECONOMICAL KOSOVAR DEVELOPMENT

*Phd.(c) Merita BEGOLLI DAUTI
Public University "Haxhi Zeka" – Pejë
merita_dauti@hotmail.com*

Abstract

Tourism is a general concept, with its own development and function can take different forms with many sorts of areal, economical, social and environment implications. It seems clear that the success of tourism in the realization of the role as a major moving force for the development of integrated development zone will depend on the type of structure, scale, quality, cost and location of tourist buildings. This means that the development of tourism and protection of natural and cultural heritage should be planned according to the resource base, economic and social needs and ecological sustainability. Tourism represents quite complex activities with socio-economic character, which has multiple important events and economic branches. The Character and multiplicative nature of tourism, goes in accordance to the requirements of the population for recreation and leisure activities and daily activities in urban centers. Tourism values constitute the relatively large number of motives, such as heterogeneity also for origin. Tourism should not be treated only as an economic activity, such a treatment only tourism as economic supply category, which will only respond to tourist demands, in itself would contain natural values (beautiful scenery, landscape, favorable climate, water, flora and fauna) each element that motivate the tourist traffic. Although Kosovo is a small country on the map of the earth is of a rich nature, landscapes, diverse world of plants and animals. Our natural and cultural heritage values in a constant pressure from uncontrolled and unplanned use. Despite this, our orientation is to intensify efforts for the preservation and conservation of these unique natural values. Developing effective policies for the protection of nature, increasing areas of protected areas, by improving the quality of management of these areas, protecting rare types of flora and fauna and protected forests, we finish our obligation to the next generations to give them a possibility enjoying the unique natural values of Kosovo.

Key words: Tourism, Environment, Natural and cultural heritage, Natural and cultural heritage, Protected area, Management

Introduction

Kosovo is located in Eastern Europe, and it's characterized in central position in the Balkan Peninsula. Kosovo it's stunted with: Albania (border length 112 km), Macedonia (161 km), Serbia (352 km) and Montenegro (77 km). It lies in the northern latitude of 41 ° 50'58" to 43 ° 15'42" and east longitude 20 ° 01'02" to 21 ° 48'02" 2. Kosovo's area is 10.907 km, in which live about 1,739,825 people. Kosovo is surrounded by high mountains, passing several mountain ridges and over 2000 more altitude (the highest peak Gjeravica 2656 m), which have different geological composition, while stretching between two larger hollows, Dukagjini's and Kosovo's. Kosovo is known by its mountain tourism potential, national parks, hunting and even hunting culture. Besides all mentioned resources catering is concentrated in the areas of tourism offer, beside urban centers in the most important roads in Kosovo. Kosovo has considerable potential for the development of winter and summer tourism. Tourism is regarded as one of major activity, because in general the market has a very high demand always growing, representing at the same time a source of income and employment. Tourism today, is one of the most powerful industries in the world and as such, has a high positive impact on economic and social development of many countries, particularly in developing countries is considered as one of the most important sources of income, employment opportunities, the diversification of the economy, the environment protection and the promotion cross-cultural exchange. The experience of many developing countries have shown that mass tourism along with great benefits for economic development, requires a very careful study of the impact, which in some cases has had unforeseen implications in economy, culture and environment. Till the last few decades, the world economic development, including tourism, has not paid attention and did not sufficiently consider the environmental consequences which in many cases have led to increased

poverty and environmental degradation. Therefore, a challenge no less important is the development of strategies and policies that will ensure an increscent of tourism in qualitative and quantitative aspect without forgetting that natural resources are often limited. This means that all countries should not only minimize the negative effects of tourism on the environment, but that the economic benefits of tourism to contribute to environmental protection and sustainable planning of use of natural resources.

Tourism and Its impact on economic development

Today, tourism is one of the most massive problem and phenomena in whole globe. Although, the history tourism development is not so old, tourism introduces a very dynamic, rapid development including many countries and peoples around the world⁷¹. The importance of tourism to the economy today is quite large. Based on tourist world turnover scope, there are better indicators of which tourism affects the economic activities⁷². Mostly all Kosovo's areas have large touristic values, depending on the resources and level of development. Kosovo's physiognomy guides clearly in different mountains of different regions, tourist transit directions, major cities, baths (medical), property complexes of natural and cultural heritage, hunting locations and villages. Current trends and trends of international tourism demand, placement opportunities in the tourist offer in international markets can be expected in the regional centers of Kosovo in the high mountains, the international road transit directions, the natural heritage complexes and also in hunting. Domestic tourism demand will be further implemented in major cities of Kosovo and in baths, but there are expected to increase the requirements for mountain tourism, and rural tourism in the regions that contains natural and cultural heritage⁷³.

⁷¹Doka, Dhimiter&Draçi Bilal, "Gjeografia e Turizmit" Tiranë 2009.

⁷² Reçica Fetah&Millaku Bedri "Ekonomia e Turizmit" Prishtinë, 2011.

⁷³ Zhvillimi i turizmit dhe programi i rregullimit hapësor të turizmit, Prishtine 2004.

As the most important and global objective of tourism development in Kosovo in the period after the war, is oriented in economic development of Kosovo in the activation of existing and important resources of tourism, which have affected the increase of Kosovo's revenues, the

most important objective is to increase employment especially in Kosovo municipalities that have more touristic potentials. To understand the real situation of tourism in Kosovo's municipalities, there are some interesting statistics presented in the table below.

Nr. identifikues	Komuna	Numri i hoteleve	Numri i dhomave				
			Me nje shtrat	Me dy shtrat	Me tre shtrat	Apartament	Rezidence
01	Deqan	2	2	7	0	0	0
02	Gjakovë	5	64	68	2	3	0
04	Gjilan	8	58	41	25	4	0
06	Istog	3	24	8	3	0	0
07	Kaqanik	4	35	10	4	0	0
08	Klinë	4	26	22	0	5	0
09	Fushë Kosov	4	22	25	2	3	0
11	Mitrovicë	5	31	80	2	5	4
13	Lipjan	6	77	2	0	0	0
16	Rahovec	3	4	35	0	1	0
17	Pejë	8	66	55	30	6	3
19	Prishtinë	28	392	432	23	67	13
20	Prizren	10	35	71	24	17	0
22	Shtime	3	25	0	0	0	0
24	Suharekë	2	1	23	3	1	0
25	Ferizaj	13	96	108	8	4	0
26	Viti	2	12	0	0	0	0
27	Vushtri	2	16	12	3	2	1
	Gjithësej	112	986	999	129	118	21

Table 1. Capacities of surveyed hotels in Kosovo

Based on information's which possesses the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) Department of Hospitality and Tourism, and the Statistical Agency of Kosovo (SAK), it appears that in all Kosovo municipalities there are 170 licensed hotels, but not all of this hotels are included in the 3 monthly survey made from the Statistical Agency. Cities that mostly hotels were surveyed are: Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, Prizren, Gjilan¹.

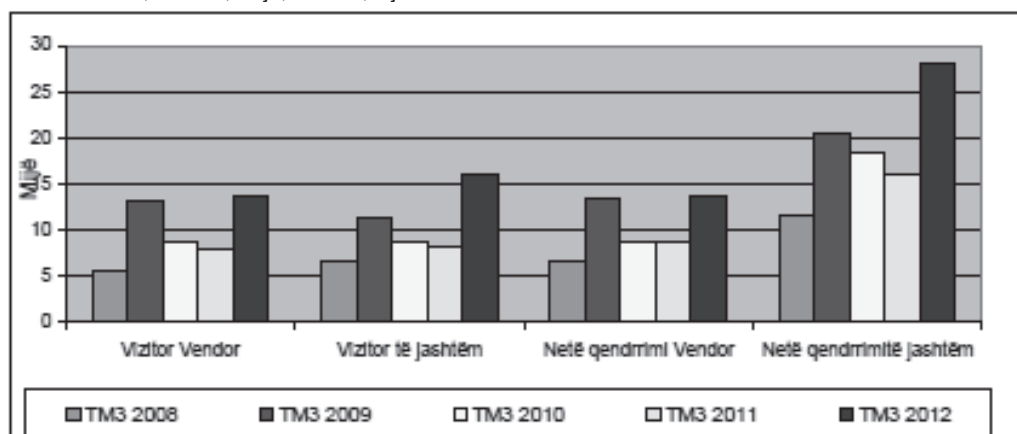


Figure 1. Number of visitors (internal and external) and number of night's spent: TM3 2012 related with TM3 2011, TM3 2010, TM3 2009 and TM3 2008.

¹Agjencia e Statistikës të Kosovës, Statistikat e hotelerisë TM3 – 2012.

In 2012 TM3 number of visitors was 29.730, where 45.79% are local visitor, and 54.21% were foreign visitors and the number of nights spent in 2012 is 41.673, TM3 about 32.77% of the locals and overnights are 67.23% are foreigners. All local visitors on a average have stayed on night, and all foreign visitor about two nights in average per visitor. Kosovo is the most visited country in 2012 was there was an increase of number of visitors, compared to previous years from 2008 to 2011. Accommodation of capacities units is the indicator that best reflects the situation that the tourist offer can be accessed for visitor's hospitality. Depending in the number of available objects we can know that how much we are able to fulfill visitors demands based on quantitative and their qualitative requests. This means that the accommodation facilities are not prepared for any big organized event, because the touristic capacities are restricted and limited. There can be made some exception for some small activities and events that can be organized.

Values of natural heritages

WTO has defined that "a form of tourism in which the main goal is the observation and enjoyment of nature". Most of these products are free (hiking, bird study, etc.), but there are products that are sold by operators and transport guide walking with luggage. The fact of payment assumes a service that is performed and the opportunity to see extraordinary things can be a beautiful way, a national park in specific landscapes, flora and fauna. In essence, these products are national parks. Protecting natural areas provided by:

- Provide economic benefits for host communities, and administrative bodies dealing with the protection of natural areas.
- Creation of jobs and sources of income for local populations.
- Awareness of local residents and tourists on the need for protection of natural and cultural assets.

Nation's natural heritage is considered as national treasure, and that's because attendance and care for their conditions is the part of culture of people who lives there. A disinherited people can hardly find place among the civilized nations of the world. Kosovo has a rich natural heritage. Suffice it to mention Sar's Park, Gadime's Cave, Mirusha Canyon, etc. Natural also cultural heritage of Kosovo has passed through numerous challenges and risks in the historical past. However the consequences of natural heritage have been smaller than cultural. Cultural heritage values can also be restored, while the natural ones can rarely happens: if a natural monument, a plant or animal species disappears, it is unimaginable that he be renewed.

Nr.	Description	Nr.	Surface(ha)	%
1	Natural reserves	11	698.4	1.52
	Plant N.R.	6		
	Animal N.R.	2		
	Special N.R.	3		
2	National Park	1	39.000	84.55
3	Natural monuments	38	4.867.9	10.55
	Speleological N.M.	3		
	Hydrological N.M.	8		
	Geomorphological N.M.	3		
	Botanical N.M.	20		
	Memorial N.M.	3		
	Crystal Museum in Stantrg	1		
4	Protected Landscape	2	1.681	3.17
	Total	52	46.247.3	100%
N.R. Natural Reserves				
N.M. Natural Monuments				

Table 2. Protected monuments in Kosova

Now a day the area is taken under legal protection of 46.247.3 hectares or 4:27% of the territory of Kosovo. Of these: National Park (Sar's Mountain's), 11 nature reserves (river bifurcation Bifurcation of Arnen reserve, Ropsit Peak, Rusenica, etc.), 37 natural monuments (Gadime's Cave, Rugova Gorge, Saint Bridge, etc.) and two protected landscapes (Germia and Mirusha). (Table 2). Kosovo is characterized by mountain tourism potential, national and cultural parks, and hunting. Kosovo has considerable potential for the development of winter tourism in the SAR's and Accursed mountains.

Protected areas

Currently the number of protected natural areas is 97 and includes an area of 136,842.34 ha (12.4% of the territory of Kosovo). Number of Protected Areas of the start of the announcement until today, has always increased (Figure 1). This number will increase if considering declaring Accursed Mountains National Park and about 100 other proposed areas.

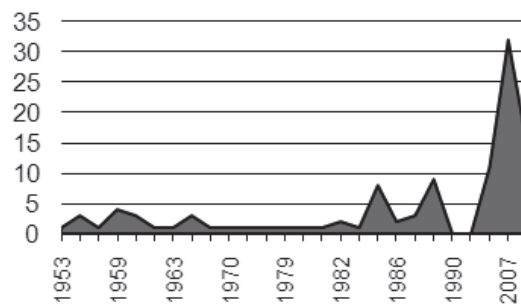


Figure 2. Chronology of declared and protected areas in Kosova

Tourism in the Republic of Kosovo is regulated by the Law on tourism and tourist services (2010/03-L-168) and carries about 8-10% of local social product¹. After 2000, the tourism sector is characterized by an intensive development, spontaneous and uncontrolled, the consequences for the environment. Tourists prefer more mountain tourism and so there are less preferred, tourism like winter recreation, cultural, commercial, transit, health and Speleo-turism². The

¹ MTI, 2001.

² Instituti për planifikim hapsinor, Prishtinë, 2004.

biggest touristic potential has National Park "SAR mountain" and National Park called "Accursed Mountains". They offer great opportunities for the development of tourism, especially winter sports. The length of ski trails at Mountain ues and reaches 209 729 m, with the possibility to be able to ski at one time more than 200,000 skiers. It also exceeds other massifs of the region Triglavi and Pelister³.

National Park "Accursed Mountains"

Geographical location, climate, hydrography, flora and fauna are very rich very important elements that create this tourist region of opportunity for medical tourism, rural, ecotourism, hunting etc. The highest peak (2656 Gjeravica m), sources and flows to the mouth of canyons, high forests and fauna to create a beautiful landscape and very attractive for the development of sustainable tourism throughout a year. Studies made by the OECD show that in this tourist region can be built: 10 most important centers for the development of winter sports tourism⁴.

The most important mountain centers	Nr. of skier	Centers total capacities
The peak of Rusolia	19.250	40.000
The peak of Kurvala	11.250	22.000
Beleg's mountains	7.550	15.000
Koprivnik	6.620	11.000
Birds table	5.150	10.000
Starzc	4.150	8.000
The peak of Strelc	3.855	7.000
Hala	3.780	7.000
The peak of Leginat	2.760	5.000
The peak of Mokna	2.030	4.000
Total	65.393	129.000

Table 3. The most important centers for winter sport tourism development – Accursed Mountain's

Accursed Mountains fulfils all needed criteria's, so in December 2012 they were announced National Park. The initiative for announcing them "National Park", has started in year 1970, and to be continued then from 2002 till 2010. Based on made studies there were included areas of Peja's, Junik's, Istog's, Decani and Gjakova municipalities with included surface around 62.000 ha⁵.

National Park "Sar's Mountains"

In 1986 the Assembly of Kosova a part of the surface 39 Mt. 000 ha has declared "National Park", and lies on the borders of four municipalities: Prizren (19,500 ha), Shterpce (15 210 ha), Therande (2730 ha) and Kacanik (1560 ha). "Sar's Mountains" are well known for botanic aspects, fauna, ecological, touristic, recreational, sporting and cultural. Forests cover 48% of the surface, 49% pastures, meadows, 1.6%, 1.4% cliffs. Sar's massively offers favorable conditions for the development of mountain tourism, winter, summer, rural health, mountaineering, hunting, fishing, outdoor activities etc. Brezovica's potential is with 1112 beds, of which 690 in the hotels of category 'A' and 'B', the cable car, ski lift and other associated content. Within

the territory of the National Park "SAR's Mountain" there are four strictly protected reserves (Great pine of Oshlak, Prevala and Rusenica) that possess rare and endemic species of flora and fauna, not only in Kosovo but also beyond⁶. Therefore in this country can be developed research and educational visits - education.

The impact of tourism in environment

Tourism presents one of the main areas of development of a country. Its development has a highly impacts on the environment, especially if not taken into account the principles of sustainable development. Tourism resources have almost all regions of Kosovo, "SAR's Mountain" and "Accursed Mountains" are the most important areas. Untouchable values of nature and diversity of cultural-historical monuments create good opportunities in tourism. Adverse impacts of tourism and recreational activities depend on the type and manner of distribution of tourist buildings, the size of the area, the number of visitors, by way of transport used, the pressure is due to the development of resource use, from waste management and environmental zones. Impacts of tourism are interpreted on several levels:

- In micro level (local level), where the country faces: competition for scarce natural resources (such as water and land), air pollution (energy, transport and water pollution, noise and environmental accidents (for example, avalanches, forest damage and burning them). Cities and countries with cultural and natural heritage, number of visitors causes problems such as heavy traffic, degradation of buildings and sites of heritage value.
- Natural parks and protected areas, number of visitors in countries with high environmental sensitivity is increasing due to the interest that is being paid to nature. The main problems arise from the excessive use of car transport for passengers and visitors to the concentration of the periods of the year in popular areas easily accessible from surrounding cities. National and natural parks are under extreme pressure, which comes from the number of visitors, the demand for recreational activities in the fields of foreign and development of tourist facilities. Overcrowding occurs in periods of area (where 60% of visitors usually comes only three months in the summer) and where most visitors come daily and traveling by car, causing huge traffic, parking and loads the garbage collection.
- In addition to the National Park "SAR's mountains and mountains of the Alps" (Mokra Gora, Rugova, Rugova Gorge, Hajla, Bogicevici, Gjeravica and Junik Mountains) in Kosovo also visited other areas of protected nature, etc⁷.

³ Gashi, M., 1997
⁴ MTI, 2007.
⁵AKMM, 2008.

⁶ MMPH, 2008
⁷Dr.Veselaj. Zeqir &Dr.Morina. Ilir ."Ekologjia". - Leksione të autorizuara, Pejë, 2012/13

Conclusion

Tourism cultural and natural heritage in addition to economic benefits also reflect the image and values of a nation. Protection of cultural and natural heritage will be an important test of the level of civilization. It is necessary to raise awareness of the value and the interest of Kosovo that this legacy remains stored for future generations. We can conclude that, tourism should be a generator of economic benefits for the country and the host

population and thus be an important motivation to care for the population; especially the effective management preserves the heritage and cultural practices. All this is achieved when there is involvement and collaboration of local representatives (local), conservationists (organizations and institutions, which deal with the storage, protection, conservation and restoration of cultural objects), tourism operators, property owners, creators and enforcement of policies and standards.

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