



The Non-Agricultural Activities in the Rural Area - Viable Economic Alternative: Case Study, Romania-South-Muntenia Region

KEYWORDS

non-agricultural activities, specific occupations, alternative incomes, rural areas

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ABSTRACT

Two directions of the rural economy are highlighted in South-Muntenia Region in Romania, including the rural area with the village and farms, which are in constant development and non-agricultural activities with territorial specific, which are traditional or in a process of adapting to the market economy. The development of non-agricultural activities evolved upward, with the increase of the rural entrepreneurs that capitalize the potential of the rural environmental features, both in the plains and in the Carpathian and mountainous areas of the region. Thus, the non-agricultural activities have become a viable economic alternative, both within individual farms and within farms units with legal status.

INTRODUCTION

The Romanian rural economy has different characteristics depending on the regions, the demographic social features and on the economic specific. This distinction is visible especially regarding the poverty in the Romanian rural area, reflected in low living standards and lack of alternative income sources.

The non-agricultural activities in the rural area (Table 1) have as specific to obtain specific craft products: pottery, weaving, wood and metal processing etc. In some areas a range of crafts developed, which are building materials: bricks, tiles, boards, shingles, etc.. In the mountain and hilly areas, they became traditional crafts, with a number of specific occupations, such as grazing, bee keeping, sericulture, hunting, fishing, and mining and crafts.

The enumeration of non-agricultural activities in the rural area made in South Muntenia Region reveals their diversity as an expression of the vocational occupations based on a long tradition of domestic economy developed in the form of crafts, transformed into complementary or alternative economic activities and specific agricultural activities of the respective areas (plains, hills, meadow, mountains). The specific activities other than agriculture and forestry in the rural area depend on the territorial distribution and on other activities of the supply group. Thus, it can be said that these activities depend on the available local natural resources, on the geography and on the traditions of the area.

CASE STUDY

In the present study, we proposed to identify the development potential of the non-agricultural activities in the Romanian rural area, especially in South-Muntenia area. We consider it is an **essential solution**, non only for surviving, but also for connecting to the European rural area, and this means in fact, European integration by rural development, it means sustainable progress of the Romanian rural economy.

These non-agricultural activities allow the expression of the entrepreneurial spirit of the rural inhabitants, the recovery and preservation of traditions (fabrics with floral, zoomorphic design, plates, tools, household articles of ceramic, wood and straw) and cultural and social values (recipes, traditional food) of the local communities.

TABLE – 1 STRUCTURE OF NON-AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES, ON GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS AND FORMS OF ORGANIZATION, IN SOUTH-MUNTENIA REGION

Type of activities	Category of area	Form of organization
Meat, milk, fruit and vegetables processing	Plain, hill, mountain area	Family associations, Cooperative, Companies
Milling	Plain, hill, mountain area	Farms, SMEs, family associations, Cooperative
Wood processing	Hill, mountain area	SMEs, family associations
Leather, fur trade, metal processing	Plain, hill, mountain area	Individual farms, family associations
Agro-tourism	Plain, hill, mountain area	Family associations, authorised natural persons
Transport (delivery) Trade	Plain, hill, mountain area	Individual farms, companies, Family associations
Craftsman pottery, basketry, crafts	Plain, hill, mountain area	Craft companies Authorised natural persons
Pisciculture, Bee keeping, sericulture, Hunting etc.	Plain, hill area	Authorised natural persons, Family associations, farms, associations of producers

Sources: Processing of data provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development [3].

The most consistent development, among the non-agricultural activities, in the last years, both at national level and regional level, knew the *tourism activity in the rural area* [1]. By this wider concept, the rural tourism contains not only the tourism at farms or agro-tourism, and the activities regarding the holidays in nature, trips in the rural area, as well residential tourism, where the services include, besides accommodation, cultural-social events, festivals, outdoor activities, producing and selling handmade products and agricultural products, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

For the years 2014-2020, it is considered that the agricultural restructuring will have a significant impact on the rural economy in general, given that the agriculture remains the most important activity in the rural area and an essential source of income for the households. In this context, three aspects are essential for the diversification of the rural economy [2]: **busi-**

ness development by infusion of investments; conversion of agricultural work force and its qualification in accordance with the new possibilities of employment; significant improvement of material and spiritual infrastructure.

Enhancing the investment efforts for the rural development depends on the internal and external funding. Internally, the

sources are limited; the banking system is not interested in financing such business, as it is perceived by a high risk. The development and modernization of the physical and social infrastructure is the first step to be taken, determining on the one hand the increase of the rural area attractiveness, and on the other side entering of private capital within it.

REFERENCE

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