

THE VALUES OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE RUGOVA REGION IN PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN KOSOVO

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Abstract: Culture is conceived as a complex whole, as a conceptual system in learning. The Rugova region is geographically located in the "Albanian Alps" which is a territory that includes a special set of cultural activities developed between generations. These intangible (spiritual) identity values include: language (dialect), tradition, traditional food, traditional clothing, symbols, natural-cultural monuments, festivals, rituals, customs and traditions, religion and the folklore tradition of the Rugova region. The overall purpose of the paper is to assess the cultural heritage and how to use its potential for sustainable development in the Rugova region. The cultural dimension of heritage and the possibility of cultural perspective consists of recognizing the new reality and changing dynamics of community life. Another goal is to deepen the knowledge about the organization and functioning of the cultural heritage of the Rugova community towards tourism. Literature research by local and international authors, data collection and analysis is built from the field through questionnaire, interview. Interdisciplinary methodologies have been used such as: ethnographic method, method of direct field observations which has been used to get acquainted with socio-cultural heritage and tourism objects. The development of the cultural tradition of food preparation, the way in which the inhabitants give a worldview for the heritage in the service of the development of tourism are parts of interest in this topic.

Key words: culture, tradition, values, heritage, region, tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Rugova is a mountainous area which lies in the western part of Kosovo, above the city of Peja. It is rich with natural and cultural values. The tradition of the Rugova region is early. Social development in different periods characterizes the processes that have taken place and they are especially investigated in culture. Traditions are thought to have existed for centuries in this region and have been continuously cultivated by all walks of life, of which go to the present day as: memorization of legends, the songs, dance, rituals, lullabies, tales, traditional dress, dialect characteristics, food, tools, musical instruments; So, the whole organization and social functioning are a special presentation of the mountain community. Therefore, it can be concluded that where there has been a development of culture, traces of the same civilization have been confirmed. The definition of socio-cultural heritage was also given by the Japanese researcher Tolina Loulanski, according to whom "Cultural heritage includes aspects of material culture - sites, buildings, landscapes, monuments and objects as well as intangible (spiritual) culture whose aspects are embodied in social practices, community life, values, beliefs and expressive forms such as language, arts, crafts, music and dances" (Loulanski, 2006: 88). She emphasizes that "the concept of cultural heritage is evolving, as a result and in accordance with the attitudes, needs and demands of people towards it" (Veselaj, 2010). "The natural resources of the Rugova mountains determine their recreational and economic functioning, the ecology of natural structures can be taken as a sound basis for the qualitative and quantitative expansion of the activity that are in function of tourism and for the maintenance and advancement of this natural environment. Only through tourism and thanks to it can the necessary means of protection be realized" Veselaj, 2010, 38). Increasing investment capacities and the demand to spend holidays in Rugova are parameters for the possibility of creating and expanding business in the field of tourism which is undoubtedly bringing benefits to residents. What is more important is that in Kosovo the climate is very favourable for tourists because four seasons are adjusted in accordance with official calendar and in rare cases the climate happens to be different, for instance, the winter season is snowy each

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year (Kuqi, 2018). Every year, the Rugova region is becoming more and more a tourist destination from all over the world. Recently, especially these 2-3 years, during the field observation, tourists from different countries such as: Albania, Switzerland, Germany, England, Saudi Arabia, etc., which opens up opportunities for business development prospects even from international countries. The grandeur and beauty of these mountains is extremely attractive. Traditional bio food, water resources, warm hospitality, are characteristic of this region and the community.

METHODOLOGY

With the research work we aim to achieve the understanding and clarification of the efficient valorization of the resources of this area as well as the transformation of cultural values as a result of the development and socio-cultural change of society today. Analyzed from the sociological, ethnological, ethnographic prism, however, linking these with cultural and tourist identity values. Use of research instruments such as questionnaires, interviews.

So, the collection of data and facts (research and qualitative analysis, research based on primary data: effective communication with the respondent, method of observation and secondary data: use of literature, relevant bibliography in libraries, online, reading and editing. The survey and interviewing method is one of the basic methods of this study, used to obtain primary quantitative and qualitative data. It was conducted through the design and implementation of surveys 165 (one hundred sixty-five) questionnaires. Through the use of this method it is intended to highlight the importance of the development of cultural tourism in the socio-economic development of the local community. Method of ethnographic study it is actually done according to the case study research model. But, in this case we also have the additional dimension of the researcher (in this case I) who also participates in the social phenomenon that is being studied, in order, through participation and regular collection of data and reflection on them, to achieve a deeper understanding of the group, organization or community you are studying (Matthews and Ross, 2010).

Method of direct observations in the field was used to get acquainted with the cultural heritage sites of the Rugova region, as well as to concretely identify their current situation and problems related to their management and operation.

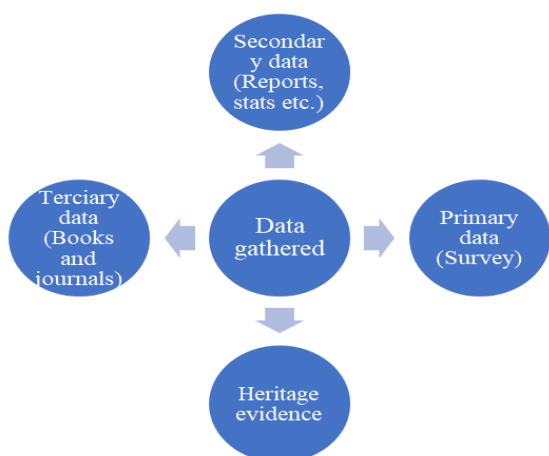


Figure 1. Data acquisition and design (Source: Patton, 2002)

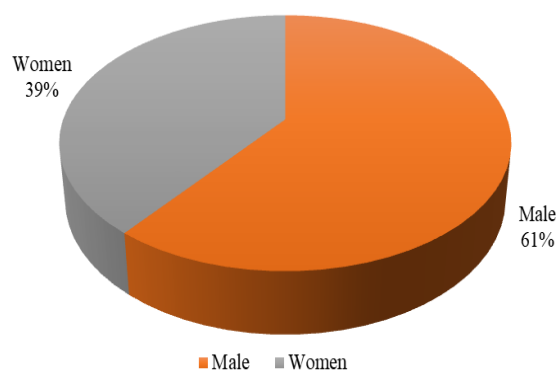


Figure 2. Participation of respondents in the research (165) 100 are mens and 65 women

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS ON CULTURE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Development can be conceived in many ways. From its inception until 1940, development was closely linked to the evolution of technology, modernization and economic growth (Richtscheid, 2011). The term tourism is used for travel, mainly for entertainment, it is the totality of human activities carried out in function of these trips, which serves to satisfy the needs of tourists (Bakiu, 2011). In the UNESCO Convention in 2003, intangible heritage was defined as: "Practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, as well as instruments, objects, cultural areas along with communities, groups and individuals as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation has been created by communities responsible for their environment, as a link between nature and history, providing them with identity and continuity as well as promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity...." (UNESCO, 2003: 3 <https://ich.unesco.org>). Forecasts show that investment in cultural heritage will increase further as it becomes "the most important product of the 21st century, determining the future of communities" (Ogino and Masahiro, 2002: 277). The most characteristic elements of heritage are resilience and dynamism. What makes heritage resilient is the fact that in its broadest sense it includes "everything inherited from the past" and in its narrowest sense it includes what has historical and cultural significance. Other definitions define culture as "contemporary goals of the past" or "that part of the past which we have selected in the present for contemporary purposes, be they economic, cultural, political or social" (Hall and McArthur, 1996: 21. Whereas, of the Parsons cultural system he perceived culture as an important force related to different elements of the social world - or in his terminology, the system of action. Culture mediates action between actors and integrates personality and social systems. Culture throughout the particular ability to be, at least, in part, a component of other systems. Thus, in the social system, culture is embodied in norms, values and in the personality system it becomes an internal part of the actor (Ritzer and Goodman, 2008). Cultural heritage is increasingly being recognized as a public good and its benefits are seen as international (Cernea, 2008). It can have economic and non-economic value.

The European Organization for Tourism and Leisure (ATLAS) defines cultural tourism as “the movement of people towards cultural attractions, away from their place of residence, in order to gather information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs” (Richards, 1996: 22). The researcher Catherine Trautmann (1994) says: “Cultural tourism is not just cultural heritage tourism. Cultural tourism works as a network. It actually includes types of art, such as dance, music, theater ...” (Trautmann, 1994: 37). Thus cultural tourism can be defined as: “visits from abroad by people fully motivated or partly by the hospitality of the community, with an interest in the historical, artistic, scientific heritage or lifestyle offered by a community, a region, a group or an institution” (Silberberg, 1995). Rugova's traditional folk games are a value of Kosovo's socio-cultural heritage. They are divided into 7 main disciplines, which are distinguished for their diversity. A special place are the games for young people and adults. The variety of games is mostly distinguished from the ages of 14-15 to those 45 years old. These games stand out, dominated by gestures and especially physical strength, as most players had physical exertion to win, such as: wrestling, pulling the rope, etc. Rugova's traditional games, with a competitive character, have a significant impact on the physical development of young people.

This event which is usually held in the first week of August brings tourists from different countries. The games and folklore presented at this cultural event is a testament to how the traditional values of this region are preserved and developed. Rugova's traditional games, being an integral part of folklore and folklore itself, are consciousness that moves in the course of time, that reflects and artistically reflects time, is modeled and circulates in time, preserves time, now as history, as social reality, as inspiration, as a sign of identity (Xhagolli, 2013). A number of popular games in the Rugova area from the inside are closely related to the environment of their creation, have a purely livestock and to some extent agricultural character (Qendra Rajonale e Trashëgimisë Kulturore Pejë, 2017).



Figure 3. Medal-Pulling the rope, in the edition of the games (Source: Authors, august 2018)



Figure 4. Throwing the sprout, in the games edition 2020, Stankaj (Source: Authors, August 2018)

According to the tradition in the Traditional Games of Rugova, for each traditional game cups or medals are distributed as a sign of gratitude for the winners of the competitions. One of the characteristic and rare games almost unknown so far in other regions is Throwing the “Llastarit”. Llastari is a wood about 6 m long, about 10 cm thick which is thrown by the contestant with both hands. The importance of throwing lies in reaching as long as possible to the point where it falls to the ground. So this game in addition to the winning side for the competitor is also the use of physical skills. So, “The popular culture of a nation is an important element, which makes it possible to determine its customary, linguistic characteristics, mentality and tendency to preserve identity as a stable historical, economic and social community” (Maxhe, 2010:154). Musical instruments constitute a special craft in the general appearance of Albanian handicrafts. Tools such as “flute, kaval, çiftelia, sharkia, lahuta”, etc, have been produced and are still produced by hand. The flute is a tool used by shepherds throughout the Albanian Alps. It has found wide use throughout the mountainous area of Rugova. It is built of a wooden or metal hole with holes to create the melody. Another instrument is the “Lahuta” consisting of wood, with long tail and strings. It was quite widespread in the region of Rugova and continues today to be part of the heritage of folk music (Zheji, 1998).

TRADITIONAL FOOD OF RUGOVA

The traditional cuisine of the Albanians has been more or less similar to that of other Balkan peoples. Foods with plant, animal and dairy sources, generally prepared at home: from bread to drinks. According to tradition, the people of Rugova ate three times a day: in the morning a simple meal, at lunch more numerous and richer, at dinner it was the most basic and abundant meal of the day. The social aspect of Rugova's nutrition is not distinguished by any categorization that emerges as an expression of social affiliation, but the differences that are observed are mainly as a manifestation of the economic situation. The dishes according to their constituent origin are of the following types: Dishes of dough origin and dishes of plant origin. Dishes of dough origin – this includes those dishes that have doughy structures. Visits that the diaspora usually makes to their families in Kosovo are an important source of income for the Kosovo economy (Kuqi et al., 2021). Among them, those that are processed from corn flour occupy a prominent place.

The following dishes are made from corn flour: “boiled cheese, boiled maza, perpeqi, leqeniku, skropi, kaçamaku”, etc. Boiled cheese, is considered a traditional specialty of Rugova and is one of the most popular dishes in this region. It is usually prepared for various holidays, as well as for entertaining rare guests. In addition to flour, this dish also contains a significant amount of cheese, usually lukewarm and cow products. Boiled maza it is also a dish with frequent use in this area and from the boiled cheese it differs only because it lacks cheese. It is found at the table, not often, even at the ordinary table, but its presence, even at the guest table, is considered a feast. Përpeqi rarely appears in the food of the population of Rugova. Its presence on the table is rarely conditioned by the basic milk production (thick cow's milk for the first two or three days after calving), which is extracted only on the occasion of cow calving. Leqeniku as a specialty there is no frequent use. It is also found in the ordinary kitchen, but it is also welcome when it is on the holiday table. Laknori on this side it is usually associated with the spring season, when various nutritious plants can be utilized (ASHAK, 1987). The most requested and most present in restaurants in the Rugova region is boiled “Maza e zie” which is also the most frequently used dish in this area and from “Djathi i zie” distinguishes only why it lacks cheese. It is on the table, even at the ordinary table, but its presence, even at the guest table, is considered a feast (Lajçi et al., 2021).

TRADITIONAL POTATO OF RUGOVA

One of these agricultural crops that has an important role for human life in these mountains is the traditional Rugova potato. “Rugova potato is as dry as a chestnut when ripe”, the Rugova people are used to saying when talking about their traditional potatoes. Nowadays, the Rugova potato is seen as a return and is planted with this culture, of course in the narrowest spaces in the backyard gardens of the residents' houses, but also in traditional restaurants. The taste of this potato is rare as the very configuration and composition of the soil give it properties and nutritional value. Even those who plant any field, land are mostly the elderly who have become accustomed to it. One of them who proves this to us during the field research is the 80-year-old Dervish Asllan Nikçi from Shtupeq i Madh. Now this potato is usually sold in a more limited quantity in the city market, although the inhabitants mainly continue to cultivate the traditional potato for family needs and local restaurants. Nowadays, potatoes are usually sold and consumed in the form of high-fat chips or very thinly cut and baked potatoes (potato chips). Potato fibers can help digest and absorb simple sugars. Potatoes are an abundant source of B complex vitamins, especially vitamin B6 or pyridoxine, thiamine, niacin, pantothenic acid and folic acid. It is also a source of minerals such as manganese, phosphorus, copper, potassium, magnesium, and iron (Mercola, 2020).

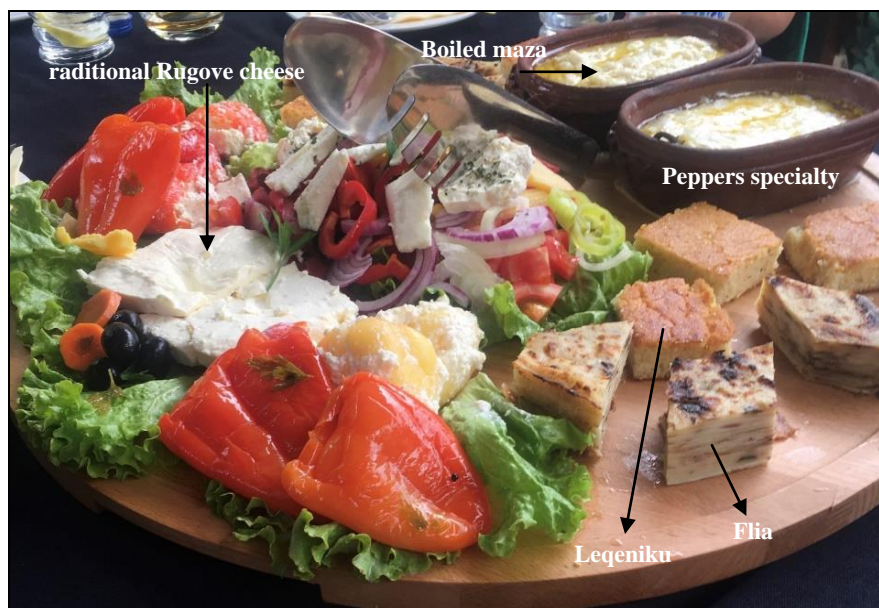


Figure 5. Traditional table in the Restaurant “Hani”-Rugova (Source: Authors, August 2021)



Figure 6. The traditional dress of the Rugovas (Source: Authors, August 2020)

This is a traditional Rugova table which is served in some restaurants in Rugova (Restaurant Hani, Bjeshka, Hotel Magra Austria). It is food sought after by visitors and represents the most traditional food value on this side. The value of this paid table is around 30 euros. This table is provided for meals for 4-5 people.

THE TRADITIONAL DRESS OF RUGOVA

Rugova man's dress At these altitudes and geographical extent, it gives it a grandeur with the features of a mighty and brave mountaineer. His body is clothed and adorned: white hood. Four-piece white woolen blouse, with long and slit sleeves, decorated with black thread, on top of it the jurdia, respectively white or black, with short sleeves up to the wrists, with a square collar (Qendra Rajonale e Trashëgimisë Kulturore Pejë, 2017). The shirt is made of fabric, up to the waist, respectively up to the knees, has long sleeves and small vest and is whiter in color. At the waist, the body is wrapped in a woolen scarf up to 72 cm long, rich in different colors, where red, yellow and green are distinguished. white trousers decorated with many threads - up to 18 threads - and glued to the feet, give the typological features of this dress. In the lower part, above the pants,

on frosty days and rainy weather, Rugovasi also wore “kallçinj”, a kind of footstool, made of wool. The footwear was made of sheep wool (“çorapet dhe mestet”) and from the skin (“opingat ose opaket”). Their knitting was done with sheepskin.

Traditional white scarf Gezofi

Gezofi- is the upper part of the garment made of sheep or goat skin. So it covers the shoulders, neck, waist and protects strongly from the cold, it is used before blouses and vests. In summer it turns with wool outside while in winter with wool inside. So it's just like “postaqi”. People say: returns “gëzofi” as is the weather.



Figure 7. Clothing of Gezofit
(Source: Authors, August 2018)

Figure 8. Traditional Clothing's Source: Authors, august 2021)

Brides Clothing It is a characteristic dress full of color and beauty. It is mainly clothing that has undergone changes. Previously in Rugova was used the “Xhubleta” of girls and brides. The girls' dress differs from the women's dress with a twist from the woolen knitted wool with the last decorative part with braid and wire embroidery. The socks are also white, while the vest is slightly smaller, but the arms are also used or the wool mittens for the upper part. The shirt is not as decorative on the front as the women so this is the difference and it is shorter. The other parts are the same as the women and brides.

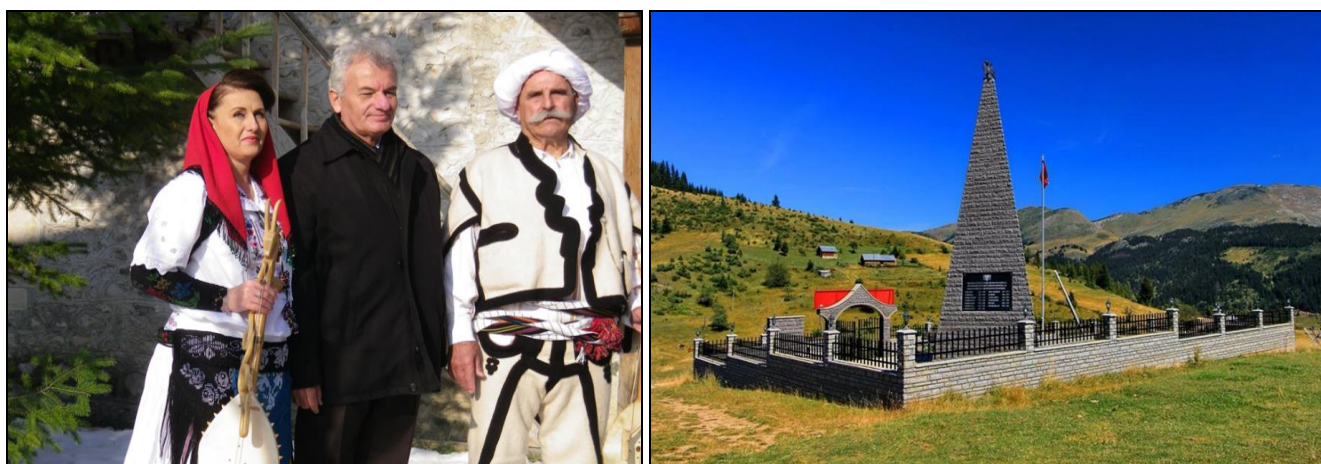


Figure 9. Among the rare female “Lahutare” Ajshe Muriqi Fetaj, the scholar of the Kreshnik Epic Prof.Dr.Zymer U. Neziri and Lahutari Rustem Bajram Nikçi

Figure 10. Family cultural memorial Rexhaj in Shkrel, Rugova (Source: Authors, august 2020)

Although a mountainous area, far from familiar with cultural and artistic developments, the spiritual and creative world of the Rugova people has been rich. Although institutions and schools were lacking to discover and treat the creative and performing talents of the song, whole generations of singers of this region are known for their characteristic voice, for the high interpretive and emotional level of the song. Song top arm and those associated with the instruments of the region as “lahuta, çiftelia, fyelli” etc, are characteristic of every village and generation that has lived in Rugova. Not only legendary and epic songs are widespread and loved for the region, but lyrical ones have also been massive. This genre of song has been strongly preserved, enriched with a new reporter, sung with passion and desire not only by young people, but by all ages (ASHAK, 1987). Even with leaves the highlanders create brilliant melodies. The Rugova mountaineer has composed love songs full of figures, comparisons, hyperbole, making her lovable, understandable and emotionally tangible to anyone who has given her dialect and physiognomy. The dreams and desires expressed through the songs were inner calls of feelings for what he wanted or wanted to have, weaving verses and songs full of passion. In this way the societies create the mechanism of maintaining the strong position of the national culture (Berisha, 2020).

This memorial was built a decade ago in honor of the generations of national resistance of the period of the League of Prizren (1878). In this memorial are the graves of the leaders of Rugova as well: Demë Isufi, Rexhë Avdia etc., who even to this day are honored by the family Rexhaj but also from the residents of Rugova. Traditionally every June 10 citizens visit this memorial as a sign of respect and gratitude for the traditional past of this region.



Figure 11. Lake of Kuqishta in Rugova (Source: Authors, august 2020)

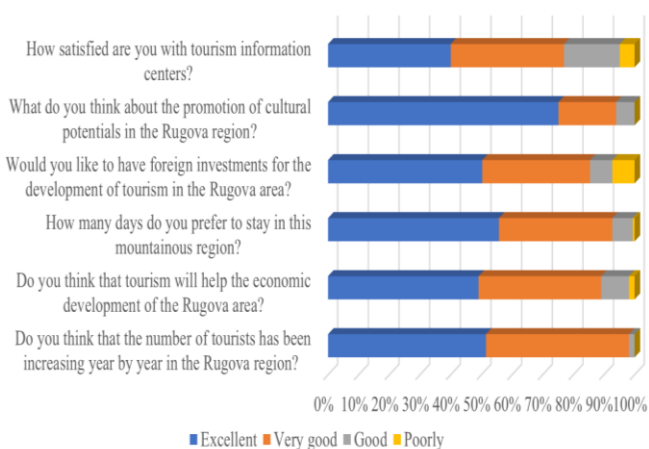


Figure 12. Chart Research conducted in the Rugova Region

Glacial lake of Kuqishta (1900 m) is filled with fresh water throughout the seasons (Shoqata për Mbrojtjen e Mjedisit, 2001). Rugova region, in addition to the intangible cultural heritage, is also known for its material heritage such as lakes, caves, waterfalls, etc. Lake Kuqishta is an extraordinary value of this mountainous region. The road that leads from the village of Kuqishta to the point where the Lake is located is an amazing hiking trail, with the possibility of rest, with information boards and rich in mountain fruits. Therefore, we often see tourists collecting blueberries, strawberries, mushrooms or teas while visiting this part. This region is rich in caves such as: Great Gorge Cave (637 m above sea level), Black Scissors Cave (known as Karamakaz 562 m above sea level) (Bajraktari et al., 2010).

These caves represent the importance of deepening the knowledge and scientific and tourist study. So, Rugova with 15 villages (Neziri, 2017), represents the most mountainous area of the Dukagjini Plain. The experience of many countries has demonstrated that tourism development planning can bring benefits and maintain satisfactory tourism markets (Gorica and Kadriu, 2013). Increasingly, the presence of the Internet is part of the mix promotion for both tourism organizations and distinctions. Today, tourism organizations have their own websites with information and reservation skills, allowing consumers to search for validity and prices before booking online (Gorica and Verla, 2007).

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COLLECTING INFORMATION

Values of cultural heritage in the Rugova region in promoting tourism development in Kosovo, conducted with respondents, during the month of June 2021.

Respondents' answers to questions focused mainly on the development of cultural tourism. We have selected only the answers which were of most interest for the object of treatment in the paper. Respondents' answers make us understand that Cultural Tourism continues to preserve the originality of culture.

In this questionnaire were surveyed 165 respondents who gave their opinion on various issues such as: the number of tourists, employment opportunities through business development in the Rugova region, economic development of the area, cultural facilities, information centers of culture, promotion of cultural potentials.

Table 1. Research conducted in the Rugova Region (Source: Authors research, september 2021)

| | Question Description | Excellent | Very good | Good | Poorly |
|---|---|-----------|-----------|------|--------|
| 1 | Do you think that the number of tourists has been increasing year by year in the Rugova region? | 85 | 77 | 3 | 0 |
| 2 | Do you think that tourism will help the economic development of the Rugova area? | 81 | 66 | 15 | 3 |
| 3 | How many days do you prefer to stay in this mountainous region? | 92 | 61 | 11 | 1 |
| 4 | Would you like to have foreign investments for the development of tourism in the Rugova area? | 83 | 58 | 12 | 12 |
| 5 | What do you think about the promotion of cultural potentials in the Rugova region? | 124 | 31 | 10 | 0 |
| 6 | How satisfied are you with tourism information centers? | 66 | 61 | 30 | 8 |

CONCLUSION

Rugova, a small mountainous province which lies in the foothills of the Albanian Alps, is one of the prominent regions in terms of nature and culture. The mountains of the Rugova region together with the mountains of Burim, Deçan, Junik in 2013 were legally declared a National Park with the name "Bjeshkët e Nemuna" by the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (Ligji nr. 04/L - 086 Për Parkun Kombëtar "Bjeshkët e Nemuna", 2013). This region is rich in natural, cultural and spiritual riches. The inhabitants of Rugova are known for their hospitality. In the chain of tradition over the centuries they preserved the culture, customs and traditions, heroic songs, white scarf, traditional games, traditional dress and a variety of assets, always being faithful to the autochthonous homeland of Kelmendi. The Rugova

region has a lot of wealth in its natural, cultural and spiritual treasure and as such it is thought that in the future it will be an ecological municipality with a tendency to develop tourism and economy. The Rugova region offers many opportunities throughout the seasons, becoming known for its landscape features, caves, waterfalls and lakes, flora and fauna. Undoubtedly, the cultural values of Rugova represent a typical mountain culture with rich features which are an inspiration for today's generations of Kosovo in the development of tourism. Here tradition is intertwined with the modern both in terms of material and intangible heritage. Dress, dance, games, wedding rites, engagements, holidays, etc. are special presentation of Rugova highlanders. Now, the Indigenous Folklore Ensemble "Rugova" has a role in promoting the Rugova tradition. The Rugova region is being considered a place of opportunities for attracting tourists and investors, being awarded the "Balkan Peaks" prize by the World Tourism and Travel Council.

This is a priority for Rugova as well as for the promotion of its natural resources. So, this region offers many opportunities for recreational and sports activities, which requires new investments in this field. Hiking trails, lakes, waterfalls and wells, make Rugova an attractive tourist center beyond the national.

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