

Geographical peculiarities of mountainous areas and their recreational use

Sandro Gogoladze

E-mail: sandro.gogoladze467@ens.tsu.edu.ge

*Department of Geography, Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences,
Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University,
3, I. Chavchavadze ave., 0179, Tbilisi*

Mountains are presented on all continents. They are different in location, area, height, orography, natural conditions, elevation, barrier properties, geopolitical development levels, and many other indicators. Mountains have a specific form of intertwining of natural and socio-economic processes that most clearly reflects on the characteristics and problems of sustainable development of the local population.

As a result of the rapid population growth in the last two centuries, the use of natural resources has reached unprecedented scales and the Earth and human's living environment have changed a lot.

The trends of increasing environmental problems are also large-scale and global and have a negative impact on the welfare of the Earth's population. On the one hand, the areas "distinguished" for the degraded forest areas and fertile soils and scales of desertification and depopulation increase every year after year and on the other hand, the wet areas and those covered with glaciers, fresh water and biological resources of the World Ocean, metal and fuel and energy fossils decrease, while the atmospheric and water pollution, negative outcomes of urbanization, etc. become more evident. The situation is even graver in the mountainous regions, which have quite peculiar economic, social and ecological environment. Most mountainous areas in the world have severe climatic conditions and scarce soil resources, poorly developed infrastructure, low incomes and poor developmental prospects. However, at some places in the world (Europe, North America), where the mountain dwellers feel comfortable, as they have quite attractive social-economic environment in the mountains.

The mountains still maintain sound ecology, bulk of fresh water resources, biological and landscape diversity, endemic species of cultural and natural vegetation and unique and interesting forms of agriculture, architecture and ethnic culture. Despite such attractiveness in the mountains, the mountain dwellers mostly live in extreme poverty and almost in total isolation. The migration processes have reached large scales and as a consequence, more than one mountain regions face a threat of depopulation. In such a situation, the need for sustainable development of mountainous regions has become an urgent issue of the modern world. Sustainable development will help create favorable social, economic and ecological environment for the future generation, and its achievement is the prerogative of only well-educated, healthy and motivated society, with an interdisciplinary and systemic sciences playing a decisive role in its formation.

Mountains are characterized by the potential of tourism development around the world. There people are attracted to the unique nature, ethnic and cultural diversity, fresh mineral and drinking waters, efficient landscapes and natural food products.