

MEDICINAL AND AROMATIC PLANTS AND THEIR ROLE IN ECONOMIC SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. CASE STUDY - THE REGION OF MALESI E MADHE

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Abstract

Exports are considered as one main priorities for economic development, trade liberalization and integration into the international market of Albania. During the last 25 years Albania economy has undergone radical changes in terms its operating base, also in terms of composition structure and development. This progress has accompanied part of the economy which is oriented towards export, turning the economy and the internal market based mainly on imports. Few products are exported and those are domestic products such as medicinal plants, chrome mineral, nickel, copper, aluminum scrap, iron-steel, cement, wood products, animal leather ... etc. So Albania is focusing on those products in which it has more advantages. Obviously a main competitive advantage, Albania enjoys in herbs and spices. Despite Albania currently exports medicinal aromatic plants the benefits are still at low levels, even lower than those prior to 1990. Therefore, this paper aims to present the level of exports of these plants from the region of Malesi e Madhe in the international market, and to identify their role in the sustainable economic development of this region. The region of Malsi e Madhe historically has been identified for production of medicinal and aromatic plants, of highest quality in comparison with many parts of Albania. The data to conduct this paper were collected from the contemporary literature in this field, about medicinal - aromatic plants, their exports and it's contribute to the economy of the region of Malsi e Madhe. Primary research is based on quantitative research through the instrument of questionnaire and qualitative research through in depths interviews with farmers, who deal with the collection of medicinal - aromatic plants in the region of Malsi e Madhe. The findings of this study show that: the sector of medicinal - aromatic plants in Albania, on one hand is profitable and contributes to the generation of income for the rural population, but on the other hand some of those plants are facing their damage or destruction. Improving the quality and the creation of added value would be among the main ways of increasing revenue from this sector.

Keywords: *medicinal - aromatic plants, sustainability, economic development.*