

## TOURIST POTENTIALS OF RURAL REGIONS IN THE AREA OF NIŠ

UDC 728.6(045)

**Milena Dinić, Nikola Cekić**

Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture, University of Niš,  
Aleksandra Medvedeva 14, Niš, Serbia and Montenegro

*"Tourism can be defined as an assembly of relations and occurrences that arise due to travelling and lodging of guests in a certain area if that stay is not based on permanent inhabitation and does not involve profit acquirement."*

( M. Mazi:

*"Characteristics and some problems in the development of tourism "<sup>1)</sup>*

**Abstract.** *The issue discussed in this paper deals with the possibilities in organizing tourist capacities of rural regions in the area of Niš. This issue is both up to date and complex for it is being considered in a time when tourism has the ability to become an evident economic potential, as well as an opportunity to reduce rural underdevelopment and improve the quality of life. Therefore, we are facing a possible small rural revolution, a process in which the contours of rural restoration on European models are coming in sight.*

*During that powerful intertwining we might face a real spatial constructive and cultural drama, a kind of social cohesion, a very interesting collision with urban tissue, that started to demonstrate its deterioration a long time ago, as well as its cracking at all joints. In my opinion, we have not been paying enough attention to the village, and today we stand at a great turning point in history and building.*

According to article 2 of the law of planning and organizing of areas and settlements, passed in October of 1995, the term "village" is defined in this manner: "a village is a settlement whose population is mainly engaged in agriculture, but is not a residence of a community". Considering the fact that 50% of the population of the Republic of Serbia lives in rural regions, while only 15% is engaged in agriculture, this definition is not adequate.

"Urban" is considered to be totally separated from "rural", with clearly defined area boundaries. According to this, rural is limited to the village, while urban means city, and therefore the developments of villages and towns are planned separately. This way of

---

Received July 02, 2001

<sup>1</sup> "Naša stvarnost", br. 6, Beograd, 1961.

thinking resulted in abandoned villages and overpopulated cities. The acute problem of the withering away of villages can be solved using a practical and realistic strategy, a concept of "sustainable development" of rural regions - where tourism represents an important link in the chain, respecting both rural and urban.

It is important to remember that the development of tourism requires a complex performance of following basic factors:

- factor of location and attraction
- factor of traffic - situation and possibilities
- factor of hotel management and lodging - situation and possibilities.

The other factors are also important: tourist personnel, tourist regulations, decisions and funds, travel propaganda, tourist organizations and agencies, auxiliary factors. In order to attain the satisfactory results of tourism planning in the particular area, it is necessary to keep in mind the complex character of tourism.

#### CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The administrative area of the city of Niš extends from the entry to the Gradiška canyon in the east, to the village Dudulajce in the west, and from the village Vrelo in the north, to the mountain Seličevica in the south. 45 villages are located in the territory of the community of Niš, and 16 in the territory of the community of Niška Banja. Unfortunately, some of these villages are enormously lagging behind the city regarding the communal and housing standards, while others are slowly withering away. It is important to emphasize that a certain number of settlements, located on the borders of Niš, which used to be villages, recently became suburbs due to rapid development and territorial merger with the city. Suburban areas are usually formed in two ways: rapid growth of the city or growth of the village near the city. The population of these settlements is mainly engaged in non - agricultural activities and represents as a rule a daily population migration towards the nearby town. Settlements that belong to this category are: Novo Selo, Medoševac, Suvi Do, Brzi Brod, Donja Vrežina, Donji Komren and Pasi Poljana.

The geographical and tourist location of the area of Niš is favorable concerning not only the intercontinental, but inter-balkan and Yugoslav circulation of tourists and provides the initial requirements for the development of tourism. Transit tourism is the most important and best predisposed kind of tourism in this region. Many traffic arteries of regional importance meet in the tourist dimension of Niš, thus directing a vast, great suburban social area towards Niš. Also, the Spa of Niš and the Sićevo Gorge are located near these traffic arteries, which is considered to be a favorable fact. Along with transit, the following kinds of tourism can also be developed in this area: excursions and resorts, sanatorium treatments, residence and relaxing, and to a small extent, manifestations and festivals, entertainment and sporting, sport and recreation, conventions and conferences.

Rural regions in the area of Niš can most successfully develop residence and relaxing tourism, and from tourist viewpoint they can be classified as<sup>2</sup>:

- independent tourist villages with a complete tourist offer (room and board, recreation, cultural offer)

---

<sup>2</sup> Republički zavod za razvoj - Beograd: Program razvoja opštine Knić, Beograd, 2000. godine

- tourist villages with an incomplete tourist offer joined with other segments of tourist demand (villages near the lakes, spas and mountain centres)
- villages with certain manifestations in their tourist offer (fairs, exhibitions, reviews, festivals, art colonies)
- transit tourist villages (villages near the lines of communications)
- tourist villages suitable for excursions (villages near the city centers)
- villages that can provide all sorts of services (hunting, fishing, sports, outdoors schools)

#### ATTRACTIVE FACTORS OF NATURAL ORIGIN

The geology and morphology of the area, which is one of the basic characteristics, is very heterogeneous. In the north and the east of the area the prevalent stone mass is limestone. In the south - Seličevica and in the west the prevalent stone mass is metamorphic rocks. The area is bisected in the middle, in the direction of northwest - southeast, by the Balkan - rodopic tectonic dislocation. The Spa of Niš arose in the cleft of Niš and near the clefts Jelašnica and Kutina. Certain elements of the relief represent the natural beauty and rarities of this area. The relevant tourist potentials concerning the rural regions in the area of Niš are: thermal springs of the Spa of Niš, Sićevo Gorge, Jelašnica Gorge, Seličevica mountain, canyon in Seličevica, mineral spring "Banjica" near Ostrovica, Bojanine vode, Ploče, Kamenički Vis, Topilo Spa etc.

The area of Niš is located in moderate continental climate, thus meaning warm, rather dry summers and cold - snowy winters. Other kinds of climate can also be found here and there, for example submountain and mountain climate in the area of Seličevica mountain, and a mildly expressed extreme of changed Mediterranean climate in the area of Sićevo and Sićevo Gorge.

The average absolute, maximum and minimum temperatures are especially important for the development of tourism. Rather high average absolute maximum temperatures occur in the area of Niš, especially in the summer part of the year. From may to September they are constantly over 30°, and in July

and august over 35°. In the winter part of the year the average absolute minimum temperatures are below -10°.

Concerning the insolation factor, the average year insolation in Niš lasts 1953,1 hours. The values of this factor don't deviate much from the average value in the other parts of the area.

On the basis of the amount of rainfall per year, which amounts to 543mm, Niš is considered to be one of the driest cities in Serbia and Montenegro. The monthly disposition shows the highest amount of rainfall in May, June and October.

A conclusion can be drawn that the climatic conditions in the tourist area of Niš are characterized by rather high average temperatures per year and high average temperatures in the summer, low humidity and low amount of rainfall.

Air flows are favorable and present to a normal extent. High thermal amounts in the summer period are alleviated by constant air flows and favorable exchange of air from valleys and the mountains. There are no destructive winds.

Heterogeneous waters (underground, ground, karst) are characteristic for the area, but water accumulations of all kinds are lacking: lakes, dam lakes, swimming pools. The lack of water accumulations presents a serious obstacle to tourist development in this area,

since the rivers of the area are rather polluted and often muddy. The climatic conditions as such demand water accumulations. Tourist potentials, concerning rural tourism, could be: lake Vrba near the village Donje Vlase and a military swimming pool "Vrežina" in Donja Vrežina<sup>3</sup>. Also, the riverbank of South Morava near villages Lalinac and Mramor is suitable for forming a beach. The beach near Mramor holds 5000 swimmers at the moment, and the villagers are interested in building a restaurant and sports facilities here. River Nišava forms a drainage ditch about 2 meters deep near the village Prosek, where water is still and suitable for swimming, and entertaining games on water are organized every summer, which could attract a number of tourists.

Concerning caves and natural rarities relevant to the development of rural tourism in this area, the following stand out: the cave of Cerje, caves and pits in Sićevo area, the canyon of Miljkovac, the canyon in Seličevica, gorges of Sićevo and Jelašnica, springs in Sićevo and Gornja Studena, Srećko's spring near Kamenica and Prozorac in ravine of Jelašnica.

It is important for tourism that these natural beauties are concentrated on the eastern border of the valley, favorably located around the Spa of Niš and Ravine of Sićevo, and also favorably located in regard to Niš, in a 10 to 25 kilometers radius. It is important to emphasize that these tourist attractions are located near important transit and regional roads.

Vegetation in the rural regions of Niš area is quite preserved, but it is necessary to afforest parts of the Sićevo Gorge, Čegar, and the tourist village Sićevo. Tourist potentials concerning fauna in the area have not been completely examined yet.

Fishing and hunting, which are thought to be an important component of tourism, are present in the area to a modest extent. In the interest of rural tourism, fishing and hunting possibilities could improve by increasing the number of hunting species, and also protecting and introducing new ones.

According to the Yugoslav Federation of Alpinism and Sport Mountain Climbing (ASF), the area of Niš represents the largest climbing place in Serbia and Montenegro with 40 alpinist and 40 sport mountain climbing directions. Two most - often - visited ravines are located here: Sićevo and Jelašnica.

#### THERMAL SPAS

There are two spas in the area of Niš: the Spa of Niš and Topilo Spa.

In the tourist offer of our country the Spa of Niš is long known by the amount of radioactive water and radioactive emanations, therapeutic and recreational potentials. Its geographical location is extremely favorable regarding that it is situated not only in the center of the area, but in the center of tourist movements

too. Although the quantity of radioactive stream places it among leading spas in Europe, its potentials have not been fully exploited yet. A poor interest of tourists is quite understandable regarding the fact that hardly anything has been invested there in the past few years, and that a tourist offer needs a modern and thought - through approach.

The Spa of Niš is predisposed to develop all kinds of tourism: sanatorium treatment as a primary and prior kind of tourism, excursions and resorts, transit tourism and residence

---

<sup>3</sup> Donja Vrežina, settlement that used to be a village, recently became a suburb, territorially merged with the city

and relaxing. Other kinds can also be developed to a small extent: sporting camps, conventions, conferences, seminars, etc.

#### AREA OF THE SIĆEVO GORGE

While studying the tourist construction and disposition of structures, it is necessary to deal with the entire area of the Sićevo Gorge, the size of 42 – 44 km<sup>2</sup> as a special tourist zone, in order to protect and build it as a national park in territorial and legal sense. This ravine has not fully been exploited yet. The road through the gorge should be widened and auto - stations should be made in places where attractive views appear. The village Sićevo is completely a part of this tourist zone and it should develop in order to accommodate and serve the tourists.

#### ATTRACTIVE SOCIAL ORIGIN FACTORS

Since the area of Niš is located at the crossroads where nations have traveled, all sorts of events have taken place and cultural influences have blended, it owns material and spiritual trails of different epochs. Many monuments have been damaged or destroyed due to transit character of the area, which was also crucial in forming area's entire appearance. In such a way the physiognomy of the area has been formed de facto by numerous influences of the old balkanic, oriental, Aegean - vardar, European and Mediterranean origin, in the city as well as in the country. This picturesque region stands out with its specialties and specifics that can become a unique tourist attraction of international character. Therefore, on the occasion of any future construction, legacy needs to be especially taken care of.

Many monuments from the past can be found in rural regions in the area of Niš, such as Neolithic localities Bujanj and Hum, the remains of the tower in Miljkovac, old church and monasteries which can be found in almost every village, old battlefields Čegar and Bujanj, as well as monuments from II world war and partisan battlefields.

The population of the area is of Serbian nationality, orthodox religion and is known by traditional hospitality. Unfortunately, general culture in tourism is still undeveloped, especially when it comes to an organized reception of tourists. That is considered to be the result of the lack of tourist experiences. The habit of organized engaging in tourism and receiving tourists by the natives exists only in the Spa of Niš, even though the population of other villages could also provide these services.

Among the attractions of economic origin following stand out: viticulture in Sićevo, Malča and Matejevac, truck farming of South Morava area, the industry of Niš, especially manufacturing of tobacco, attractive crafts and domestic handicrafts.

The international manifestations such as the Colony of Arts and Painting and the Colony of Literature in Sićevo, which take place every year in august, have tourist potentials regarding the attractive factors of cultural origin. The building of the Colony of Arts and of Literature is suitable for tourist lodging.

## TRAFFIC FACTORS

The area of Niš is located at the crossroads where transit domestic and international traffic goes by, which is considered to be an excellent prerequisite for the development of tourism in rural regions. Lines of communications towards Belgrade, Skopje and Dimitrovgrad are the backbone of highway and interregional traffic and can be considered for the development of transit tourism. Anyway, transit tourism is the leading challenging kind of tourism, with international as well as with domestic passengers, and is especially attractive for student excursions. Roads towards Kosmet and Negotinska Krajina are regional lines of tourist traffic and potential connections with interregional tourist traffic. These two road networks are a central system of tourist lines in the area. In order to retain tourists in this region, it is necessary to construct and modernize the connecting network of modern communication lines with accompanying buildings and infrastructure. Niš has an airport that has been greatly damaged in the 1999 bombing and has not been functioning since, but rebuilding is being planned and it should be over by June of 2003.

## HOTEL MANAGEMENT AND LODGING FACTORS

In view of the fact that transit tourism is the leading kind in this area, the network of hotel management and lodging is sadly lacking. Besides the middle class hotels, there is almost nothing else. There are no hotels of A category, nor motels or camps. Lodging capacities in rural regions are barely present: mountaineer's houses in Bojanine Vode, Seličevica, Ploče, and one private hotel "Lion" in Donja Vrežina. There is a ski - lane and a ski - lift in Bojanine Vode, but they are out of order. Also, the rural population does not have a habit of organized engaging in tourism, although the interest in receiving tourists exists in certain villages. Therefore, it is necessary to pay special attention to composition and professional training of employees in hotel management, culture of serving and processing the market.

## OTHER FACTORS

In the market conditions today it is considered to be a general rule that good advertising sells a product. Therefore, good tourist propaganda is required for tourist success. Rural regions in the area of Niš have tourist potentials, but they should be presented adequately and offered to the market. Available tourist organizations and agencies should include those rural regions in their tourist offer where natives are interested in receiving tourists, and where adequate requirements are met. Also, it is important to educate additionally by seminars all the existing personnel in all domains relevant to tourism - hotel management, traffic, commerce, crafts, services, gas stations, tourist organizations and agencies. General and local tourist regulations present an important requirement for the development of tourism. Tourist inspection should control whether these rules are being obeyed. Furthermore, it is necessary to form a tourist fund where means would be spent exclusively in tourist domain, for example for tourist propaganda.

The development of rural tourism requires the adoption of urbanist plans for rural settlements. While urbanist plans for towns were obligatory up until now, rural regions were

left in the margins of urbanism. Therefore the number of plans made for rural settlements is quite small, while suburb areas lost their form, physiognomy and ethnology by uncontrolled building of structures. The problem of losing ties between physical and spiritual coordinates while developing, is a problem of all villages and suburban settlements in the area of Niš, and needs to be especially looked after during further planning of tourist capacities.

### CONCLUSION

There are no significant forms of tourism in rural regions in the area of Niš. Residence and relaxing is estimated to be the most promising kind of tourism. The Spa of Niš, Sićevo and Prosek satisfy the requirements for transit tourism. Sanatorium treatment and conventions and conferences can be developed only in the Spa of Niš. Manifestations and festivals could develop to a small extent in Sićevo, thanks to the annual gathering of painters in the Colony of Arts and writers in the Colony of Literature. Excursions take place in ravines of Sićevo and Jelašnica, in Seličevica, Čegar, Bojanine Vode, Kamenički Vis, Ploče, as well as near the rivers Nišava and South Morava. Sport and recreation can successfully develop in the gorges of Sićevo and Jelašnica and in the Spa of Niš, because the Yugoslav Federation of Alpinism and Sport Mountain Climbing (ASF) organizes competitions here. Development of fishing and hunting is also possible to a smaller extent, in addition to leading kinds of tourism (see illustration 1).

In order to implement the perspective plan for the development of rural tourism, extensive measures and actions are required in the field of traffic, hotel management, commerce, crafts, tourist personnel, propaganda, tourist regulations and other tourist services. Many important issues need to be solved in the domain of communal economy - a great number of villages has problems with water - supply and waste waters. Also, there is a need for a planned and skilled solution to the problem of preserving landscapes, organizing parks and areas for sports and recreation, entertainment, residence etc. While designing and building new lodging capacities, a concept of "sustainable development" has to be taken into account, resulting in conservation of resources and building legacy, tradition and culture. In view of the fact that at the beginning of this century tourists aren't attracted to uniform villages, but to authentic rural areas that can provide the original tourist atmosphere for a longer stay, bringing up to date the development of individualizing of villages is necessary, while local traditions, virtues and specifics, or to be more precise the new rural tourist identity, needs to be especially pointed out. In favoring the rural culture in a totally new sense, we need to step into the civilization courses without any intrusion from any side, especially not the (Euro)urbanization that can ruin an already destined, historically found tourist - vital micro and macro meaning, and destruct or move the values of rural milieu.

If we were to approach the rural regions in the area of Niš more carefully, ideologically and practically, the positive effects of the development of rural tourism would be numerous: opening of new jobs, employment of labor, unburdening of certain centers and a better distribution of labor. It would lead to strengthening the economy potentials of the entire area, especially of villages - raising the living standards in rural regions, reducing daily and constant working migration from rural areas, reviving the abandoned rural communities, enabling larger and better concentration of funds in rural areas, developing new cultural, aesthetic, educative habits, etc.





## REFERENCES

1. Badovinac P., "Centralne urbane funkcije - centri", Arhitektonski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, Beograd, 1997.
2. Bajić-Brković M., "Održivost i grad", Arhitektonski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, Beograd, 1999.
3. "Bespravna izgradnja u gradovima Srbije" - Udruženje urbaNišta Srbije, Beograd, 1997.
4. Ćirić J., "Planiranje i turizam", Niš, 1966.
5. Ćirić J., "Perspektive razvoja turizma na Niškom turističkom području", Niš, 1963.
6. Ćirić J., "Turističke mogućnosti sreza Niš", Niš, 1963.
7. Kostić C., "Sociologija grada", Centar za analizu i projektovanje prostornih sistema - ISPU", Beograd, 1973.
8. "Planiranje i uređenje predela" - Udruženje urbanista Srbije, Beograd, 1996.
9. "Ruralni turizam i održivi razvoj Balkana" - Prvi forum Asocijacije Eksperata u Eko - Ruralnom Turizmu. Prirodno - matematički fakultet, Ekonomski fakultet, Zbornik radova, Kragujevac, 2001.
10. "Selo u promenama" - Stručno naučno savetovanje, Udruženje urbanista Srbije, Beograd, 2001.
11. "Selo u novim razvojnim uslovima" - Stručno naučno savetovanje, Udruženje urbanista Srbije, Beograd, 2003.
12. Stefanović D., "Urbanizacija, prilog istraživanju međuzavisnog razvoja stanovništva, delatnosti i životne sredine ljudi u savremenom svetu", Centar za analizu i projektovanje prostornih sistema ISPU, Beograd, 1973.
13. Stojkov B., "Plan i sudbina grada", "Građevinska knjiga", Beograd, 1992.
14. "Strategija razvoja naselja Srbije u novim uslovima", Udruženje urbanista Srbije, Beograd, 1998.

## TURISTIČKE MOGUĆNOSTI SELA NA PODRUČJU NIŠA

**Milena Dinić, Nikola Cekić**

*U ovom radu otvaraju se pitanja mogućnosti organizovanja turističkih kapaciteta u selima na području grada Niša. Pitanje je istovremeno aktuelno i složeno jer se otvara u trenutku kada turizam u ovim prostorima može postati evidentan privredni potencijal i prilika da se zaostatak sela u razvoju umanji a kvalitet življenja ljudi poboljša. Dakle mi smo pred mogućom malom rurbanom revolucijom, pred procesom u kome se naziru obrisi obnove sela na evropskim modelima.*

*U tom snažnom prepletu nama se može desiti prava prostorna graditeljska ali i kulturološka drama, neka vrsta socijalne kohezije, vrlo interesantno sudaranje sa urbanim tkivom koje je poodavno počelo signalizovati njegovo popuštanje, a i pucanje po mnogim šavovima. Pri utisku smo da se selom nismo dovoljno ozbiljno bavili i da se danas nalazimo na velikoj, istorijskoj, graditeljskoj prekretnici.*