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HOW TO DEVELOPE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN RURAL DESTINATIONS IN SERBIA

Abstract: The classical distinction between countries of tourist offer and countries of tourist demand has already been surpassed considering that many countries of tourist demand (USA, Germany, Great Britain ...) earn much more from tourism than the countries of tourist offer (Italy, Greece, Portugal ...). The changes in customers' behaviour are reflected through restructuring of tourist movements towards new destinations. What is essential in creating, promoting and marketing tourist destinations for the specific tourism forms development is the identification of all the positive and negative factors that influence the development of these destinations. Converting a potential into a tourist destination depends on many factors both in qualitative and in quantitative sense. Discovering an area of preserved environment that also possesses attractive motifs presents the beginning of the possible tourist destination creating. Further 'destiny' of a tourist destination depends on its planning and development intensity. Rural tourism is a significant component of integral and sustainable development and revitalization of the village, as well as a component that is missing in stimulating the local market development for agricultural and non-agricultural activities in the country, along with a special stimulation to employment. Serbia possesses remarkable natural resources and other potentials for the development of all forms of rural tourism. However, rural tourism in Serbia is an insufficiently organized field that is not being developed adequately to the possibilities available to it. That is why this paper wants to point out the potential opportunities for the development of rural tourism in Serbia through sustainable development and correct performance policy on both national and international tourist market.

Keywords: sustainable development, rural tourism, destination, resources, TQM

Садржај: Комплексност туризма и туристичких потреба светског становништва утиче ма промену туристичке тражње. Захтеви за новим и специфичним облицима туризма су карактеристика развоја ове делатности на крају XX и почетку XXI века. Нови облици туризма се све више траже на туристичком тржишту. То даје шансу руралним подручјима да се равноправно укључе са својом туристичком понудом уколико поседују одређене потенцијале и адекватне кадрове који могу да укључе те потенцијале на туристичко тржиште.

Класична подела на земље туристичке понуде и земље туристичке тражње је већ превазиђена с обзиром да многе земље туристичке тражње (САД, Немачка, Велика Британија) зарађују од туризма много више него земље туристичке понуде (Италија, Грчка, Португал ...). Промене настају и у понашању потрошача и огледају се кроз реструктурирање туристичких кретања према новим дестинацијама. Оно што је врло битно за стварање, промоцију и пласман туристичких дестинација за развој специфичних облика туризма је препознавање свих позитивних и негативних утицаја и фактора за развој ових дестинација. У зависности од планирања и интензитета развоја туристичке дестинације зависи и њена даља 'судбина'. Рурални туризам је значајна компонента интегралног и одрживог развоја и ревитализације села, као и компонента која недостаје у подстицању развоја локалног тржишта за пољопривредне и непољопривредне делатности на селу, као и посебан подстицај запошљавању.

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Србија има изузетне природне ресурсе и друге потенцијале за развој свих облика руралног туризма. Рурални туризам у Србији је, међутим, недовољно организована делатност која се не одвија адекватно могућностима којима располаже. Због тога се кроз овај рад жели да укаже на потенцијалне могућности развоја руралног туризма у Србији кроз одрживи развој и правилну политику наступа како на домаћем тако и на иностраном туристичком тржишту.

Кључне речи: одрживи развој, рурални туризам, дестинација, ресурси, TQM,

During their travel, tourists want to enjoy and meet local community, population, cultural-historic monuments, folklore, gastronomy... Numerous resources for tourism development, especially rural tourism, are at disposal in our country. Today's tourism assumes its sustainable development in one destination, region, country... namely global tourism development through sustainable development.

The complexity of tourism and tourist needs of the world's population influences the change in tourist demand. The requirements for new and specific tourism forms are the features of this field development at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. The new forms of tourism are in a greater and greater demand on the tourist market. Thus, **rural regions are given the chance** to be included with their tourist offer provided they have certain potentials and appropriate personnel that can include these potentials in the tourist market.

Rural tourism as a specific form of tourism

Rural tourism can be defined not only conceptually, as a state of mind, but also technically, in relation to the activities, destinations and other measurable and tangible features. In compliance with this, it can be said that it is an alternative to mass market tourism due to the fact that it attracts tourist segments interested in culture and the environment. The product of rural tourism is connected with natural and environmental issues, which makes the basic resource of a rural tourism destination.

The phenomenon of rural tourism has been realised through the tourist need to become acquainted with customs and habits of other authentic cultures that can be best perceived in rural entreties. Rural tourism has different manifestation aspects:

- *Social* – the contact of urban and rural population;
- *Ecological* – awareness heightening of ecological and natural issues :
- *Economic* – the income generating possibility for country population.

Rural tourism as a specific form of tourist trends simultaneously unites recreational and cultural function. A traditional village is based on a specific socio-economic organization. This organization is founded on patriarchal way of life. Unfortunately, this way of life is beginning to give way its place to modern life, which destroys a traditional village. On the other hand, a tourist village, where tourists go during holidays, weekends and vacations to return temporarily to a natural way of life, »is emerging« (Štetić, S. 2003) . Its visitors are most often the inhabitants of big cities, who want to experience a completely new life, different from the usual daily grind. This type of village is becoming an everyday fact in the developed Europe.

The significance of rural tourism development is doubtless. That is why development elements and their impact on changes in the development of the whole region are being studied. Especially because the significance of this tourism is exceptional, which is reflected in:

- widening tourism development bases and increasing income generating;

- adding value to continental parts by including them in a tourist offer;
- making foundations to widen a real circle of tourist demand, especially with those segments that have a slightly lower income, or with those that have an exceptionally high income and are searching for something new and original to solve their tourist needs,
- developing under-developed regions by including them in a tourist offer;
- employing a greater number of the members of households offering services to tourists that stay at the hosts;
- finding market for home-made product surplus in a village household (agricultural products, meat, milk, fruit, vegetable...),
- marketing the products of folk arts and crafts (embroidery, knitting, carving, national costumes, artistic objects of naive artists...), along with preserving the customs and reestablishing the old, forgotten crafts,
- creating possibility for the population to come back into a part of abandoned villages and households and their revitalisation...

Studying rural tourism in the developed countries, primarily in the countries of tourist demand (Austria, Italy, Germany, Great Britain...) we learn that rural tourism is accepted here as *a part of a tourist fashion and need, so that it is also being conducted as a tourist policy.*

Sustainable tourism

Today the most serious warnings to the world public come from biologists and meteorologists, who claim that the number of extinct plant and animal species is extremely large in this century, and that noticed climate changes lead to aggravation in the particular regions as well as in the whole world.

Extremely unfavourable prognoses for the world's future have created new development objectives in market economies, where once an unimaginable concept of a „sustainable development“ appeared, which implies a certain level of orientation and limitation along with the responsibility to act preventively, to minimize negative development effects and to direct international cooperation.

The outgoing development of tourism worldwide has convinced us that the basic element of its development is space within both national and international frameworks. The quality of the space and its facilities are the most important motivation for tourist movements and types of tourism that are being developed within these frameworks.

Nowadays a special form of tourist demand is very explicit, which finds itself in natural surrounding. Through mass tourism development we face a series of benefits and issues that must be solved and surpassed, aimed at further tourism development. The search for „a sustainable level of interaction between nature and man, nature and tourism, as well as man and tourism“ should be a guideline in tourism development planning with the function to preserve the environment and to satisfy tourist needs.

In order to explore a space as a „framework“ and to provide guidelines for a quality „stage“ in creation and implementation of a tourist product, we must bear in mind basic concepts and changes in the world's tourist trends so that we could influence on:

- the approaching changes in diversification of the world's tourist movements;
- the changes in tourist demand and drastic decrease of „basic tourist product“ price;
- the increasing need to visit a preserved natural environment;
- striking a balance between mass and „sustainable“ tourism.

In a constant search for new and exotic destinations, nowadays tourists can also afford travels once reserved only for the very wealthy.

The motivation of going into nature is exceptionally expressed while considering the tourist demand type and discovering segments of tourists interested in visits to preserved natural environment. Thus, we can talk about four types of tourist demand depending on the quality of area and the obtained tourist development (Lindberg, 1991):

- “*Hard core tourists*” – the nature users in its basic (raw) form.
- “*Nature users*” – this is the population that travels purposefully towards parts of protected nature (national parks, jungles, nature reserves...), which they research and enjoy.
- “*Leading nature users*” (leaders) – they visit the preserved natural environment with the aim to travel into the unknown and unusual.
- “*Average nature users*” – the aims of their travel are not primarily the objects of protected nature, but they are a part of the present travel or an option on the occasion of their stay in a tourist place.

The tourism development sustainability means giving a new sense to life through the directed development of economy and technology as aspects of man’s rational practice. That means drafting a new vision of economy, technology, culture, politics, tourism... namely a new vision of the entire way of life and work. Sustainable tourism development must be sustainable: economically, ecologically, culturally and politically.

The tourism development potentials are revealed all over the world. The tourism development opportunities and their economic effects in some regions have a great influence on including a large number of new tourist destinations in the world’s tourist market.

The policy of tourism development, in tourist as well as in potential regions, presents a great dilemma for all those who deal with planning and directing the entire development of these regions (Grčić LJ., Grčić M. 2006). The occurrence of conflict regarding priorities is present everywhere, which causes an exceptional mobility in considering the “pros” and “cons” of the development elements for different forms of tourism in some destinations (Štetić, S 2001).

The conflict situations in the field of protected nature are between the tourism development and protected environment, which can be overcome to a certain extent through locality positioning and development directing of single parts (if this is possible).

Starting from all economic and non-economic tourism effects and mass tourism development, it points out that most countries have joined mass development tourism. Studying world tourist trends and research of their influence on the development of some countries, tourism economic effects are most frequently and primarily spoken about. However, different types of tourism have different effects that must be taken into consideration.

Sustainable tourism development in rural areas

Today the most attractive tourist destinations are those which have preserved physical-geographic environment, protected nature and anthropogenesis tourist motifs that attract tourists. Those destinations that do not have opportunities to offer such a tourist product are faced with a decreasing number of tourists, and thus with other negative effects reflecting in smaller foreign currency inflow, employment decrease. Sustainable

development implies three main principles, which are: ecological, socio-cultural and economic.

1. *Ecological principle* implies such tourist development that does not oppose ecological processes and biological development of an area.

2. *Socio-cultural principle* points out increasing participation of local community and local population in decision-making and development planning. This principle is compatible with making efforts to sustain and develop the region.

3. *Economic principle* represents investing into proper region development with the aim to manage and create bases for the survival of future generations.

Different regions possess potentials for the development of different aspects of tourism: eco-tourism, rural, urban, ethnic, nostalgic, religious, adventurous, transit, congress..(Todorović M., Bjeljic Ž. 2006). Since the field of our research is rural tourism, we will consider those demand and supply segments that refer to the type of tourist movement directed to these regions.

1. "Special interest" tourism is in a rapid expansion in the world. Trekking, mountaineering, rafting, sailing, hunting and fishing are popular these days. The participants of these movements do not insist on luxury, but they need specific services, extremely qualitative and trained guides, as well as safety while staying in a particular region.

2. Rural tourism does not require capital investments in its development , but must be planned and programmed very carefully to stay within the growth limit.

3. Eco-tourism has been developing most rapidly in recent years. It deals with nature-lovers who want to learn as much as possible about the environment and its ecology and culture.

Today different aspects of tourism are being developed in different parts of the world. What is important for the countries that plan to develop sustainable tourism is protection and planned development of tourism.

Providing that rural tourism becomes a part of life and development policy of some destination, region or country as a whole, the following must be taken into consideration:

- The significance of preserved nature for the rural region development,
- The significance of area authenticity for rural tourism development,
- The significance of local population for rural destination organization, presentation and development,
- The participation of local community in tourist destination development policy represents the essential driving force,
- Tourists are the extremely suitable segment for education about the significance of rural tourism development and natural environment protection,
- Rural tourism contributes to preservation and organization of a destination provided that local population is involved in its development according to plan,
- The need for cooperation between conservationists and tour operators in natural resources promoting and adding value to rural destinations.

Tourists must be acquainted with and informed about local environment, customs, culture, behavior, manners with the local inhabitants as well as about everyday life in different ways. Also, they must be informed about all positive and negative manifestations in the life of local inhabitants, so that they would not put themselves in danger or endanger

somebody else. The countries which want to strike a balance of their development aimed at further tourism development, make exceptional efforts for sustainable tourism development.

Sustainable tourism development in rural regions conditions the usage of tourist facilities, so that they are not destroyed in a way that future generations cannot use them. That is why certain measures aimed at sustainable tourism development must be taken.

The creation of a new tourist destination

Discovering potential tourist destinations represented a challenge for many explorers and 'hard-core' tourists. Owing to them, we have found out about new areas. New destinations are not only a challenge but also a need for further tourism development... They are opportunities for tourist offer enrichment, and its inclusion in the world's tourist trends.

- Tourists want new areas... Tour operators want new consumers...
- Tourists are longing for new adventures... Tour operators are longing for new means...

These wishes come true here, in a newly-discovered destination... through a new form of tourist movements. However, it is very often forgotten that people live there, people with their specific needs and wishes, which frequently do not coincide with the wishes and needs of tourists and tour operators. The relation between local community development and tourist destination development is a very delicate issue that requires special attention, especially today, when tourist movements assume extremely large variety and the creation of specific tourism.

The main directions of tourist destinations development and their involvement through specific tourism implementation can be observed in different ways. We will single out some of them:

- Their conditioning with the type, quantity and quality of the existing resources;
- Their conditioning with tourist-geographic location;
- Their conditioning with the trends on the world's tourist market;
- Their conditioning with tourist demand;
- Their conditioning with the existing level of tourist offer.

New tourist destinations, wishing to be competitive on the tourist market, often have considerably lower prices, which attracts a larger number of tourists. However, it is questionable if this is the right and the only way towards the world's tourist market.

The countries of Eastern Europe, North Africa, Middle East and China are on this way. They invest a lot in tourism development, often neglecting sustainable development and its principles. It can negatively reflect on the area as a whole, especially within the framework of tourist destinations.

Serbia – land of nature

On the territory of our country different geographic regions of Europe adjoin: the Mediterranean, Pannonian plain, the Balkans and Rodopi-Sara region. It has good traffic connections with all the countries of the Middle and Western Europe, and through Pannonian plain a natural link with all the continent is established. An important natural junction of international roads that presents a natural bridge between Europe and Asia and between Europe and Africa is situated on its territory.

The dominance of geo-morphologic tourist motifs in Serbia is caused by the mountainous character of its relief. Thus, there are numerous mountains, gorges, caves and other forms of relief. The greatest tourist value are mountains, so that special attention is paid to their protection. Also, the greatest number of villages is located in his scenery, which represents an exceptional basis for rural tourism development.

Since a great part of our country is under karst, specific forms of relief interesting for tourist addition of value occur here. The most interesting are speleological objects, first of all caves. There are nearly 500 in Serbia.

The canyons are a special attraction in the tourist offer of our country. The Tara has carved the greatest canyon valley in Europe 78km long and 1300m deep. Đerdap is the biggest penetration in Europe and the longest gorge here (100km). It is made of several gorges.

Hydrologic tourist motifs of Serbia reflect in myriad rivers (the Danube, the Sava, the Velika Morava, the Kolubara, the Ibar...), lakes and thermo-mineral springs.

Serbia is a land of thermo-mineral springs, especially its eastern part. The greatest number of these waters emerges on split lines. The warmth of the water depends on the depth of the spring. Extremely warm water have: Vranjska Spa (92 °C), Josanicka Spa (78 °C), Sijarinska Spa (71 °C). Depending on the riches of minerals in the water, i.e. its physical-chemical composition, they are: iron waters (Koviljaca, Vranjska, Josanicka Spa...), iodine water (Novi Sad, Becej), Niska Spa (radio-active water and gases) and Sokobanja (radio-active water and mud), sulphurous water...

On its territory even in Roman time numerous springs were caught, and a large number of spas was founded at that time (Niška spa, Gamzigrad). There is a lot to be said about the significance of thermo-mineral springs and spas. Spas are predominantly located in rural areas, so that they are surrounded by unpolluted nature and picturesque villages, which also provides a stimulus for rural tourism development.

The lakes in our country are not numerous, but they are heterogeneous in their origin as well as in their natural characteristics. Pollution most often comes from the excessive and unplanned building of weekend cottages, shore-part covering, and unplanned water usage (Stanković, S.2002).

Rural settlements in serbia

Current condition of tourism development in Serbian villages is a consequence of tourism development in our country so far, which neglected involving continental parts in tourist offer of Yugoslavia. It also influenced exceptional concentration of capacities and tourism turnover in maritime parts, while tourist capacities of continental parts were ignored. Such a tourism development policy also influenced the complete lack of future planning of tourism development in continental parts of the country.

About 43% of the total population, namely 42% of households, live in rural areas of Serbia that cover about 90% of its territory. Besides, these areas are rich in flora and fauna (428 protected animal and 215 protected plant species) and 1300 protected natural objects (5 national parks, 22 regional parks, 122 nature reserves, 375 natural monuments...)

In order to involve rural areas into tourist offer, certain prerequisites are needed. It does not only involve the space equipment and facilities, but first of all, population preparedness to receive guests. Providing that village inhabitants want to be included as a part of tourist economy, then its members should have **the wish, capability and opportunity** to offer a qualitative service and to meet the expectations of their guests who are staying in rural households.

Bearing that in mind, we know that the potentials for rural tourism development are only **possibilities**, which cannot be offered to tourist market without real forming. The basis

for the performance, on the national as well as on the international market is an adequate tourist product of a rural area.

The main creators, animators and conductors of rural area tourist offer are **people**. In this case, they are members of village households, people who offer services in rural areas, as well as conductors of tourist movements towards these (and in these) areas. It means all those who offer their products and their services connected with the tourist product of rural tourism.

Considering tourist movements in European frameworks, it can be said that the movements towards rural regions are exceptionally present. A research carried out on the market of Great Britain points out that 25% of European tourists tend towards staying in these regions. In the mid-nineties of the last century, an increased movements towards rural regions was noticed after studying shorter travels of European population.

Selective forms of tourism require specific spaces... services... products... in a word **a specific tourist destination**. The strategy of positioning a tourist destination for these forms of tourist movements must start from the fact that competition is very strong, and tourist needs very heterogenous. The areas in rural Serbia undoubtedly possess a part of the quality necessary for creating a rural tourism product. However, there is a lot that should be done to turn these destinations from potential into real destinations of rural tourism. That is why some of the destinations that can boast of a specific and unique offer competitive on the international tourist market are mentioned here.

- **Vojvodina** abounds in rural motifs that can be included in tourist movements: Fruska Gora (the national park) with an abundance of natural (protected flora and fauna, vineyard area, spa springs...) and anthropogenous motifs (monasteries); Protected areas (the Stari Begej-Carska bara, Deliblato Sands), Rural settlements and granges
- **Eastern Serbia** due to its natural-geographic characteristics has great opportunities for rural tourism development: The Djerdap National Park (the Iron Gates), Hydrologic motifs (the Danube, the Timok, the Pek...) Djerdap lake, Numerous caves, Mountain massifs, Authentic village settlements, Timok brasseries
- **Western Serbia** is a mountainous area **with** authentic mountainous villages where it seems that time has stopped. Houses and private plots show us the customs and the way of life and work. In the silence surrounded by nature and an abundance of hospitality, there is a part of Serbia where rural tourism finds its place.
- **Central Serbia** with its hilly-mountainous space, an abundance of thermo-mineral springs, villages surrounded by meadows and grasslands, is the heart of Serbia. Hidden from the sight, medieval monasteries rest there, recounting the history of the Serbian people and their centuries-old struggle for freedom... Being destroyed and desecrated through ages, even today they display all the beauties of the medieval architecture and art in Serbia... Within easy reach of these stupendous monuments there are gentle villages with a host's soul...
- **Southern Serbia**, at the crossroads towards Asia and Africa, seems as if it has hidden its beauties from an unexpected guest. As if even now it prepares to get through new crusades and devastations. This is where the very heart of Serbia, built by the Nemanjic dynasty, is situated (Studenica, Sopotani, Zica...), in the medieval monasteries that preserved the traces of history, our culture and literacy. Exactly here where Serbian culture and literacy originated, there are villages basked in the sun

with doors always open to guests...

The tourist offer of rural tourism has its own unique values, which should be used. The specific tourist product of these destinations must emphasize the authenticity, uniqueness, role of the local factor... Thus, a tourist offer for this segment of tourist demand must be explored and studied, and a tourist product must be given a meaning according to the requests of specific customers. Only then we will be able to offer the largest part of these areas in Serbia to international tourists. Maybe it is good enough not to have so many visitors. This was the reason why these regions are still preserved and the nature untouched, as if they are being stored away for some other time.

Serbia is a land of nature, people, culture, customs... a country with a heart of gold. Its natural and cultural potentials, as well as human resources are a priceless treasure which should be met. That is why the author of this paper has tried to describe only a part of what is available in rural areas of Serbia.

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КАКО РАЗВИТИ ОДРЖИВИ РУРАЛНИ ТУРИЗАМ У СРБИЈИ

Поједини аутори истичу да се сеоски туризам може дефинисати концептуално, као стање свести, али и технички, у односу на активности, дестинације и остале мерљиве и опиљиве карактеристике. У складу са тим може се рећи да је он алтернатива масовном тржишном туризму због чињенице да привлачи сегменте туриста који су заинтересовани за културу и животну средину. Производ сеоског туризма је у вези са природом и вредностима животне средине, што чини основни ресурс туристичке дестинације руралног туризма.

Тренутно стање развоја туризма на селу у Србији је последица досадашњег развоја туризма у нашој земљи која је занемаривала укључивање континенталних делова у туристичку понуду Југославије. То је утицало и на изузетну концентрацију капацитета и туристичког промета у приморским деловима, док су туристички потенцијали континенталних делова били запостављени. Оваква политика развоја туризма утицала је и на потпуно одсуство планирања будућег развоја туризма континенталних делова земље.

Селективни и облици туризма захтевају специфичне просторе... услуге... производе... једном речју *специфичну туристичку дестинацију*. Стратегија позиционирања туристичке дестинације за ове облике туристичких кретања мора поћи од чињеница да је конкуренција јака а туристичке потребе врло хетерогене. Простори руралне Србије несумњиво поседују део квалитета неопходних за стварање туристичког производа руралног туризма. Међутим, постоји много тога што се треба урадити како би ове дестинације од потенцијалних постале реалне туристичке дестинације руралног туризма.

Концепт одрживог развоја може постати основа развоја туризма у једној земљи, уколико његова начела буду укључена у процес стратегијског планирања развоја туризма и уколико се овај концепт постави и као један од стратегијских циљева развоја. Осим економских, схвата се и значај други циљева туристичког развоја, као што су социјални, културни, психолошки, политички, и нарочито – еколошки.

Туристичка понуда руралног туризма има своје уникатне вредности које треба искористити. Специфичан туристички производ ових дестинација мора нагласити аутентичност, уникатност, улогу локалног фактора... Због тога, туристичка понуда за овај сегмент туристичке тражње мора бити истражен и проучен, а туристички производ осмишљен према захтевима специфичних купаца ... Тек онда ћемо моћи највећи део ових простора Србије понудити иностраним туристима. Можда је то и добро што нема много посетилаца. То и јесте био разлог што су ова подручја још увек очувана а природа нетакнута, као да се чува за нека нова времена.