

STATE AND PROSPECTS OF SPA TOURISM IN SERBIA

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Abstract: *In contrast to the area of high contamination, there are places with rooms as the ideal place for a polluted environment and recreational needs, which include spa town. Such places are numerous and various natural elements having significant health and fitness functions (thermo sources, noble gases, mud, favorable climatic conditions, rich vegetation, etc.). Which attract attention many tourist demand. Serbia, popularly called "state spa", and this epithet was given due to the number of thermal springs, long tradition and the importance of the tourist traffic. Although Serbia has a large number of thermal and mineral springs, official statistics record tourist traffic only about 30 spas, which account for about 95% of spa tourism gprometa our country. The subject of this paper refers to the assessment of the situation and perspectives of spa tourism in Serbia. Special attention is devoted to analysis of resources for spa tourism, discussion of key factors for tourist valorization of Serbia determining the structural characteristics of spa tourism, compared the experiences and results of tourist valorization of Serbia with contemporary trends in certain spa resorts in Europe, as well as defining the most important tasks improvement of spa tourism in Serbia.*

Keywords: spa, tourism, development, perspective, Serbia

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a fast growing industry in the world, and in Serbia and a great development opportunity. Spa tourism has a special role here (Novakovic - Kostic, R., 2015). Examining the situation and identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats has an important role in proper forecasting future growth and development of spa tourism (Djuricic, R., 2015).

This paper details will be trained existing spas in Serbia, their characteristics from the standpoint of spa tourism and prospects for sustainable development.

2. SPAS IN SERBIA

Spas are characterized by a great health and fitness functions, due to the natural resources of different elements (thermo, plemenitigasovi, mud, climatic conditions, vegetation), due to which this kind of places attention of ample tourist demand. Serbia, popularly called "state spa" because of the number of thermo-mineral springs, long tradition and general familiarity spas, as well as their importance in the tourist traffic. In Serbia registered about 300 mineral, or thermal mineral water (Stankovic, S., 2000.). However, the significantly higher number of unregistered, individual sources less or greater yields, which should be protected and determine its mineral composition. The richness and diversity, but also arrangement and chemical composition of the thermal mineral water in Serbia, is related to the "relations tectonic complex" (numerous and intertwined fissure lines) and a variety of geological composition of the field, including a wide distribution of igneous rocks.

The two main geographical areas in which they are concentrated thermo-mineral springs Serbia, and spas as places that are being developed in addition to these sources, include:

♦ **watershed of the West:** Ovčar Banja GornjaTrepca, Mataruska Banja, Vrnjačka Banja, Banja Banja, Banja Jošanička, Novopazarska Banja, Banja Rajčinovačkaetc .;

♦ **basin of South Morava:** Niska Banja, Sokobanja, Kuršumlijska Banja, Prolom Banja, Banja BanjaVranjska Banja, Fruska Gora, StaraPlanina and the like. Kosovo and Metohija is also very rich in thermal mineral springs (Pecka Banja, Banjska, Klokot Banja).

Vojvodina is characterized by a small number of mineral springs and baths (some still being formed), very dispersed deployment, and not properly equipped for the development of tourist and health resort functions. The largest number of thermal mineral springs in Vojvodina was discovered during drilling for oil and water to drink. **The major tourist importance are the following spas:**Kanjiža in the north of Backa, Han iStariSlankamen in the area of Fruska Gora, and Rusanda in Banat near Zrenjanin.

Outside of these areas, from the famous spa should mention Koviljaču near Loznica, Banja Bukovička below Bukulje, Gamzigrad near Zajecar and Brestovac Banja near Bor.

J. Markovic. (1987) on the territory of our country singled out the following spa zone:

1. Šumadijska: Mladenovačkaselters, BukovičkaPalanački Banja and Kiseljak;
2. Western-moravska: slani, upper TrepčaMataruška, BogutovačkaVrnjačka and Spa;
3. Kopaonik-Jastrebačka: Jošanička, Fishing, Banja, Kursumlija and Prolom Banja;
4. Novi Pazar-pribojska: Fruska Gora, PriličkiKiseljak, Novopazarska Banja, Banja Rajčinovačka;
5. South-Moravian: Banja and Vranjska Banja;
6. Eastern Serbia: Sokobanja, Brestovačka, Banja, Banja and Niska Banja;
7. Western Serbian: Koviljaca Spa and Tara;
8. Vojvodina: Kanjiža, Banja Junaković, Rusanda, Han and Slankamen;
9. Kosovo: Ilidža and Klokot.

Of physical-chemical properties of thermo-mineral water, the temperature is the most important, the first because of the application according to the spa water to the medical, but also for other purposes (early cultivation of vegetables and flowers). The largest number of thermal mineral sources in Serbia belongs to the group of hypo (20-34C), or a 20-well-known features and spas sources which puts them on a homeothermic (34-38C), and in and hyperthermia (over 38C). The water temperature is not a critical factor in the development of the spa, we show examples of Vranje (90-92C) and Josanicka (62-78C) Spa as underdeveloped, while the more developed baths with lower water temperature (Vrnjačka Banja, Soko, Koviljaca). In some spas and water needs to be heated to be applied for therapeutic purposes. Mineral water with temperatures below 20C are referred to as cold mineral water. These water containing carbon dioxide, and have a pleasant refreshing flavor, and bottled to use the beverage (also known as stone water).

According to the temperature of water, heat and mineral sources in spas in Serbia can be divided into 4 groups (Jovičić, 2002):

1. Cold mineral water in: Bukovička Spa, provincial KiseljakMladenovačka Banja, Vrnjačka Banja, Klokot Spa, etc .;
2. hypothermal water in: Sokobanja, Bukovička, Koviljača, Zvonačka bath, spa KlokotObrenovac and Spa;
3. homeothermal water in: Niska Banja, Ovčar Banja, Brestovac Spa, Lukovska Banja Pribojska Banja and Banja Koviljaca;
4. hyperthermal water in: Gamzigrad, Brestovac, Kuršumlijska, Novopazarskoj, Sijarinska, Jošanička and Vranje Spa.

In terms of the mineral composition, the largest number of sources well-known spas in Serbia belongs to sulfur (sulfur-containing hydrogen), or an alkali, and water (containing sodium carbonate). Typical representatives of sulfuric water are: Banja Koviljača, Mataruska Banja, Banja Ribarska, Kuršumlijska Banja, Vrnjačka Banja; while alkaline water occurs in the following spas: Bukovička, Sijarinska and Bogutovačka Banja Kanjiža and Klokot. It should be noted that each mineral source has its own specific characteristics, which derive from the specifics of the chemical and physical so that the mineral water differ from each other when they belong to the same category. However, the mineral composition of the water can be, but is usually not a critical factor in the development, because it depends on a number of other natural and anthropogenic factors. One of the basic balneological properties of thermo-mineral springs, their medical treatment function. Thanks to medical effect, created a tradition of spa treatment, formed a specific ambiances could talk about the particular type of action to these places. Serbian spas were known in Roman times, frequented in the Middle Ages, but we would say that is still ahead of their period of intensive development.

The new period of development began with the construction of specialized medical institutions for various types of diseases in some spas (Vrnjačka, Sokobanja, Niska, etc.), As well as reconstruction and construction of new hotels.

3. GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION – A KEY ELEMENT FOR TOURIST VALORIZATION

The geographical position is in relation to other geographic features, the most influence on the differences in the tourist resort traffic, and therefore it deserves a key element of the treatment of tourist valorization places mentioned. In reviewing and evaluating geographical location spas, the greatest importance must be given to the relationship mentioned cities: major roads, then attractive tourist motifs, as well as populated areas. Position spa to the major lines of communication is one of the most important elements of tourist valorization spas, bearing in mind that the communicative directions of both directions of tourist movements. In this respect, the most favorable position with spas lying on international roads in the valleys and the Great South Morava.

As is known, the valleys of the river passing the road and railway communications to the pan-European Corridor 10, which binds to Central and Western Europe with south-east of the continent our and further to the Middle East. At the same time this is a tourist route that leads to the eastern Mediterranean, or the shores of the Aegean, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. This route has a favorable position Niska Banja, which lies near the town of Nis, as one of the 3 most important crossroads in our country. Favorable position towards this direction has Vranjska Banja, while other spas in the South Morava basin considerably farther. A significant factor in the future tourist traffic spas activation of this part of Serbia will surely be the airport in Nis, which will contribute to better communication skills of the area. The

second important communicative direction in Serbia leads through the valley of the Ibar River and through Kosovo and Metohijato Skopje and further towards the south. This direction can be treated as a variant of the international road through the valley of the Morava. Advantages Ibar direction are reflected in the fact that it has a central location and which intersects, in the physical and the geographical and cultural and geographical terms, are very different and attractive tourist facilities: Šumadiju, valley Ibar, Kosovo and Macedonia. The most favorable position in the direction of the Ibar have Mataruska Banja Gornja Treпча and Banjska, then Bogutovačka and Jošanička Banja. The third character is a communicative route which leads the Western Morava valley and has the shape of transversal direction crossing the longitudinal direction 3 (Moravski, Ibar and Zlatiborski). The most favorable position in relation to the West-Moravian corridor have Vrnjačka Banja and Shepherd. Given that all three communicative direction play an important role tourism can be said that of all the spas in Serbia, favorable traffic-travel position are low, and Mataruška Vranjska Banja, a little less convenient and Shepherd Vrnjačka Banja. Belgrade as the largest city and Vojvodina characterized by dense population, are the two most powerful emissive areas of tourism demand in Serbia. This is based on their function and the cultural and economic characteristics of the population. In addition, the area of central Serbia, also has the characteristics of a strong tourist dispersive: it is the urban settlements which lie within a radius of 40 to 50km: Kragujevac, Cacak, Kraljevo, Krusevac, Paracin, Jagodina, Čuprija. Somewhat weaker dispersive travel, but it should be noted that both Nis to Leskovac, Prokuplje and Aleksinac and Bor with Zajecar, Negotin and Knjazevac. Bearing in mind such division emissive tourist areas, it can be concluded that the western-moravsko spa area has a favorable position, it is understandable that this area is absorbed over 50% of the turnover in the spa tourism Serbia (Jovičić Z, 2002). In this area the most favorable position with Vrnjacka, Mataruska Banja and Shepherd. The spa area of South Morava most favorable position and have Banja Niska Banja, then Kuršumlijska and Children. In addition, Koviljača and Bukovička Spa also have a favorable position in relation to urban areas as a tourist dispersancy. Urban settlements, cultural and historical monuments are important tourist attractions of Serbia, especially when it comes to foreign clientele. Close to major urban areas is of double importance for spas that are dispersive domestic as well as centers of international tourism trends. In this sense, the best positions are low and Vrnjačka Banja, then Mataruška, Shepherd, and Bukovička Vranjska Banja. When it comes to monuments as tourist motifs are in great benefits of spas, which are located in the town of Kraljevo, given that this is an area that is rightly called a cultural treasure of Serbia. There are Studenica, Žiža, Sopoćani, Ljubostinja and other monumental value that can be successfully integrated with a range of spa resorts in this part of Serbia (Mataruska, Vrnjacka, Shepherd, Bogutovačka and Jošanička Banja), whose participation in spas nights of our country is about 50 %. Given that the mountains form an important natural of resources for tourism, proximity of Kopaonik, Sara and Prokletija favors Jošanička Kosovo and spas. Be sure that other well-established tourist mountain enhancing the attractiveness of their spa in the foothills of Ozren (Dimitrovgrad), Goc (Vrnjačka Banja), Jastrebac (Ribarska Banja) and Bukulja (Bukovička Banja). It should be noted that the proximity, or position on rivers give preference to certain spas: Mataruškoj Spa (Ibar), SPA (FK), slani (West Morava), Niškoj Spa (Nišava) and so on.

On the basis of the overall analysis tourist and geographical position of spas in Serbia, it is possible to allocate 3 group Spa (Jovičić Z., 2002):

- First group: spas of the busiest situation (low and Mataruška Han);
- The second group: the spa near the important communication (Shepherd, Vrnjacka, Banja, Banja, a spa and Jošanička Banja);
- The third group: the spa near other tourist motifs (Sokobanja, Koviljača, Bukovička, Pec, Novi Pazar, Rajčinovačka and Klokot Banja).

Because recreation, especially health resort functions that can be performed throughout the year, tourism in spas should not have pronounced seasonal feature, although in this case should not be neglected factor in climate that affect the general tourist mobility, including attendance at spas. If some banja greater emphasis in its development puts the recreational tourist function, it is expected that tourist traffic has slightly more pronounced seasonal memorial, which stands out at spas that are located near urban centers (excursion tourism). However, in terms of medical treatment function well equipped spa medical facilities and services can be successfully developed throughout the year. However, the aforementioned structural characteristics of spa tourism does not apply in the case of Serbia, because in our spas sezoničnost very strong tourist traffic.

The high season in spas in Serbia related to the period from June to September, because then realizes approximately 55% B and 45% of tourist arrivals. Accentuated seasonal nature of spa tourism in Serbia is a result of its one-sidedness, neorganizovanosti market performance and the backwardness of the offer, because the dominant feature of the spa bath mainly due to lack of equipment associated with the summer half of the year. Nekompletiranost tourist offer, as well as many marked differences in the ability to communicate geographical position, had a different impact on seasonal fluctuations in tourist traffic in some spas. In this respect, we can distinguish three groups of spas.

• **I group** consists of spas that most of the turnover achieved in the summer half of the year, and include: Bogutovačka, Brestovačka, Banja, Banja and Banja Rajčinovačka. These are baths with less capacity, offer incomplete and less tourist traffic, which is characterized by greater distance from major tourist dispersive our country. This group accounts for spas only 5-6% Utotal number of spa stays in Serbia.

• **group II** of spas, which have a more pronounced and the winter season, considering that in the period September - april achieve over 20% of its annual turnover. This includes 5 of our most popular and najizgradenijih spa, which absorb more than 2 / 3 celokupnog tourist traffic spas in Serbia: Vrnjačka Banja, Sokobanja, Niska Banja, Banja Koviljača and Banja. This group spa has conditions for the development of many types of tourist traffic, which will continue to play an important role in tourism of Serbia.

• **Group III** spas absorbs about 30% of the spa tourist traffic and characterized by their variable and uneven distribution of tourist traffic per month. Among these spas are substantially more significant Mataruska Banja and GornjaTrepca, due to solid construction and good position in relation to communication pravce.Turistička offer spas Serbia needs to make more to follow market demands, because spas have long ceased to be "spas", fighting increasingly zaanimiranje recreational clientele or tourists in the true sense of the word. Accordingly, it is commendable example to emphasize the Spa, as well as our most advanced spas, which in addition to healing function successfully develop cultural and event tourism (festivals of film scripts, folklore, herbs ...)

then the mountain and hunting tourism (spa is situated at the foot of Goc), as well as sightseeing and monumental tourism (visit Studenica, Zica, Sopocani).

Surely it must be emphasized the fact that the Vrnjačka Banja grown into one of the most important centers of congress tourism in Serbia. Spa tourism Serbia is characterized by the domination of the traffic of domestic guests, while the share of foreign clients at a very low level and has a marginal character. Such a relationship is, more or less maintained throughout the second half of the 20th century, as well as the first decade of the 21th century, even though the overall situation in which the tourism evolved during this period was highly variable. 1980s, when tourism Serbia as a whole recorded so far the best tourism results. Recreational tourism, generally characterized by a smaller radius of movement, and is therefore relatively easy to explain the dominance of domestic visitors to the spa tourist traffic. Domestic tourism in spas Serbia has a long tradition. The data on tourist turnover in Serbia were recorded in 1869 in Vrnjacka Banja, and later referred to the Sokobanja (1893).

Spa tourism is rapidly revived after World War II, fueled by the state social policy, but in 1960 the spa by law granted the status of natural lečilišta. Increased rapidly and the number of spas that have provided medical and tourist services, a scarce material base of tourism and hotel facilities lečilišnih compensated the housing in households which had been involved even with 75% of total spa facilities. The increased concentration of the population of urban areas, the growth of their standard of living as well as the increased need for recreation recreation, are also important factors of a significant number of visits spas in Serbia by local ratings, especially during the period: 1970 to 1990. years. Diversity and therapeutic effects of thermal mineral water and other natural healing factors, their spatial distribution (spa has almost all parts of Serbia), as well as good traffic connections of our most important spa with key tourist generating areas, further explain the fact that the spa tourism in the entire previous period was predominantly relied on local clientele.

4.PERSPEKTIVE SPA TOURISAM IN SERBIA

Condition of spa tourism in Serbia (as well as tourism in general) is not satisfactory, which can be attributed to a number of reasons, subjective and objective. However, the prospects of spa tourism in Serbia can be assessed positively, bearing in mind that it is a form of traffic which for decades has the leading position in the tourism industry of our country. Directing future development of spa tourism must be based on a strategic approach, which is an essential prerequisite for the development of tourism in the modern world. Defining the strategy of spa tourism should determine the objectives and methods (techniques, tools), how to set goals and achieve. An important provision of the strategy, its dynamism, and anticipating and adapting to change.

This means that the strategy of development of spa tourism should take into account the complexity of the changes that are continually taking place in the environment (market, economic, ecological, political, technological, traffic ...). Since the development of tourism in our spas must be based on market specialization.

Namely, a large number of spas that Serbia has affects the distribution of the total mass of nights in these places, which should be done specialization in their further development, bearing in mind the fact that the thermal mineral water can be varied use. So, each spa must adapt their concept of development target segment (segments) tourist clientele, meaning that specializes in those modes of transport that will bring her the highest profitability in the market. Specialization can accelerate the differentiation of health resort and recreational functions of the spa town, sometimes completely transformed medical treatment in the recreational function, and all increase tourist spending. Thus, specialization in the development of certain types of tourist traffic would constitute the basis of the concept of spa tourism. Specialization could be treated as a condition for an increase in tourist spending and as an expression of wealth thermal mineral waters of our country.

Almost none of the spas in Serbia (maybe the exception Fishermen Spa) was not developed solely as a medical sanatorium center, although some of them significantly affirmed in the development of the spa functions, such as Vrnjačka Banja (treatment of diseases of the digestive tract), Sokobanja (the treatment of respiratory diseases) or Low SPA (treatment of rheumatic and cardiac diseases). Also, none of the spa is not only developed as a tourist and

recreation center. Some developed spas have sought to enrich their offer various activities and facilities complementary tourism and so attracted a large clientele, earning higher incomes (eg. Vrnjačka Banja is a lot of attention focused on organizing congresses, and in Soko Banja was built factory for the production of souvenirs). However, the concept of market specialization has not taken root in spas Serbia. Almost all spas Serbia lie at the foot of a mountain and thus able to impose correlative development of mountain and spa tourism, and the combined climate and spa treatments. Such features special favor Vrnjacka Banja (GOC), Sokobanji (Ozren) Bukovička (Bukulja) and Jošanička Banja (Kopaonik). The word was on spas in which to connect the spa and mountain tourism represented a special kind of "specialization" in their development, or to such relationships to be established with other spas. Relations between the spa and the neighboring mountains can be very different from the complete integration of functional Josanicka spa in the development of tourism on Kopaonik to Bukulje in concept development Bukovacka Spa. Spas that are located near major cities and developed the spa with a stronger material base have certain advantages over other spas in terms of creating a diversified tourism offer. Enriched with attractive offers throughout the year is the introduction of recreational, cultural, artistic and entertainment events, organization of fairs, conferences and other events, as well as organizing production activities complementary tourism: bottling of spa water, the production of vegetables and flowers (hot leje), renovation of old crafts , production of souvenirs. The thermal water in spas can also be used for providing heat energy or heating facilities (most extensive heating system was conducted in Vranje and Sijarinska). A positive example of spas where most success achieved in terms of diversification of the tourist offer, refer to our most advanced spa Spa. An important place in her bid belongs to sports and sports-recreation (sports teams, sports games, a variety of recreational activities outdoors and indoors) and sport fishing tourism (West Morava). Close to Goča provides excellent conditions for connecting spa and mountain tourism.

5. PROTECING ENVIRONMENT IN SERBIAN SPAS

Serbian spas are great ecological potential and natural resources of national importance, which deserve special protection measures, with the active role and responsibility of both the public and private sectors. Disregard for the overall concept of the development of the tourist development have led in recent years to a number of negative effects, thus affecting the natural therapeutic factors and the entire ambience of those places (degradation of most parts of the bath due to unplanned construction, uncontrolled raising holiday, the absence of zoning, inadequate treatment of the waste materials , increased air pollution caused by the strengthening of the motorized tourism and the like.).

In fact, as some spas in Serbia developed to its natural environment more degraded and modified (and vice versa).

Means that the ecological value of spas in Serbia can preserve samoaktivnom and continuous protection, which is one of the priorities in the development of these cities. **Among the most important of them include the following:**

- development of basic planning document the entire development of spas, who must be:
- subordinate to all plans and programs of development, including tourism;
- activate tourism complementary activities, in order to spread
- enrich the tourist offer basis, enable balanced development and reduce
- Pressure on the most valuable parts of the spas;
- implementation of a complex planning process spatial distribution and construction
- all the required facilities, having previously completed the process impact analysis
- environment (AUS);
- spatial separation of objects and surfaces to cure and tourist-related purposes;
- initiating a broader spatial units in the immediate environment of the spa,
- with the goal of integral protection and valorization of the value of the area;
- adequate staffing personnel of all organizations and institutions in spas;
- the creation of the modern concept of information and guide services that the
- a more efficient way served the tourist trade;

6. CONCLUSION

Tourism in spas Serbia has a long tradition and this city, with Belgrade and major cities, can be considered the first tourist areas and tourist centers in Serbia. The rise of spa tourism was particularly pronounced in the first decades after World War II, when they were encouraged by the state social policy, spas legal status granted by natural lečilišta. Strengthening of market relations in the economy of the late 1960s, the focus of tourism development in Serbia is transferred to the mountain resorts and larger cities (particularly Belgrade) and from then on spa tourism recorded stagnation and decline in the overall tourism industry of our country. After the great crisis of the last decade of the 20th century, spa tourism in the first years of the 21st century achieved some progress, but it achieves a slower pace compared to the mountain and city tourism in our country. However, there is no doubt that it will in the coming decades spa tourism, with mountain and city tourism, belong to the most important motif forms of tourist traffic in our country,

whose results largely depend on the success of the implementation of the following measures: the preservation of ecological tourism potential, strengthening of material base of tourism economy, market specialization and better organization of the tourist offer, as well as the adoption of the concept of regional tourism development. Among spas in Serbia, is allocated a group of ten baths which have gained market recognition as an independent travel motifs (Vrnjačka, low, Sokobanja, Mataruška, upper TrepčaSijarinska, Koviljača, of Prolog Bukovička, Ovcara Spa), some of which are grown and in urban urban settlements with extended functions. This group bath has the most favorable perspectives of development in the future, particularly in the short and medium term, due to the impact of various factors (the tradition, the results achieved in the previous period, the heterogeneous motif basis, a solid material base, good geographical position, etc.) In contrast to them all other Serbian spas have the character of complementary tourist values in them and the important tourism results can be expected only in the long run.

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