TOURISM AS A COMPONENT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NOVI PAZAR COMMUNE

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Summary: Geographic, historic, social and economic factors are of the greatest influencing the level of tourist development of the Novi Pazar commune, 742 km², where 85249 inhabitants lived in 1991, which is 0,7% of population of the Serbia and Monte Negro. The Novi Pazar is economic, trading, cultural, scientific, educational, and health service center, very picturesque, with churches, mosques, numerous old houses, and ancient Turkish baths. The commune, with natural resources, a nice climate, and magnificent history has got all conditions for the development of tourism and catering, livestock breeding and fruit-growing, industry, trade, traffic, public utilities, and hand crafts.

INTRODUCTION

Geographic, historic, social and economic factors are of the greatest influencing the level of tourist development of the Novi Pazar commune. Novi Pazar is located in the Raška region, which extends on 8201 km² where according to the 1991 census, 420,000 inhabitants lived. The Novi Pazar commune extends on 742 km² where 85249 inhabitants lived in 1991, which is 0,7% of population of the Serbia and Monte Negro. The Raška region lies on the hilly-mountainous terrain from 400 to 1625 meters above sea level in the South-Western Serbia (Priboj, Prijepolje, Nova Varos, Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Tutin); northeastern Montenegro (Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Rozaje) in the intersection of three bordered i.e. the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia.

The region is central part of the old Serbian medieval state named Raška and center of the Serbian spirituality, architecture, painting and literature, with great number of churches and monasteries. Some of monasteries are of the world cultural inheritance: the Sopočani monastery and Mileševa monastery with their world wide known frescoes (The White Angel, The Death of the Virgin, The Resurrection from the Hell), Miroslav’s Gospel, the first Serbian book, written in 1192, etc.
Planning of further tourist and economic development should take into account the
fact that Novi Pazar commune, with natural resources (spa, forests with good timber
potentials) a nice climate, and magnificent history has got all the conditions for the
intensive development (tourism, industry, trade, traffic, hand crafts, etc).

1. MAIN GEOGRAPHIC AND HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
NOVI PAZAR COMMUNE

Vlastimir created the first state, which Serbs trace, about 850. This state centered
upon an area in northeast of Montenegro and southern Serbia known as Raška, extending
over the valleys of the rivers Piva, Tara, Lim, and Ibar.

Historically, the Raška region is crossroads of Europe. For centuries, the worlds
have met here, leaving their traces and imprints upon the total ambience of the region. Its
beneficial climate, with four seasons, raw materials and agricultural products have
couraged the development of trade and tourism, but also attracted various armies to come
and match their swords and guns. This has left on this soil many medieval towns and
fortresses, the witnesses of the past, but also an unusual ethnic and cultural diversity, which
attracts interest and arises enthusiasm.

It is hard to say much of the Novi Pazar commune in the ancient times because of
the lack of sources and poor archeological data. Insufficient data on the Novi Pazar
commune makes it difficult to form a social picture of its social organization, life and
working activities of the population. During prehistory, the same things happened as in any
other time in history: big migrations, ethnic and racial changes, advance and retreats,
epochal inventions (fire, melting metals, making alloys, etc). Such inventions lead to
turning points in history of people at that time. It is very difficult to determine how long a
certain period lasted in some areas. When it started is much easier to find, as then there
were great cultural differences among certain groups of people living on a small area. As
their main occupations were hunting, fishing and cattle rising, a number of ethnic groups
remained only temporarily on this territory, as they were constantly in motion because of
frequent wars they have to wage. Hence, they built only smaller settlements with the houses
made from earth, or by wattle and daub technique.

Various cultures and ethnic groups were interwoven here, such as old Balkan,
Roman-Byzantine, Slavic, and oriental. The basis of the Serbs’s social organization in the
region during medieval period was extended family. Several families were grouped locally
under a chieftain (župan). With kinship and locality playing such a pivotal role in social
organization, sustained collaboration within larger groupings was difficult. Nevertheless,
several chieftains might unite on occasion under a great chieftain (veliki župan), who for a
short time would succeed in establishing control over a substantial territory. Christianity
had been introduced into the Balkans peninsula during the Roman period, but the region
had largely reverted to paganism with the arrival of the Serbs. A firmer planting was
achieved in the second half of the ninth, when the Byzantine commissioned two brothers
from Thessalonica, Ciril and Methodius, to undertake the task of evangelizing the Slavs.
Eastern Church was assured over the greater part of the Balkan’s, and the use of the
Cyrillic alphabet became one of the most visible cultural badges. In 1375, the archbishop of
Peć was raised to the status of patriarch, in spite of the anathema of Constantinople. During
this time great churches and monasteries were endowed, particularly those at Mileševo
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These monuments have come to constitute important symbolic points of attachment for Serbs. The frescoes of the Raška School are known for their capacity to blend a reverential sense of awe for secular authority with a deep sense of devotion. Literary work extended beyond the copying of manuscripts to include pieces of independent creative merit, such as the biography of Stefan Nemanja prepared by St. Sava and his brother Stefan Prvovenčani.

Economic development also contributed to the consolidation of Nemanjić power in region. Gold, silver, copper, and tin had been exploited during Roman times, but production now rose to meet the new demands of imperial courts and center’s of ecclesiastical authority. Although this wealth supported a remarkably modest court, it also sustained substantial mercenary armies. Trade expanded, particularly in the hands of Italian merchants, who led caravans along the old Roman routes.

The first great Turk invasion on Serbia happened in 1521, when sultan Sulejman II the Magnificent with his tremendous army conquered Šabac and looted the lowlands of Srem and captured Belgrade. Second attack followed as soon as in 1526, when Sulejman captured Petrovaradin and Osijek, and then Mohač beat the Hungarian army to the les. In that battle, king Ludwig II was killed. With its military power destroyed and without a real head of state, Hungary no longer represented an obstacle to Turk expansion.

Toward the end of the 14th century, the Ottomans occupied the region and made it a sanjak (an administrative division). Forced to accept the position of vassals to the Turks, Serbian despot continued to rule a diminished state of Raška, at first from Belgrade and then from Smederevo. Serbian resistance cannot be considered to have ended until the fall of Smederevo in 1459. As everywhere else, the Turks introduced their special feudal system. Because there was not enough population for a great economic prosperity, Turks begin to settle Serbian people. Those migrations caused big ethnic changes in the area. Turkish people lived exclusively in cities, while Serbs inhabited villages.

The whole Raška region, including Novi Pazar, called Novi Pazar’s sanjak became a thriving commercial region, and the town of Novi Pazar, founded in the mid-15th century, became the most important commercial center on the trade route between Dubrovnik and the town's inside. The Novi Pazar’s sanjak became a subject of international interest during the Christian uprisings against the Ottoman Empire in 1875 to 1878. Novi Pazar was claimed by Serbia and by Montenegro, two Slavic states, as a step toward the unification and liberation of all the Serbs. Possession of the sanjak would have established a geographical connection between Serbia and Montenegro and provided Serbia with an outlet to the Adriatic by way of Montenegro. Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, however, sought to maintain the sanjak as a buffer between the two Slavic states in order to prevent their possible union and the creation of a strong Slavic state in the Balkans. After long and persistent struggle of the Serbs, especially in the 19th and 20th century, the Raška region and other Serbian countries under Turkish authority were liberated by Serbian and Montenegro in the First Balkan War in 1912 and state border was established. After First World War, these two Serbian states, together with other Serbian and Yugoslav regions, united in one country.
2. TOURISM AS COMPONENT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Novi Pazar commune, and the whole Raška region, is an undiscovered oasis of beauty and pleasure of natural resources and cultural and historical monuments, a region, which provides all kinds of pleasure, develops imaginations and stays in memory. It is a region of openhearted people, clean nature, mountains, plains, churches and monasteries. Mountains in the Raška region are climatic resorts. The best known ones is Zlatar. The richness and the beauty of Zlatar are to be found in the huge areas with both deciduous and evergreen forests (beautiful centennial coniferous and birch forests), meadows and pastures at a moderate altitude and ideal conditions for summer and winter holidays, sports and recreation. Bearing in mind the chance for the tourism development, the exiting potentials are to be the fundament of the more successful development.

Through the region streams many rivers. Ibar river rising in the Mokra mountain and flowing eastward to Kosovska Mitrovica, then northward to join the Zapadna Morava River. Its length is 276 km, and it has a drainage area of 8,000 km². Major tributaries are the Raška, Studenica, and Sitnica. The adjacent upland is forested. Lim River rising in flowing through the Raška region, from southeast to west and join Drina River in Bosnia. Major tributary is Uvac River. Uvac River rising in the Ozren Mountains, 14 km from Sjenica to the west. Its length is 115 km and it has drainage area of 1340 km². On this rivers, people built four hydro plants (1947) and lakes: Zlatar's lake, Radoinja's lake, Sjenica's lake on the Uvac river, and Potpeć's lake on the Lim river. In stream valleys the alluvial sediments appear (sand, pebble, and clay). These rocks are the basis for the combined work of surface and deep erosion of great dimensions that really jeopardize the lower agricultural fields and often the town of Novi Pazar itself. Besides the surface waterfowls, the Novi Pazar commune is allot rich in underlying waters, which come to surface through numerous springs. The spring water is of good quality, however, due to small droppings, and the distance from the settlements, it is hardly ever used for water supplying.

The Romans discovered the spa in Novi Pazar, and climatic resorts of the Raška region as early as 2000 years ago. The Novi Pazar’s spa (Novopazarska banja) is situated near Novi Pazar city. The ruins of the Roman baths have been preserved until the present day in the modern spa. It has seven small fountains with temperature between 15-50°C. In medieval period spa was under church called Djurdjevi stupovi. In the last few decades, ordinary, every year 3000-4000 tourists visit spa, usually during spring and summer. There are some features common to the spa, climatic resorts and rehabilitation centers, their location, at the foot of the mountains, in the middle of the forests, protected from the winds and with mild climate.

The basic further development of the Novi Pazar spa is founded on proper using taking care and promoting of its natural resources. The mineral water and climate are the fundamental principals of its therapy, which is acknowledged by the official medicine and is considered important for curing and rehabilitation of the patients.

Meadow and pasture flowers, as a tourist motive, were the most dominant floras in the past in the Raška region. Today it is present still on meadows and pastures. Certain representatives of this communion persistently appear on plough able fields as weeds, that people destroyed, either chemically or mechanically. Of more important species today, these can be see: common mallow, yarrow, spurge, field bindweed, thyme, burdock, frog
eggs, clover, volume, saga, wormwood, henbane, heartburn, daisy, alliance, yellow bedstraw, etc. In a vegetation structure many other plants can be found as well, so the conclusion can be drawn on the richness of flowers in meadows and pastures. The animal world shared the faith of vegetation. It used to be much richer in the past. By sloughing the vegetation, many animal species disappeared.

In the immediate vicinity of the rivers, spas and mountains there are medieval monasteries built between the 12th and 17th century, famous for their fresco paintings. This is why the valley of the Ibar River is known as the Valley of the Century. The Old Ras (Stari Ras), the Sopočani monastery and Studenica monastery are included in the list of World Cultural Heritage. During the medieval Serbian history, Studenica was the most important of all Serbian monasteries. It was built to serve as a memorial of Stefan Nemanja, the founder of the Serbian dynasty of Nemanjić. At the end of 12th century, Nemanja founded Mother of God’s Church in Studenica, as a mausoleum of the Nemanjić family. It is basilica built of white and gray marble. Among the surviving frescoes from 1209 (a majority of which was restored in 1569) from the feast cycle, the Crucifixion on the west wall has been preserved. It is not only one of the most magnificent and beautiful compositions of Serbian medieval art, but it is also marks the beginning of a great era of our painting. Among the paintings dating from 1430-as, there are portraits of Nemanja, St. Sava, and Stefan Prvovenčani on the south wall. These, as well as many other, later, paintings which, apart from the usual religious themes presented on frescoes in churches, represent illustrations from the lives of the saints, of historical compositions, originated under the influence of contemporary Serbian literature, flourishing at the time. For Studenica typical St. Sava wrote a biography of his father Nemanja, which represents the most beautiful masterpiece of the medieval literature. There are two churches inside the monastery circle: the King’s church, and the church dedicated to St. Nicola.

Novi Pazar, as a tourist destination, is a large cultural and trading center in the Raška region. The town is very picturesque, with churches, mosques, numerous old houses, and ancient Turkish baths. Novi Pazar was recovered briefly several times, but Turkish domination lasted for 500 years, and the town became an important station. Novi Pazar became an important trade town and was the administrative center of a Turkish military district called sanjak (sandžak). The Altum Alem mosque from the 16th century dates from the Ottoman period. Agricultural trade is now the main economic activity, and industrial development since 1945 has centered on textiles („Raška”), shoes („Ras”), fabricated fibers, woodworking, and food processing. Novi Pazar remains a center for handicrafts, particularly filigree. Tourism has grown in economic importance, with visitors streaming in to enjoy the scenic locale, historic monuments, and distinguished architecture.

Hotel „Vrbak” (B category), with 126 beds, is located in the center of the town. In 1991 town visited 23077 visitors, 1992 – 10266, 1993 – 9835, 1994 – 15186, 1995 – 17492, 1996 – 3231, and in 1997 – 9388. In 1991, Novi Pazar had 108503 tourist sleeps, and in 1997 – 52850 tourists sleeps. Number of visitors and tourist sleeps descended during last decade, because of the political situation in the region of ex Yugoslavia. Center of the town is marked by a square with shopping center, craftsman shops and other service facile. Here are also located administration institutions, along with the hotel „Vrbak” and restaurants. Residence buildings and parts called mahale, whose inhabitants work in the town, surround the downtown. In a wider circle, encompassing also the outskirts, there are houses of those inhabitants whose occupation is agriculture. However, these specific
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features have gradually been disappearing, as the residence area identified with the other town parts, and the industrial zones and complexes occupy the periphery.

CONCLUSION

As we wrote, the Novi Pazar commune and the whole Raška region are especially rich in historic patrimony, and forests of high quality. That is the fact that has always influenced significantly the complete development of the region. The Novi Pazar commune is hilly-mountainous terrain, and an ecological environment; it makes an excellent resource for the production of healthy food, particularly meat, milk, dairy products, forest products and medicinal herbs. The mountain, with its beautiful meadows, rivers with clean water, natural rarities like Griffon V culture colonies in the crag of the Uvac River and all the others natural resources, as well as the great cultural inheritance, present the perfect base for the tourist development of region.

Bearing in mind the change and opportunities for the development, the existing potentials are to be the fundament of the more successful development of the region of Serbia in near future. The development determinations in the area of the Novi Pazar commune have to be based on fundamental determination that ecological riches of meadows and forests, riches of water, and the other natural resources must be pressed as ecological reserves of future.

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