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ON THE MEDICAL-HEALTH TOURISM POTENTIAL OF LANKARAN –ASTARA ECONOMIC-GEOGRAPHICAL REGION**ПРЕДПОСЫЛКИ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ В ЛЕЧЕБНО-ОЗДОРОВИТЕЛЬНОМ ТУРИЗМЕ ТУРИСТСКО-РЕКРЕАЦИОННЫХ РЕСУРСОВ ЛЯНКРАНЬ-АСТАРИНСКОГО ЭКОНОМИКО-ГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКОГО РАЙОНА**

Summary. The development of health and medical tourism in Lankaran Astara economic-geographic region is described in the article. For this, features of health and medical tourism demand, opportunities and potentials of its development are researched. Opportunities of this field and potentials of health and medical tourism for pre-independence period of Azerbaijan Republic are analyzed and measured. There are attempts to open up perspectives of medical tourism in Lankaran astara economic-geographic region through using existing opportunities

Keywords: economic-geographical region, tourism, medical tourism, medical-health tourism, sport-health tourism

Аннотация. Статья посвящена проблеме развития лечебно-оздоровительного туризма в Ленкорань-астаринском экономико-географическом районе. С этой целью изучаются особенности лечебно-оздоровительного туризма, условия и возможности, которые необходимы для его развития. Анализируются условия, созданные на территории Азербайджанской Республики до обретения ею независимости в связи с санаторно-курортным отдыхом, а также оценивается потенциал исследуемой территории в этой сфере. В статье делаются попытки раскрыть перспективы развития оздоровительного туризма в Ленкорань-астаринском экономико-географическом районе с использованием существующих возможностей.

Ключевые слова: экономико-географический регион, туризм, медицинский туризм, лечебно-оздоровительный туризм, спорт-оздоровительный туризм

Анотація. Стаття присвячена проблемі розвитку лікувально-оздоровчого туризму в Ленкорань-астаринському економіко-географічному районі. З цією метою вивчаються особливості лікувально-оздоровчого туризму, умови та можливості, які необхідні для його розвитку. Аналізуються умови, створені на території Азербайджанської Республіки до здобуття нею незалежності у зв'язку з санаторно-курортним відпочинком, а також оцінюється потенціал досліджуваної території в цій сфері. У статті робляться спроби розкрити перспективи розвитку оздоровчого туризму в Ленкорань-астаринському економіко-географічному районі з використанням існуючих можливостей.

Ключові слова: економіко-географічний регіон, туризм, медичний туризм, лікувально-оздоровчий туризм, спорт-оздоровчий туризм

Lankaran-Astara economic-geographical region that located in the south-eastern part of Azerbaijan covers Lankaran, Astara, Masalli, Lerik, Yardimly, Jalilabad and republican subordination Lankaran city. This economic-geographical region has been one of the potential tourism zones of Azerbaijan even during the Soviet period. Travels on the purpose of medical and health have also been organized in the economic region at that time. In the Soviet period being in the health resorts and sanatoriums was not considered as a tourist service.

Generally, there are different opinions on the medical-health tourism in the scientific literature. Tourism plays an important role in the organization of free time, opens great opportunities for meeting most needs of people. Tourist travels are no longer just limited by spending free time, it is implemented in combination with meeting other needs.

The concept of tourism is comprehensive from social point of view. Approach to the social aspects of tourism allows to determine its three forms: 1) tourism as a social activity and a type of activity; 2) tourism as a mobile form of individuals in different space and heritage; 3) tourism as a means of ensuring the personal development of the individual in different directions; Tourism acts as a social institute performing different functions from the structure – functional analysis point of view. Different functions mean to maintain and develop the mental and physical capabilities of an individual, gaining multilateral qualifications of a person, understanding of environment, as well as, natural and cultural heritage. Tourism that shows itself as an activity aimed at the development of physical and moral qualities with the displacement in time and space, draws attention from many aspects. Here the main and important thing is to change the permanent residence temporarily of a man to become familiar with the culture and history. These futures major influence on place transference of a man. The first tourist travel draws in visits on the directions and routes then.

The main functions of tourism are reproduction (recreation, recovery), study, self-affirmation. These functions are interrelated with each other. As a result, tourist programs try for tourism to render consumer complex services. At that time, tourist travel motivation of an individual is taken as a basis.

One of the main factors of tourist motivation is health. People often travel for the purpose of treatment, health and health prevention. It should be noted that, one of the main goals in tourist travels organized for the purpose of going in for sports (some types of sport tourism), gaining some skills (direction-determination, walking tourism, forest tourism, mountain tourism) is health promotion. Due to its nature, tourism is a social event. Tourism is associated with the development of society members spiritually and physically, improving the communication among the people. The social nature of tourism shows itself in the influence on the different spheres of its social life. For example, tourism changes the demands of people` sphere of interest, forms consumption culture (1).

Tourism influences on all activity fields of society, as well as, economy, culture, social field. Tourism has become one of the most profitable on the modern world. According to the World Tourism Organization, the annual

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income of international world tourism, that used 7 % of the world capital, increases stable since 1995. The share of tourism in goods and services had increased to 10% in the early 1990s. It means the third place after the oil and automobile export. The annual growth of investments in tourism is 30 % (2, 2).

According to the information of experts of world economic forum on march 9, 2011, the first ten countries in terms of competitiveness in tourism sector was Switzerland, Germany, France, Austria, Sweden, US, Great Britain, Spain, Canada, Singapore (3). According to the information of 2013, the countries, included top ten, are placed in the table (Table 1) (4).

Azerbaijan has increased its solidity to competitiveness in tourism field. According to the information of Trend, in the report named “Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2013”, that the World Economic Forum shared on Friday was noted about this.











Azerbaijan has ranked to 78th stage from 83th in the report published every two years.

In addition, according to the WEF, Azerbaijan is in the 46th stage on the legislative base in the tourism sector, 87th stage on business environment and infrastructure, 96th stage on people, culture and nature resources in the tourism sector in the world.

Some indicators are taken into account as a key in tourism and travel sector. WEF has highly appreciated Azerbaijan on the indicators for the transparency of state department and correct evaluation of the situation (48th stage in the world), the number of the days starting business (33), expenses needed for starting business (33), sustainability of tourism sector development (41), providing security in the country (52), health and hygiene field (34), the number of hospital beds falls 10 thousand people (8), the effectiveness of marketing attracting tourists (44), fuel prices (17), the number of world importance historic monuments (45).

WEF shows the conditions of getting visa (133th stage in the world), obtaining qualitative drinking water (112), situation of tourism infrastructure (109), collection and taxes in the airplanes (121), the quality of education system (108), natural resources (110) as the problematic fields. Competitiveness report on travel and tourism sector covers 140 countries.

The development of mass tourism has created the tourism industry in the world. Tourist organizations offer tourist services and directions of tourist travels in this industry.

	Country	Region	The number of foreign tourists (2013)	The number of foreign tourists (2012)	Difference
	 France	Europe	84.7 mln	83.0 mln	2.0%
	 USA	North America	69.8 mln	66.7 mln	4.7%
	 Spain	Europe	60.7 mln	57.5 mln	5.6%
	 CR	Asia	55.7 mln	57.7 mln	-3.5%
	 Italy	Europe	47.7 mln	46.4 mln	2.9%
	 Turkey	Europe	37.8 mln	35.7 mln	5.9%
	 Germany	Europe	31.5 mln	30.4 mln	3.7%
	 Great Britain	Europe	31.2 mln	29.3 mln	6.4%
	 Russia	Europe	28.4 mln	25.7 mln	10.2%
	 Thailand	Asia	26.5 mln	22.4 mln	18.8%
Note: The rating has been fully published in the source of UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.					

The medical-health tourism occupies a special place among tourist services. Satisfying recreation demands of a man stands on the basis of medical-health tourism. People always have a need to restore their intellectual, physical and emotional powers. In this regard, the two interrelated components of recreation demands show themselves. The first covers psycho-physiological, the second moral-intellectual demands. Psycho-physiological demands are satisfied by feeding, sleeping and movement, moral intellectual demands by learning, communication and health promotion. Medical-health tourism has the opportunities to offer just these means complexly.

It is known that, scientific-technical progress, deterioration of the ecological situation cause the weakening of population health. As a result of increasing tension of stress, a man begins to feel weary in body and mind in his organism. It increases the interest of a man in restoration of his health, moral and physical abilities all over the world (5).

Health care in developing countries, as well as, increasing unity of rest and health, make demands of people to seek high-quality medical-health services that are financially possible for them. It increases the urgency of organization of medical-health tourism all over the world.

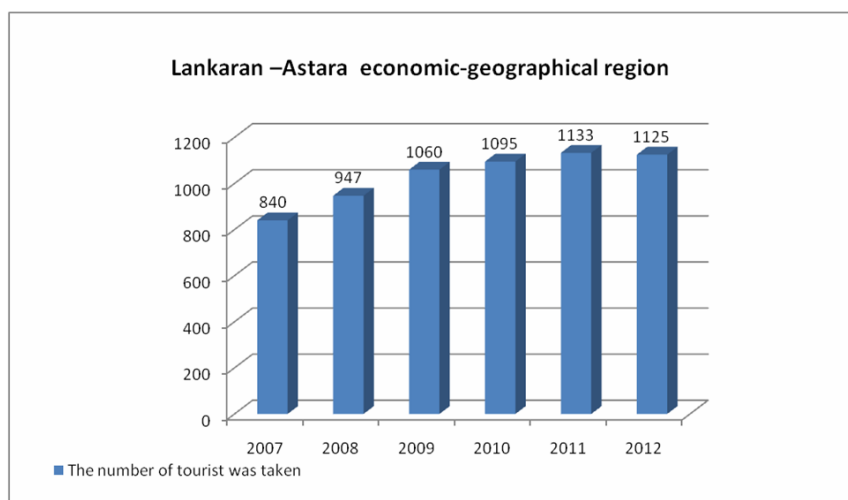
It should be noted that European Spas Association defines the treatment tourism as to strengthen the health of an individual, to rest by being far from his permanent residence in order to develop physically (6, 11).

The concepts as treatment, sport and health, rehabilitation tourism, recreation tourism are used in the works of russian researchers on the tourism (7, 51).

According to A.V.Babkin, the medical-health tourism means transference of an individual in and outside of the country not to be less than 20 hours and not to exceed 6 month for the purpose of health, as well as, prevention of various diseases (8, 40).

There are three main components of the medical-health tourism: 1) treatment and rehabilitation; 2) health; 3) recreation (7, 51). The first and the second of these types require medical service. The third is associated with organizing the rest and free time. All these show that, the exact borders of the medical-health tourism has not been determined yet.

There are opportunities for organizing types of services of the medical-health tourism which are intended both medical service and to spend leisure time in Lankaran-Astara economic-geographical region of Azerbaijan. There were established tourist routes for the purpose of health even in the Soviet period. Nowadays, hotels and other types of accommodation operate in the economic region for receiving certain number of tourists. According to the statistical data of 2012 in terms of the number of rooms in hotels and other establishments for accommodation, the figures were given in the chart. (Table 2)



The main features, expanding tourism opportunities in the region at that time, were to settle by the seashore, surrounding by forest and mountain mass.

In the modern situation the opportunities of ecotourism is great in the economic region. Nature monuments, exotic landscape, forested area, mountain ecosystems are included to the ecotourism. These opportunities are quite spread in the economic-geographical region. Different mountain rivers, some waterfalls, mineral springs are included to the main hydrological monuments system in the region. Existence of hot water springs with the peculiarity of treatment opens good perspectives for the development of this direction of tourism. At present, the main part of the flow of domestic and foreign tourists to Lankaran and Masalli districts of the region is just for this direction.

As it is mentioned above, various tourism zones were established in the Soviet period in Lankaran. The travel and excursion bureau, organized there in 1980, arranged tourist routes in 15 directions according to 7 districts in the south. Lankaran was divided into 3 tourism zones.

The coastal zone of Lankaran completely covers the shore of the Caspian Sea. There are restaurants and hotels along the coasts, which is rich in curative importance of black sand in forested area. One of the most enjoyable rest types in the city is going down to the shore, having tea and watching the sea. Nice sea smell comes from the Caspian Sea in Lankaran. Fish-net thrown into the sea everywhere and the trains moving by railway from the shore, seaside-park creates a special aura. The seaport in Vel village of the district opens good perspectives for tourism.

Haftani (also Gaftani) zone of Lankaran district is very useful for medical-health tourism. The name of the area Haftani means seven springs in the Talysh language. These seven springs located in this area are curative hot water springs. It is not accidental that, there has been built sanatorium for the purpose of medical-health. There have suitable conditions for the development of ecotourism. The most famous objects in the area, which is rich in curative waters, are Lankaran Sanatorium and Ibadi Istisu (Hot Water).

Lankaran Istisu Sanatorium was opened in 1980 s. It is located at the foot of the Talysh mountains, in the forest 12 km far from the city. The curative quality of water is supplemented by quiet forest and natural beauty, which gives peace and comfort to the residents. Treatment for locomotors apparatus, diseases of the nervous system is provided in Istisu. The sanatorium is open seasonal, it works from May to August. The experience shows that this sanatorium has the ability to operate the whole year (9).

The Ibadi water spring is located in a small mountain mass, La village. Waters of different temperatures boil in the slopes of Ibadi and Sumakh mountains. It is situated in the west of Lankaran, on the way to Lerik and 17 km far from the center. These springs have appeared following a volcano. Its water is drinkable and is believed to be good for gastric, gall bladder, osteochondrosis and other bone diseases. The legend goes that, someone named Ibadulla suffered from a serious disease, settled down here and healed.

Lankaran region is rich in mineral waters. The temperature of thermal and cold waters is from 130 C up to 640 C. They contain nitrogen and methane. There are 157 mineral water sources in Lankaran region. The hot water in Istisu village of Astara, Ibadisu, Haftani of Lankaran, as well as, Gariblar village of Masalli are famous in the economic region. In the summer season there is observed a flow of a lot of tourists to these areas.

The economic-geographical region also rouses interest with the hydrological monuments. Settling down on the shore of Caspian Sea, the landscape of seashore opens great perspectives for the development of the beach and sea trip tourism.

Lankaran-Astara economic-geographic region has a great potential of water tourism. There are also great opportunities for sport tourism. There has a possibility to use nature monuments for the purpose of sport tourism. The tours, organized to natural monuments being associated directly with the physical recreation activity, create suitable conditions for the organization of sport tours. Such tourist activity may be raised to the level of sport-health tourism.

Pedestrian tourism travels on the determined route can be arranged in Lankaran-Astara economic-geographical region. This is the most popular tourism area in summer season and it is an acceptable tourism type for the economic-geographical region. There are such a complex pedestrian tourist routes that they can be only passed by experienced, sportsman tourists, but in simple routes everybody can travel. The above-mentioned realize the opportunity of creating both complex and simple pedestrian tourist routes. The simplest way of engaging in tourism is the pedestrian tourism for those who are interested in travels. It should be noted that the pedestrian tourism is carried out in the forests and foothills zones.

Generally, the tourism potential is quite extensive in Lankaran-Astara economic-geographical region. Determination of all these potential take into account of organizing leisure time of tourists and providing participation of them in various excursions on different routes. All of these require a complex approach to the tourism issues in the region. The tourism opportunities of this economic region should not be limited by one district area. The organization of travels to other districts of the economic region of the tourists, those who are in Lankaran, is an issue roused a special interest. In our opinion, the tourism potential of the noted economic-geographical region should be studied with the condition of both on different districts and covering of different districts.

Istisu in Masalli district is a treatment center with hydrogen-sulphide. The locals call this as “miracle water”. Hot water with 69 C temperature sparkles naturally from under the ground. This water is used to treat many diseases such as joint-muscle, skin, gynecological. Treatment is carried out in the mineral water baths in the sanatorium. The water coming from rocks in Istisu is ice cold. Rich in hydrogen-sulphide, it smells like strong sulphur. It is poured into a glass as a medicine and drunk in one gulp in order not to feel the taste of it. There are “kidney water” and “stomach water” signs above the springs. It is said that, spring water treats stomach ulcer and kidney pains. The curative content of the water in Istisu was found during the investigation works hold 50th years of XX century. Mir Kazim Aslanli, a native (Masalli) geologist and scientist, defined his dissertation on the curative importance of Istisu (hot water) in 1955. Treatment-resort zone, created here in 60 s, gained the status of sanatorium in 2007. Because of having a subtropical climate, the amount of rainfall is more than other places of the region. The forests of Istisu are 12 km far from the center of district. Istisu is beautiful in all seasons of the year. In autumn all the colors of nature can be seen in the Talysh forests. In order to feel all the beauty of Istisu, it is advisable to go in spring, autumn, and winter months. While it is hard to spend more than 3-5 minutes in the bath due to high temperature in summer, it is possible to swim in the pool for hours in cool air. Relaxation is felt after a course of Istisu bath. Some skin diseases on the body are treated by this water. Here occurs the flow of people coming here for treatment in July-August. Istisu is also famous for its waterfalls (9).

The analysis shows that, there are great opportunities for sanatorium-resort complexes in Lankaran-Astara economic-geographical region. For this purpose, the content of hot water flowing from the mountain mass of the economic region, as well as, the cool water, the curative importance of them, also the ways of use for treatment and health should be determined. It is possible to organize of carrying out treatment-prophylaxis by water and mud baths, as well as, drinking spring water by the medically determined norms. At present, tourist travels organized to this area is characterized as retail. The use of water baths is carried out by the medical-health norms only in the area of sanatorium, while the tourists use from other hot water sources by the primitive way. All of these issues confirm the importance of development of the medical-health tourism in the region.

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