

THE POTENTIAL OF THE ISSYK-KUL REGION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURIST MARKET IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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This article starts with the overview of the current conditions of the tourism industry in Kyrgyz Republic. Particular accent is made on the fact that the country's tourism industry is represented mainly by recreational tourism, health and swimming resorts, mountain tourism, cultural and rural tourism. There is significant role of the demographic characteristics in forming tourism industry of Kyrgyzstan. Particularly author looks at the country's population, its dispersion and how that affects the industry. The population of the country is about 5 million people where 60% of them live in the rural areas. There are only two cities in the country with the population of over 100 000 people, Bishkek (the capital, over a million people) and Osh (about 300 000 people). Discussion in the further sections of the article is based on the example of the Issyk-Kul region, which is one of the good examples of the regions of Kyrgyzstan with vast opportunities for tourism development. In further sections of the article the author pays attention to the comparative analysis of the tourism development in rural areas and small towns. As a result of that kind of analysis one of the main obstacles in the tourism development was found a lack of experience of the rural areas in tourism services. After looking at the current conditions and conducting some analysis the author presents the trends and suggests possible opportunities for development of different tourism sectors in Kyrgyzstan. As concluding points the author gives some emphasis on the potential for the country's rural tourism development from the international tourists' points of view. While type of tourism means main perspectives for international tourism development, it also carries many problems in these areas.

Keywords: tourism, rural tourism, small towns, tourism policy, natural factors, socio-economic factors, territorial differentiation

Efficient usage of touristic recourses is a focusing question on the grounds of researching different aspects of tourism in rural locality. They are interested in analyzing the development level of tourism outside of the cities in Kyrgyzstan.

For the organization of internal societies actually there are being searched some forming directions, one of which is development of touristic industry in rural area. Touristic policy is connected with problems of service and rational wildlife management. The main activity of tourism shows the indicator of mutual conditionality of natural and social environment in service industry. Partly location of villages depends on natural factors. Natural factors are fundamental for the development of touristic activity. Socio-economical factors make sense in territorial differentiation of touristic industry in regions with small population. The interconnections of natural and social-economical factors lead to integration of researching directions and complex based solution of problems of tourism development in rural areas [6].

More than 5 million people live in Kyrgyzstan. The largest cities are Bishkek – capital (1,2 million.) and administrative centre of the same name region – Osh (more than 300 thousand people) that is more than 30% of whole Kyrgyzstan population. Other cities do not exceed 150 thousand people therefore these cities fit to the range of small localities. By taking into consideration that Kyrgyzstan is agro-industrial country and 60% of population lives in rural areas. So, the problem of analyzing the development of tourism in rural areas is go-

ing in the context with the general government policy on development of touristic industry in Kyrgyzstan. The view of this research will be focused on one of the political-administrative regions because of difference in population and density of village's location in Kyrgyzstan [7].

Issyk-Kul region is a large administrative part of Kyrgyzstan. Population is 450 thousand. Demographic content is characterized by multiconfessionalian and multinational features. Basic ethnical groups are Kyrgyz people (70%), Russians (6%), and others are Kazakhs, Uyghur's and Dungans.

Leading religions: Islam and Russian Orthodox Church. There are 3 cities and 192 villages. Statistical correlation is characterized by prevalence of village population. Karakol (80 thousand), Balykchi (45 thousand) and Cholpon-Ata (20 thousand) – 30% of whole residents [8].

Economical disposition: agrarian-manufacturing, comparatively developed touristic-recreation sector in the range of Kyrgyzstan.

The particular importance in the development of rural tourism in Issyk-Kul is based on natural conditions. To the natural components we can relate relief, climate, water, vegetation and fauna.

Natural conditions influence to the formation and development of touristic area, choice of subregion for rests. Tourists are interested in resplendence of flora and fauna, peculiarities of landscape, facilities of different activities during journey. The nature of region is unique and versatile, there are almost all types of geo-systems: deserts, semi deserts, prairies, forests,

alpine and subalpine meadows, snow peaks and glaciers.

Issyk-Kul region occupies north-east part of Kyrgyz Republic (410–430 of northern latitude, 760–810 of eastern longitude) and includes closed hollow of the same name and located southward from it highland sifs – Central Tian-Shang. The altitude is from 1600 to 7440 meters high. Total area 43,5 thousand square meters which is 22% territory of Kyrgyz Republic.

The peculiarity of Issyk-Kul region is its location in center of Eurasian continent among the temperate zone deserts, isolation with spines, considerable elation above sea level and presence of non-freezing saline lake [1].

Formation of touristic territories

Stimulation of touristic sector development in rural area brings number of territories to a particular specialization in performing the servicing functions.

The idea of recreation district in recreational geography is based on labor division theory. Touristic locality means socio-economic category, in most of the works it is interpreted as territorial system for serving recreants.

Method of territory regionalization is the method which is used in physical and socio-economical geography. There are two regionalization: “sectorial” and “integral”. Integral regionalization unites natural and socio-economical aspects. Touristic regionalization is all about the integral type of this methodology where stocktaking, assessment of natural and socio-economical conditions and development resources are equally interweaved. The efficient combination of these aspects creates the necessary prerequisites for development of tourism in the scale of region’s specialization sector.

The touristic regionalization of rural territories allows evaluating natural recourses and using them efficiently by taking into consideration the environment of the region.

Territories where service and other activities of tourism are so developed that they can be deputized as sector of specialization can be added to touristic rural localities.

Territorial specialization can be expressed via interregional commodities exchange. That is why, by following this principle in touristic activity, rendering services to voyageurs must be estimated as “removal of goods” from the present rural locality. Mass migration of population for the touristic purposes leads to redistribution of money, material and labor recourses, the quantitative expression of which shows rural localities involvement in territorial labor division in economical sense.

Touristic rural locality is defined as a territorial constellation of economically intercon-

nected servicing enterprises, specialized in best servicing to meet all demands of tourists.

For the touristic rural localities it is inherent seasonal prevalence of functioning, stipulated by both the natural rhythmic and a number of aspects of social life organization.

The rural tourism in Issyk-Kul region has characters decomposed with qualitative and quantitative expressions:

a) Existing touristic specialization – sanatoria and health sector, comparatively to world standards it has level of development below the average.

b) There is a presence of relations in territorial servicing the tourists, especially in central sub regions: Karaoy village – Cholpon-Ata – Bosteri.

c) Comparatively to neighboring regions of Kyrgyzstan the development level of touristic service is much higher.

System of rural touristic region’s conception is methodically important, as far as function of further development of every individual touristic locality can be estimated within the bounds of whole of Kyrgyz Republic territorial subdivision system.

Only the presence of resources is not enough for further development of touristic functions, there is a necessity of scientifically grounded projection and efficient building of servicing establishments by taking into consideration the economical and ecological politics.

Zonation of Issyk-Kul region’s territory for touristic usage bends to purpose of increasing the servicing functions.

Peculiarities of medical and architectural zoning, landscape characteristics are being interested by the level of suitability for organization of rural tourism.

There are following zones:

- Immediate touristic usage zone.
- Protected and recoverable natural landscapes zone.

The first zone of touristic recreational usage mainly included sea coast in the limit of 1–2 km. These territories are on north shore from Chyrpykty village to Korumdu village, region of Tup estuaries, Jergalan on the east, from Kyzylsuu bay to Jenish village and from Tamga village to Ak-Terek on the south.

In addition, to the first zone we can add forest middle-mountains; in Issyk-Kul region – Kyrchyn hole, in Tup – Kegen hole, in Ak-Suu – Ak-Suu sanatorium region, Karakol gorge and Jeti-Oguz region – Jeti-Oguz sanatorium region.

The second protected and recoverable natural landscapes zone includes territories of whole protected woodlands and wildlife preserves.

Forest subzones include territories of hill’s flank and coastal forests. They occupy

117,3 thousand hectares, which is 2,7% of oblast's territory. The second zone also includes one more subzone, territories not used for economic needs: glaciers, rocks, ravines, other broken localities, which are used in recreational purposes that are for sportive mountain tourism and alpinism.

In addition, the Issyk-Kul region territory is zoned into three sub regions: Northern, Eastern and South (with center in Cholpon-Ata, Karakol cities and Tamga villages) with natural potential and tourism infrastructure focusing difference [1; 5].

In Northern Issyk-Kul sub region up to 2012 there are 82,9% boarding houses; 77,7% sports and fitness complexes and camps; 80% camping sites. Most of them are built in fitness centers of Choktal village (25%); Bosteri village (17,6%); Korumdu village (12,1%); Karaoy village (9,3%) and Cholpon –Ata city (9,4%) [8].

Health-improving establishment's location on northern shore of Issyk-Kul lake is connected with the development of this region as a recreational zone, it is the first one; secondly, here is 80% of first claim sanatorium constructions; thirdly, comfortable economic-geographical location of Northern Issyk-Kul sub region. The recreants have direct transportation accessibility to this region. 8,8% of whole health resort establishments are located in eastern subregion (Ak-Suu, Jergalan, Kara-Bulun, and Juuku). The natural environment and diversity of touristic resources call forth development of highland and alpine tourism in eastern subregion. There are interesting courses which pass through this territory. 9 health-improving organizations located in southern region. It is 4.6% of whole tourists flow in this oblast. Among the organizations of subregion the sanatorium "Tamga" confers a distinction with a same name touristic camping site.

Tourism development level

Boardinghouses, sanatoriums, children's health camps, vacation houses, sports bases

and touristic bases are the significant places in development of tourism in Issyk-Kul region, in perspective we can find holiday inns, motels and campsites there.

It should be supposed that technology of using touristic zones in rural territories – creating a fund of touristic lands, which have comfortable recreational conditions and large spectrum of high quality resources as natural and cultural-historical; organization of servicing enterprises, accomplishing usage of lands for the purposes of relaxation and tourism. Functional parks organized in rural territories must express existing touristic needs [2].

By general analyzing of people's touristic activity it is obtained that having rest in Issyk-Kul region mostly divided into short and vacation. Short recreation means the activity of dynamic people. It characterizes with city parks, entertaining centers and theatres for short times.

Vacation rest means people's long term activity for the touristic purposes to other locality, model of touristic rest's character (Fig. 1).

Analyzing the rural tourism besides natural resource, socio-economic characteristics are useful tool to pay attention to physiological, psychological, aesthetic, ethical nature of person during his touristic activity [4].

We should distinguish for major kinds of touristic systems by taking into account social character of tourism in Issyk-Kul region:

- Medical.
- Health-improving.
- Sporty.
- Cognitive

All these kinds basically the touristic systems solve quite complex medico-biological and social tasks. If the first type is mainly pointed at preventing chronic diseases progressing, suppression of inflammatory process activity, rising the hemodynamic, restoration and process in organism, then the second and third types of areas pointed at building up one's health and diseases prophylaxis. That's why they are closely connected with each other.

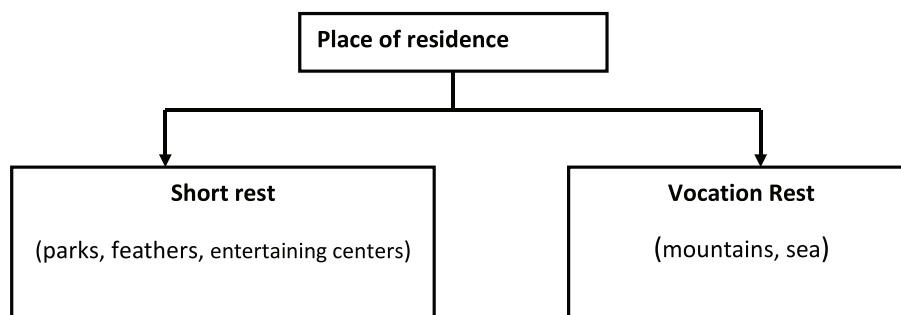


Fig. 1. Character of touristic rest

Remedial actions in first kind of touristic system are put into effect with assistance of natural factors: mineral water (baths and drinks), therapeutic mud (applications), and climatherapeutic procedures. In first kind specialists raise great demands before medical complexes, especially to balneological ones, as far as different elements of these complexes inter into germaneness with important systems of organism and focused at treatment and strengthening health.

The second and third kinds of general health-improving arrangements are used for healthy people and these arrangements are focused at removal of fatigability, restoration of important organism systems in connection with fatigue and working ability growth.

For these purposes measured out walking, trips, excursions, entertainment actions, air and solar baths, sea and river bathing, and e.g. acquire essential value. Medico-biological and social meaningfulness of these two kinds of touristic systems are great as far as they are focused strengthening people's health.

The fourth kind mainly affects aspects necessary for cognition of new phenomena, new processes underlie development of treatment and general health-improving arrangements on the one hand and widening the general horizon, understanding their culture level and intellectual wealth on the other.

In Issyk-Kul region the rural tourism characterized with:

1. Cognitiveness – meeting tourists with sights.
2. Activity – accomplished with staying on touristic bases and different categories of mountain courses with various complexity and duration.
3. Health-improvement – presented by touristic health-improving objects aiming medical treatment and human organism relaxation.

Analyzing the present development level of rural tourism in Issyk-Kul region we can mark that it's unripe and does not meet world touristic standards, there is no proper interconnection within subsystems. The infrastructure and its development go by an extensive way and there were shown unreasonable exploitation of naturally-recreational resources by touristic sector.

Tourism development perspectives

Basically Kyrgyzstan is rural country, where most of the population has agrarian mentality and associated with provincial life. The territory of Issyk-Kul region has great natural resources – minerals, water, stern, forest, recreational zones where agriculture is widely developed.

Original combination of natural recourse potential of mountains, marine climate, unique nonfreezing basin, landscape's extraordinary diversity, health resort's and sanatoria presence make favorable ecological conditions for organization labor, mode and relaxation. The natural resource potential is not always and everywhere used reasonably and efficiently. Especially we can clearly observe ecologically unfavorable status of mountain landscapes. By the intensive usage of natural recourses almost all the component of mountain landscape are involved to the process. As a result, the natural or naturally-transformed ecologically-conservator situation formed during long terms and it will become worse. First of all it understands by sharp changes in structure of ground intercession, disappearance of traditional kinds of plants and animals.

Tourism outside the town is being researched as a significant complex in servicing sector [3].

Attention is paid to aspects of rural tourism as for a perspective sector of tourism in Kyrgyzstan. The system of rural tourism can be presented as a component sector of development (Fig. 2).

The rural tourism is the main part of social-economic relations in touristic sector development in Kyrgyzstan. It interests people with its well-being material and high cultural level to be outside of town of Kyrgyzstan.

The rural tourism must have a fundamental development – bearing in mind the place's historical-cultural potential including the whole socio-cultural environment with traditions and customs, peculiarities of everyday and economical activity. Any locality can give a minimal set of resources for tourism perspectives, but for its' bulk development it is necessary to concentrate objects of culture heritage, followings are distinguished:

- socio-cultural infrastructure;
- objects of ethnography national crafts and useful arts, applied art centers;
- historical settings;
- ethnography monuments.

The rural tourism absorbs into itself aspects of voyage and recreation where tourists can get acquainted with life, culture and customs of our people. The socio-cultural factor's development in rural are is a tool for widening the resources to attract traveling flows. Therefore it must be included to the general doctrine of cultural-historical complex development.

The rural tourism development level is used for creating a favorable image on servicing markets.

Elements and factor of rural culture can be channels for distribution information about touristic facilities of a region or country.

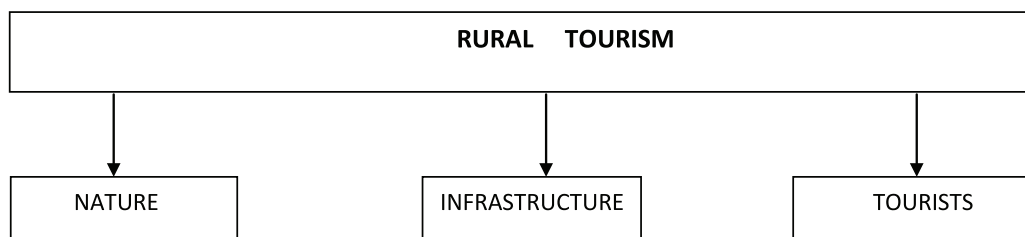


Fig. 2. Rural tourism system

Successfulness of rural tourism development depends not only on material and technical basis which suit general standards and requirements but also on uniqueness of cultural-national heritage.

Objects of cultural-national heritage must present in reasonable and creative shape. The technology and touristic product can be everywhere but there is no place for absolute uniformity in culture. That is the main point of rural tourism development perspectives in Kyrgyzstan.

Any province desires to become popular in tourism, possess unique, have cultural complexes and offer them on the touristic market.

Evaluation of rural potential for touristic purposes can be conducted by two major methods:

– *division of cultural complexes according to their significance in world and domestic culture;*

– *duration of time for getting acquainted with sights, that allows evaluating perspectives of historical cultural potential for tourism.*

Of course these methods are basically subjective (cultural complexes that rated high by various specialists do not cause adequate reaction among tourists). The main value of cultural complex is its correspondence with the criteria that tourists have. This factor maybe related with tourist's interests in objects of cultural heritage. Therefore, rural touristic activity or-

ganizations have a goal to build up cultural touristic complex.

Based on contemporary status of rural tourism, and taking into account natural resources of the region, existing infrastructure, objects of tourism and relaxation are necessary to stress point on investments that doesn't require significant capital costs and providing quick investments return. In this case the development of different sectors must be conducted by paying special attention to nature-conservative measures.

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