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THE IMPORTANCE OF GEORGIA'S RESORT AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES - CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF GREEN TOURISM

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Summary. Georgia is a country rich in mountain and plain resorts with healing properties. The abundance of resorts is not accidental. It is determined by the climatic conditions of the country and more than 2000 healing waters found in the territory. Mineral waters are the most effective in treating various diseases. Resort factors, which are used for therapeutic and prophylactic purposes, are closely interconnected and have a complex effect on the human body. Part of Georgia's resorts are abandoned and unused. However, the Department of Resorts has currently begun to study a significant part of the resorts. Most of the resort and recreational resources belong to microclimatic, mixed-function and balneological type resorts. Despite the country's balneological resources and the beneficial properties of the resorts, resort green tourism is still in the process of development. We have studied resort tourism values in the Shida Kartli region. The study area includes the region where the effective use of existing resort and recreational values, material and technical improvement of resort potential, development of recreational and tourist products, sharing international experience and attracting the holidaymaker market will contribute to the development of the local economy and sustainable development of the environment.

Keywords: Resorts, Georgia, Tourist, Factors, Importance.

Introduction. Supporting health tourism can bring significant economic benefits to the country. Today, it has become valuable and necessary to relax in places with favorable climate and healing resources. Rehabilitation is a conscious action and is determined by those conditions, factors and methods that are most favorable for the restoration of the human body. The need for rehabilitation is due to the fact that during labor activity, psycho-emotional stress, even a practically healthy person experiences a state of fatigue and decreased working capacity. Today, much attention is paid to the development of natural healing and health tourism, the development of medical and rehabilitation centers. Georgia has great prospects for the development of recreational tourism throughout the country. The creation of resorts in Georgia began at the beginning of the 19th century, the Georgian people have been using mineral waters for the treatment of various diseases and the healing air of the mountain climate since ancient times.

Georgian resorts have deservedly earned state significance, and some of them are even of federal significance, with their full resort and healing properties, which is why they truly stand out like pearls in the midst of resorts [1]. References to the thermal and hyperthermal (sulfur) mineral springs of Tbilisi date back to ancient

times. In 930, the Arab geographer Al-Istarkh noted that “there are hot water baths in Tbilisi without heat”. The French traveler Sherdin described the hot sulfur mineral waters of Tbilisi in the first half of the 17th century. The scientist, geographer and historian Vakhushti Bagrationi recalled the hot springs of Tbilisi and the large baths arranged around them in the second half of the 17th century [2].

Georgia is divided into territories with similar characteristics and recreational potential. The prospects of a recreational region of various levels depend on the development of resort and recreational economy, the creation of service infrastructure. The modernist reforms implemented in the Tbilisi balneological resort are a good example of Tbilisi becoming an international spa capital, the balneological profile of this center has been restored, and sharing its experience will help the regions in the development of recreational and health tourism. It is important that the country's resort space begins precisely from the capital of the country - the balneological center, which has already gained international recognition. As scientists and researchers note, the introduction of modern technologies, high quality of resort products and services should be taken into account in order for Georgia to become a country with a developed medical tourism destination [3].

Some places in Georgia are of particular benefit to the sick. The special properties of the climate, mineral springs, and mud make these places healing places. They are called resorts. The main importance of resorts lies in their natural healing properties. These healing properties are provided by nature itself [4].

We find interesting information in the work “Abandoned Georgian Resorts” where the author indicates several abandoned and unused resorts in Georgia. For example, Lebarde is located in the Martvili municipality. It is a balneological resort, which is partially located in the alpine zone, at an altitude of 1600 meters above sea level. The resort still fascinates visitors with its alpine lakes, beautiful views and clean air. Due to the high iron content, Lebarde water is used to treat gastroenterological diseases. If the road leading to the resort is restored, Lebarde will turn into a multi-profile resort in the future and, like Bakhmaro, will become one of the popular vacation spots in our country.

"Menji" This amazing place, located in the Senaki municipality, was called the "Kavarjani cemetery". Menji is a balneological resort, known for its peaceful environment, clean air and beautiful nature. The word "Menji" in Megrelian means sour water. The resort's infrastructure is abandoned and the buildings are dilapidated. Obviously, if Menji were a functioning resort, it would bring significant income to the Georgian economy. "Kvereti" is a balneological resort, where there are mild winters and moderately humid summers. The place was famous for its sulfide mineral water, which is excellent for treating various diseases. The resort also has an interesting history: it was built by German prisoners of war after World War II. Kvereti was popular among both local and foreign vacationers. "Libani" is located in the Borjomi municipality, at an altitude of 1300-1400 meters above sea level. In addition to tuberculosis, the large sanatorium of Liban also treated diseases of the gastrointestinal tract and the nervous system. The resort was distinguished by its incomparable mineral waters and the sanatorium building, which has been preserved to this day and is included in the list of cultural heritage. Today, the sanatorium building is damaged and abandoned, although it is possible to restore it [5].



One of the ancient territories of Georgia, Shida Kartli, is establishing itself in the country's tourism world with its natural resource potential. However, the once existing resort areas, unique recreational zones, are now inactive. The study pays significant attention to the resort potential of Shida Kartli, medicinal factors, the healing resources of the natural environment, and the recreational opportunities of the region, which are found in many places and are often wasted. We consider the restoration of old resort areas, the multidimensional development of recreational spaces, the definition of recreational tourism, and the use of unique places rich in natural factors for recreational purposes to be important tasks.

Research methodology. For the purpose of the research, we were guided by qualitative research methods, which involves processing analytical material presented in open sources. Within the framework of desk research, literature and publications were analyzed, data were collected, and findings were discussed.

Literature review. In the paper, we discussed the scientific publications of scientists and researchers. The tourism and resort resources of Georgia have been studied from various angles by researchers: M. Ukleba, G. Kuparadze, T. Chilingarishvili, N. Kvaratskhelia, N. Grdzlishvili, N. Pavliashvili, I. Tarkhan-Mouravi, N. Saakashvili, E. Elizbarashvili, N. Kutateladze and others.

Discussion/Results.

There are resorts of all types of medical profiles in the world in Georgia, where natural healing factors, healing climate, healing mud, mineral springs, etc. are found. There are 102 resorts and 182 resort areas in the country that have the ability to treat, rehabilitate and improve various diseases. Seven of them - Borjomi, Tskaltubo, Gagra, Akhali Athoni, Bichvinta, Kobuleti and Gudauri - are of international importance. According to the leading resort resource, five main types of resorts are distinguished in Georgia: seaside-climatic, balneological, balneo-climatic, mountain-climatic and suburban. By definition, a resort is a medical place where the main means of treatment are resort factors such as mineral and healing water, climate and mud. Unlike a resort, a resort does not have the appropriate infrastructure for the use of natural healing factors for recreation and medical-rehabilitation and/or prophylactic purposes. Modern approaches to this issue are interesting. The definition proposed by the University of Memphis School of Resort Management, Center for Resort and Hotel Business: New definition of Resort: "A resort is a full-service lodging facility that provides access to or offers a range of amenities and recreation facilities to emphasize a leisure experience. Resorts serve as the primary provider of the guests' experience, often provides services for business and meetings and are characteristically located in vacation-orientated settings". A resort should possess: 1. Main complex comfortable features - Signature Amenities 2. Auxiliary, atypical attributes - Anchor Attributes 3. Recreation-leisure-entertainment experience - RLE-E (Recreation-leisure Entertainment Experience) [6].

Thus, according to the complex criteria of a resort destination, both the profiling characteristics of the place and the comfortable elements of the product, the quality of infrastructure, the quality of amenities, etc. are important [7].

Georgian resorts, based on the comfort of the geo-graphical features considered, can be grouped into three types -high, medium, and low comfort. 1. There are 25 resorts in Georgia with high comfort geographical (environmental)

and recreational characteristics. The comfort index of their geographical location and environmental factors is 65%. 2. 30 (50%) resorts are distinguished by their geographical and recreational characteristics with average comfort. 3. Only one resort has a low indicator -Muash. The comfort index of its geographical environment reaches 30%.The development and operation of resorts requires the development of environmental assessment and protection policies. As a rule, the activities of vacationers create a number of ecological problems. In order to prevent the situation, it is desirable to apply the principles of landscape architecture and landscape planning. [8]

The object of our research covers the Shida Kartli tourist and recreational region. According to the 2014 Georgian Government Resolution, there were 9 resorts and 16 resort areas located on the territory of Shida Kartli. Out of 49 resorts, 5 (Nagutni, Kodibina, Java, Khovle and Bagiata) are balneological, 3 (Surami, Kvishkheti and Biisi) are climatic-balneological and one is balneological-climatic. Out of the resort areas, 4 (Abano, Khvedureti, Kashveti and Khtsisi) are balneological, 4 (Tkemlovana, Edisa, Kemulta and Kotanto) are climatic-balneological and 8 (Ateni, Feli, Sakavre, Bateti, Bulbulistsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Gostibe and Tsru) are climatic. As for the occupied territories of Shida Kartli, resorts and resort areas in this part are found in the resort districts: Java, Bagiata, Kodibina, Nagutni, Edisa, Kothanto, Tsru and Kemulta [9].

Recreational resources in Shida Kartli are transformed into natural conditions and contribute to the restoration of physical and spiritual strength. Let us highlight some of them. The main climatic resort of the region is the town of Surami, a climatic-balneological resort with a profile located in a low-mountain resort zone. The town of Surami belongs to a resort that is important for children with its profile. Its natural healing factors are the low-mountain climate, a deciduous forest spread over 120 hectares around the town, in which artificially planted coniferous massifs are mixed with weakly sulfide, hydrocarbonate, magnesium and calcium mineral cold waters [10]. The same profile is characteristic of Kvishkheti, a climatic and balneological resort with sulfide water type, a mountain climatic resort, which is located in the middle of a coniferous-spruce and mixed forest.

Recreational activities are connected with nature and people, therefore, the protection of natural landscapes and the maintenance of the ecological state are important for the development of tourism. In the study region, in particular, in the Ateni Gorge, protected areas have been created, all of which will significantly contribute to the formation of recreational territorial systems. The biological impact of the mountain climate is wide-ranging, it calms the nervous system, increases tone, improves vital processes, activates assimilation and dissimilation, improves respiratory function, blood circulation and digestion, increases the body's immunity to various diseases, due to this factor, rest in mountain resorts has a tonic and strengthening effect on the human body [11].

Important conditions for regional development are based on the tourist-recreational component, the main elements of which are natural recreational resources and climatic conditions. The Ateni Gorge in Shida Kartli is distinguished by its diverse, attractive landscape and beautiful nature. The main feature of this type of recreation area is the sanatorium climate. Rich flora and fauna are preserved, high



recreational value, a clean and healthy forest climate, natural picnic and recreational areas, natural mineral springs.

The development of medical and health tourism in the region is promoted by the balneological resort Biisi, which is located in the Tana River Gorge, in the Boshuri community, at an altitude of 1080 m above sea level. Its natural medical and rehabilitation factors are the moderate mountain climate and warm sulfide waters with a mineralization of 1.3 g/l, chloride-hydrocarbonate, weakly alkaline mineral waters. The climatic resort is located in the moderate mountain resort zone, where the natural medical factors are the climate, coniferous and mixed deciduous forests and sulfide waters with mineralization. Types of treatment are mineral water baths, passive climatotherapy. Unfortunately, today the infrastructure is in disrepair, but if investors are found and appropriate investments are made, the village of „Biisi” has the potential to become one of the strongest centers of medical tourism in the country. In the Gori municipality, Gorijvari is distinguished by natural health-improving factors: low mountain air and sulfide, chloride-hydrocarbonate, sodium mineral waters, although resort activities are not organized, this tourist product is currently not aimed at fully utilizing its potential. The resort "Khovle" is located at an altitude of 720 meters above sea level. Khovle is known for its natural healing factors: low mountain air and sulfide, sulfate-hydrocarbonate, sodium mineral springs, which have been operating for decades, but are now closed. The healing water was used as a bath. The water flows into several ravines at once and enters the resort building through pipes.

In the building. The water is used to treat rheumatic, osteochondrosis, gynecological and gastrointestinal diseases. "Gostibe" is a climatic type resort, where the main healing factor is the climate. The village and its territory are located on the northern slopes of the Trialeti mountain range. At an altitude of 600-1800 meters above sea level. Gostibe is especially useful for children for the treatment of bronchial asthma. For years, a "student camp" operated here, which accepted children on a republican scale. The resort "Abano" is located 27 kilometers from Kareli, at an altitude of 720 meters above sea level. The climate of Abano is low-mountain, moderately dry. The natural healing factors of the resort area Abano include pleasant mountain air and sulfur-hydrogen, chloride, hydro-carbonate, calcium, sodium mineral waters. Types of treatment include mineral water baths and passive climatotherapy [12].

The potential of unique natural resources in Shida Kartli creates a niche that provides prospects for increasing the attractiveness of the region for visitors in terms of health. The level of awareness of the resources available here in the market is low. The natural conditions of the territory, climatic environment, natural landscapes, water, forest resources and their uniqueness, aesthetic appeal, natural health value, opportunities for their inclusion in recreational activities and economic feasibility should be taken into account. As we have mentioned, there are excellent natural conditions for the revival and development of resort economy in Shida Kartli. It is important to organize infrastructure so that the resort destination can receive tourists and provide appropriate services. It is necessary to regulate problems related to the road, train appropriate personnel, conduct information tours and raise awareness.

In summary, we note that Georgia has a great natural and cultural heritage, which allows us to restore old resorts and develop new ones. Studying the existing resort areas in the Shida Kartli region, improving the quality of the landscape, developing a strategy and destination management plan, organizing infrastructure at the local level, attracting investments, provides great potential for strengthening the local economy, as well as for attracting interest from local communities and, finally, achieving sustainable development goals. Research should be conducted based on scientific arguments, and decisions should be made for the sustainable development of the resort destination. It is important to conduct monitoring that concerns business, local population, tourists, and their expectations. The right solution would be to analyze recreational use within the study area. Open public plans should be developed, information should be collated, which should include sensitive environmental protection issues, issues of protecting landmarks, and many others. Studying the issues we have described will create favorable, new potential on the path to the development of recreational and health tourism.

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ЗНАЧЕННЯ КУРОРТНО-РЕКРЕАЦІЙНИХ РЕСУРСІВ ГРУЗІЇ – ВИКЛИКИ ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ЗЕЛЕНОГО ТУРИЗМУ

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Анотація. Грузія — країна, багата на гірські та рівнинні курорти з лікувальними властивостями. Розмаїття курортів не є випадковим: воно зумовлене кліматичними



умовами країни та наявністю на її території понад 2000 джерел цілющих вод. Мінеральні води є найефективнішими у лікуванні різних захворювань. Курортні чинники, що застосовуються з лікувальною та профілактичною метою, тісно взаємопов'язані та справляють комплексний вплив на організм людини. Частина курортів Грузії занедбана й не використовується. Водночас Департамент курортів наразі розпочав вивчення значної їх частини. Переважна більшість курортно-рекреаційних ресурсів належить до мікрокліматичних, змішаного функціонального та бальнеологічного типів. Попри бальнеологічні ресурси країни та корисні властивості курортів, зелений курортний туризм усе ще перебуває у процесі становлення. Ми дослідили цінності курортного туризму в регіоні Шида Картлі. Досліджувана територія охоплює регіон, де ефективно використання наявних курортно-рекреаційних цінностей, матеріально-технічне вдосконалення курортного потенціалу, розроблення рекреаційних і туристичних продуктів, обмін міжнародним досвідом та залучення ринку відпочивальників сприятимуть розвитку місцевої економіки й сталому розвитку довкілля.

Ключові слова: курорти; Грузія; Сакартвело; туристи; фактори; важливість.