

SOCIAL SCIENCES

CHARACTERISTICS OF DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL TOURISM IN THE NAKHCHIVAN AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC

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Abstract

The article analyzes the development dynamics of medical tourism in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, the existing infrastructure of this sector and its position in the regional economy. Medical tourism, as a complex field of activity that combines various health-oriented services and experiences, offers travelers both preventive and rehabilitation opportunities. The Nakhchivan region is distinguished by its rich natural treatment resources, favorable climatic conditions and historical and geographical advantages. Mineral water sources such as Duzdag Physiotherapy Center, Sirab, Badamli, Vaykhir are the mainstays of this sector. The study shows that the potential for medical tourism in Nakhchivan is quite wide and the application of innovative approaches, efficient use of local resources and environmental sustainability should act as the main strategic goals for the development of this sector. Modern tourism infrastructure and integration of entrepreneurship into this sector can both reduce the seasonal dependence of medical tourism and contribute to the socio-economic development of the region.

Keywords: Nakhchivan, medical tourism, health, natural resources, tourism infrastructure, sustainable development.

Introduction

One of the new economic priorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan is the tourism sector and the development prospects in this field. Due to its historical, scientific and geographical nature, the tourism sector has played an important role in the national economy of countries from ancient times to modern times. In particular, this sector has been the focus of great attention by countries that have developed and are developing in this field. Naturally, one of the important reasons here is that tourism has become one of the continuously developing directions on a global scale. Because, being a new part of the national economy, this sector is also effective in generating budget revenues (2). On the other hand, currently the development of tourism in the country has shown its logical result. In this sense, when approached from the prism of regional economic development, it becomes clear that this sector is the focus of attention in all regions, including the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. It can be noted that in recent years, the main reasons for the development of tourism here and the large number of tourists arriving are:

- ensuring the sustainability of state support through multi-directional mechanisms;
- the emergence of new tourism features, characteristics (destinations) and tourist centers;
- restoration of historical monuments that will be relevant for tourism;
- ensuring, restoring and, if necessary, reconstructing transport and road infrastructure;
- maintaining the number and quality of efficient tourism catering establishments;
- creating reliable treatment and recreation centers;
- organizing tourist routes in order to improve the level of service to tourists;

In the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, which has a rich tourism potential due to its essential regional

characteristics, tourism is also increasing its importance as one of the main types of activity in providing employment. Considering that tourism is also distinguished by its stimulating effect on the exhibition of the creative activities of the local population and the production of souvenirs, especially the development of handicraft skills, it is necessary to note its role in the development and long-term prospects of this sector.

The development of tourism against the background of continuous national economic reforms is paving the way for the formation of its medical-health type in a wide scope. Studies show that medical-health tourism in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, having a rich history, is in a leading position among the types of tourism due to its relevance and importance. The reason for this indicator is the increase in demand for this area. More precisely, it is organized with the aim of maintaining and restoring the health of members of society as a whole, and of people in particular, especially tourists. The analyses of international organizations in this area are also distinguished by their necessity. Thus, according to the assessment of the World Tourism Organization, medical-health tourism is considered an important tourist motivation even on a global scale. Due to its socio-economic nature, medical-health tourism has emerged as one of the promising directions among alternative types of tourism in the autonomous republic (6).

The importance of medical tourism in terms of the economy of the Autonomous Republic can be shown as follows (8).

- Medical tourism is an important service sector that supports the development of the economy;
- Medical tourism is an activity that contributes significantly to national income;
- Medical tourism affects the development of the public and private sectors and increases their competitiveness;

- The development of medical tourism has a great impact on the employment of the population;
- The development of tourism creates favorable conditions for the recognition of the geography and culture of the place.

Discussion

Let us note that in ancient times, in our country, the famous “Naftalan” oil showed its history for medical tourism in the 12th century. In terms of the richness of natural resource potential in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, it demonstrated prospects for medical tourism in the 20th century. At the same time, medical and health tourism has developed further compared to other types of tourism. With all this, the autonomous republic has the necessary natural resources, treatment centers and mineral water reserves for the development of medical and health tourism. Also, more than half of the natural remedies are successfully used.

The emergence and development of speleotherapy in Azerbaijan is associated with the use and in-depth study of the salt caves in Nakhchivan - the physiotherapeutic center “Duzdag” cave. Duzdag, the natural treatment center of the autonomous republic, is distinguished by its unique healing properties. As a result of research conducted in the salt mine, which was accidentally discovered as a result of an avalanche in 1967, many stone hammers and several stone axes belonging to ancient people were discovered. Duzdag Physiotherapy Center was a leading institution in the field of speleotherapy in 1979, operating as a hospital with a 50-bed underground department. . Located at an altitude of

1173 meters above sea level. The underground department of the center is located approximately 12 km from the city of Nakhchivan. The underground department is located in the salt mine, 300 meters from the entrance, at a depth of 110 meters, in the 9th worked out line.

All conditions for examination and treatment have been created at the Duzdag Physiotherapy Center, which was rebuilt in 2008. This unique treatment center, the only one in the world, is the main place of appeal for people suffering from non-specific respiratory diseases.

Salt caves and mineral waters are driving the development of this area. Those who apply here are mostly people suffering from bronchial asthma and allergic diseases (9). As a result, according to the statistics of 2019, the Center currently has 347 beds, providing opportunities for the treatment of about 4,000 patients. Duzdag caves are located two kilometers from the “Duzdag” hotel. The first Salt hotel in the world belongs to this region. The hotel consists of 6 floors, including the underground part. The above-ground part of the complex located in the hotel is equipped with a library, cafe and comfortable rooms. Its location near the Duzdag cave creates favorable conditions for those who come here for treatment to spend the night. The provision of complex resort services by the “Duzdag hotel” allows attracting other segments in addition to tourists who come for health reasons. In addition to treatment in the salt cave, the hotel also offers tourists Spa, recreation and entertainment services (5).



Figure 1. The inside of the Duzdag cave



2. The interior of the cave

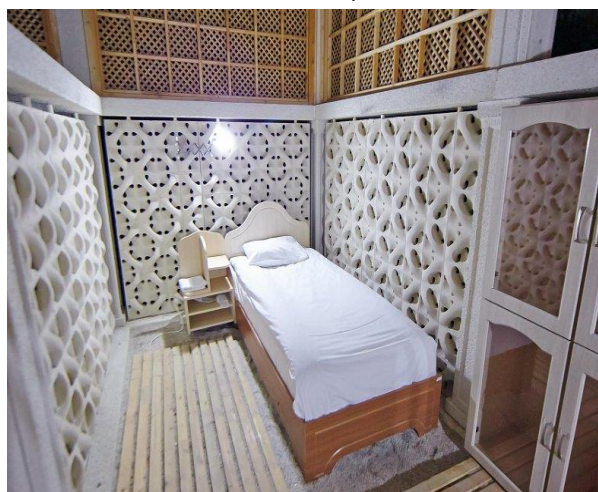


Figure 3-4. Duzdagh Physiotherapy Center

Daridag Arsenic Water Treatment Plant - It is located 8-9 kilometers northeast of Julfa city, which is considered one of the places of therapeutic tourism in the autonomous republic, between the steep slopes of Daridag, at an altitude of 800-900 meters above sea level. Nakhchivan is not without reason called the “museum of natural springs”. Daridag healing water, which is considered to be arsenic mineral water belonging to the group of rare silver-containing waters in the world, is located here. Daridag mineral water is included in the group of thermal waters, as this water emerges to the surface of the earth at a temperature of 53-57 degrees Celsius. Here, many diseases are successfully treated (10).

Daridag Arsenic Water Treatment Center, which began operating in 1978, provides treatment using arsenic water from 5 springs. In 2005, medical assistance

and other services were established for guests on the territory of the Julfa Daridag Treatment Center (5).

Due to its medical and experimental nature, Daridag arsenic thermal water is beneficial for many skin diseases, and is recommended for consumption mainly in cases of scabies, jaundice, pyoderma, gastrointestinal, and joint diseases. In addition, the treatment center has an irreplaceable therapeutic value for taking a bath in cases of peripheral nervous system diseases (16). It is used in the treatment of nervous system pain, rheumatism, skin, osteochondrosis, etc. As a result of large-scale construction work implemented in the regions and State Programs implemented by our state, the Daridag treatment facility was built (5).



Figure 4-5. Daridag Arsenic Water Treatment Center

Ashabi-Kahf mineral water - called magical water by people who come here. Considered an analogue of Pyatigorsk mineral water, it boils and foams every 15 minutes, then retreats. The composition of this water, located in the Babek district, is hydrocarbonate, chlorine, sulfate, sodium, and carbon dioxide. Small pools

have been created for patients to receive treatment, and rheumatic and wind patients are treated by entering the water and waiting for 10-15 minutes. Thus, the course of treatment continues for 10 days. Both local residents and tourists use these places for treatment (5).



Figure 6-7. Ashabi-Kahf mineral water

Analyses show that currently 60% of our country's mineral water reserves fall on the share of the autonomous republic alone. The existence of more than 250 mineral water sources on the territory of the autonomous republic gives grounds for considering it as a living nature museum. Naturally, some of the mineral waters are distinguished by their therapeutic value. Examples of the above include Sirab, Badamli and Böyrek waters (4). In particular, it is possible to rarely find analogues of the radon and sulfur waters in Nakhchivan in foreign countries, distinguished by their uniqueness. These reserves, which are calculated for the reliable health of people, can also include iron waters, which have a miraculous role in the treatment of internal organs.

Because, those waters have high medical importance, and are mainly known as a medicine for the liver. In addition, the use of carbonated waters in the treatment of gastrointestinal diseases, as well as in the elimination of inflammatory factors, further increases the prospects of the autonomous republic in this field (5, pp. 150-153). At the same time, there are "Barjomi" type Gulustan, Navi, Bichenak, "Narzan" type Badamli, Dinga, Qizilburun and other such waters in the shade.

One of the important factors here is that it is considered appropriate to use these waters not only during the treatment period, but also during the recovery phase. Due to their importance, mineral waters such as Sirab, Badamli, and Böyrek water are also packaged separately at the plant and accepted as table water.

Sirab healing and table water is one of the magical waters of Nakhchivan. This water is considered the best of the carbonated healing waters available in our country. According to experts, Sirab water is highly effective in the treatment of pancreatic disease and hyperacid gastritis. At the same time, the healing water, which also has properties such as bile formation, is used in stomach and intestinal diseases. As a tourism product, it is actively represented in other cities of our country and also in trade relations with foreign countries (5).

Conclusion

Since ancient times, people have used mineral waters, healing mud, and plants with medicinal properties

to treat various diseases. The evidence that mineral springs have been used as a treatment since ancient times is the presence of stone pools on their banks, which have remained to this day. Mineral springs are mainly located in mountainous areas.

We can note that the potential demand for health care is based on the images based on objective or subjective truths formed or shaped in their minds, and of course, the promotional campaigns that cause this. In order for patients to visit a country, they must first of all be aware of the existence of that country, the level of health care in the country and its tourist opportunities. This can only be possible as a result of skillful advertising activities.

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