

ROLE OF SERBIAN MONASTERIES IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Abstract:

Nowadays, speaking about sustainability on tourism activities is a story about tourism based in offer of natural and cultural heritage that one space could give. Those two elements, nature and culture, precisely are issue of protection in sustainable concept but at the other side, became main objects of realization in all concepts and varieties of sustainable tourism: eco, agro or soft tourism. Monasteries are base of cultural identity in Serbia because in that way tradition, history and specifics of national values are represented. There is a great number of monasteries, but different by its ancient history, architectural and artistic importance, location in the map of Serbia, but also, in specifics of surrounding and theirs positive and negative impacts. In this case study will be shown how monastery cultural heritage are involved in planning system and which role, from a point of tourism economy, is given to it. Concerning already mentioned differences two examples, first Monastery Studenica, included in protected natural area and second, Monastery Mileševa, included in urban area of Prijepolje town, are going to be represented in their particularities and roles in sustainable tourism of developing Serbia.

Monasteries in Serbia- General

National identity of Serbs in a closets relation to monasteries because they represent not only foundation of religious roots but first territories, countries, rulers from the moment that Serbs settled Balkan Peninsula. Inspire of historical alters and rule of other nations over Serbian people, monasteries and churches, as a symbol of spiritual freedom, kept their role for centuries. From the very beginning monasteries were built and donated by rulers where architecture was evolutionally changing in three different styles: Raška School (XIII century), Serbian Vizantian School (XIV century) and Moravian School (XV century). Those styles mostly depended on significance of ruler countries in Europe and Mediterranean at the time and countries where the painters and constructors were coming from.

Today, in Serbia, there are around 115 monasteries evaluated as monasteries of extraordinary and great importance, mostly equally scattered Serbia vide with few locations where are situated as a groups of monasteries. For example, monasteries of Fruška Gora consist of over 15 cultural monuments similar as 11 monasteries in West Morava Ovčar- Kablar valley. Monasteries in this valley are known as Little Saint Mountain cause reminds at Athos Mountain (Saint Mountain) in Greece where Serbian, just as Bulgarian, Russian, and Greek monasteries are situated.

Table 1- Protected Surrounding of Cultural Monuments

Name of Cultural Monument	Year Protection Was Proclaimed	Municipality	Area (ha)	Description of Cultural Monument
Part of Tršić village and Tronoša Monastery	1965	Loznica	1308,00	Vuk Stefanović Karadžić place of birth and monastery where he got a primary education
Manasija Monastery	1986	Despotovac	243,68	Cultural monument from 15 th century
Studenica Monastery	1986	Kraljevo	246,03	Cultural monument from 12 th century
Ravanica Monastery	1989	Ćuprija	136,80	
St. Prohor Pčinjski Monastery	1989	Bujanovac	121,04	Cultural monument from 14 th century
Ljubostinja Monastery	1983	Trstenik	113,13	
Rača Monastery		Bajina Bašta	153,66	
Koporin Monastery	1989	Velika Plana	47,21	Cultural monument from 15 th century
Jašunjski Monastery	1989	Leskovac	188,27	Cultural Monument form 15-16 th century
Mileševa Monastery	1990	Prijepolje	289,69	Cultural monument with surrounding

Source: **Five Decades**, 2006

In course that monasteries originally were located in some kind of protected places, were enemy could hardly reach and harm sacral buildings, some of them are even today isolated from direct civilization, in naturally preserved landscapes. Therefore, it is not unusual for cultural monument to be protected as naturally valuable sites. That case is with monasteries listed in previous table.

Decision on proclamation of suggested protection for certain area is accepted by Serbian Government. Protected is supported by legislative: Law on Environmental Protection and Law on Cultural Monuments; as well as by Institute for Natural Protection of Serbia and Institute for Cultural Monuments Protection of Belgrade, Novi- Sad etc.

Protection of natural and cultural heritage is also in relation with urban and spatial plans made for these kinds of areas such as: WHS Studenica and Gornjak Study of Impact on natural values of area, Spatial Plan for Special Use area Prohor Pčinjski, Tršić- Tronoša, Ras- Sopoćani, Orašac, Master Plan of St. Stefan in Slanci, Ovčar- Kablar canyon Protection Study etc. Overall, Spatial Plan of Republic of Serbia is important cause issues about cultural monuments and values are integrated in tourism and protection chapters.

Spatial Plan of Republic of Serbia- Cultural heritage in Tourism and Protection Concept

Regarding Spatial Plan of Republic of Serbia and its preferences on tourism concept, leading ideas contributing to role of monasteries as a part of tourism and local economy are:

- Evaluation and valorisation of cultural heritage;
- Institutionalization of tourism activities;
- Prolongation of tourism season;
- Education of children and youngsters.

Altogether with these goals realization, expected result is complex and integrated tourism offer where complement activities (tourism, agriculture, education, science etc) in space would be attached, coordinated and functionally related one to another as a foundation of modern tourism concept.

Among others, cultural tourism (tourism based on cultural activities and cultural monuments) is on list of types of tourism regarding potentials for that kind of activity. That counts national and international visits, summer, longer stayings, picnic and transitional tourism, eco, monumental, religious, manifestations, scientific and educational tourism where monasteries as part of national and, confirmed by UNESCO, international importance, have their own place. As monasteries offer elements of monumental, religious and manifestations tourism than they have special place in eco tourism activities, especially in cases of natural surrounding locations. Consequently, offer is extended on education of children about tradition, scientific exploration in architecture, history, art etc.

In a course to relate economic and market orientation of tourism at the one side and complexly integrated tourism activities types at the other side, Spatial Plan of Republic of Serbia is proclaiming spatial- functional areas: tourism zones, tourism regions, transitional tourism directions, city tourism centres and spas.

Some of criteria that confirm relations between cultural tourism, economy and sustainability of the space are (1) socially most acceptable and economically most efficient using of Republic funds for capital infrastructure and following buildings constructing just as social standard uncommercial services with task to develop tourism and complement activities and (2) possibilities to realize developing effects attracting new markets and upgrading local environment and surrounding in global.

In following table chosen priorities in tourism development will be shown. Those priorities are divided in two groups: first, priorities in alreadyformed or initiated areas and tourism centers, which are in advantage compering to second group of priorities which are counted as new areas of tourism activities.

Table 2: Developing and ordering initiatives for tourism offer till 2010

Zone Part		Region Part		
Symbol	Name	Symbol	Name	Addition
I	Stara Planina	I.1	Babin Zub	
	Vlasina	I.2	Vlasinsko jezero sa Čemernikom i Vardenikom	
Sr	Kopaonik	Sr.1	Kopaonik - Željin - Vrnjačka Banja	Prva subregija objedinjene ponude
	Golija	Sr.2	Srednja Golija	
J	Šarplanina	J.1	Brezovica	
	Prokletije	J.2	Koprivnik	
		Z.1	Tara, Zlatibor i Zlatar	
		C.1	Jablanik, Povlen i Maljen sa Divčibarima	
		C.3	Đerdap	
		S.1	Fruška Gora	
		S.2	Gornje Podunavlje	
		S.3	Gornja Tisa	

Source: **Spatial Plan of Republic of Serbia, 1996**

In the same Spatial Plan priority is given to cultural monuments valorization and classification in zones of expected or already existing big changes- cities, towns and infrastructural corridors. Protection instruments and measures are reviewed and directed through made categorization such as: (1) Cultural monuments written in a list of World Cultural Heritage (Studenica, Sopoćani monasteries with Stari Ras) and suggested to be in this list (Gamzigrad, Dečani, Gračanica, Pećka Patrijaršija monasteries, monasteries at Fruška Gora and Đerdap with Lepenski Vir), (2) Cultural monuments of extraordinary importance, (3) Cultural monuments of great importance, (4) Other cultural monuments.

Also, in concept of protection classification on cultural values and monuments is given as: (1) Spatial cultural- historical areas (urban, rural, urban- rural types), (2) cultural monuments, (3) archeological sites and (4) Famous places.

Those categorizations and classifications are relevant in a course of protection level and protected area, proclaimed in relation to cultural heritage importance.

Goals and principles on which elemental protection of cultural heritage in Serbia is protected are material heritage preservation, rising of awareness about it, protection suppose to be integral, altogether with space that surrounds it, illegal building and inappropriate reconstructions control and cultural monument as economic issue in the same time thus treating it as developing potential in the space.

Protection of cultural monument concerns not only protection of monument itself, but its surrounding zone as well. Protected zone for one cultural monument consists of (a) directly protected zone (proclaimed by Institut for protection or some other institution) and of (b) other space important for appropriate good experience and presentation of monument (defined in spatial or master plan).

Planning and ordering process approaches to monumental protection incorporating data on monuments and their preservation in spatial/master plans altogether with instrument for their protection.

Studenica Monastery- Cultural Heritage as Part of Protected Natural Area

Studenica Monastery is located in South west Serbia, by Studenica river. Natural surrounding of Monastery has been protected since 1986 and today, as part of Golija Natural Park, it is area in the UNESCO's World Heritage List and MaB program.

There are two main reasons for that kind of treatment: natural and cultural. This area has long history, from prehistoric times till today and altogether with archeological sites, citadel remains, historical paths, settlements with preserved traditional architecture etc. make Studenica Monastery attractive and important in role of sustainable tourism in Golija Natural Park. Base of sustainability in tourism activities are: manifestation *Art Colony*, fairs, hiking path *Golija Transversal*, Studenica mineral water, everything fitting in concept of recreational, eco and cultural tourism.

Sustainable tourism indicators, tourism density and tourism intensity, show that impact of tourism, at the territory of Natural Park, is low. But, certain locations, where Studenica Monastery is included, have middle tourism intensity. Regarding gravitational area for collective accommodation here, tourism activities already taking possibility for serious impact on environment.

Accommodation offer consists of Studenica Hotel with 70 beds, outside Monastery walls and some capacities inside walls, but not officially included. Planed situation is 450 beds inside, outside walls and within rural households. Even if it is called "hotel", Studenica is not that in regular way, some classical services are not available and accommodation is not officially classified, so all of that influence on serious tourism offer on this location, but Golija Mountain as well. The other reasons are non defined gastronomic offer and without recent equipment. Till now, Golija area has been sightseeing destination, mostly with aim to visit Studenica Monastery, but more marketing and renewal in ideas and equipment are necessary to make this region economically worth. Also, economically speaking, not so negligible number of unsettled or deserted apartments, should be adapted for use in tourism demands.

Golija area is highly evaluated in hydroenergy potentials jet not used enough. Plan reserved few locations for new accumulations, among these one at Studenica river, approximately 20 km from Monastery. Construction is planed for 2021 but precaution is indispensable because intervention are going to be made upstream from Monastery and all possible changes and impacts has to considered in course not to damage medieval remains of national importance. If realization of



project are going to be done well, local tourism will have some advantages as well because future accumulation will be used not only for electric energy production, water

supplying but for tourism activities also. Reason more to be careful is that project details are not defined in Spatial Plan and unexpected acts in the future are possible.

Mileševa Monastery- Cultural Heritage as Part of Urban Surrounding

Similar as Studenica, Mileševa Monastery is located in the South West part of Serbia at the Mileševka River. Monastery is constructed in 1219, sponsored by Prince Vladislav. It is typically Raška School architecture mostly influenced by constructors that came from Dalmatia and other parts of Western seaside. In contrast to this, painters were coming from East thus bringing influence of Byzantine style. Today, the most valuable details of this piece of art are frescoes where Monastery is second ranged, right after Studenica. Specific is inclusion in urban area and Master Plan of Prijepolje town. At the other side, Mileševa Monastery with medieval Mileševica town and natural surrounding is spatial, cultural- historical area of extraordinary importance for Republic of Serbia. Concerning public interest of that significance, Prijepolje Municipality proclaimed *Decision on Protected Surrounding Proclamation - Mileševa Monastery Natural Area* in 1990. Boundaries of this space are extension of Natural Park- Mileševka River Canyon Protected Area. Within protected area there are tree zones different in protection level and allowed activities. Main goal of zoning is defense from illegal constructing and appropriate behaving in course to preserve already existing buildings and theirs surrounding. Proclaimed this document of protection conditions of use and constructing in Monastery and Mileševka River zone should be defined in way to guarantee relevant natural and cultural elements protection. Specifics of area needs a document for itself that will regulate construction, soil and land use.

Regarding morphologic characteristics of terrain and historical- ambient identity of space Master Plan of Prijepolje defined, among the others, Monastery Mileševa zone. In the same document are planed green zones down the Mileševa River banks to provide air flow and visual improvement of space. In course to preserve good visuallity sview to Monastery should be preserved and not diminished with new construction which is forbidden in 1 km radius from Monastery.



Tourism potential for Mileševa is good because of its historical and national value, location close to town so it might be combined with town tourism. The best way to participate in Monastery and regional economy is to Monastery arrange and manage its own economy. But, at the other side leadership in those kind of activities should be planed and provided, at least consulted by professionals because many aspects and values

are included- architecture, history, nature etc.- and it is hard to expect that people from Monastery could be introduced in all these kinds of activities in a proper level. Thus, behind aim of Monastery survival the main parson commenced space rearrangements and different object constructing (buildings, parks, fish lakes etc.) regardless to primordial values in space.

Althought there is bigger possibility for area to be preserved in sustainable manner because of officially proclaimed protection and plans made to arrange this area some issue are existed form previous time e.g. regional road corridor that crosses nearest frontage of Monastery's gate. This fact has to be changed in the future. Master Plan anticipated change of corridor but flexibly, without exact space definition.

Conclusion

Beside natural values, cultural heritage has very important role in sustainable tourism development especially when these two elements are combined. That is the case with most Serbian monasteries that raised in medieval century when hidden and sacral location for building had substantial role. So, these were naturally very attractive. Thanks to latency those places stayed naturally preserved keeping its natural values thus 'inviting' to be carefully managed and developed in sustainable way.

Regarding multifuncional values of Serbian monasterises (historical, cultural, national and international importance, architectural, painting relevance) altogether with preserved natural surroundings, those have a real potential to take inevitable place in offer for sustainable tourism. All the components of sustainability- social, ecological and economical- have its chance to take appropriate role in further tourism development. Not in equity, but in a qualitate balace, monastery could find way to independence and self standing respecting ecological principles and social capacities of area where it belongs.

Literature:

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