

## **TOURISM AND DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL SPACES OF SERBIA**

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### **Abstract**

One of the leading demographic problems that has hit Serbia is the demographic run off of rural areas. This is the actual problem that is being studied in world research. Rural areas are rich in natural and ethnic heritage, which is not valorized adequately or presented as a product on the tourist market to a sufficient extent. Many destinations in the world have, thanks to tourism, emerged from anonymity and revitalized rural areas. It is believed that tourism in mass form would succeed in stopping the process of emigration of the population, but even to the extent that it would lead to the return of the evicted population and the economic recovery of rural areas. The authors of the paper investigated the attitude of the local population about the representation and influence of tourism on the demographic development of rural areas in the villages of Vojvodina, Southwestern and Southeastern Serbia. Based on the analyzed data, it has been concluded that there are no parameters that would accurately determine the statistical impact of tourism on demography, but that certain positive assumptions can be made that would serve for extensive research.

**Keywords:** demography, tourism, rural development, Serbia.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Many forms of tourism, tourism products, support the concept of sustainable development of rural areas, and the impact of tourism on the revitalization of demographic elements in rural areas. To what extent does tourism affect the demographic elements of rural areas can only be said after extensive research into the development of tourism and the population. However, there is a problem of how to investigate this dependence in detail, and more precisely, direct and indirect influence on demographic elements. The question arises as to how much tourism can influence when Serbia's rural areas are concerned. It is possible to achieve an understanding of this dependence and assume the effects, but maybe not get specific and accurate statistical impact data. The most important thing is to recognize the dependence of tourism and the demographic development of rural areas, and point to the positive impact of this economic branch. The development of tourism activity has the power to stimulate the demographic development of rural areas. Many countries have shown that tourism was the initiator of demographic growth (Gajic et al. 2017). Tourism has the power to valorize all resources and elements that further influence other determinants of overall economic development, demonstrating its complexity. Tourism has a major impact on migration movements, mostly seasonal. Many settlements that do not belong specifically to the tourist regions, see the benefits of tourism regardless of the fact that they develop a non-residential form of tourism. If tourism is recognized as a branch that contributes to economic benefits, it

is possible to motivate the local population for mass development and improvement of the system of valorisation of natural and anthropogenic resources. It is therefore possible to stimulate a large part of the tertiary sector in rural areas, and especially the economic factor of employment, both direct and indirect in all tertiary activities (Chan et al. 2011). Tourist activity in rural areas affects the employment of women labor, especially through invisible employment, through the issuing of a room for accommodation. There are no specific ways to measure the exact impact of tourism on the development of demographic elements, but to a large extent it is of significance and the identification of positive impacts. In tourist regions it is possible to point out the impacts and dependence of these two components, however, in non-tourist regions exclusively, but heterogeneous, measuring dependency is very difficult. Tourism development that does not affect the change of space, settlement structure, social organization, while contributing in economic terms, can lead to demographic development in rural areas (Aref et al. 2009). By contrast, mass tourism and commercialization of resources can lead to opposite effects and missed investments. At the same time, economic balances would be created, because those branches that did not have an advantage in development would now have a greater significance in the system of all economic activities (Huh et al. 2006). It is therefore understandable that the result of the overall tourist impact on demographic development depends on the way in which the population responds to a certain objective situation. The method of this response, again, depends on the structure and characteristics of the population. In order to more easily determine the real impact of tourism as a factor of demographic development, it is desirable to structure the procedure of population research and to see in which elements and with how much sense and effect tourism is present. The authors of the work carried out research of the attitudes of the host as a service provider in the rural areas of Serbia. The research was carried out in the villages of Vojvodina, Southwestern and Southeastern Serbia, and in that way they obtained results that clearly speak about the assumptions of the positive impact of tourism on demographic rural development, but not the specific statistical data on the extent to which this dependence is represented (Smith et al. 1992; Jakkolo et al 2015).

## **1. THE NOTION OF RURALITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN SERBIA**

Rural areas are suitable for sustainable management of natural resources, ie conservation of nature and living environment, which is a basic feature of sustainability. Rural areas provide food and other raw materials of agricultural origin for the growing needs of the population, while achieving competitive income (Hekkula et al, 2011). The more massive development of tourism in rural areas can significantly affect demographic elements such as to keep the population in rural areas and to keep the resource gap between rural and urban areas in order to maintain the authenticity of the village. Also, development of tourism can equalize the quality of life in rural and urban areas and to enable the urban population to settle in rural areas with providing conditions for the return of the population from urban to rural areas. Tourism development increase the competitiveness of production and thereby generate higher incomes of agricultural producers and encourage agriculture and other activities, supporting all economic activities of the rural population, and encouraging the education of the rural population and raise awareness of the significance tourist activities and positive influence on all demographic factors of development (Vujko et al. 2017). The rural areas of the EU

continue to generate 45% of the newly created value, employing 53% of the total working population. More than 56% of the population live in rural areas, which include more than 91% of the EU territory. The European Union has accepted the concept of encouraging the sustainable development of rural areas based on sustainable economic development, which implies an increase in living standards, while at the same time preserving the natural, cultural and traditional heritage. In this way, rural areas in modern Europe are transformed into ecologically preserved and cultivated environments, which are systematically equipped with communal and social infrastructure, and develop sustainable agriculture and local entrepreneurship and connect with the environment (Badler et al. 2003).

The heritage of the traditional rural area represents a rich base for the dynamic development of rural tourism because these areas have preserved their landscape and numerous traditional features, such as architecture, traditional crafts and services, a diverse and rich offer of local specialties, especially cultural and historical diversity. With the lack of strategy and adequate support for this segment of rural development, the following obstacles can be considered as objective obstacles: lack of quality road infrastructure, lack of tourist infrastructure, poor financial support, poor coordination of development plans and activities and lack of marketing of tourism potentials of local rural areas. However, the biggest and most difficult obstacle to the development of the rural demographic factors is depopulation of rural areas. The strategy for rural sustainable development must be based on a strong link with tradition and all its elements. Such a practice would in the next phase generate the need for brand new activities and jobs, as well as the employment of the local population and the retention of young and educated people in the villages. The development of rural tourism certainly contributes to the following economic categories: GDP growth, unemployment reduction, creating workplaces that do not require special education, stimulate family business, return young people to the village, develop small business - accommodation, catering, trade, entertainment, increasing local residents and state revenues, foreign investment attraction, promotion of the development and variety in other sectors (local crafts, manufacturing and agriculture), infrastructure development (Tosun, 2002). Apart from the economic effects, there are other non-economic effects, but they are no less important for local communities: promotion of cultural heritage and cultural exchange, discovery of new different cultural activities, promotion of social integration, community involvement, conservation and promotion of indigenous cultural values, promotion of local citizens' entrepreneurship, protection of natural areas, improving infrastructure, protection of the landscape (Baloglu et al. 2003). In Serbia, about 85% of the total territory is classified as rural, with 55% of the population living in it, accounting for 41% of the country's GDP. The rural part of Serbia has about 3900 settlements. In rural areas of Serbia there are 1.365.000 households, which makes up 54% of the total number of households in Serbia. From 1991 to 2002, the number of people in rural areas in Serbia decreased by 3,6% in relation to the total decline in the population in the country by 1%, while in the period from 2002 to 2011 the number of inhabitants decreased by 311,139 (10, 9%). Rural tourism, at the moment, directly participates in the Serbian economy with 10.4 billion RSD (Serbian currency). This represents 16% of the total GDP in the travel and tourism sector in the Republic of Serbia in 2016. The average daily consumption recorded is lower than in other countries and amounts to 1900 RSD per person (15 euros), excluding the costs of accommodation and transportation. It is

estimated that in 2016 rural tourism realized 2.7 million nights or 27% of the total number of tourist nights in the Republic of Serbia. The average occupancy rate of a hotel in a rural accommodation is 4%, and the other accommodation capacities are 21%. (Master Plan of Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism in Serbia, 2015).

One of the key characteristics of demographic development in Serbia is the increasingly unfavorable age structure. Changes in the age structure in the period 2002-2011. years, indicate a continuation of the process of declining youth participation, while at the same time increasing the share of the elderly. Parameters of the age structure of the rural population are even more unfavorable. Every fifth inhabitant of the village in Serbia is older than 65 years, while in the region of South and East Serbia it is every fourth (Strategy of Agriculture and Rural Development of RS 2014, 2013). In the educational structure of persons older than 15 years in the Republic of Serbia, those with a completed secondary school (47%), whose share increased from the previous census by as much as 5 percentage points, were the most common. The same trend is present in rural areas, where persons with completed secondary education make up 37% of those older than 15 years old, and for the first time they are more in relation to the category of illiterate or without complete basic education (15% according to the last Census). The modest knowledge and lack of additional skills of the rural population are confirmed by the data according to which 97% of the rural population did not attend additional training programs, and 54% do not have special knowledge and skills. Such results adversely affect the overall capacity and competitiveness of the labor force of rural areas. Low labor quality can be considered as one of the factors that aggravate the economic development of rural areas, because it is the reason for the low entrepreneurial potential of rural residents, just as it causes a low economic interest of foreign investors. Such an environment stimulates the migration of highly educated people, because it is difficult to keep the educated workforce in areas without sufficiently attractive jobs that correspond to their education and ambitions (RS Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy 2014, 2013).

**Table 1: The state of rurality in Serbia and the region**

	Serbia	Croatia	Slovenia
Size of the rural area (% of the total territory)	85%	90%	90%
Rural population (% of the total population)	48%	44%	57%
Population in rural areas (inhabitants / km <sup>2</sup> )	84	79	102
Average unemployment in rural areas	21%	18%	9%
Number of households that have a tourist offer	300	400	600
Average number of overnight stays per year	150.000	220.000	300.000
Average tourist time (days)	2.8	2.8	3,7
Total accommodation capacities (number of beds)	8.000	8.900	6.000
Average utilization of capacity	40%	57%	70%
Average household income (in euros per year)	2.500	5.000	10.000

Source: created by the author based on statistical datas taken from the Internet sources (<https://www.dzs.hr/>, [www.stat.si/statweb](http://www.stat.si/statweb), [www.stat.gov.rs/](http://www.stat.gov.rs/))

## 2. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

The main method of research in this part of the paper will be the test method. The method of testing is a way of reaching the primary data of information, and its essence consists in collecting data through statements of other subjects (respondents), and through verbal communication with them using questionable statements. The survey method is a very often used method of finding information in data, and the breadth of its application has contributed to being considered as a modern method in marketing research. A survey questionnaire was used in the field survey realization as a means of testing.

The total number of respondents, the owners of rural households providing rural tourism services in the rural areas of Serbia explored in this paper is 46. The survey covered 15 municipalities that are grouped into the following regions: Vojvodina, Southwestern Serbia, South-East Serbia. Only a part of the wider research will be presented in this paper. The authors of the paper, have been investigating in the period from April to the June 2017. Participants in the research are providers of rural tourism services where researchers conducted research.

Table 2: A review of distributed of questionnaires by region

Region	Distribution of questionnaires
South Eastern Serbia	32.61%
Vojvodina	32.61%
South Western Serbia	34.78%

Source: created by author based on survey.

## 3. RESULTS OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

In this paper is given through the table 3 only the structure of respondents according to profession, as inhabitants of those rural areas. Other structures of respondents are given through the text of the paper.

Table 3: The structure of respondents according to profession

		Frequency	Percent %
Profession	agriculture	11	23.9%
	tourism	20	43.5%
	craft	6	13.0%
	other	9	19.6%
Total		46	100%

Source: Prepared by the author based on data analysis in SPSS 19.0.

In this part of the research paper we present the results of the analysis and the conclusions derived from the data processing collected by the household questionnaire. The aim of this phase of the research is to gain insight into the possibility of tourism's impact on demographic rural development in 15 municipalities of Serbia from the perspective of

the owners of rural households. A total of 52.2% of male respondents and 46.7% of the female population participated in the study. The highest percentage of respondents is aged 50-60, 32.6% of them. From 21 to 30 years of age it belongs 2.2%, from 31 to 40 of them 17.4%. A total of 19.6% was examined in the age from 41 to 50 years. Of the total number of respondents, 23.9% deal with agriculture, 43.5% tourism, 13% crafts and 19.6% other activities. With a completed high and high school total 26.1% of respondents. Then, with a secondary school 26.1%, with a basic 17.4%, and with an unfinished elementary school, 2.2% of the respondents in this research.

Table 4a): **Basic data of households**

Number of household members	1	2	3	4	5
	7%	29%	24%	27%	13%
Surface of property (square meters)	100	200	300	do 700	700 +
	27%	47%	11%	2%	13%
Categorization of objects (IP= in process)	I	II	III	IV	IP
	18%	44%	28%	4%	6%
Number of visitors per year	50	50-100	100-500	500-1000	1000+
	23%	7%	38%	16%	16%
<i>Type of accommodation (mean: B&amp;B= bed and breakfast)</i>					
Full accommodation		B&B	Overnight	All	Total
52%		26%	11%	11%	100%
Rooms in households		3 rooms	2 rooms	1 room	more
		20%	17%	2%	61%
Prices of services (RSD)		to 1000	to 1500	to 2000	to 3500
		24%	27%	33%	16%

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 19.0.

Table 4b): **Type of provided service in homes on farms engaged in rural tourism**

Provided service	Yes	No
Heating in winter	91%	9%
Air conditioners	40%	60%
French bed	63%	37%
Sofa	35%	65%
The bathroom	98%	2%
Homemade food	93%	7%
Sports activities	43%	57%
Field trips	80%	20%
Participation in activities	52%	48%
Creative workshops	37%	63%
Homemade drink	76%	24%

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 19.0.

Tables 4a and 4b present facilities and the quality of services that have been provided, by the hosts in those rural areas. According to the results of the survey, it was determined that 91% of the households provide adequate heating during the winter, but only 40% of the hosts have a proper air conditioner for the summer tourist season. Comfort is one of

the important requirements of tourists, and we tried to find out more about this by asking questions about the type of bearings found in households. The results show that 63% of the hosts offer a single bed, and the same number offers a double bed (suitable for two people). In 35% of households there is a sofa bed.

According to the results, only 2% of the respondents considered as a "satisfactory" equipment and arrangement of accommodation offered to tourists; 9% estimate accommodation as "good", slightly more than a third (1/3) as "very good" and even more than half (54%) as excellent.

Table 5: **The attitude of the owner of the farms about characteristics of services**

Assessment of equipment by the host									
Rate		5		4		3		2	
Percent		54%		35%		9%		2%	
Assessment of cleanliness and hygiene									
Rate		5		4		3		2	
Percent		76%		20%		4%		-	
Spaciousness and brightness									
Rate		5		4		3		2	
Percent		63%		26%		11%		-	
Assessment of peace and tranquility									
Rate		5		4		3		2	
Percent		87%		11%		2%		-	
Method of preparation of food									
Guest Kitchen		Host cooks		Outside the household		They share with the host		All	
69%		9%		4%		16%		2%	
Type of advertising									
Recommendation		Announcement		Association		Fares		Internet	
yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
78%	22%	24%	76%	33%	67%	49%	51%	89%	11%

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 19.0.

According to the results of the questionnaire, 4% of the respondents consider the cleanliness and hygiene service of the room as "good", 20% of them as "very good" and even 76% as excellent. Satisfaction with the quality of accommodation influences, the room's spaciousness and brightness, and we have included this feature in the questionnaire conducted by hosts providing tourist services to visitors of rural areas. About 11% of respondents rated as "good" the spaciousness and brightness of the room, 26% as "very good" and 63% as "excellent". Peace and quiet in the hostel's room are rated as "good" by 2% of the hosts, 11% of them rated as "very good" and 87% of respondents rated this service as "excellent".

The main problem that each household faces in the villages of Serbia, is small number of people in those households. There are mainly two members (29%), probably due to the most dominant age structure among the hosts, indicates an older couple whose children left home and who need additional sources of income. Slightly fewer four-member rural households (27%) and three-member households (24%) and at least those

with five or more members (13%). There are also other research limitations, as inaccessibility and poor acceptance of those households. In this sample, properties and houses hosted by tourists are mostly located within the village, 78%, while a smaller part of households outside the village. The facilities hosted by tourists are significantly different in size. The largest number of facilities, in particular 84% of the sample, is in the range of 30 to 300 m<sup>2</sup>, but there are also hosts who have registered farms from 2,000 to 20,000 m<sup>2</sup>. Of course, here we are talking about agricultural households, not the housing complex. Since these are small-sized tourism objects, it can be concluded that most households accommodate tourists in their private residences.

Considering the limited possibility of investing in the expansion of tourist capacities in Serbia, it can be concluded that tourism facilities in rural tourism are relatively small areas, they do not allow the accommodation of a larger number of tourists, and thus the possibilities for expanding this activity are very limited. About 73% of households are older than 20 years old. Houses hosted by tourists are mostly built in the last century, and renovated in the nineties and after 2000. Preservation of old houses nurtures the tradition and old customs of Serbian culture, and thus diversify the tourist offer on the market. Considering the old method of construction, maintaining such houses in good condition is considerably more expensive compared to houses of modern materials. Nurturing and providing opportunities for the preservation of these old buildings should be supported by numerous state subsidies and other cultural protection policies. Tourist facilities available to visitors of rural areas of Serbia, mostly (44%) are from the second category. The smaller part (28%) belongs to the third, while the first belongs to 18%, and the fourth category is 4% of tourist facilities (authors research). About 4% of facilities were still in the process of categorization in the research period. In Southwestern and Southeastern Serbia, tourism objects are of the second category, while in Vojvodina, tourism objects are the third and then other categories. A significant share of tourist facilities of the first category was recorded only in Southwestern Serbia. Even 86% of hosts whose facilities are categorized believe that the categorization process has been carried out in a fair way. The share of those who do not share their opinion is 14%. Hosts who believe that the categorization process has not been implemented in a fair manner has made it clear and why they share such an opinion.

Also, there are those respondents, who believe that the problem lies in the "constant change of regulations that can not be respected" or there is dissatisfaction with "incomplete and incomplete regulations by the categorizers." When asked which structure of visitors is primarily intended for their tourist offer, the majority of respondents (70%) claim that their tourist product is intended for all structures, 28% of the hosts claim that it is adapted to families, and only one host claims it is intended for business people. It is interesting that no household adapts its offer to the needs of children and youth. The number of visitors who use annual services and the tourist offer of households in Serbia varies significantly, from 12 to 2,500 people per year. The reason for this is the different development of the region of Vojvodina, Southwestern and Southeastern Serbia, as well as the difference in the tourism product offered by the hosts. According to the results of the analysis it was established that 9% of households have turnover up to 30 visitors per year, 14% of households from 30 to 50, and 7% from 50 to 100 visitors per year. The majority of households (38%) have 100 to 500 visits per



year, while 16% of households have between 500 and 1,000 and over 1,000 visits during the year.

The survey showed that the largest number of households are visited by both domestic and foreign tourists. Only 15% of households are visited exclusively by domestic tourists, and 4% of households come exclusively from abroad. In 80% of cases, guests are originating both from Serbia and other countries, which points to the existence of demand among foreign tourists for the tourist product of rural tourism in Serbia and potential for development in the future. In order to maintain and increase this demand in the future, more investment is needed in the promotion medium as well as in the improvement of the quality of accommodation units in rural areas of Serbia.

**Table 6: The average length of stay of tourists**

Length of stay	1 day	5 days	7 days	2 weeks	Longer
percent	5%	63%	26%	2%	4%

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 19.0.

According to the results from Table 6, there are 63% of those who are staying up to 5 days, 26% of the hosts claim that there are tourists who stay a week, while there are only 4% of tourist that stay longer. About 5% of the hosts claim that tourists stay on average for one day, while only 2% of the hosts claim it is two weeks. In order to develop a tourist offer, it is very important to establish good and lasting relationships with the users of tourist services. The tourism development of the region depends exactly on the relations that the hosts have built with tourists, since the tourists will share their experiences with acquaintances and other people with whom they are in contact. According to the research conducted, 89% of cases in the Serbian households are permanent guests, that is, those who, on the basis of positive previous experiences, decide to return to the rural areas of Serbia. The examined hosts had the opportunity to present in the questionnaire what are the most common demands of their guests. The answers were different, but what agrees most of the hosts is that their guests are the most important home-made foods and specialities, enjoying peace and quiet, a chance to visit the surrounding interesting places (sightseeing of pubs, villages, old cemeteries, churches and monasteries, nature walks, vineyard touring, tractor driving) as well as satisfactory communication with the hosts.

In all 100% of surveyed households from all three investigated regions (Vojvodina, Southwestern and Southeastern Serbia) offers accommodation services to visitors. In addition to accommodation, households are able to offer some other type of tourist attractions. The largest number of respondents, 78% of the hosts, have some kind of room for reception of visitors. Most often it is a courtyard with a table, chairs, a place for preparing food, a terrace or some kind of balcony, older buildings, restaurants, shops, playgrounds, ethno-cottages, as well as an exhibition space with ethno-setting. Traditional cuisine represents the primary characteristic of rural tourism. In our sample, even 93% of the hosts offer visitors homemade food. Also, two-thirds of the hosts (76.1%) offer their visitors a drink from their own cellar. Regarding the conditions for preparing food in households, the majority of tourists (69%) have the opportunity to prepare food in the kitchen, which is separately allocated for them; 16% of tourists prepare food in the kitchen shared with the host; in a couple of households (9%) the host

prepares food for guests, in only 2 households (4%) guests are fed outside the household, and in one household (2%) there are all mentioned possibilities.

In addition to traditional dishes, rural tourism is required due to the wide range of sports and recreational activities. However, according to our survey, less than half of households (43.5%) offer guests participation in sports and recreational activities. Considering the low incomes and small-sized households, we conclude that hosts included in the sample survey are not able to afford better conditions for improving their tourist offer. The results show that households from Southwestern Serbia are more likely to offer visitors the opportunity to participate in sports and recreational activities compared to Vojvodina and Southeast Serbia. This conclusion is supported by the fact that about half of the interviewed hosts offer visitors participation in host jobs. This primarily refers to the feeding of animals and the work of a farm or field. Although participation in rural jobs is one of the main attractions of rural tourism, only 52.2% of the hosts are able to offer this service to guests. The results of the hi-square test show that households from South-East Serbia are least able to offer their visitors the opportunity to participate in domestic affairs. In addition, we have come to the conclusion that only 37% of households provide visitors with participation in creative workshops. If we take into account the fact that we came to the survey that 84% of the hosts have a farm size up to 300 m<sup>2</sup>, it is expected that in such a small area it will not be possible to build a bigger farm that would expand the tourist offer.

However, despite the limited possibilities of the hosts to offer tourists something else in addition to their accommodation, 80% of the hosts offer visitors the opportunity to go on a trip around the household. Households from Vojvodina mostly offer this option to their visitors. In this way, the host tries to fulfill the time of the tourists by making them familiar with the sights and cultural features of the rural area in which they reside. According to data collected during the survey, it was found that most of the hosts, 52%, offer a full board to their guests, which means three meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and overnight. A smaller number of hosts, 26%, offers breakfast and overnight, while 11% offer only a bed. All three of these options offer only 11% of the host. From the sample we can conclude that households in Serbia mostly decide to offer full board to visitors to rural areas.

As far as accommodation capacities are concerned, only one host offers only one room available to tourists, 17% of the hosts have two rooms, 20% of the hosts reported three rooms in their offer, while the majority of respondents have more rooms than the above (61%). Data processing has shown that 80% of households issue accommodation throughout the year, while 20% of those who make it seasonally, or in certain months. This data can be positively evaluated from the point of view of the intensity and potential of rural tourism development in Serbia. The most important parameter of the quality of the accommodation unit is the price, ie the ratio of price and quality of accommodation on the basis of which tourists make their decision on the use of these services. According to the results of the survey, it was found that the price significantly varies, ranging from 640 to 3,500 RSD. The analysis shows that 24% of households offer the price of up to 1,000 RSD, while a slightly higher number offers the price of up to 1,500 RSD. The largest share of households, 33%, offers the price of up to 2,000 RSD, while the smaller

part, about 16%, charges the highest prices for their tourist product. However, it should be emphasized that the supply of households differs.

When asked about how many times they have hosted tourists in their household so far, 98% (45 of the 46 respondents) answered that she hosted more than 5 times. Repeated catering activity suggests that an increasing number of households from rural areas of Serbia accept this activity, which confirms the tendencies and potentials of rural tourism development in Serbia. Only one respondent replied that up to now he had only 5 occasions to accommodate tourists.

When asked what kind of benefits they have had since rural tourism, half of the respondents (51.1%) answered "financial". Considering the degree of economic underdevelopment of Serbia, and especially rural regions in Serbia, it is expected that a larger number of hosts are looking for a source of additional income through undertaking tourist activities. Even 40% of the hosts say that they had some other benefit (for example, learning a foreign language in conversation with tourists), 6.5% of respondents consider that the benefits besides the financial (including the opportunity to sell their products) mirrors and the opportunity to get to know and socialize with people. Only one respondent stated the opportunity to get to know and socialize with people as the primary benefit in relation to financial. The question "Which year did you start to receive tourists?" Showed that the hosts mainly started to work in rural tourism in the late 1990s and after 2000. Only 4% of households started this activity before the 21st century. This data coincides with the period in which the hosts upgraded and renovated their facilities, but also with the period of the crisis of the political and economic situation in the country. More than half of the respondents (56.5%) are members of an association of rural households. Membership in associations can contribute to the development of rural tourism, the promotion of rural tourism, and the promotion of cooperation among rural households. The following associations are listed: "Cenej Salads"; "Eco-ethno Kosjerić"; "Cluster Sombor"; "Entrepreneur for rural tourism in Serbia"; "Tourist Organization Negotin"; "Tourist Organization of Kovačica Municipality"; "Tourist Organization of Pirot"; "Host Association - Valjevo"; "Association of hosts in eco-rural tourism Skokenovac"; "Association of the Local Community of Cream"; "Association of Danube Bački Monoštor"; "Association of rural hosts of Serbia"; "Tourist Organization of Gornji Milanovac"; "Association in eco-rural household"; "Women's Association Banstolka" and "Vesnik". Tourist agencies and organizations play a major role in promoting promotion and development of tourist offer of rural regions. For this reason, we asked the hosts if they had established cooperation with some of these organizations. The survey results show that 96% of the hosts have cooperation with them, which is a positive indicator of their interest in increasing tourist demand and supply. Organizations listed in the questionnaire are: Tourist Organization of Serbia (TOS), Tourist Organization of Vojvodina (TOV), tourist organizations of Belgrade, Bor, Valjevo, Gornji Milanovac, Dimitrovgrad, Zaječar, Indjija, Ivanjica, Knjaževac, Kovačica, Kosjerić, Ljiga, Majdanpek, Negotin, Nova Varos, Novi Sad (TONS), Pirot, Senta, Skokenovac, Sremski Karlovci, Uzice, "local tourist organization"; Host Association Valjevo; travel agency Panacomp - Wonderland Novi Sad, Banat Tours (Kikinda), Bon Voyage (Novi Sad), Magelan (Novi Sad), Fijaker (Backa Palanka), Miross (Belgrade), Kompas Brod (Slavonski Brod), Kompas Ljubljana, Limba (Bratislava, Slovakia), Tourist agency Sombor, agencies DMC Vekol (Belgrade), BTL (Belgrade).

The ways of promotion are a means of attracting tourists and provide development of the tourist offer of the rural region. However, these funds require financial investments which, due to the unstable and crisis economic situation in Serbia, are very difficult to secure. Having in mind this situation, we gave the hosts the opportunity to state their way of promoting their tourist offer. According to the results of the research, we found that no host among the respondents advertises their tourist offer. This is a very devastating result, which is the result of low income and worsening economic situation in the country.

Due to the lack of financial means for advertising in the media, the hosts of rural areas of Serbia rely on the oral recommendations of acquaintances, fellow citizens and guests. According to the survey results, 78% of respondents believe that the arrival of new guests comes from recommendations, while 22% disagree with this claim. In addition to advertising problems, we have found that there is a problem in labeling the facility where accommodation is offered. Even 76% of households do not have a prominent rental notice. The reason for the poor traffic and tourist traffic in these areas of Serbia can to a certain extent be explained by the lack of funds for promotion and advertising, as well as inadequate labeling of the objects that are being issued.

According to the results of the questionnaire, it is estimated that about a third of households are advertised through tourist associations where they are members, and almost half of the respondents take part at tourism fairs to promote their tourism product. The results show that the percentage of households using these means of advertising and promotion is very low, and that there is a problem in advertising and promotion, which results in low tourist visibility and poor prospects for the development of rural tourism in Serbia in the future. The survey has shown that most households advertise via the internet, as it is currently the cheapest means of promotion and, unfortunately, the only households in Serbia that can afford it. Even 89% of respondents use the internet to present their tourist offer and attract guests. As for tourist plans for the construction or upgrading of new accompanying facilities, 64% of the hosts have such plans, while 36% do not plan for this kind of investment in their households currently. This is a sign that there is a household interest, as well as potential, for improving the tourist offer for visitors to rural areas in Serbia. In the development of rural tourism, public and state institutions, as well as non-profit organizations, play an important role by providing funds, either in terms of finance or some other form, to promoting and improving the region's tourist offer that is less developed. In order to assess the participation of state institutions in the development of rural tourism in Serbia, the survey covered issues related to the provision of financial resources.

When asked if they received incentive funds or some other kind of assistance from the municipality to improve the rural tourism product, 65% of households answered affirmatively. However, about one-third of the sampled sample, or more precisely 28%, responded negatively to this question, which is a significant number. The most common answers are that the funds were provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as the institutions of some municipalities, such as the Municipality of Negotin and others. In order to get a more detailed insight into the needs of households and the obstacles to the development of this form of tourism, we asked the question of what kind of support would best suit households for this purpose. The largest number of respondents (70%)

answered "financially", while there were also those who, in addition to financial support, would also welcome "moral support" (2%), "logistical promotional" (2%), "marketing" (4%), Promotional logistic (2%), credit (2%), promotion (2%), promotion and education, each type of assistance (2%) and two respondents (4%) said they do not need help.

## CONCLUSION

Multistage neglect of agriculture and the natural and demographic exhaustion of rural areas have resulted in very negative economic and social trends and today's unfavorable situation, characterized by numerous problems. The most important among them are small and non-competitive farms, a large number of agrarian holdings, fragmented agricultural land, small production plots, extensive and low technological level of production, insufficient or inadequate use of agro-technical measures, poor productivity, poor management of manure and agricultural waste, such agriculture results in poor income, is non-competitive and unprofitable and can not be a factor in sustainable development in the current situation. The development of rural tourism as a sustainable system depends on many factors that are changing and adjusting all the time through various plans, actions and negotiations. It is believed that the people who provide this type of service are active participants of the development itself (Ozledim et al, 2015).

The authors of the paper examined the attitude of the local population, more precisely the service provider, the offer that is offered to tourists, and the quality and way of improving the offer. The authors carried out the research in Vojvodina, Southwestern and Southeastern Serbia, with a total of 46 respondents. On the basis of the data on the evaluation of the quality of services by the host, it can be concluded that the top-rated services are such as domestic food (93%), tours (80%), and serving domestic drinks (76%). Rating of other provided services is not satisfactory perceived by the host.

In order to develop tourism to a greater extent, every household would have to be able to accommodate 45-50 people, what is the usual standard for tours with bus transport. In terms of prescribed standards of quality units, identified numerous problems that the owners of rural households are facing. Households in rural areas of Serbia are generally small and have no room for improvement of tourist offer. If we take into account the limited possibility of investing in the expansion of tourist facilities in Serbia, leads to the conclusion that the tourism facilities in rural tourism is relatively small areas, do not allow hosting a large number of tourists, and are thus able to expand these activities are very limited. Accordingly, categorization is quite inadequate. In the Southwest and Southeast Serbia dominated by objects other categories, while in Vojvodina is dominated by objects of the third and then the second category. A significant proportion of tourist facilities first category is recorded only in Southwest Serbia. They are mostly older buildings (73%). The local population said that tourism should be seen as material gain in the first place. In addition, even 76% of households have a prominent notice on the issuing of stay. It has been established that 35% of owners of rural households had no access to financial assistance for the improvement of the tourism product. It was found that hosts does not advertise its tourist offer, but rely on recommendations of previous guests. These results point to a weak level of organization in promoting the development of rural regions in Serbia. The assessments given, can not greatly affect the demographic

development and the changes in rural areas, but certainly can in some way contribute to the understanding of a lesser degree of tourist orientation (Svaradova et al. 2013). Awareness of the impact of tourism on rural development and all demographic elements exists, but the poor development of this activity can certainly not contribute and present concrete data. It is possible to create a positive attitude about the impact of tourism on the positive changes in demographic factors in the rural regions, and accordingly, all tasks and plans are directed to develop a more massive form of tourism trends and thus arouse the expectations that are expected. The development of tourism is considerably more than in other activities conditioned by the quality of the environment, its natural and cultural values, because the degree of preservation and attractiveness of the environment directly reflects the possibilities for the development of tourism in a given area. Rural tourism and its development can not be treated separately from community activities (Said et al. 2001). Management, cooperation and cooperation in business are prerequisites for establishing rural tourism, networking, partnership and regional institutions. The development and realization of rural tourism must take place through cooperation not only at the level of local communities, but also through regional cooperation and integration into wider international programs. Connecting with national and international associations, whose activity is not only related to the development of rural tourism, but also to integral and sustainable development as a whole, in addition to facilitating the exchange of information and experience and adopting methodologies, contributes to efficient marketing. Rural tourism provides opportunities on which a local and regional strategy can be based (Palmer 2010). Therefore, its successful development depends on strategic cooperation involving a wide range of stakeholders. Effective partnerships between the public and the private sector are the basis for sustainable development. But while public sector involvement is welcome, innovations need and often come from the private sector by those who live and work in the area.

One of the main limitations in the research is certainly the lack of funds to complete a comprehensive survey. The work is part of a wider research, and only the data related to the presented topic are shown here. In addition, the problem is, in the cooperation of the service provider, more precisely, the lack of understanding by the host. The awareness that this research would help better rural development is not always present in them. A large number of houses are located in inaccessible parts of the village, and certainly for authors this was also one of the limiting factors of research.

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## **UTJECAJ TURIZMA NA DEMOGRAFSKI RAZVOJ U RURALNIM MJESTIMA SRBIJE**

### **Sažetak**

Jedan od vodećih demografskih problema koji je pogodio Srbiju je demografski pad u ruralnim područjima. Radi se o problemu koji se proučava u mnogim svjetskim istraživanjima. Ruralna područja bogata su prirodnom i tradicijskom baštinom, koja se u dovoljnoj mjeri ne valorizirala adekvatno ili kao proizvod na turističkom tržištu. Mnoge destinacije svijeta, zahvaljujući turizmu, izašle su iz anonimnosti i revitalizirala su ruralna područja. Vjeruje se da bi turizam u masovnijem obliku uspio zaustaviti proces iseljavanja stanovništva, čak i u toj mjeri da dovede do povratka iseljenog stanovništva i gospodarskoga oporavka ruralnih predjela. Autori rada su istraživali stav lokalnoga stanovništva o zastupljenosti i utjecaju turizma na demografski razvoj ruralnih prostora u selima Vojvodine, jugozapadne i jugoistočne Srbije. Na temelju analiziranih podataka došlo se do zaključka da ne postoje parametri kojima bi se točno utvrdio statistički utjecaj turizma na demografiju, ali se mogu napraviti određene pozitivne pretpostavke koje bi poslužile za opsežnija istraživanja.

**Ključne riječi:** demografija, razvoj, turizam, ruralni razvoj, Srbija.

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