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The recreational potential of waterfalls in an example of Gabala district

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Abstract

Gabala district is a famous tourist destination in South Caucasus. Tectonic feature, lithological and topographical structure, climatic condition and river regimes of this region result in observing a great potential in terms of waterfalls. There is a Yeddi Gozel (Seven Beauties) waterfalls in this district which attracts both domestic and international visitors. At the same time there are other waterfalls in this district which of the value remains underestimated and their potential is not being used enough in tourism. In these articles we investigate the accessibility of these waterfalls, their altitude, proximity to the road, proximity to other attractive objects in terms of tourism. Taking all this into account we estimate their accessibility and their touristic potential. Considering the studied waterfalls we made a map on ArcGIS 10.5, we proposed three touristic routes in the region and grouped other touristic objects that tourists can enjoy on that route. Thus, these routes can be used to attract more tourists and bring more income to the country and the local people.

1. Introduction

Ecotourism is a responsible tourism to the natural areas which conserves environment and improves the well-being of local people. The south slope of Great Caucasus is well known for its mountainous ecosystems, historical monuments and variety of ecotourism destinations. Among various tourism resources this region is rich with its waterfalls- must-visit sites for travelers. The purpose of this article is to reveal the unfamous waterfalls of study region, to determine the way to reach them, evaluate their recreational potential and add them to the tourism route.

Waterfalls are landforms of limited occurrence, natural curiosities which are rare or absent entirely across most of the inhabited world. Waterfalls display a variety of visual characteristics and sounds that together make them particularly attractive to the beholder. Engaging with waterfalls is a part of the “adventure travel” and is attractive to travelers in search of a deeper travel experience.

2. Method

This research uses survey method. Data was collected by using field observation and Google Earth

Pro. Data analysis with descriptive analysis. Research was carried out in a Gabala region in South slope of Great Caucasus. During the field observation we discuss famous and unfamous waterfalls in a mountainous region of this village, investigate their accessibility for the tourists, make a map in ARCGIS 10.8 showing the location of waterfalls and the ways which can take tourists to these objects. We evaluated the tourism potential of the area by revealing the tourism attractiveness of the surrounding areas. We grouped the waterfalls and divided them into 3 tourist routes so that the tourists who are waterfall lovers can visit several waterfalls in the same trip. We also assessed the attractiveness of tourist routes by noting other tourist facilities available along these routes.

3. Results

From the discussion we revealed that Gabala district has 3 types of waterfalls in terms of accessibility. Easily accessible waterfalls are two- Yeddi Gozal and Durja. They have 0-2 km distance from the way or village. Hard accessible waterfalls have 2-4 km distance from the way or village, very hard accessible waterfalls are situated more than 4 kilometers away from the way or village.

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Table 1. Accessibility degree of waterfalls

Water-falls	Attitude (m)	Distance from the way or the nearest village (km)	Accessibility		
			easy	middle	hard
Yeddi Gozal	1059	0,3	+		
Durja	1608	0,82	+		
Soyuqbulaq	2180	2,44		+	
Zeylik	1496	2,2		+	
Ag chay	1419	3,3		+	
Gazan	1931	4,39			+
Mujug	1931	4,7			+
Mijixjadaur	2125	5,48			+
Gamarvan	1774	5,69			+

village is Gamarvan village. The village provided with guesthouses. There is a Istisu sanatorium in Gamarvan which theats some diseases with mineral water. Gamarvan village has a summer pasture in mountains. So, tourists can enjoy from lambs, clean and cool weather in summer.

All three routes are high estimated routes because of their listed attractions.

4. Discussion

Typically found in difficult, even dangerous, terrain waterfalls are often made easier to reach and enjoy by the construction of footpaths and other amenities. Yeddi Gozal (Seven Beauties) is a seven-storey waterfall which is located at an altitude of 1103 m at the foot of the mountain in a thick forest. These waterfalls are 6 km from the village of Vandam. This waterfall is the most easily accessible waterfall in Gabala district. Yeddi Gozal (Seven Beauties) waterfall is equipped with wooden stairs, because two of them are seen from below, to see another five waterfall tourists have to climb stairs.

Durja waterfall is in the Durja village, on 1608 m, on the Durjachay river, the tributary of Demiraparanchay. Distance from the village is 0,82 km. From Gabala to Durja village there is a cable car and highway, to the waterfall there is a hiking trail.

Many tourists dislike the commercial development at some waterfalls and so are encouraged to go to other, less developed falls. This in turn, contributes to the development and degradation of remoter, more pristine waterfalls sites, thus incurring the further spread of tourism blight.

There is The Soyugbulag waterfall which is three storey waterfalls on the Vendamchay river basin, on 2180 m altitude. This waterfall is 2,44 km away from the village way. Waterfall has a hiking route passing through the valley os the Vandam river and continues by the mountain river through the forest.

Gazan waterfall is on the Dastamazchay river basin on 1200 m altitude. is 4,39 km away from the village way. It has very difficult and dengarous way. So, tourists who like difficulty can go and enjoy from this waterfall.

Mujug waterfall is the highest waterfall of Azerbaijan on a Demiraparanchay river basin. The waterfall is far from the settlement. It has 4,7 km distance from Laza village. There is no road leading to this waterfall. So, getting to Mujug waterfall is an adventure tour. Tourists have to climb into the mountains, hike or horseback ride to the waterfall.

Near the Mujug waterfall there is a Michighchadaur waterfall on 2125 m altitude. Between Mucug and Michighchadaur there is a 1 km distance. And this way passes from forested mountains.

Zeylik waterfall is situated in Laza village on 1496 m, on the Demiraparanchay basin. 2,2 km far from the village. It is located 5 km deep in the forest of Shahdag National Park. The road to the waterfall passes through forest path and river bed.

Ag chay waterfall is on the 1419 m, on a Gamzelichay basin. The nearest village is Gamarvan village. The distance from the village is 5,69 km. There is a camp site on this way.

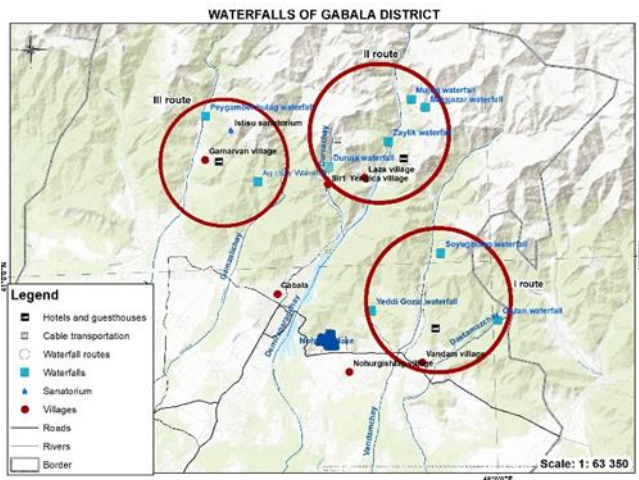


Figure 1. Tourism routes for waterfall trips

Table 2. Indicators used in the evaluation of tourism potential

Type	variables	I route	II route	III route
Natural resources	Waterfall	+	+	+
	Landscape	+	+	+
	Wildlife	+	+	+
Tourism infrastructure	Hotels, guesthouses	+	+	+
	Campsites	+	+	+
	Treatment			+
	Cable transportation		+	
	Horse riding	+	+	+
General infrastructure	National road	+		
	Village road	+	+	+

It is seen from the Table 2 that all 3 routes is rich with touristic resources. I route includes three- Soyugbulag, Yeddi Gozel and Gazan waterfalls. The nearest village is Vandam village. The region is a forested mountain region. Region provided with hotels and Baku-Balaken highway passes through from this village.

II route include four- Mujug, Mujukhजार, Zeylik and Durja waterfalls. Mujug is the highest waterfall of Azerbaijan. The nearest villages are Laza and Durja villages. These villages also provided with hotels. In Durja village there is a cable transportation which begins from Gabaala district, III route include two waterfalls- Peygenberbulaq and Ag chay waterfalls. The nearest

Peygamber bulaq waterfall is on the 1579 m altitude, 1,94 km from the spring named Chomche bulag, 3,51 km from the Campsite and 6,49 km from the Gamarvan village.

5. Conclusion

Waterfalls are the most attractive natural objects that attract tourists even though there are accessible or not. In these articles we investigate the waterfalls situated in Gabala district. We clarified their accessibility. We grouped waterfalls being near to each other in three routes. We noted another touristic resources and attractiveness of this routes and estimated all these routes with high assessment.

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