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MUSEUMS OF ARAGATSOTN REGION AS A TOURIST RESOURCE

In the article, we present the museum resources of Aragatsotn region, wanting to raise whether the museum resources of the region are within the scope of tourists' interests. Museum tourism can be defined as tourists visiting museums in order to get acquainted with certain historical and cultural values and heritage. Museums today are the mainstay of the tourism industry are a part. We have conducted a number of surveys among tourists to record accurate data and raise the issues that concern tourists.

Aragatsotn region is distinguished by its natural and man-made recreational resources, among which museums stand out. The public is not aware of many of the museums, so the purpose of this research is to make a cadastral evaluation of the museums and to recommend tourist development routes. Thus, it can be concluded that modern architectural and constructional solutions for museums attract tourists from all over the world, unusual architectural forms arouse the interest of consumers and motivate them to actually visit the museum.

In the field of cultural tourism, museum tourism is a special activity of museums known for the production and sale of various tourist products such as creation of exhibitions, organization of internal and external excursions and presence of museum shops. This direction in tourism appeared relatively recently, in the 1970s in the West and in the mid-1990s in Russia. There are many scientific works on museum resources, different authors have referred to museums in different ways, but the goal of all of them is to present the museum as a cultural asset.

A new approach to understanding the nature and public purpose of the museum is being developed. The focal point is the person involved in the museum framework rather than the museum itself as an object with its properties and functions. The authors listed above have referred to museums as a tourist resource, presenting an international experience. In the past when visiting a museum there was a norm to be silent in the museum, listen to the tour guide, and only possibly ask a questions in the end after getting permission. All these used to repel the visitors, because they seemed to have appeared in a mold and the rights of the visitor were limited. And now a new culture is emerging, in which it is encouraged to touch museum exhibits, to have an interactive experience, form a clearer picture and develop the imagination.

The results may be useful for governmental and local authorities, as well as the private sector, for improving their tourism development policies.

Keywords: *Aragatsotn region, tourist resource, cadastral assessment museum, house-museum, cultural value, historical-architectural monument.*

In cites: Margaryan, V.G., Harutyunyan, E.H., Kandyba, Yu. (2024). Museums of Aragatsotn region as a tourist resource. *Human Geography Journal*, 37, 41-48. <https://doi.org/10.26565/2076-1333-2024-37-04>

Introduction. Today, large-scale art projects can revive the lost interest in destinations that are in decline, or can be the tool that can upscale the economy in cities that are experiencing an economic crisis.

Lack of spiritual culture is obvious in modern conditions of social development. Tourism, including cultural tourism, is meant to fill that gap, and museums are essential here. One of the ways of spiritual development of the society is cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is a form of tourism that aims to explore the culture and cultural environment of the place of visit, including the landscape, get acquainted with the

traditions of the inhabitants and their lifestyle and art, creating various forms of entertainment for the local people.

Aragatsotn region is distinguished by its natural and man-made recreational resources, among which museums stand out. The public is not aware of many of the museums, so the purpose of this research is to make a cadastral evaluation of the museums and to recommend tourist development routes.

The purpose of the article is to research the museum resources of Aragatsotn region and clarify the attitude of

tourists visiting the marz regarding the museum resources of the region. The topic chosen by us is not accidental, because the museum resources of the region are little researched, and therefore the range of interests of tourists is not clarified.

The purpose of the article is to research the museum resources of Aragatsotn region and clarify the attitude of tourists visiting the marz regarding the museum resources of the region. The topic chosen by us is not accidental, because the museum resources of the region are little researched, and therefore the range of interests of tourists is not clarified.

Among young people, the interest in museums tours has also started to increase. Visits to specific museums, organizing class-events in museums are also encouraged in schools. However, there is still very little scientific literature on museum tourism in Armenia. The purpose of our work is to highlight the museum resources of Aragatsotn region, reflect on the current state of resources, the flow of the tourists, make a cadastral assessment and suggest possible directions for development in order to develop the museum culture in the regions in addition to the capital Yerevan. The cadastral assessment implies a comprehensive assessment of the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of museums.

Our work consists of several parts of the assessment of the museum resources of Aragatsotn region, we have reflected on the current state of the resources, the movement of the number of tourists, the range of interests of tourists, we have made a cadastral assessment and suggested possible directions for development.

Currently, tourists are very careful when choosing routes, because there are many requirements, any tourist carefully studies the route, adjusts himself, of course, observing the safety rules. We will present our requirements and concerns, as we ourselves are potential tourists: safe area, convenient geographic location, attractive area

The above can be changed depending on the wishes of the tourists, but we believe that these are basic and important, although there may be a clash of opinions.

Materials and methods of research. In the article,

we wanted to highlight the tourist opportunities of the museum resources of the Aragatsotn region of the Republic of Armenia, wanting to find out whether the museums of the region are objects of interest for tourists or not. We have identified the tourist potential and importance of museums as a historical and cultural value. In the course of the research, the relevant literary sources were analyzed and used [7-10, 12, 15].

Cultural tourism is a form of tourism that aims to explore the culture and cultural environment of the place of visit, including its landscape, get acquainted with the traditions of the inhabitants and their lifestyle and art, creating various forms of entertainment for the local people. Cultural tourism can include visits to cultural centers - museums, cultural heritage sites, contacts with local residents, as well as the organization of cultural events. The term "cultural tourism" emerged relatively recently, in the 80s of the XX century [8]. Museum tourism, as a new branch of cultural tourism appeared quite recently as an independent direction.

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A new approach to understanding the nature and public purpose of the museum is being developed. The focal point is the person involved in the museum framework rather than the museum itself as an object with its properties and functions [13]. The authors listed above [8, 13] have referred to museums as a tourist resource, presenting an international experience.

The wishes and demands of tourists can be controversial if the tourist has not researched the route in advance. When talking about specific museums, we can say that we recorded several facts of interest to tourists, which we will present in fig. 1.

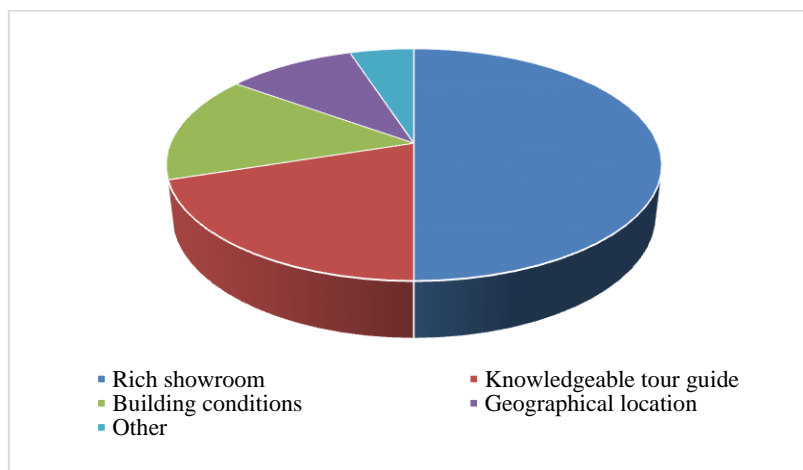


Fig. 1. Interesting questions of tourists about museums

The main methods used in the article are: micro and macro analyses, statistical methods, correlation analysis, SWOT analysis. We conducted the surveys with 105 tourists who were participants of inbound and outbound tourism, about 85 percent had higher education and were sufficiently aware of the field, they researched the area before choosing a route. The respondents were of different ages in order to get a better understanding of the survey.

Based on the characteristics of the research, the goal and the problems before us, we used both general and special research methods, such as comparative, analytical, historical and survey.

Through the SWOT analysis, we form a brief and comprehensive understanding of the special features of the object under study.

During the study and analysis of the museum resources of the Aragatsotn region, we also used GIS technologies and remote sensing data (RSD). Some modern methods involve the combination of expert methods of research and GIS technologies, which allows

not only to process a large volume of spatial data and use these images as cartographic material, but also to verify them through direct natural surveys in the field. In addition, this allows not only to process a large amount of spatial data and visualize this data as cartographic material, but also to verify it with field survey data.

Research results. Aragatsotn region is distinguished by its historical and architectural monuments. Museums have their own role and importance here. When tourists visit the region, they get to know not only the churches, ancient castles, but also the house-museums of prominent Armenians and the latest interactive museums. Here, the tourists will find answers to a number of questions that concern them. In addition to traditional museums, they will also find a new one with an interesting presentation.

There used to operate 14 museums in the region, but now there are 13 operating (fig. 2). Museums are located in the cities of Ashtarak, Aparan, Talin, as well as in neighboring communities. Museums reflect the culture and history of the region.

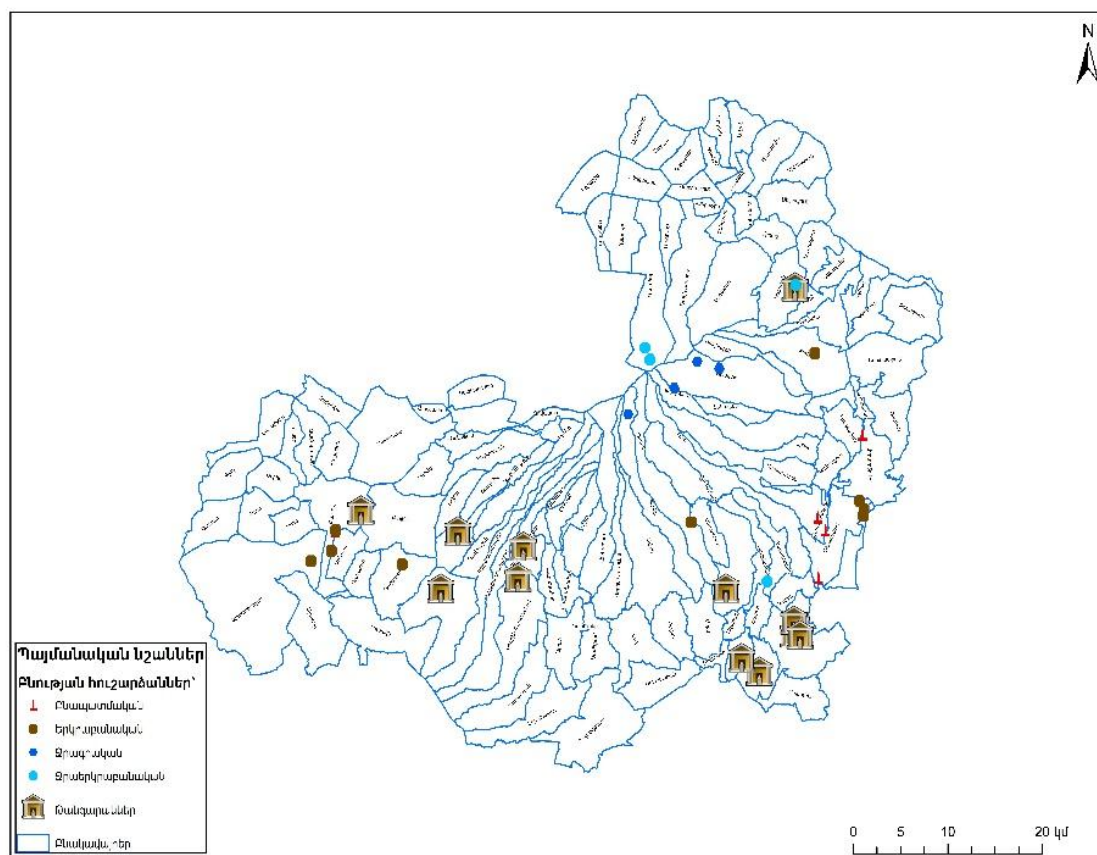


Fig. 2. Map of museums and natural monuments of Aragatsotn region

Viktor Hambardzumyan's House-Museum - The private house of the National Hero of the Republic of Armenia Victor Hambardzumyan (1908-1996) was built in 1950. It is the first building put into operation in the territory of the Byurakan observatory. The famous scientist lived and conducted his creative activities with his family in that house since then until his death. It opened as a house-museum in 1998 on the occasion of the famous scientist's 90th birthday. The house-museum

encompasses Victor Hambardzumyan's biography, his family history, his professional path as an astrophysicist and rich documentary materials about his exceptional significance in the development of science in Armenia, many diplomas, scientific works, manuscripts, honors and awards. The first floor of the museum houses the scientist's office and his personal library comprised of more than 3,000 books. Here you can get acquainted with the scientist's many diplomas, honors, personal

photos and gifts given by prominent people. On the second floor, there are the family's bedrooms, plaster casts of Viktor Hambardzumyan's face and hands, and personal items. Thematic events, conferences and Hambardzumian readings are organized in the museum. The house-museum is a unique educational and inspirational environment, receiving thousands of visitors every year, mostly schoolchildren, for whom the entrance to the museum is free of charge [10].

Perch Proshyan's House-Museum - The museum was founded on May 16, 1948 in the city of Ashtarak where the famous writer was born. At first, the museum presented the bakery and two small rooms of the Proshians' house. Later, in 1965, another room was added. The two-story building of the museum was built in 1990. There is also a pantry and a bakery in the building, which exhibit the 18th-19th c. copper, clay, wooden household items and tableware. Other halls display materials, pictures and personal belongings related to Proshyan's life and literary and social activities. Three exhibition halls were built next to the memorial house, one of which is furnished with the writer's personal belongings, and the other two exhibits items related to his life and activities, which were mainly acquired due to the donation of Proshyan's descendants.

The house-museum has more than 2,000 commemorative and auxiliary items, which represent Proshyan's literary, pedagogical and social activities. The house-museum was renovated in 2008 and the exhibition was renewed as well. The museum is considered one of the active cultural hubs of Ashtarak [16].

Grigor Ghapantsyan Museum - The museum was founded in 1987, in Ashtarak, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the famous linguist and historian Grigor Ghapantsyan (1887-1957). For ten years, the armenologist worked in a separate building next his the father's house, then he moved to Ashtarak school No. 4 named after Grigor Ghapantsyan, where his works occupy a separate department.

About 300 manuscripts, photographs, books, works of fine art, and personal belongings representing Ghapantsyan's life and fruitful scientific activity are exhibited in the museum. Currently, the museum artifacts have been temporarily moved to the Museum of Literature and Art named after Yeghishe Charents.

House-Museum of Gevorg Chaush - Gevorg Chaush was a figure of the Armenian National Liberation Movement. The House-Museum of Gevorg Chaush is located in the village of Ashnak. The museum was built in the 1980s with the initiative of Chaush's cousin, Gevorg Melkonyan, and was designed by architect Rafael Israelyan. The museum presents the life and activities of Gevorg Chaush. In addition, exhibits describing the personal belongings of the famous general and the historical events of the beginning of the 20th century of Armenia are presented [6].

"Agarak" reserve-museum - It is located on a rocky promontory made of volcanic tuff outcrops on the right bank of the Amberd River in the administrative areas of Agarak and Voskehat villages, on both sides of the Yerevan-Ashtarak-Gyumri highway. One of the main features of the monument is that the entire area of the settlement and its surroundings are completely covered

with huge complexes of rock-hewn and stone-hewn structures, most of which are associated with the Early Bronze Age settlement of Agarak. There are rock-hewn niches, stairs leading to these niches and other structures of significance.

House-museum of Mushegh Galshoyan - The house-museum of the Armenian novelist is located in the village of Katnaghbyur which is the birthplace of the writer. The museum opened in 2004. The museum presents the writer's personal belongings and details of his creative life [1].

Gourmet Durme chocolate tourist showroom - The Armenian chocolate brand "Gourme-Durme" founded in 2007 opened a showroom-museum in Ashtarak in October 2018. It is the first in Armenia where visitors get to "deal" with both the taste and history of chocolate. "In the "Gourme-Durme" showroom, a visitor can press a button on the wall, and an employee will bring fresh chocolate to taste." Here you can also listen to the history of chocolate and the stages of its creation in Armenian, Russian and English languages. It is also planned to provide French and Italian translation.

House-Museum named after Tatul Krpeyan - The House-Museum is located in Tatul settlement of Talin community. Opened in 2017, visitors can see Tatul's bed, favorite chair, room rugs and wardrobe. In separate showcases there are the needle and magnet, folder, notebooks that are always in the hero's pocket. The Armenian-Turkish dictionary is striking. Tatul Krpeyan mastered the language of the enemy on the battlefield. Both family and individual photos are posted on the walls, the most influential of which being the first and only photo of father and his daughter (Tatul and Aspram Krpeyan) [2].

N. Bazmaberd Armenian Studies Museum-Audience - The Armenian Studies Museum-Auditorium was opened on November 5, 2021 in E. Asatryan secondary school. The personal belongings of a renowned scientist and soldier Yesai Asatryan, diaries of his scientific works, notebooks, items found from archeological excavations and a photo camera are placed in showcases. In one part of the auditorium, Armenian ethnography is exhibited with items used in everyday life, such as carpets, rugs, cradle pottery, weapons and so on. Two books authored by the archaeologist-scientist are presented at the exhibition, which are "Fort of Zakari" and "Monuments of Tallinn Region". The museum is the first precedent, which will operate in a school, which can be a great stimulus for tourism. Loving the homeland is through recognition.

Museum named after Aram Grigoryan - He was born in 1971 on February 23 in the village of Verin Bazmaberd in Talin. Aram served in the Soviet army in 1989-1991. In 1996, Aram was a contract soldier and an honorable warrior. He sang in the trenches, sang in the positions, sang at home. His songs were brave with weapons and like weapons. Aram's singing ceased on August 4, 2014 in Karvachar.

Kamancha Museum and Gastrobac - Located in Ashtarak city, this museum was founded in 2020. Here, guests have the opportunity to see a collection of kamanchas (traditional Armenian instrument) in the museum inside the courtyard, participate in kamancha

making and teaching master classes, enjoy Armenian music and delicious food. Gastro yards are infrastructures designed with a unique concept. They enable regional communities to host tourists and guests, offering them traditional national dishes, drinks and cultural experiences.

S. Mesrop Mashtots school museum - The building next to the St. Mashtots Church used to be a school, which was built in 1912-1913 and served as a school until the 1970s. It was renovated in 1996 and served as a schoolhouse. There are halls in the school, which are intended for displaying museum specimens and exhibitions. The exhibitions are changing. At the moment, an exhibition-sale of handicrafts of students studying in Armenian homes operating under the auspices of the Church of the Mother See of St. Etchmiadzin is being displayed, which has a charitable purpose [12].

Voskevaz wine factory - Voskevaz wine factory is located in the village of Voskevaz in the Aragatsotn

region. The vicinity of Aragats, the highest mountain in Armenia, endowed with amazing beauty, carries within it the layers of the previous periods of the development of Armenian civilization. Just a few kilometers away from the factory, on the edge of the Kasagh gorge, are the ruins of the "Badali Jam" church built in the 5th-7th centuries. Remains of a wine vessel were found buried in the ground nearby. The factory was founded back in 1932. The winery offers to opportunity to get acquainted with the winemaking processes. There are also temporary exhibition halls in the area, which are updated regularly with the goal of combining craft and art.

Aparan History Museum – The museum is located in the city of Aparan in Aragatsotn region. The exhibits of the museum have been collected since the 1970s by Alexanyan Rafik. The museum mainly consists of 3 exhibition halls: geological exhibits, first Artsakh war, the first republic of Armenia and the heroic battle of Bash-Aparan.

Table 1

Flow of tourists in May-June

Name	Number of tourists	Age of tourists	Nationality of tourists	Ticket price /AMD/
Victor Hambardzumyan's House-Museum	11 389	Schoolchildren 70%	Armenians 80 % Foreign nationals 20 %	500-1500
Perch Proshyan House-Museum	1400	Schoolchildren - 80 % Middle-aged and elderly 20 %	Armenians 85 % Foreign nationals 15 %	500-1000
House-museum of Gevorg Chaush	40	Middle-aged and elderly 100 %	Armenians 100 %	Free
"Agarak" reserve-museum	-	-	-	-
House-museum of Mushegh Galshoyan	300-350	Schoolchildren 90 % Middle-aged and elderly 10 %	Armenians 95 % Foreign nationals 5 %	Free
Gourmet Durme chocolate tourist exhibition hall	1400	Schoolchildren 85 % Middle-aged and elderly 15 %	Armenians 90 % Foreign nationals 10 %	400-600
House-Museum of Tatul Krpeyan	50	Schoolchildren 100 %	Armenians 100 %	Free
Nerqin Bazmaberdd Armenological museum-auditory	100	Schoolchildren and students 100 %	Armenians 100 %	Free
Museum named after Aram Grigoryan	30	Schoolchildren 100%	Armenians 100 %	Free
Kamancha Museum and Gastrobac	50	Middle-aged and elderly 100%	Armenians 60 % Foreign nationals 40 %	5000
S. Mesrop Mashtots School Museum	700-800	Schoolchildren 70%, Middle-aged and elderly 30%	Armenians 90 % Foreign nationals 10 %	100
Voskevaz Winery	7550	Middle-aged and elderly 100 %	Armenians 30 % Foreign nationals 70 %	3500-7000
Aparan History Museum	150-200	Schoolchildren 100 %	Armenians 100 %	Free

Overall, we have conducted a thorough study of the museum resources of the Aragatsotn region of the Republic of Armenia and after the inventory stage, we have made a cadastral assessment of the resources. Our analysis show that all the museums of Aragatsotn region are distinguished by their cultural appeal and interest, be-

cause the region is one of the most unique areas of the republic where exhibits of great touristic value are found. Museums not only represent cultural value, but also provide additional recreational value, increasing the recreational value of the region.

Comparing the museums listed above, the indicators

already show that the most visited museum in the months of May-June is the house-museum of Viktor Hambardzumyan in the region. No wonder why those months were chosen, because the largest flow of tourists is observed in Armenia in that period of the year. Such a flow of visitors to the museum is not surprising, because the Byurakan observatory also operates next to the museum, and Amberd Castle is located in the adjacent area. In addition, the variety of landscape zones before reaching the museum and the castle is breathtaking. All this contributes to the large flow of tourists. In this region tourists of every age and gender will find their favorite tourist destination.

The indicators of other museums speak about several factors. First of all, many of the museums are not even known on the scale of the region, and are not included in the itineraries of tourist companies either. We should also note that the building maintenance of many museums is in a bad condition, which is another circumstance that reduces the frequency of visits. In addition, it is difficult to find contact information about them on the Internet, and it can only be found through word of mouth or recommendations by friends.

Thus, by carrying out a cadastral evaluation of the

recreational resources of the museums of Aragatsotn region, it can be concluded that it is possible to use the museum resources in the region for recreational purposes, because they have great recreational potential and cultural value. Currently, the region is distinguished by a large flow of tourists because of the historical-architectural monuments and museums.

There are recreational areas, churches, monuments next to the museums, which make the area even more attractive and unique.

And finally, let's present the results of another survey, from which it becomes clear whether the museum resources of Aragatsotn region are bought within the scope of tourists' interest. We conducted a survey on the level of interest in the museums of Aragatsotn region among tourists who visit the Republic of Armenia. First, we present about the museums, then we conduct a survey, because many people may not be familiar with the museum resources of the region. We conducted surveys among approximately 200 tourists over the course of 2 days, among middle-aged and elderly people who work in various fields of service and industry (fig. 2).

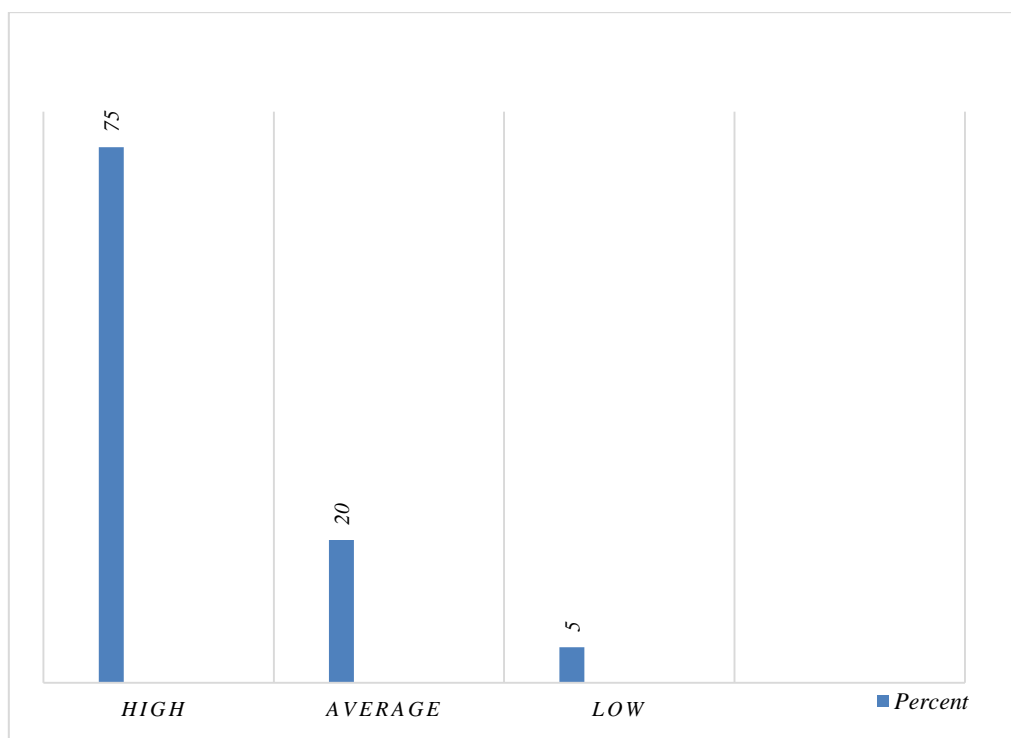


Fig. 2. The degree of interest of the museums of Aragatsotn region

We have also performed a SWOT analysis of the museum resources of the region, presenting the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks (tabl. 2).

Thus, it can be concluded that modern architectural and constructional solutions for museums attract tourists from all over the world, unusual architectural forms arouse the interest of consumers and motivate them to actually visit the museum.

In the past when visiting a museum there was a

norm to be silent in the museum, listen to the tour guide, and only possibly ask a questions in the end after getting permission. All these used to repel the visitors, because they seemed to have appeared in a mold and the rights of the visitor were limited. And now a new culture is emerging, in which it is encouraged to touch museum exhibits, to have an interactive experience, form a clearer picture and develop the imagination.

Table 2

SWOT analysis of museum resources of Aragatsotn region

Strengths	Weaknesses
Rich exhibits Differences in styles and types of museums Next to the museums of historical and cultural monuments Availability of natural recreational resources adjacent to museums Competent presentation of materials Archaeological values present objects	Inadequate infrastructure Lack of internet information requests Partially satisfactory building conditions Lack of marketing policy Lack of ticket values Less flow of tourists
Opportunities	Threats
Creation of tourist packages Organization of courses and trainings for workforce and personnel (languages, service etiquette, etc.) Creating jobs for community residents Highlighting the culture of the region Creating advertisements	Forgetting culture Abolition of museums

Conclusion

– The resources of the regional museums are sufficient and have a high value category to organize recreational experiences and restore their popularity. That is why we suggest planning and management of museum resources of the region more systematically and purposefully.

– The population of the region, the relevant authorities of the regional administration, the RA Government, the RA Ministry of Education and Culture, the RA Tourism Committee, etc., are considered to be the subjects implementing the planning of museum resources.

– In case of proper planning of the recreation economy in the region, it will be possible to develop both local and international tourism, and many types and forms of recreation in general.

– Propose to establish a price policy related to the entrance fee of the museum, which will also help to improve the condition of the museums and start an advertising campaign.

As a result of the research, we offer several routes:

– "Agarak" reserve-museum – Tallinn Catholic

Church-Gevorg Chaush's House-Museum – Tatul Krpeyan House-Museum – Mushegh Galshoyan House-Museum;

– Aparan History Museum – Churches of Ashtarak (Ashtarak, Red, White) – Perch Proshyan's house-museum – Gourmet Durme chocolate tourist exhibition hall;

– N. Bazmaberd Armenological museum-auditory – Aram Grigoryan museum – Dashtadem – Voskevaz wine factory;

– Amberd – Viktor Hambardzumyan's house-museum – St. Mesrop Mashtots School Museum – Kamancha Museum and Gastrobak.

As also suggested:

– When communicating with museums, we suggest that they make themselves heard in some way, be it through advertising on the Internet or in another way.

– We also propose to establish a price policy related to the entrance fee of the museum, which will also help to improve the condition of the museums and start an advertising campaign.

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МУЗЕЇ АРАГАЦОТНСЬКОГО РЕГІОНУ ЯК ТУРИСТИЧНИЙ РЕСУРС

У статті ми представляємо музейні ресурси Арагацотнської області з метою визначити, чи входять музейні ресурси регіону до сфери інтересів туристів. Музейний туризм – різновид культурного туризму, який можна визначити як відвідування туристами музеїв з метою ознайомлення з певними історико-культурними цінностями та спадщиною. Сьогодні музеї є основою індустрії туризму. Ми провели низку опитувань серед туристів, щоб зафіксувати точні дані та підняти питання, які хвилюють туристів.

Арагацотнська область вирізняється своїми природними і техногенними рекреаційними ресурсами, серед яких виділяються музеї. Про багато музеїв суспільство не знає, тому метою даного дослідження є проведення кадастрової оцінки музеїв та рекомендації маршрутів туристичного розвитку. Можна зробити висновок, що сучасні архітектурно-конструктивні рішення музеїв приваблюють туристів з усього світу, незвичайні архітектурні форми викликають інтерес у споживачів і спонукають їх реально відвідати музеї.

У сфері культурного туризму музейний туризм – це особлива діяльність музеїв, яка відома виробництвом і продажом різноманітних туристичних продуктів, таких як створення виставок, організація внутрішніх і зовнішніх екскурсій і наявність музейних магазинів. Цей напрямок в туризмі з'явився відносно недавно, в 1970-х роках на Заході і в середині 1990-х років в Росії. Наукових праць, присвячених музейним ресурсам, багато, різні автори по-різному називали музеї, але мета всіх – представити музей як культурну цінність.

Наразі розробляється новий підхід до розуміння природи та суспільного призначення музею. Фокусною точкою є особа, задіяна в музейній структурі, а не сам музей як об'єкт зі своїми властивостями та функціями. Автори назвали музеї туристичним ресурсом, що представляє міжнародний досвід. Раніше під час відвідування музею існувала норма мовчати в музеї, слухати екскурсовода і, можливо, наприкінці задавати запитання з його дозволу. Все це частково відштовхувало відвідувачів, оскільки права відвідувача були обмежені. Але зараз формується нова культура, в якій заохочується доторкатися до музейних експонатів, отримувати інтерактивний досвід, формувати чіткішу картину та розвивати уяву.

Результати дослідження можуть бути корисними для державних і місцевих органів влади, а також приватного сектора для вдосконалення політики розвитку туризму.

Ключові слова: Арагацотнський регіон, туристичний ресурс, кадастрова оцінка музеїв, будинок-музей, культурна цінність, історико-архітектурна пам'ятка.

Надійшла 02 вересня 2024 р.

Прийнята 15 жовтня 2024 р.