



Organizational and Economic Mechanism for the Development of Pilgrimage Tourism in Uzbekistan

Alieva Makhbuba Toychievna

Professor of the Department of Tourism and Service, Tashkent State, Economic University, Doctor of Economic Sciences

Annotation: the fact that people of different religions, including Muslims, travel around the world for various purposes, performing religious prayers (hajj, umrah, etc.), seeking food, and other reasons in general, has led to the establishment of unique approaches and standards in tourism. This, in turn, led to the formation of a specific direction of tourism - pilgrimage tourism. At this point, tourism experts have expressed their views on how Muslims should travel for whatever reason without complying with their religious requirements, so that it is equally clear to all.

Keywords: pilgrimage tourism, Islamic tourism, religious tourism, halal tourism.

In Uzbekistan the development pilgrimage tourism has grown to the level of state policy. Famous masters of Sufism in the Islamic world are Abu Ismail Muhammad ibn Isa At-Termizi, Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ali at-Termizi; famous seven saint of Bukhara, mysticists are Khojai Jahon –Abdulhalik Gijduvani, Khoja Muhammad Arif Revagari, Mahmud Anjir Fagnavi, Khoja Ali Romitani, Muhammad Boboi Samosi, Sayid Mir Kulol, and Bakhouddin Nakshband. Moreover there are 360 mosques and 80 madrassas in Bukhara, and the city is awarded the title of “Star of the Islamic World”. Bukhara is one of the seven holy cities among Mecca, Madina, Baghdad, Damascus, Jerusalem and Mazar-e-Sharif. Bukhara is the birthplace of Abdullah Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari, better known as Imam al-Bukhari, a Muslim scholar, muhaddis and mufasssir, “author of one of the canonical collections of Sunni traditions” “al-Jami al-Sahih” which is considered the most reliable collection after the Koran in the Islamic world and the founder, the teachings of Tariqat Bahouddin Naqshbandi are also known as Shahi Naqshbandi and Khojai Buzur, one of the spiritual fathers of Sufism, considered the founder of the Sufi order Naqshbandi. It is said that Bahauddin Naqshband had a dream during a trip to Mecca. In it, the Prophet Ibrahim looked at him and said: "When I ascended to heaven and looked down, I saw only three" rays ": one from Mecca, the other from Medina and the third radiated from Saint Bukhara." That is, if holy rays fall from heaven to all Muslim cities, then only from Mecca, Medina and Bukhara do these holy rays rise to heaven. Therefore, we can confidently say that Bukhara is the third sacred place of pilgrimage in the Islamic world after Mecca and Medina. In conclusion, if all Muslims in the world make a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina during the month of Kurban Khait, they attain the Muslim title of Hajji (Arabic. - “pilgrim”) - the honorary title given to a Muslim who successfully completed the Hajj ceremony in Mecca, while visiting Bukhara and making a pilgrimage to the seven holy saints of Bukhara at any time of the year, we think that they will have the title of “Small Hajji”,- said professor Navruz-Zoda. That is why thousands of visitors come visit them constantly. So, development of pilgrimage tourism has become a crucial point in the promotion of the whole tourism sector. Pilgrimage Tourism has emerged as an instrument for employment generation, poverty alleviation and sustainable human development. Pilgrimage Tourism promotes international understanding and gives support to local handicrafts and cultural activities. It is an important segment of the country’s economy, especially in terms of its contribution towards foreign exchange



earnings, generation of additional income and creation of employment opportunities. In this case pilgrimage tourism helps people to attain spiritual maturity as well as moral cleansing. These traditional opportunities have taken on a special resonance in an age in which modernity and rationalization appear to be limiting individual expression, denying the possibility of the miraculous, and transforming the world into a rationalized environment centered on economics. In a nutshell, three main advantages of religious tourism are classified: 1. Religious tourism raises awareness of humanity's common heritage and provides resources for preservation. 2. It can contribute to local development as well as economical boost. 3. It reforms cultural understanding. One thing is clear, during the critical period, for the period of tough competition, when various disagreements and misunderstandings arise, various diseases appear, and when people are seized by despair, pilgrimage tourism acts as a torch to save people from despair and its importance increases even more than other types of tourism. Asia and the Pacific are blessed not only with religious sites but also because it forms the hub of pilgrim centers, religious festivals and other related cultural activities of a religious nature". As it seems, in the region, and especially in our country, there is a huge potential in tourism, and it is becoming one of the strategic parts of the economy. Therefore, through the development of tourism, particularly with the development of pilgrimage tourism, we can achieve the following objectives: The State Committee for Tourism Development of Uzbekistan registered the number of pilgrimage destinations that can receive visitors from all over the world. There are about 100 of these holy shrines that can be visited not only by Islam, but also by Christians, Buddhists, and Jewish believers. Most of the listed sites are in Khiva, Samarkand and Bukhara.

Table 1. Main tourism statistics in Uzbekistan

	2018	2019	% change
Number of visitors, millions	5,346	6,749	+ 26,2
Tourism earnings, billion USD	1,041	1,313	+ 26,1
Number of tour operators	465	1448	+ 211,4
Number of visa-free countries	18	86	+ 377,8
Total accommodation facilities	914	1188	+ 30
Including: Hotels	784	833	+ 6,3
Hostels	53	214	+ 303,8
Others	78	141	+80,8
Total number of beds	21074	26147	+ 24,1

Today, large-scale reforms are carried out in all spheres of public life in Uzbekistan, and the main goal of these reforms is an indicator of further development of the country's economy and improvement of the welfare of our people. Tourism is important in the economic development and growth of Uzbekistan, and in the following years, along with other spheres of Tourism, great attention is paid to the development of pilgrimage tourism in our country. At present, one of the promising sectors that will bring a high income to the national economy is National Tourism, says the president of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, – Uzbekistan is a state with great potential in the field of Tourism. There are more than 7 thousand 300 objects of cultural heritage in our country and most of them are included in the UNESCO list. At the same time, it is possible to open new tourist destinations, taking advantage of the unique nature of our country, the possibilities of beautiful



recreation zones. With the active involvement of world brands in this sector, we should pay special attention to the development of tourism, environmental, educational, ethnographic, gastronomic, tourism and other sectors of this sector. In this regard, we should take into account that the application of public-private partnership relations opens wide opportunities for the development of the industry. It is necessary to develop and accelerate the program "Small Hajj", which consists of visiting holy shrines and monuments in Samarkand, Bukhara, Tashkent. It is also necessary to fully launch large-scale opportunities in the field of internal tourism. Say: "Travel through the earth and see how it created the creatures from the beginning ..." (Surat al-Ankabut, 20) Tourism, which is convenient for Muslims, is based on the personal needs of the followers of Islam, who travel in conditions that meet their religious requirements. Convenient tourism for Muslims is not just about traveling to religious places or Muslim countries for religious reasons. Based on Islamic Sharia, offering tourist services to mostly Muslim travelers (such as halal hotels, halal resorts, halal restaurants, and halal travel) is called affordable tourism for Muslims. Uzbekistan has entered the tenth directive on pilgrimage tourism among members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) according to the Global Muslim Travel Index 2019 (GMTI). This report was published on the basis of Singaporean company Crescent 30 Rating and Mastercard. GMTI is based on such factors as climate, security, economy, religions, transport infrastructure and services in foreign countries. The list of the best directors, including Uzbekistan, entered Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Morocco, Iran, Bahrain, Malaysia, the UAE, Kazakhstan and Indonesia. Take into the point that the promotion of Uzbekistan in the rating is based on the results of the State Committee Development of Tourism and the agency Crescent Rating International. For the last year, within the framework of cooperation, the agencies have repeatedly visited Uzbekistan with the aim of studying and analyzing the development of pilgrimage tourism in the country. Uzbekistan is intensively opening up to the world and its famous religious places can become the basis of the tourism boom in the country. Such famous scientists of the Muslim world as Imam al-Bukhari, Imam at-Termizi, Imam al-Maturidi, Bahauddin Naqshbandi, alZamakhshari and others lived and worked on the territory of modern Uzbekistan. Their mausoleums will play an important role in the development of tourism in the country. In addition, Uzbekistan is located in the center of Central Asia. The country has a rich cultural and historical heritage. Today, the authorities are making certain efforts to open the country to the world, paying special attention to the tourism sector. According to the forecasts of "Crescent Rating", by 2026 the number of pilgrim tourists will reach 230 million. Considering the centuries-old Islamic heritage of Uzbekistan, the development of pilgrim tourism has great prospects for the country. However, Uzbekistan is not yet a benchmark in this area. In a survey by the Center for Business and Tourism Development conducted among those who visited Uzbekistan in 2017, only 2.2% answered that they would like to visit the country as a tourist pilgrim. At the same time, according to the Crescent Rating on the World Muslim Tourism Index for 2017, Uzbekistan ranked 29th, while Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were in higher places. Since 2017, tourism has become a strategic sector of the national economy. The President signed a decree aimed at the active development of this industry. The main directions here are the introduction of halal certification, training of halal tourism guides and the construction of halal hotels. Uzbekistan is actively developing bilateral relations with other states in the field of pilgrim tourism. For example, agreements on the organization of special pilgrimage tours in Uzbekistan were concluded with Pakistan and Turkey. Today, most of the tourists visiting Uzbekistan come from the CIS countries. Whereas close interaction of Uzbekistan with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in this area will contribute to: a) increase the flow of tourists from Muslim countries; b) expanding mutually beneficial trade and investment relations within the OIC. Support for specialized tours of important Islamic shrines in Uzbekistan could increase the overall flow of tourists. The country has unique holy places, especially for Hanafi Muslims, including Sufis. The long-term absence of a unified tourism policy and strategy in the country is considered an urgent problem that impedes the



development of this sector. Now the government of Uzbekistan has clearly stated its intentions to develop the tourism sector. Under President Sh. Mirziyoyev, more than 50 legal norms were adopted in the field of tourism. The role of the cult of saints in the shrines is invaluable in strengthening the qualities of diligence in the population. As the nobles worked tirelessly to reach the level of sainthood, the attitude of the people towards labor became imitative in the lives of the saints. These views are in line with the motto of Bahauddin Naqshband, "Dil ba yori, dast ba kor" ("The soul must be turned towards God and the hands should be in work"). In the public opinion regarding the holy shrines, purity is the main criterion, and such vile deeds as blasphemy, indifference to others, prostitution, and drunkenness are strongly condemned.

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