

Article

Analysis of Pilgrim Tourism Objects in Samarkand Region and Their Use

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Abstract: This article analyzes the tourism facilities of the Samarkand region, their types, and the current level of utilization. The role of historical and cultural heritage sites, shrines, ecological and recreational sites in the development of tourism will also be highlighted. The study examines the efficiency of using tourism facilities, existing problems, and ways to eliminate them. The article provides scientifically grounded proposals and recommendations for further increasing the tourism potential of the region.

Keywords: Samarkand Region, Tourism, Tourist Sites, Historical Monuments, Pilgrimage Tourism, Ecological Tourism, Recreational Areas, Tourism Infrastructure, Tourism Potential, Service Quality, Tourism Development, Operational Efficiency

1. Introduction

Today, the tourism sector is recognized as one of the fastest-growing sectors of the global economy. The development of tourism, especially in regions rich in historical and cultural heritage, is not only a source of economic income but also an important means of preserving and promoting national values. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the development of tourism is one of the priority areas of state policy, and large-scale reforms are being carried out in this direction. The Samarkand region is one of the most important tourist regions of the republic with its rich historical monuments, architectural monuments, shrines and unique natural places. Tourism facilities located in this region are of great importance not only for the development of domestic but also for international tourism [1]. At the same time, the effective use of existing tourism resources, improving service quality, and further developing infrastructure remains one of the pressing issues of today. The purpose of this article is to analyze tourism facilities in the Samarkand region, study their level of utilization, identify existing problems, and develop proposals and recommendations for their elimination. The development and regulation of the tourism sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan are carried out on the basis of a number of laws, presidential decrees, and resolutions. These regulatory legal acts define the legal framework for tourism activities and serve to improve the development and management mechanisms of the industry [2].

The Law "On Tourism" is the main document in the field of tourism. The main purpose of this law is the legal regulation of relations in the field of tourism, the development of the tourism services market, and the protection of the rights and interests of tourists and tourism entities. This law clearly defines basic concepts such as tourism, tourist, tourist activity, excursion activity [3].

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In addition, the following laws are of great importance in the development of the tourism sector:

- The Law "On the Protection and Use of Cultural Heritage Sites" regulates the preservation and effective use of historical monuments;
- The Law "On Licensing Certain Types of Activities" defines the legal basis for organizing the activities of entities providing tourism services;
- The Law "On Certification of Products and Services" serves to monitor the quality of tourism services.

There are a number of important decrees and resolutions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan aimed at developing the tourism sector. Including:

- 2016 Decree No. UP-4861 - defined the main directions for the accelerated development of the tourism sector;
- 2019 Decree No. UP-5611 - provides for additional measures for the development of tourism;
- Resolution No. PP-135 dated April 26, 2023, is aimed at increasing tourism potential and increasing the number of tourists [4].

In recent years, state support mechanisms in the tourism sector have also been expanding. In particular, in accordance with Resolution No. PP-238 dated July 27, 2023, a system of financial incentives has been introduced for tour operators to attract foreign tourists, and the legal framework of the tourism sector in Uzbekistan, which provides for the allocation of subsidies for each tourist, is constantly being improved. This contributes to the development of tourism infrastructure, improving service quality, and strengthening the country's competitiveness in the international tourism market [5].

Literature analysis on the topic

In recent years, a number of scientific studies have been conducted to study the tourism sector, specifically the tourism potential of the Samarkand region and the level of its utilization. These studies aim to comprehensively cover the economic, social, and cultural aspects of tourism.

Research on the dynamics of the development of the tourism sector in the Samarkand region has shown a steady increase in the number of local and foreign tourists visiting the region over the last decade, as well as a significant increase in the volume of tourism services and investment. In other studies, the city of Samarkand is assessed as a major tourist center in Central Asia, and its historical and cultural heritage, particularly architectural monuments and shrines, are cited as factors shaping the main tourist flow [6]. The negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector and the subsequent recovery processes have also been scientifically analyzed. Scientific works on the prospects for tourism development in the Samarkand region emphasize the importance of pilgrimage tourism, cultural tourism, and domestic tourism. It is noted that it is possible to increase the tourist attractiveness of the region through the development of these directions, as well as the important role of state policy and regulatory legal acts in this regard. A number of other studies have examined the issues of introducing digital technologies in the tourism sector, which are recognized as an important factor in improving tourism infrastructure, improving the quality of services and effectively managing tourist flows. In particular, the need to create unified digital platforms and increase the digital literacy of specialists in the field was emphasized [7].

Research conducted on the example of individual tourism sites (for example, the Konigil Paper Center) demonstrates the importance of attracting cultural heritage sites to tourism, integrating them with international projects, and developing them based on the "Silk Road" concept. An analysis of existing literature shows that despite the high tourism potential of the Samarkand region, the level of its effective utilization has not yet been fully studied. In particular, it is necessary to conduct additional scientific research on a comprehensive assessment of the efficiency of using tourism facilities, improving the

quality of infrastructure and services, and the widespread introduction of innovative approaches [8].

2. Materials and Methods

In this study, a comprehensive approach was used to study the tourism facilities of the Samarkand region and the level of their utilization. In the course of the research, theoretical and practical methods were combined. In the theoretical part, scientific literature, articles, regulatory legal documents and statistical data related to the field of tourism were analyzed. In particular, scientific views related to tourism infrastructure, the efficiency of using tourism facilities, and the development of regional tourism were studied.

In the process of practical research, methods of observation, comparison, systematic analysis, and generalization were used. The current state and level of utilization of the main tourism sites in the Samarkand region (historical monuments, shrines, cultural heritage sites, and recreational areas) were studied. Additionally, based on the statistical analysis method, an analysis was conducted on the number of tourists visiting the region, the volume of services provided, and tourism infrastructure development indicators. During the study, existing problems were identified, and scientifically grounded proposals and recommendations for their elimination were developed.

This methodology serves to ensure the reliability and practical significance of the research results.

3. Results and Discussion

As a result of the conducted research, it was determined that the tourism facilities of the Samarkand region possess great potential. Historical and cultural heritage sites, pilgrimage sites, and recreational areas located in the region are considered important tourist destinations not only in the republic but also internationally. At the same time, it was noted that the level of use of tourism facilities is not the same in all regions, and in some places, the infrastructure is not sufficiently developed [9].

The study revealed certain shortcomings in the quality of tourism services, the transport and logistics system, information support, and the culture of service. The lack of modern services and comfortable conditions at tourist sites, especially in remote areas, prevents them from realizing their full potential.

Based on the above, the following proposals were developed:

- developing modern infrastructure and improving the quality of services at tourism sites;
- diversification of regional tourist routes, development of new tourist routes;
- widespread introduction of digital technologies, in particular, the development of online booking and virtual tours;
- wide involvement of the local population in tourism activities and improving their skills;
- actively promote tourist sites internationally and improve marketing strategies.

The implementation of these proposals will serve to increase the tourist attractiveness of the Samarkand region, increase the flow of tourists, and have a positive impact on the economic development of the region [10-13].

Analysis of pilgrimage tourism sites in the Samarkand region

The largest flow of pilgrimage tourism sites (Shah-i-Zinda and the Mausoleum of Amir Temur, Imam Al-Bukhari Mosque, Bibi-Khanym Mosque, Chor Chiyor) occurs in the areas of the shrines. At facilities with a high level of infrastructure (5 points), the flow of tourists is also stable and large. The number of tourists visiting pilgrimage sites in remote areas (Shaykhal Shrine, sites associated with Khoja Anhor Vali, Hazrat David Shrine, Bandikushon Shrine, Sheikh Khudoydodi Vali Complex, Dahbed Complex, Muhammad Amri Naqqibek Madrasah, Abdullo Norinji Jome Mosque Shrine, Imam

Bahri Ota Mausoleum, Jome Mosques) is relatively low, and one of the most important reasons is that infrastructure, services, and tourism services are not yet well-established in some places [14][15].

Table 1. Pilgrimage Tourism Sites and Infrastructure Assessment in Samarkand Region

No	Samarkand city, district	Pilgrimage site	Infrastructure level (1-5 points)	Commentary
1.	Samarkand city	Shah-i-Zinda complex	5	One of the most visited pilgrimage sites.
2.	Urgut district	Chor Chinor Shrine	5	Tourist services, roads and trade infrastructure are well developed.
3.	Bulungur district	Sheykhal Shrine	3	There are important services, but they need to be developed.
4.	Payariq district	Imam Al Bukhari complex	5	It is considered an international center of pilgrimage tourism. It has cultural and scientific significance.
5.	Samarkand city	Amir Timur Mausoleum	5	A historical and religious shrine, it has a high flow.
6.	Samarkand city	Bibi-Khanym Mosque Places	5	A major pilgrimage and historical site.
7.	Pastadargom district	related to Khoja Anhor Vali	3	Of historical importance, but insufficient services.
8.	Nurabad district	St. David's shrine	2	Road and service infrastructure is not developed.
9.	Taylak district	Bandikushon Shrine	3	Roads are satisfactory, but tourist services are insufficient.
10	Jomboy district	Sheikh Khudoydodi Vali Complex	3	It is necessary to develop service and tourism services.
11.	Akdarya district	Dahbed complex	4	It is one of the famous pilgrimage centers in the Islamic world, associated with sheikhs and saints.
12	Kattakurgan district	Muhammad Amri Naqqibek Madrasa	3	It is necessary to develop a high level of infrastructure.
13	Narpay district	Abdullo Norinjiy Cathedral Mosque	2	An object with strong spiritual qualities, but the development of its infrastructure is required.

14	Pakhtachi district	Imam Bahri Ata Mausoleum	3	The site has a spiritual aspect, but the tourist infrastructure is not well developed.
15	Ishtikhan district	Cathedral mosques	3	The infrastructure is moderately developed, especially the information system.

4. Conclusion

Pilgrimage tourism sites in the Samarkand region are considered one of the most ancient and rich regions of Uzbekistan with historical and cultural heritage. In particular, the city of Samarkand is famous in the Islamic world for its holy pilgrimage sites, where the Shah-i-Zinda complex, the Amir Timur mausoleum, the Bibi-Khanym mosque, and other historical monuments are of not only religious but also scientific and cultural significance. The conducted analysis shows that pilgrimage tourism in the Samarkand region is developing from year to year, but there are certain problems in areas such as infrastructure, service quality, and information support. It is also necessary to effectively manage the flow of tourists and improve the service system at some facilities.

The pilgrimage tourism of Samarkand occupies an important place in the tourism potential of Uzbekistan and makes a significant contribution to the country's economy.

Our main recommendations:

1. Improving infrastructure

It is necessary to modernize roads leading to pilgrimage sites, transport services, sanitary conditions, and recreation areas.

2. Strengthening information and promotional work.

It is advisable to create multilingual (Uzbek, English, Arabic, Russian) information stands and mobile applications about the objects.

3. Development of digitalization

It is necessary to introduce online maps, virtual tours, and an electronic ticketing system for pilgrimage routes.

4. Improving the quality of service

It is necessary to train employees working in the tourism sector in advanced training courses and to improve the culture of service for guests.

5. Preservation of cultural heritage

It is necessary to conduct constant monitoring of the preservation, restoration, and transmission of historical monuments to future generations.

6. Expansion of pilgrimage tourism routes

It is advisable to develop new pilgrimage routes and promote them at the international level.

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