



## Development of Pilgrimage Tourism in Uzbekistan

*Najmiddinova Gulnora Obidjon Qizi*

*Doctoral student of Tashkent Institute of Architecture and Civil Engineering*

**Abstract:** *The article shows the main directions of the development of pilgrimage tourism in Uzbekistan, the factors affecting it and opportunities. Also, religious tourism and its structure, definitions given by different authors to concepts such as religious structure, pilgrimage tourism, and Islamic tourism are analyzed. The progress achieved in the development of pilgrimage tourism in the country is analyzed and the tasks to be solved are highlighted.*

**Keywords:** *religious tourism, pilgrimage tourism, religious-excursion tourism, tourism infrastructure, tourism development concept, halal standard.*

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**Introduction.** Issues of improving the quality of tourism in the countries of Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, have hardly been considered in foreign literature. This, in turn, indicates the urgency of studying the aspects of improving the tourism sector in Uzbekistan. For example, the State Committee for Tourism Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which deals with tourism issues in our country, is a relatively new organization, and the country's infrastructure is not competitive with other international tourism sectors; the existence of many gaps in the legal framework; there is a severe shortage of qualified personnel and others. Also, many problems that hinder the development of the tourism sector of Uzbekistan are related to health care, public safety, transport, financial system, etc. In the "Concept for the development of the tourism sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2019-2025" adopted in our country, in the development of the tourism sector in 2019-2025, it is necessary to turn tourism into a strategic sector of the national economy, to diversify and improve the quality of tourist services, and to attract tourist infrastructure, including foreign investments and the task was set to achieve through improvement in exchange for conducting effective advertising and marketing work. Uzbekistan is a convenient destination for pilgrimage tourism. Many famous scholars in the Islamic world lived and worked in our country. At the same time, there are historical places in our country that are dear to people who believe in other religions. One of the most valuable examples of the Holy Quran of the Islamic world - Hazrat Imam Complex, where the Holy Quran of Caliph Osman is kept, the mausoleum of the great Islamic Imam Muhammad Al-Bukhari, the mausoleums of the followers of the Naqshbandi sect, and many other such religious centers. Thousands of tourists from different parts of the world visit Uzbekistan every year to visit and travel to such historical and holy places.

**Main part.** On December 9, 2020, President Sh. Mirziyoyev chaired a meeting to discuss the work being done in the fields of tourism and sports and the tasks for the next year. the goal of reaching a million dollars was set. The biggest resource in this regard is, first of all, pilgrimage tourism. There are many shrines of Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism in our country. Using this opportunity, it was noted that it is possible to attract 700,000 pilgrims and ensure the export of services worth 130 million dollars [<https://president.uz/uz/lists/view/3999>]. Experts emphasize the high development

potential of all types of tourism in Uzbekistan. At the same time, experts in the field of tourism do not agree on the concepts of religious tourism, pilgrimage tourism, and their composition. According to the opinion of many experts, religious tourism is a type of activity related to meeting the needs of tourists traveling to holy places and religious centers located outside the area of their residence and providing them with services [Khristov T.T., 2]. It includes pilgrimage tourism, religious-excursion tourism and religious scientific tourism. Accordingly, persons who travel from their place of residence for a period of not more than one year to visit various religious centers and holy places, fulfill certain prayer requirements, and study religion and religious sources a tourist who travels with a purpose is called. Pilgrimage is a type of activity that consists of people visiting holy places and performing certain actions there, and pilgrimage tourism is a type of activity aimed at providing services to pilgrims. Religious excursion tourism includes traveling to religious centers, where tourists can see religious monuments, museums, and participate in religious activities. This type of tourism is closely related to scientific tourism. Scientists visit existing religious centers, countries and regions with rich religious traditions and study religious heritage - manuscripts, religious architectural objects. According to a number of authors, the fact that Muslims travel around the world for various purposes, such as performing religious prayers (hajj and umrah), seeking sustenance, and generally for other reasons, has led to the foundation of a unique approach and standards in the field of tourism.

At this point, it should be noted that tourism experts expressed their opinion on how to name Muslims traveling for any reason without departing from their religious requirements so that it would be equally understandable for everyone. Due to the problematic aspects of the proposed terms such as pilgrimage tourism, Islamic tourism, religious tourism, Shariah tourism, halal tourism, the term Muslim-friendly travel (friendly tourism for Muslims) has been proposed based on the opinions of experts in the field of religion and tourism. Approved [3].

The Islamic Tourism Center defines Islamic tourism as follows: any event, meeting, pilgrimage that is carried out in accordance with Islamic rules during the trip is called Islamic tourism. Also, according to the definition of this center, the following are defined as Islamic tourism destinations: - Muslims traveling in different directions; - Muslims traveling to Muslim countries; - travel according to Islamic principles; - Muslims traveling to study Islamic heritage; - Non-Muslims traveling to learn about Islamic heritage. It should be noted that there is an opportunity to develop all the listed directions of pilgrimage tourism in our country. Thousands of tourists from different parts of the world visit Uzbekistan every year to visit and travel to historical and holy places. It should be noted that a number of measures have been implemented to increase the attractiveness of Uzbekistan in the field of pilgrimage tourism. According to the decree of the President No. 5611, from January 5, 2017, a Pilgrim visa was introduced for foreign citizens visiting for a period of up to 2 months to study the cultural-historical and religious heritage and traditions of Uzbekistan.

The recognition of Uzbekistan as one of the centers of pilgrimage tourism in the world community in general gives impetus to the development of tourist infrastructure in the country and a significant increase in the flow of tourists. Religious sites alone are not enough for pilgrimage tourism. In order to attract tourists, there should be good promotion work, convenient visa procedure, conditions for performing prayers at the airport and hotels. At the same time, the information package on pilgrimage tourism objects has not been formed, tour packages have not been classified taking into account the country of arrival, culture, traditions, religious values, etc., maps of objects that will help tourists have not been prepared, it is necessary to emphasize that the infrastructure of pilgrimage tourism is not sufficiently formed and the mechanism of using innovative factors in the organization of pilgrimage tourism is not scientifically based. For the development of pilgrimage tourism, it is important to solve the issues of development of the hotel system, guest waiting rooms in hotels, airports and railway stations meeting the standards of pilgrimage tourism. In 2018-2019, a

number of activities were carried out in our country in this regard. As a result, the number of foreign tourists visiting our country increased. According to data, 6.7 million foreign visitors came to our country in 2019.

This is 126.2% compared to the same period of 2018. In accordance with the decree of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev dated February 3, 2018 "On additional organizational measures to create favorable conditions for the development of the tourism potential of the Republic of Uzbekistan", Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey, South Korea, A visa-free regime for citizens of Japan and Israel and a simplified visa procedure for tourists from 39 countries have been introduced. Today, Uzbekistan has introduced a simplified procedure for entry visas for citizens of 86 countries. In 2017, Uzbekistan took the 28th place in the rating of Halal travel - compiled by the Crescent Rating organization. In the rating, our country was highly rated in the areas of - safe travel (84 points out of 100), freedom of access to the synagogue (80), - food options and guarantees (70). But - visa (50), airport facilities (48.3), - family vacation (44.4), living conditions (33.2), - facilities for Muslims (25), - arrival of tourists (21.2) , - communication opportunities (19) took the middle and lower ranks. In 2018, attention was paid to the improvement of the less developed directions, which were evaluated at a lower level in the rating. The State Committee for Tourism Development, in cooperation with the Crescent Rating organization, developed proposals and recommendations for the development of pilgrimage tourism in our country. Based on these recommendations, the necessary conditions were created for the performance of prayers at international airports [4].

### **Conclusions and suggestions.**

Considerable work has been done on the development of pilgrimage tourism in our country. The first problems that need to be solved in the field have been solved. For the development of pilgrimage tourism, it is necessary to solve the issues of development of the hotel system, guest waiting rooms in hotels, airports and railway stations meeting the standards of pilgrimage tourism. From this point of view, it is of scientific and practical importance to collect the information resources from the factors of development of pilgrimage tourism in Uzbekistan, to summarize the description of the spiritual and material resources available in the country, to create an integrated electronic platform that provides complete information on pilgrimage tourism. .

The example of specific programs for the development of tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan shows the direct effect of their implementation: hotels, restaurants, ski resorts, roads, etc. But the implementation of these programs requires investments in other sectors of the national economy: construction, production. The multiplier effect of the implementation of these programs means the involvement of various economic entities (advertising agencies, trade enterprises, public catering, entertainment institutions, transport companies and those that provide cash flows to the state budget of this type). Thus, international tourism will continue to develop despite the threat of economic decline, because tourism has its own characteristics. International inequality in tourism is significant. To achieve equal success in the world, new approaches to tourism development must be based on international cooperation. Therefore, international cooperation and agreements between the main components of tourism (hotels, transport, travel companies) should guarantee the future development of the sector. Tourism is an important sector of the economy as a type of social and cultural activity and the industry that produces the necessary services to meet the needs arising in the course of travel, and its further development and improvement will help to increase state revenues.

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