

Development and Importance of Pilgrimage Tourism in Uzbekistan in Case of Samarkand City

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Abstract. *The article mainly contains information about pilgrimage tourism in Uzbekistan with its development, the role of pilgrimage tourism in tourism industry and prosperity of ancient routes for attracting travellers in the future, contribution of pilgrimage tourism in economy, and some examples given with key points and facts which can show prosperity of country in this type of tourism.*

Key words: *pilgrimage tourism, holy places, muslim prayers, Samarkand, increase of tourist attraction, contribution of pilgrimage places.*

Pilgrimage, a common religious and cultural phenomenon in human societies and an important feature of the world's major religions, has been defined as 'a journey resulting from religious causes, externally and internally for spiritual purposes and internal understanding' (Barber, 1993:1). Pilgrimage is currently experiencing resurgence around the world (Digance, 2003; 2006). Pilgrimage is a type of population mobility. 'Mobilities' constitute a growing interdisciplinary field of study (Hannam, Sheller, & Urry, 2006; Sheller & Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007). Pilgrimages have powerful political, economic, social, and cultural implications, and can even affect global trade and health. Pilgrimage necessitates spatial movement and is also an important subject due to its scope and spatial influence.

Pilgrimage tourism is the type of tourism where people travel to religious places, spiritual significance for religious purposes devotion, cultural exploration and personal fulfillment.

For thousands of years, people have been travelling to places considered sacred to meet or to worship divinity. Religion-motivated tourism is extremely important in many parts of the world.

This sphere of tourism already became famous in Uzbekistan and a lot of people visiting to holy places much more than before. Because it is developing rapidly in this country due to rich history and spreaded religion. Majority of local people like to visit to pilgrimage places as a domestic tourist. Mostly in Samarkand and Bukhara located several holy places for attracting pilgrims that iconic and symbolic places of Uzbekistan. Especially, Imam al-Bukhari complex considered second holy place for Islamic world that muslim people should visit after Hajj. For instance, Shakhi zinda necropolis, Imam al-Bukhari, Imam al-Moturidi, Khoja Ahrori Valiy, Saint Daniel mausoleum, Bibikhanum complex in Samarkand, and also Nakshbandiy, Seven Pir, Chashmai Ayub in Bukhara great example for pilgrimage tourism.

In order to boost economy and enhance indicator of financial sight of country, pilgrimage tourism plays crucial role. By visiting millions of religious visitors government amplifies its touristic reputation and at the same time gets profit.

Moreover, it serves for improving Halal tourism and Islamic tourism. Because , each foreigner muslim traveler wants to find any appropriate place for praying, reading namaz and getting services according shariah during their pilgrimage tour. Holy and pilgrimage places of country emphasized by UNWTO organization due to it is ancient history and beautiful construction.

Uzbekistan owns over 7,000 tangible cultural heritage sites from different areas and periods, including historical centers . Great number of mosques, madrasas, tombs and holy buildings give huge opportunity for prosperity of pilgrimage tourism in Uzbekistan.

Especially, miraculous monuments that situated in Samarkand city are very unique with their architecture, decoration, design and patterns. It is known majority religious places were built during Timurid empire. And builders that worked at that time were master and famous experienced ones. For that reason Amir Temur and later Mirzo Ulugbek ordered to build majestic and perfect buildings by them.

According to the rating of Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) for 2019, Uzbekistan entered the top ten countries which are popular among the members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The literature on pilgrimage, however, is still fragmented and lacks synthesis and holistic conceptualisation (Kong, 2001; Stausberg, 2011; Timothy and Olsen, 2006). The study of the relationships between religion, pilgrimage, and tourism has frequently approached religion and tourism as two separate subjects, warranting little interrelated or comparative treatment

International debates on the definition of pilgrimage and other terms have intensified over the years. In addition to the debate on religion, pilgrimage, and tourism, since the early 1990s scholars began to pay attention to secular sites and the non-religious factors involved in pilgrimage (Badone and Roseman, 2004; Badone, 2014; Coleman and Eade, 2004; Eade, 1992; Margry, 2008). T

Most considerable fact is Uzbekistan and it is regions totally safe for foreigners and touristic visits. No doubt it gives big chance to come in this city and complete thematic tour packages according to tourist purpose.

Safe tourism most important key factor for visitors to choose any country any time. By promoting safe tourism tourism sector can offer different touristic products.

A number of significant efforts are being made by countries around the world for safe tourism. It helps to reorganize pilgrimages, increase tourism revenues and for creating new jobs in this sector. According to International Council for Tourism and Travel, the total share of tourism in world GDP is 10.4 %or 8.3% trillion US dollars and many job places created around the world.

After independency of Uzbekistan several measures has been implemented to improve the quality of tourism services, tourism legislation, provide state support to individuals and legal entities engaged in tourism field, expanding touristic products increase incomes, living standards of the population, investment of the country.

Achieving to results require scientific research to transform tourism industry as a driver of economy, increase the flow of visitors through pilgrimage tourism and serves to improve development of touristic destinations.

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