



UDC: 338.48:502.131.1 (575.1)

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Based on the review of H.Egamkulov, Associate Professor of GulSU

THEORETICAL BASIS OF ECOTOURISM AND DIRECTIONS FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT IN UZBEKISTAN

Annotation

This article discusses the theoretical foundations of ecotourism and the directions of its development in Uzbekistan, revealing the types, directions, and opportunities for developing the industry. Also, the opportunities for developing ecotourism in Uzbekistan and the characteristics of the industry are highlighted based on the SWOT analysis method for developing the industry. Based on the analysis and results, the article develops proposals and recommendations for developing the industry based on the experiences of foreign countries where ecotourism has developed in our country.

Keywords: Tourism, ecotourism, ecology, recreation, nature, landscape, mountain, desert.

ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСНОВЫ ЭКОТУРИЗМА И НАПРАВЛЕНИЯ ЕГО РАЗВИТИЯ В УЗБЕКИСТАНЕ

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматриваются теоретические основы экотуризма и направления его развития в Узбекистане, раскрываются типы, направления и возможности развития отрасли. Также на основе метода SWOT-анализа для оценки перспектив развития отрасли освещаются возможности развития экотуризма в Узбекистане и особенности отрасли. На основе проведенного анализа и полученных результатов в статье разрабатываются предложения и рекомендации по развитию отрасли, исходя из опыта зарубежных стран, где экотуризм уже развит в нашей стране.

Ключевые слова: Туризм, экотуризм, экология, отдых, природа, ландшафт, горы, пустыня.

EKOTURIZMNING NAZARIY ASOSLARI VA UNI O‘ZBEKISTONDA RIVOJLANTIRISH YO‘NALISHLARI

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada O‘zbekistonda ekoturizmning nazariy asoslari va uning rivojlanish yo‘nalishlari tahlil qilingan, sohani rivojlantirish turlari, yo‘nalishlari va imkoniyatlari ochib beriladi. Shuningdek, sohani rivojlantirishning SWOT tahlil usuli asosida O‘zbekistonda ekoturizmni rivojlantirish imkoniyatlari va sohaning xususiyatlari ta’kidlangan. Tahlil va natijalar asosida maqolada mamlakatimizda ekoturizm rivojlangan xorijiy mamlakatlar tajribasiga asoslanib, sohani rivojlantirish bo‘yicha takliflar va tavsiyalar ishlab chiqiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: Turizm, ekoturizm, ekologiya, dam olish, tabiat, landshaft, tog‘, cho‘l.

Introduction. In the modern world, with globalization and increasing environmental problems, the demand for tourism types that approach nature responsibly is increasing sharply. Ecotourism is emerging not only as an industry that provides economic profitability, but also as an effective mechanism for protecting natural ecosystems. Especially for a country like Uzbekistan with a rich natural heritage and diverse landscapes (mountains, deserts, water bodies), scientific and practical research into ecotourism is of great importance.

Analysis of literature on the topic. In the field of tourism, A.Yu. Aleksandrova recognizes two types of ecotourism and considers the types of ecotourism described by other scientists to be thematic types of ecotourism [1]. In fact, we consider this to be a correct conclusion, because A.Yu. Aleksandrova, in her scientific literature, groups all types of ecotourism into two main types: minimally modified or undisturbed, ecotourism in wild conditions, and ecotourism in specially protected natural areas.

The German scientist E. Haeckel, in his works "General Morphology of Organisms" written in 1866 and "Natural History of the Origin of the World" written in 1868, fully defined the term ecology and defined the second meaning of ecology as "habitat", "feeding place" [2]. Therefore, only when everyone considers nature their home can global ecological crises be prevented. Ecotourism can greatly help humanity in this direction.

Hector Ceballos Lascurain's definition (1980) states that "Ecotourism is a tourist activity based on the ability to study and protect nature with care and with the ability to help study and protect specimens of flora and fauna" [3].

Definitions of Russian Scientists In the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the following scientists are recognized as the founders of ecotourism. Including;

- Birzhakov M.B.: "In ecotourism, a feeling of protection and preservation of nature is created as a result of being with nature with minimal impact on it" [4].

- Drozdov A.V.: "Ecotourism is based on respecting the traditional culture of local populations, increasing the educational culture of tourists, responsibility for and protection of nature, meeting social and environmental demands, and preventing the global ecological crisis"[5].

- Sergeeva T.S.: "Ecotourism is a visit to unique natural areas that have preserved the traditional way of life of the local population and have been minimally affected by economic activity; it is an increase in the living standards of the local population

and the level of ecological culture of all participants in the tourist process, compliance with nature protection standards and technologies in ecological tours and programs [6].

Research methodology. In assessing the current state of the ecotourism sector in Uzbekistan, regional classification, statistical and economic-mathematical, statistical table methods, and SWOT analysis methods are of great importance.

Analysis and results. Ecotourism is one of the fastest growing trends in the modern tourism industry worldwide, with successful experiences based on national parks and reserves in countries such as the USA, Costa Rica, Australia, and Kenya. In these countries, ecotourism is emerging not only as an industry that provides economic profitability, but also as an effective mechanism for protecting natural ecosystems. Ecotourism is considered different in developed countries, that is, in the United States and Canada, all trips to nature are considered ecotourism. That is why these countries are considered leaders in the development of domestic and foreign ecotourism.

The processes of systematically establishing ecotourism activities began in the 1980s, initially in the USA, Canada, and Western European countries. At this time, the fundamental scientific and theoretical foundations, principles, and classification types of the field were not yet fully formed. Therefore, as a result of initial scientific research conducted in the above-mentioned countries, this direction was described as follows:

-Soft tourism is important in Germany and England, mountain tourism in France, nature tourism in Russia and the USA, green tourism, adventure tourism in Italy, and rural tourism in European countries.

Ecological tourism or ecotourism - since the beginning of the 20th century, special importance has been attached to it in the USA, Canada, European countries, Australia, Malaysia, Japan and other countries, and this industry has developed at a high level.

In tourism theory, the term "soft tourism" refers to a tourism model based on the principles of sustainable development and aimed at maintaining ecological, social, and economic balance [7]. The term "soft" in this concept does not refer to a physical characteristic, but rather to the nature of the activity, which is careful, flexible, and has minimal negative impact on nature, local communities, and cultural heritage. This concept was developed as an alternative to mass tourism, focusing on the rational use of resources, maintaining ecological balance, and preserving the key features of the area.

Ecotourism is an active form of recreation based on the rational use of the natural conditions of the area. Ecotourism is not like regular tourism. He does not consider amenities such as luxury hotels, resorts with all the amenities, internet, and entertainment centers to be mandatory [8]. For example, ecotourism focuses on nature and spiritual enrichment rather than comfort. Unlike species realism, this means treating nature and culture as objects of consumption while maintaining a high level of comfort. Ecotourism, on the other hand, focuses on nature and spiritual enrichment rather than comfort. It is based on experiencing nature, perceiving it, spiritual enrichment through interaction with it, protecting natural heritage, and supporting the traditional culture of local communities.

Ecological tourism or ecotourism is an environmentally responsible travel activity to unspoiled natural areas to explore and enjoy natural and cultural attractions that promotes conservation, has minimal negative impact on the environment, ensures active socio-economic participation of local populations, and is conducted in an environmentally responsible manner.

"Ecotourism is tourism that involves traveling to places with a relatively intact environment to gain an idea of the natural and cultural-ethnographic features of the area, without damaging the integrity of ecosystems, protecting nature and natural resources, and creating economic conditions that are beneficial to the local population."

Although scientists have conducted various scientific studies for a quarter of a century, they have not reached a consensus on the concept of ecotourism. They sometimes call this phenomenon ecotourism, sometimes nature tourism, sometimes green tourism, and in some cases even interpret it as one of the directions of adventure tourism (mountain climbing, rafting, desert safaris, etc.). However, the essence of the issue lies not in the term, but in the impact of tourism activities on nature. That is, the main criterion is whether the ecological state of the area will be preserved or negatively changed as a result of this activity.

Table 1

Types and classification of ecotourism

№	A type of ecotourism	Description
1	Scientific ecotourism	Travel aimed at studying nature and ecology for scientific purposes, conducting research and observations
2	Natural history ecotourism	Trips aimed at exploring the geological, biological, and historical natural features of the area
3	Ecotourism in nature reserves and reservations	Trips aimed at observing and studying natural resources in national parks, reserves, and sanctuaries
4	Adventure ecotourism	Travel related to sports, adventure and extreme activities in nature

Note: The table was developed by the author.

From the data in Table 1, we can see that scientific ecotourism is mainly carried out in nature reserves, national parks, biosphere reserves, and nature reserves. The same is true in Uzbekistan. So far, mass ecotourism has not been allowed in our nature reserves. It can only be used for scientific purposes. Our national parks can and are used for mass ecotourism and recreation.

In order to develop the industry in Uzbekistan and achieve economic prosperity in this area, it is necessary to conduct an analysis based on SWOT analysis. Because the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats to network development were analyzed (Table 2).

Table 2

SWOT analysis of ecotourism in Uzbekistan

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Natural diversity: the presence of mountains, deserts, and unique lakes.</p> <p>Rich flora and fauna: Rare species listed in the Red Book and state reserves (e.g., Zamin, Hisar).</p> <p>Cultural harmony: The possibility of combining ecotourism with national values and agrotourism.</p> <p>Legal: Adopted government programs and tax incentives for the development of the industry</p>	<p>Infrastructure: Poor roads, electricity, and internet connectivity in remote areas.</p> <p>Service level: Lack of service in ecotourism destinations that meets international standards.</p> <p>Shortage of specialists: Lack of professional eco-guides and eco-managers.</p> <p>Marketing: Uzbekistan's eco-potential is not yet sufficiently recognized in the international market.</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	BILATERAL PARTIES
<p>Global Demand: Global demand for "ecotourism" is growing by 10-15% annually.</p> <p>Investments: Attracting grants for "green" projects from international financial institutions.</p> <p>New directions: Develop ecotourism and "Dark Sky" tourism throughout the island.</p> <p>Digitization: Introducing mobile apps and virtual guides for eco-routes</p>	<p>Climate change: Depletion of water resources and acceleration of desertification (impact of the Aral Sea disaster).</p> <p>Ecological degradation: Pollution and ecosystem destruction due to uncontrolled tourism.</p> <p>Competition: Strong competition in mountain tourism with neighboring countries (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan).</p> <p>Anthropogenic pressure: Damage to flora and fauna by local populations.</p>

Note: The table was developed by the author.

"Concept" for the development of ecotourism in Uzbekistan: Ecotourism is understood not only as a trip to ecological natural areas, their fauna and flora, aimed at educational and spiritual goals, but also as a set of complexes related to solving environmental problems through the implementation of socio-economic issues [9]. We believe it is appropriate to develop ecotourism in our country based on the goals and objectives set out in this concept.

Currently, in our country, the Zamin National Park and the Chatqol-Ugom National Park are used for ecotourism purposes. In scientific ecotourism, tourists or scientists collect data in nature reserves, national parks, and specially protected natural areas [10]. This ecotourism is now also called the "German" or "Western European model".

Conclusion and recommendations. For the systematic development of ecotourism, it is necessary to combine international experience (models of the USA, Canada, Germany) and local geographical characteristics, as well as improve the legal and economic mechanisms for the transition from scientific tourism to mass-educational ecotourism.

We can list several priority areas for the development of ecotourism in Uzbekistan. The natural landscapes, unique ecosystems, and historical sites of this region create great opportunities for ecotourism.

1. Rational use of natural resources: Uzbekistan has naturally unique areas. It is important to develop tourism infrastructure in these areas while maintaining ecological balance.

2. Development of ecological infrastructure: Construction of environmentally friendly hotels, use of renewable energy sources, introduction of waste management systems, and This will create convenience for tourists and reduce damage to nature.

3. Involving local residents: The participation of local residents is important in the development of ecotourism. Developing national crafts, training local guides, and establishing family-based tourism services will increase the income of these residents and sustainably develop the area.

4. Creation of ecological routes and directions: Desert safaris (along Kyzylkum), mountain trips (trekking in the Nurota Mountains), and lakeside recreation (around Aydarkul) will regulate the flow of tourists by creating special ecological corridors.

5. Preserving biodiversity: The region is home to rare flora and fauna. To preserve them, it is necessary to develop reserves and national parks, support scientific research, and strengthen environmental education.

6. Marketing and promotion: Promoting the region in the international tourism market, advertising on digital platforms, and creating an ecotourism brand.

7. Improving transport and logistics infrastructure: Repairing roads, i.e. developing transport services, introducing signage and navigation systems.

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