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STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING ECOLOGICAL TOURISM AROUND SACRED SITES

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Abstract: This article analyzes the theoretical foundations and practical aspects of developing ecological tourism in areas where sacred sites are located. In today's globalizing world, the tourism sector is rapidly developing and has become one of the important branches of the economy. In particular, pilgrimage tourism is considered one of the main directions attracting tourists, especially foreign visitors, in many countries. At the same time, the increasing flow of tourists may negatively affect the ecological condition of the areas where sacred sites are located and may cause various types of damage. Therefore, introducing the principles of ecological tourism in the areas of sacred sites is considered one of the important issues. The article examines the interrelation between ecological tourism and pilgrimage tourism, their role in sustainable development, and strategies for developing the tourism sector while preserving ecological balance in the areas of sacred sites.

Key words: ecological tourism, pilgrimage tourism, sacred sites, ecological balance, tourism strategy.

Introduction. At a time when development is increasing day by day, the tourism sector is considered one of the fastest-growing sectors of the global economy today. According to the data of the World Tourism Organization, in recent years tourism has made a significant contribution not only to economic development but also to strengthening cultural exchange and international cooperation. Among the various directions of tourism, ecological tourism and pilgrimage tourism occupy a special place. At the same time, pilgrimage tourism is related to people's religious beliefs and is carried out through visits to sacred sites. In many countries of the world, pilgrimage tourism is considered one of the important tourism directions. Meanwhile, ecological tourism is based on the principles of protecting the natural environment and maintaining ecological balance.

Sacred sites are often located in areas that are historically and naturally important. Therefore, the increase in the number of pilgrims may sometimes have a negative impact on the ecological condition of these areas. For example, it may lead to problems such as an increase in waste, damage to natural landscapes, or pollution of water resources. From this point of view, developing ecological tourism in the areas of sacred sites is of great importance. This serves not only to preserve natural resources but also to ensure the sustainable development of the tourism sector. Ecological tourism is a type of tourism organized by protecting the natural environment, maintaining ecological balance, and taking into account the interests of the local population. The main goal of ecological tourism is to preserve nature while attracting visitors and demonstrating the unique features of natural areas.





Ecological tourism is based on the following main principles:

- protection of natural resources
- development of ecological culture
- support of the interests of the local population
- reduction of the negative environmental impact of tourism activities

In recent years, ecological tourism has been rapidly developing in many countries of the world. The reason is that modern tourists are increasingly interested in types of tourism that do not harm nature. Sacred sites are places of significant religious and cultural importance in human history. These sites also play an important role as tourist attractions that attract many pilgrims. There are many sacred sites in the territory of Uzbekistan as well. These include historical mausoleums, mosques, madrasahs, and religious complexes. These sites are important not only from a religious point of view but also as historical and cultural heritage. The development of pilgrimage tourism also has a positive impact on the country's economy. The increase in tourist flow contributes to the development of hotels, transport, catering, and additional service sectors. However, the sharp increase in the number of pilgrims visiting the country may also cause certain environmental problems. Therefore, it is necessary to organize tourism activities in the areas of sacred sites based on ecological principles.

Strategies for Developing Ecological Tourism Around Sacred Sites

The development of ecological tourism around sacred sites includes several important strategic directions.

1. Protection of natural areas

Preserving natural landscapes in the areas where sacred sites are located is considered important. For this purpose, it is necessary to introduce ecological monitoring systems, manage waste properly, and use natural resources rationally.

2. Development of ecological infrastructure

Developing tourism infrastructure based on ecological requirements is also very important. For example:

- organizing waste recycling systems
- using environmentally friendly transportation
- expanding green areas

These measures help reduce the negative impact of tourism activities on the environment.

3. Involving the local population in tourism processes

The local population plays a significant role in the development of ecological tourism. Local residents can earn income by providing tourism services, which means they gain opportunities to increase their financial resources. At the same time, they pay greater attention to preserving the natural and cultural heritage of their region.

4. Formation of ecological culture

Forming ecological culture among tourists and pilgrims is also considered one of the important factors. For this purpose, it is necessary to conduct ecological





awareness campaigns in tourist areas, install information signs, and provide information about the ecological rules that must be followed.

In conclusion, developing ecological tourism around sacred sites is considered one of the important directions of modern tourism policy. By introducing the principles of ecological tourism, it is possible to protect the natural environment, develop tourism infrastructure, and improve the living standards of the local population. At the same time, the rich historical and religious heritage of Uzbekistan creates great opportunities for the development of ecological tourism. Therefore, developing and implementing effective strategies for ecological tourism around sacred religious sites will contribute to the sustainable development of the tourism sector.

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