

Economic Significance Of Pilgrimage (In The Example Of Pilgrimage Of Namangan Region)

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Abstract: This article analyzes the economic importance of shrines. It was analyzed that the contribution of shrines to the economic development of the region is important, not only religiously and spiritually. During the research, the economic activity around the shrines, trade, hotel services (home hotel economy), and the economic impact of religious tourism on the society are shown.

Key words: Pilgrimage, economic importance, religious tourism, local entrepreneurship, donation, architecture, pilgrims, traditions, rituals.

Introduction. Shrines have been an important place in the socio-cultural life of the Uzbek people for centuries, and shrines themselves reflect not only social relations, but also economic aspects. Holy places and shrines, along with being important in the formation of people's daily lifestyle and spiritual world, are increasingly playing an important role in their economic life.

In recent years, it is noticeable that the increase in the flow of pilgrims to shrines and holy places in the Namangan region has a positive impact on the economy of the region. While improving the quality of service to local and foreign pilgrims serves as an important factor in shaping the image of the region, the work carried out on performing pilgrimage acts and pilgrimage etiquette serves to shape people's spiritual worldview.

Analysis of literature on the topic. In recent years, given the important role of pilgrimage sites and religious tourism in socio-economic life, many scientific works have been carried out on the current state and economic potential of holy places. Regarding pilgrimage tourism, the Uzbek Islamic scholar B. M. Bobojonov described the most common type of pilgrimage sites in Central Asia as "holy places". Regarding the pilgrimage sites and shrines of Sufi figures, A. Mamanazarov, B. Sattorov, Poslavskaya O. and S. Jorayeva also touched upon the history of pilgrimage tourism in detail. In particular, in their co-authored scientific article on pilgrimage sites and holy places, researchers D. Abramson and E. Karimov emphasize that the desire to understand the social, economic and political changes that have a strong impact on the lives of the region's population is increasing the importance of holy places and pilgrimages to them [1]. Also, enologists A. Akchayev and Sh. Jumayeva, in their research, offer some ideas about the economic potential of pilgrimage sites and their impact on the region in which they are located.

Regarding the pilgrimage sites in the Namangan region, a team of authors led by N. Abdulakhatov also studied the pilgrimage sites by district. Also, regarding the historical objects and architectural monuments located in the region, the work "Secrets of the Architectural Monuments of Namangan Region" co-authored by I. Yusupov and E. Mirzaaliyev also covered some pilgrimage sites in the Namangan region.

Pilgrimage sites and religious ceremonies in Uzbekistan are not only of religious and spiritual importance, but their economic aspects are also among the issues that need to be studied separately. Currently, scientific research on the systematic development of pilgrimage tourism and increasing its efficiency in our republic has not been carried out sufficiently. In particular, in-depth analyses are needed on the economic model of pilgrimage tourism, its compatibility with infrastructure, and its contribution to local and international tourism.

Research methodology. The development of this topic is explained by the use of field ethnographic research, comparative analysis, survey methods, and scientific works of scholars who have conducted research on pilgrimage tourism.

Discussion and results. The process of organizing a pilgrimage reflects the following process: the emergence of the practice of pilgrimage, determining the composition of pilgrims based on the characteristics of the rituals held at the pilgrimage site, preparing the necessary items for the pilgrimage, and visiting the designated pilgrimage site. These processes determine which pilgrimage site the pilgrims will visit and for what purpose. As a result, they lead to the formation of pilgrimage tourism among the population. Pilgrimage tourism means visiting holy places, cities, cemeteries, and sacred places from the point of view of respect and faith of various confessions in their religion [2. P. 11]. Pilgrimage tourism, unlike other types of tourism, is associated with religious beliefs and spiritual needs, and is the oldest form of tourism, dating back almost to the time of the emergence of humanity [3].

Pilgrimage tourism has occupied a special place in human culture, and its development has been inextricably linked with religious beliefs, social structure, and state policy. It has gone through several stages during its historical development: initially, there were pilgrimages based on primitive religion and animistic beliefs, and later, with the emergence of religions based on theology, pilgrimage tourism became a more developed and systematic phenomenon with clear rules.

Today, pilgrimage tourism is not limited to religious purposes, but has become an important segment of global tourism, encompassing social, cultural and economic aspects. Pilgrimage tourism has become one of the industries that has risen to the level of an industry worldwide. This industry is in third place after the main sectors of the economy, oil and gas, and mechanical engineering [4], and is gaining special importance in the economic and cultural development of countries. The fact that this industry has unlimited economic and cultural potential has become one of the priority areas of research in many scientific fields.

Since pilgrimage sites and holy places are the basis of pilgrimage tourism, it is receiving more attention than ever from the state and local entrepreneurs. Also, large-scale work is being carried out to meet the needs and requirements of pilgrims, create favorable conditions for them, and improve the quality of services, including the development of the pilgrimage tourism sector, thereby improving the lifestyle of the population and creating a decent life for them. The adoption of the "Travel around Uzbekistan" program [5] is an indication that these issues are currently being paid attention to at the state policy level. Also, the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Additional Measures for the Development of Domestic and Pilgrimage Tourism", adopted on February 24, 2021, also stipulated the implementation of a number of major projects to improve special conditions for visitors to pilgrimage sites and shrines in the republic. In particular, the priority task was to repair the internal roads leading to the "Chur-Chur momo" shrine in the Chodak village of Pop district of Namangan region, provide quality service, and improve the

sanitary and hygienic condition [6]. One of the distinctive features of the development of domestic and pilgrimage tourism in our country is the possibility of visiting them at any time of the year [7. P. 107]. The reason for this is the change in attitude towards cultural heritage sites in recent years and the creation of necessary conditions for domestic and foreign pilgrims at and around republican-level shrines by the state.

Pilgrimage tourism is also widespread internationally, with about 300 million pilgrims making religious pilgrimages annually [8], and the total number of travelers is even higher. The consistent development of pilgrimage tourism not only contributes to economic growth, but also serves to preserve cultural heritage and strengthen social ties in society. It is clear from this that holy places and pilgrimage sites not only play an important role in the formation of people's religious and spiritual outlook, but also play a significant role in the economic development of the region in which they are located. In particular, several aspects were highlighted in the research conducted on pilgrimage sites located in the Namangan region:

- As a result of the improvement of shrines, the architectural structures around them have a positive effect on the general appearance of the area. Since the local population considers the improvement of shrines to be a meritorious deed, the roads leading to these places and the surrounding areas are always improved before the pilgrimage season;

- The creation of a service sector for pilgrims visiting shrines provides employment for the local population around the shrine and increases their income. For example, there are home-based hotels, small kitchens and mobile stalls operating around the Bibi Mushkulkushad shrine, located in the Kumkurgan MFY of Namangan district. This contributes to the economic growth of the area;

- Donations received at shrines and made by pilgrims, sacrificed animal meat and other gifts are sent to the socially disadvantaged. As a result of field research, it is not possible to obtain an accurate estimate of the amount of donations in Namangan region [9. Field notes. Namangan district, Kumkurgan, Namangan region, 2024].

According to the results of field research, it was found that each pilgrim donates at least 3 thousand soums to the shrine. At the same time, at least 5 thousand soums are donated to the shrine imam for reciting the Quran [9]. Despite the fact that special donation boxes are installed at shrines, pilgrims prefer to donate money by putting it in an unofficial designated place in the area. As a result, it has been noted that funds not placed in these boxes are collected by business people around the shrine. Therefore, the idea that some shrines in the region are becoming commercialized remains justified. Another aspect of the problem is that due to improperly controlled donations, infrastructure and roads at many shrines remain in a deplorable state. If these funds were properly directed, the transformation of shrines into prosperous and comfortable places would be accelerated.

Conclusion. Shrines are not only important religiously and spiritually, but also economically. Around them, trade, hospitality, and service sectors develop, supporting local entrepreneurship. Research shows that donations and other contributions made by pilgrims affect the economy of the region. However, it is necessary to properly direct these funds and develop the infrastructure of the shrine. Thus, the orderly management of pilgrimage tourism serves the economic development of the region.

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