

The Role of Agritourism in the Sustainable Development of Rural Areas

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Abstract

In the article, rural tourism is characterized as one of the sectors of the tourism industry, which is focused on the use of natural resources in rural areas to increase the income of the population in the countryside.

Keywords: Agritourism, traditions, tourists, hospitable locals, personal service, leisure activities, beautiful landscapes.



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Introduction

In the modern world, tourism is the main type of economic activity that has a positive effect on the growth of incomes of the population in the country. The development of the tourism industry is one of the priority economic tasks of our state. In the Decree adopted by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the strategy of actions for the further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021", one of the important directions for the development and liberalization of the economy is "the accelerated development of the tourism industry, increasing its role and contribution to the economy, diversifying and improving the quality tourist services, expansion of tourist infrastructure".

On this basis, the "Concept for the development of the tourism sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2019-2025" was adopted, where the main goals, stages, directions and prospects of tourism development. Uzbekistan has a huge tourist and recreational potential, which includes 7,400 cultural heritage sites. Rich resource and natural potential for the development of virtually all types of tourism. Analysis of statistical data indicates the following, at the end of 2018, the Republic of Uzbekistan was visited by about 5.3 million foreign tourists.¹

According to the World Tourism Organization, agritourism is one of the five key strategic directions for the development of the tourism industry in the world until 2020.

Rural tourism as well as its varieties of agrotourism and farm tourism are close to ecological travel in that the destinations of such tourism are territories remote from urban centres and megacities.

Rural tourism includes all types of visits to the countryside: for the purpose of acquaintance with culture, cooking, sightseeing located in rural areas remote from the centres of culture, just outdoor recreation.

Uzbekistan is a country with many historical sights and picturesque rural corners preserved beyond touch, with natural parks and open-air museum cities. Intensive excursions and accommodation in family mini-hotels, the development of a network of which is actively encouraged by the state, in tourist centres such as Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva.

You can use the opportunity to travel to the countryside, mountain villages, where hospitable locals, personal service, the opportunity to live for several days in a real atmosphere of an Uzbek home, feeling all the charm of a simple life, plunging into the ancient culture and touching the land with centuries-old traditions.

The peculiarity of the Uzbek mentality is the benevolence and warmth of people. Attracting tourists to rest in the homes of the local population aims to create good human relations between them, the exchange of cultures and traditions. When such relationships are established, the hearts of people open and make them ready for any creative creation, which is so necessary for all of us in our difficult times.

Locals know all the trails in the mountains and can take tourists to waterfalls, lakes, caves and almost unknown places. All this is still preserved in Uzbekistan. Guests will be taught horseback riding, milking a cow, mowing hay, churning butter, spinning yarn, picking cotton, embroidering and many more practical skills without which life in the countryside is impossible.

If guests wish, the host family organizes hikes in the mountains or the steppe for mushrooms,

berries, nuts, herbs, will also offer guests a traditional excursion service to get acquainted with the unspent culture, traditions and life of indigenous peoples, will treat them to national dishes prepared from environmentally friendly products that are sorely lacking in many developed countries.

In some regions of Uzbekistan, rural tourism has already received a certain development, although there is no strong competition in this area.

Main part

Income from the export of tourism services amounted to USD 1,041 million. For comparison, in 2015 the number of tourist organizations was 398 units, in 2018 this figure was 950, the number of hotel facilities increased over this period - from 661 to 900 units.² Agritourism (rural tourism). Its essence lies in tourists visiting rural areas for the purpose of recreation or carrying out cultural and leisure activities in ecologically clean areas. The main driving forces when choosing an agritourism are the following factors:

- the need to restore health;
- limited financial resources;
- eating "environmentally friendly" products;
- the peculiar way of life in the countryside.

The implementation of agritourism is ensured by the creation of special tourist villages, the formation of rural tours, including food and accommodation services, in rural settlements that are located in ecologically clean areas.

In fact, this is tourism associated with visiting the countryside, living in rural houses, outdoor recreation, picturesque beautiful landscapes, with participation in local folk traditions, holidays, customs.

Studying the development experience and features of this type of tourism, it can be noted that there is no single or universal model for the development of rural tourism. In every country and even region, in accordance with the peculiarities of natural conditions and resources, traditions and way of life, pursued by economic policy there is a concept for the development of rural tourism.

Based on the experience of the development of this type of tourism and the impact on the rural economy, one can summarize its advantages for the development of rural regions as follows:

- the possibility of additional earnings;
- the incentive to put your farm in order;
- the opportunity to engage in creative work with able-bodied family members, in particular adults;
- raising the educational level of the whole family;
- the stimulus for active learning of foreign languages.

The possibility of additional earnings in rural areas leads to an increase in income, which subsequently affects the growth of living standards. In general, examining the experience of rural

²UZSTAT

tourism development, the following conclusion can be drawn the development of tourism in rural areas is a real opportunity for increasing the income of the population in rural areas.

There are great opportunities for rural tourism in almost all regions of Uzbekistan, as it is mainly an agricultural country. Rural tourism, as a new type of recreation, can play a major role in the tourist segment of Uzbekistan, using both inbound and outbound tourist flows. Favorable ecological and climatic conditions, social infrastructure, ethnographic culture based on traditional hospitality - all these are present in our country and are important factors for agritourism.

In our country, rural tourism is well developed in Jizzakh and Navoi regions, on the northern slopes of the Nurata ridge. Guest houses are established in villages such as Old Forish, Ukhum, Hayot, Majrum. Visitors of these houses will have a fascinating walk in the mountains, get acquainted with the flora and fauna of the Nurata Biological Reserve.

If the villages where agro-tourism can be organized are located close to the traditional tourist routes along the Great Silk Road, then this is the case. Despite the fact that there are many routes of this road through the territory of modern Uzbekistan, it is necessary to develop the infrastructure that will accompany it in order to fully implement the new route. In Samarkand and Tashkent regions, which are rich in vineyards and production for their processing, it is possible to offer special wine tasting tourist services. The development of wine tourism in Samarkand has already begun³.

According to this type of tourism, rural residents will receive an additional source of income, which will positively affect their well-being. These incomes can be used for the reconstruction of old buildings and the creation of new tourist facilities, the preservation and use of cultural, historical and natural heritage and traditions of rural life. The development of this type of tourism has a progressive impact on the rural economy.

The economic structure of rural areas is being improved, the development of industries involved in the hospitality industry is being stimulated, those remote areas that were previously considered unpromising for the development of other types of activity are involved in the economy.

The established way of life in rural areas is characterized by a relative "lag" in development. The reason for this may be remoteness from cities, relatively less developed infrastructure, predominance in the structure of incomes of the population of incomes associated with the direct development of agriculture (natural income in the form of agricultural products), the presence of a small number of industrial enterprises, etc. In general, the development of rural tourism in socio-economic terms solves a number of whole tasks:

- ensuring the socio-economic development of rural areas at the expense of relatively non-traditional types of activities;
- creation and increase of jobs in the hospitality industry (provision of employment in rural areas);
- the decrease in the outflow of youth from rural areas (in recent years, there has been an outflow of the rural population to urban areas in Uzbekistan);

³Uzbectourism.uz, 2019-2020

- preservation and popularization of the traditional rural way of life, crafts, methods of land cultivation, etc .;
- the revival of national traditions, customs, national culture;
- the solution of environmental problems related to nature conservation;
- development of rural infrastructure;
- raises the cultural and intellectual level of villagers;
- stimulates the production of environmentally friendly food products;
- mastering new professions related to service;
- creation and active functioning of tourist enterprises in remote and sparsely populated regions, etc.

In order to develop agro-tourism in the region, it is necessary to eliminate the following shortcomings:

- the need to take comprehensive measures to increase the share of small and medium enterprises in the structure of agro-tourist facilities and attract investment in strengthening the tourist infrastructure of rural areas as a result of integrated development of rural areas;
- the need to create a system of strategic planning for the development of tourism in rural areas (development and implementation of socio-economic development programs from rural areas, districts and cities);
- the need to reliably determine the status and development prospects of this segment of the tourism market to create a comprehensive strategy.

Thus, the presented analysis showed that our country has rich natural and agricultural potential. A systematic approach is also needed, which will increase and create serious competition for rural areas, will increase the demand for tourism services and thereby ensure their sustainable development.

Conclusion

Agritourism as a promising area for sustainable development of rural areas has the following advantages:

- has a positive impact on the preservation and development of rural areas, the rational use of their resource potential in the implementation of targeted development programs;
- encourages the development of private farms;
- expands the demand for ecologically clean, natural food products;
- provides solutions to the socio-economic problems of construction, handicrafts, culture and rural areas in general, and employment in rural areas in particular. All this ultimately affects the level of competitiveness of rural areas, which is reflected in the increase in the welfare of the population.

Thus, the presented analysis showed that our country has rich natural and agricultural potential. A systematic approach is also needed, which will increase and create serious competition for rural areas, will increase the demand for tourism services and thereby ensure their sustainable development.

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