

THE SPECIFIC FEATURES OF PILGRIMAGE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE  
BUKHARA REGION

Nematova Kh. Kh.

Master's student of 1 course of group 10-1-Geo-24,

Bukhara State University

[nematovaxurshida81@gmail.com](mailto:nematovaxurshida81@gmail.com)

**Annotation :** Tourism is rapidly developing as a major source of income in many countries around the world. From this perspective, it is important to study the potential, current state, development, and prospects of this sector in our country, particularly in the southwestern part of Uzbekistan — the Bukhara region. The development of tourism serves not only as a source of income but also plays a significant role in employment. The region's numerous tangible cultural heritage sites, landmarks, favorable natural and climatic conditions, exceptional hospitality, national traditions, and values are clear indicators of its vast potential for international tourism. This article explores the specific features, development trends, and prospects of one of the most important branches of tourism in the Bukhara region — pilgrimage tourism.

**Keywords:** Tourism, pilgrimage tourism, sacred sites, "Sharif shahar", "Yeti Pir", "Golden chain",

“Pearl of the Ancient East”, “Tabarruk Ziyorat” .

**Introduction:** Tourism plays a critical role in economic growth and development for every country and is among the most important contributors to overall progress and prosperity. The growing significance of tourism each year highlights the urgency of its further development. Uzbekistan possesses great potential for the development of its tourism industry. In recent years, the country has implemented a series of intensive measures to promote tourism. Today, Uzbekistan is recognized globally as a safe, steadily developing country offering new opportunities for pilgrimage and travel. Efficient use of the existing pilgrimage tourism potential, presenting Uzbekistan as one of the key centers of world civilization, earning international recognition, diversifying pilgrimage services, and increasing tourism exports are among the strategic directions for tourism development in the country.

There are over 200 types of tourism in the world, with pilgrimage tourism being one of the fastest-growing and promising areas. Recognized as the cradle of Islamic civilization and a center of enlightenment and culture, Uzbekistan has given rise to many scholars, intellectuals, scientists, and great saints who have contributed to the development of Islam and global knowledge. Around the world, there is a strong desire to visit their sacred shrines and blessed sites [4].

**Object of Research and Methodology:** In addition to favorable conditions and resource opportunities, it is crucial to establish a legal framework for tourism development. To ensure the implementation of Presidential Decree No. PF-6165 of February 9, 2021, "On further development measures for domestic and pilgrimage tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan", and to organize effective promotion and provide scientifically grounded information about

pilgrimage sites, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted Resolution No. 100 on February 24, 2021, titled "On additional measures to develop domestic and pilgrimage tourism".

In accordance with this resolution, a Council for the Coordination of Pilgrimage Tourism Development was established, and its key tasks were defined as follows [3] :

Comprehensive study and systematization of Uzbekistan's pilgrimage tourism potential, as well as the development of scientifically grounded information about sacred sites, religious scholars, and their spiritual legacy.

Centralized analysis of tourism market needs.  
Effective and high-quality organization of promotional efforts.

Review and approval of scientifically based content for media products, audio-visual materials, articles, and brochures.

Creation and coordination of high-quality informational materials for cultural heritage sites, guides, and tour leaders.

Development of pilgrimage etiquette guidelines for sites of different religious denominations.

To ensure the implementation of the "New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022–2026", as approved by Presidential Decree No. PF-60 on January 28, 2022, within the framework of the "Year of Honoring Human Dignity and Active Neighborhoods," as well as to intensify tourism development in the Bukhara region, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted Resolution No. 543 on September 28, 2022, "On further measures to develop the tourism sector in Bukhara region for 2022–2026"[1]. Moreover, based on Presidential Decree No. PQ-338 of July 29, 2022, the implementation of the "Tabarruk Ziyorat" (Blessed Pilgrimage) tourism concept played a significant role in the development of pilgrimage tourism [2].

**Results and Their Analysis:** As a result of these reforms, the tourism sector has grown fivefold in the last three years. While nearly 1 million tourists visited Uzbekistan in 2016, the figure increased to 2.7 million in 2017 and surpassed 5.3 million in 2018. It is projected that by 2025, the number of foreign tourists will reach 7 million, with an annual foreign exchange revenue of 2 billion USD [5].

Currently, Uzbekistan is focusing on increasing the number of pilgrims from countries with high pilgrimage tourism potential, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Arab nations, especially to its historical cities, including Bukhara. Known as the spiritual capital of Islam, Bukhara is revered with titles such as "Sharif Shahar" (The Noble City), "City of Pride," and "Imam of Cities." The names of Imam Al-Bukhari, Imam At-Tirmidhi, Imam Al-Maturidi, Bahauddin Naqshband Bukhari, and Az-Zamakhshari, originating from present-day Uzbekistan, are widely known throughout the Muslim world. The mausoleums of these great figures, who hold prominent positions in the Islamic world, represent vital potential for tourism development in Uzbekistan.

The region is also home to the shrines of the 10th to 16th links in the "Golden Chain" (Silsilat-uz-Zahhab) of spiritual succession originating from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), including Khoja Abdukhaliq Gijduvaniy, Khoja Arif Revgariy, Khoja Mahmud Anjir Faghnaviy, Khoja Ali Romitaniy, Khoja Muhammad Boboyi Samosiy, Khoja Sayyid Amir Kulol, and Khoja Bahauddin Naqshbandiy. The presence of these shrines within a single region makes Bukhara a highly significant destination for pilgrimage tourism [6]. Pilgrimage tourism has thus evolved



around the intent to visit these blessed sites with a foundation of historical and religious knowledge.



**Picture 1.** Location of the “Yeti Pir” pilgrimage sites in Bukhara region

From November 27 to 29, 2024, the city of Bukhara hosted the events of the “Tabarruk Ziyorat” International Pilgrimage Tourism Week, organized by the Tourism Committee, the Committee for Religious Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Bukhara Regional Administration. The organization of such events opens wide opportunities for the development of the tourism sector in the region.

More than 100 participants took part in the International Pilgrimage Tourism Week, including foreign guests, scholars, professors, and educators from member countries of the Organization of Turkic States, as well as religious scholars, students, guides and translators specializing in pilgrimage tourism, tour operators, hotel managers, and representatives of local and foreign mass media.

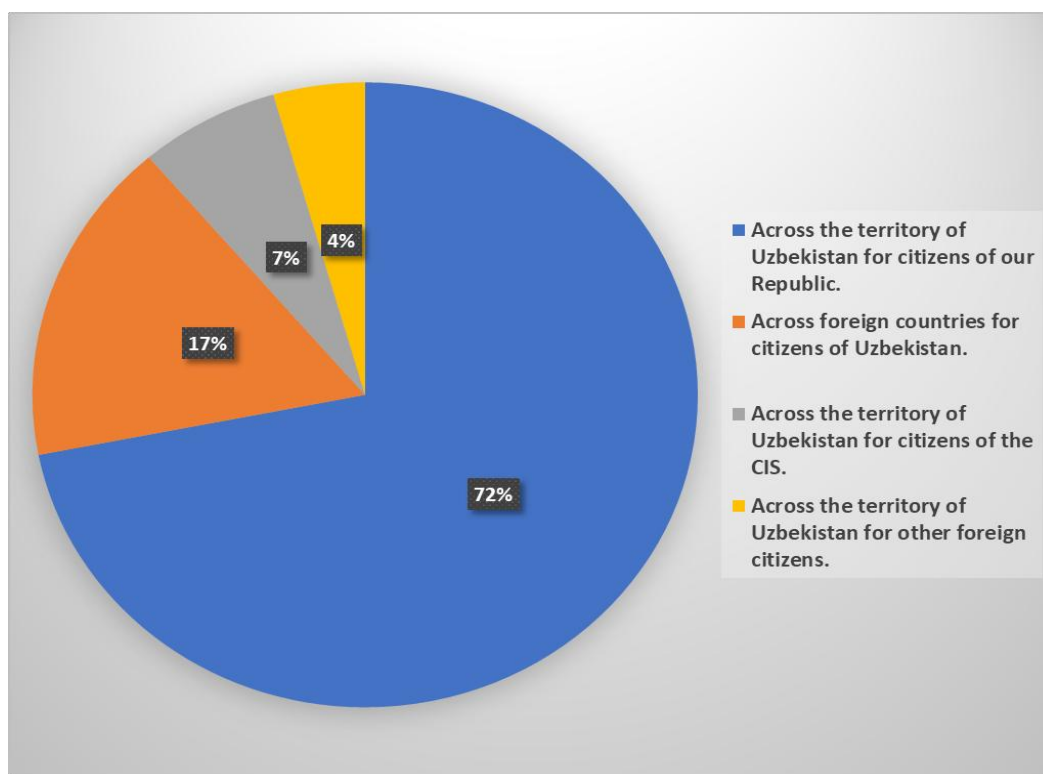
Within the framework of the week, seminars were held on topics such as “The Essence of Tabarruk Pilgrimage,” “The Potential of Pilgrimage Tourism in Uzbekistan,” “The Turkic World and Tabarruk Pilgrimage,” “Activities of the Organization of Turkic States in the Tourism Sector,” “Sustainable Tourism and Respect for Ancestral Heritage,” “Marketing the Tabarruk Pilgrimage Route,” and “Alp Er Tonga.” In addition, the website [tabarrukziyorat.uz](http://tabarrukziyorat.uz) was officially presented, alongside roundtable discussions with local tourism companies addressing

their challenges, as well as events such as the “Domestic Tourism Fair,” the “Bukhara Craftsmen’s Day” festival, and the opening ceremonies of the “Tourism Street” in G’ijduvon district’s Qo’rg’on tourism neighborhood, Shirin tourism village in Vobkent district, and the Tandoor Makers Street in Ushot village of Jondor district. In conclusion, the forum demonstrated Uzbekistan’s commitment to preserving and promoting its cultural and religious heritage and its aspiration to become a global center for pilgrimage.

**The Role of Bukhara in Pilgrimage Tourism :**Today, there is a growing influx of pilgrims from countries with strong pilgrimage tourism potential -such as Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the Arab states-coming to Uzbekistan. Historically, Bukhara has been revered as a center of Islamic civilization, often called “The Noble City” and “The Imam of Cities.” It is especially famous as the birthplace of the Naqshbandi Sufi Order. There are more than 40,000 followers of the Naqshbandi order worldwide, with a majority residing in Turkey, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The unique feature of Bukhara is that all seven sacred pilgrimage sites of the “Yeti Pir” (Seven Saints) of the Naqshbandi order are located in one area, making it an especially significant destination for Muslim tourists.

Currently, there are 29 officially recognized pilgrimage sites in Bukhara. However, many other sacred landmarks exist but remain underdeveloped due to insufficient infrastructure. In the old city area alone, covering 500 hectares, there are 83 historical sites, and across the districts of Bukhara region, there are over 200 more sacred places. Known as the “Pearl of the Ancient East” sacred Bukhara is one of Uzbekistan’s tourism gems. Many of its historical and cultural heritage sites in the city center are inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List. Some of the most notable ones include [8]:

Poyi Kalon Architectural Complex (recognized as the "Eighth Wonder" by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization);	
Ark	Fortress;
The Samanid	Mausoleum;
Chashmai Ayub	Mausoleum;
Magoki-Attari	Mosque;
Ulugh Beg	Madrasah;
Mir-i-Arab	Madrasah;
Lyabi-Hauz Ensemble, among others.	



**Picture 2.** The volume of tourist packages sold in Bukhara region in 2023.

In 2023, a total of 5,377 tourist packages were sold in Bukhara region, with 72% of them sold to citizens of Uzbekistan within the country; 17% to foreign citizens of Uzbekistan; 7% to citizens of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) within Uzbekistan; and 4. % to citizens of other foreign countries within Uzbekistan (pictures 2). In conclusion, it is worth noting that promoting the charming nature of our tourist attractions, our ancient and rich historical heritage, and our national traditions and values to the world through the intelligent use of modern information technologies will effectively increase the sales of tourist packages within Uzbekistan. This will create opportunities for the growth of tourism revenue [7].

**Conclusion :** Pilgrimage tourism plays a vital role in fostering a deeper understanding of Islamic history and culture. It enhances the touristic prestige of the region and helps Bukhara gain recognition as a major pilgrimage tourism hub. The information above shows that pilgrimage tourism is one of the most promising sectors in Bukhara. The efforts being made to develop this field, along with the creation of favorable conditions, highlight the growing significance of tourism and the potential for rapid progress in this area. Further development of infrastructure will enhance the region's touristic appeal and attract even more visitors.

#### List of References :

1. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated January 28, 2022. "On the Strategy for the Development of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026". <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/6968143>
2. Turkiy davlatlar bilan turizm sohasidagi hamkorliknini jadal rivojlantirish chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida <http://lex.uz/uz/docs/-6137065>





3. Buxoro viloyatida ziyorat turizmini rivojlantirishni takomillashtirish yo'llari <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/buxoro-viloyatida-ziyosat-turizmini-rivojlantirishni-takomillashtirish-yo-llari/viewer>
4. Usmanov M.R. Turizm geografiyasi. O'quv qo'llanma. SamDU, 2019. - 265 b.
5. Data from the statistical office of the Bukhara region. <https://www.buxstat.uz>
6. Abdusalomova D.O. Buxoro viloyatida ziyorat turizmini rivojlantirish imkoniyatlari <https://ilmiyanjumanlar.uz/uploads/conferences/0028/4.1.pdf>
7. Zaynutdinova D.K ., Nematova Kh.Kh. Geographical features of tourism development in Bukhara region «International journal of artificial intelligence», №05, 2025. <https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai/article/view/4586>
8. Зайнутдинова Д. К., Нематова Х. Х. Некоторые аспекты развития туризма в Бухарской области. «Экономика и социум», №1(128), 2025. [www.iupr.ru](http://www.iupr.ru). «Институт управления и социально-экономического развития», Россия, г. Саратов.