

**ORGANIZATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR COORDINATING THE CHUST
CRAFTS CLUSTER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PILGRIMAGE TOURISM**

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Annotation. This article provides a scientific analysis of the potential of the Chust handicraft cluster in the development of pilgrimage tourism, with a particular focus on integrating the traditional knife-making and skullcap-sewing schools with the tourism potential of the region. The study examines how Chust's pilgrimage routes can be enriched through local craftsmanship traditions, how cooperation among cluster participants can be strengthened, and how an effective organizational mechanism for creating a regional brand can be developed. The article also highlights the economic and cultural benefits of linking pilgrimage tourism infrastructure with handicraft centers. In conclusion, practical recommendations are proposed for integrating the Chust handicraft cluster into the pilgrimage tourism system.

Keywords: pilgrimage tourism, Chust handicrafts, knife-making school, skullcap embroidery traditions, cluster model, integration, regional brand.

Introduction. In recent years, Uzbekistan has paid special attention to the development of new sectors of tourism, with pilgrimage tourism and craft tourism being identified as one of the most promising areas. Presidential Decree No. PQ-4539 sets out priority tasks such as supporting artisans, expanding master-apprentice schools, and providing craft centers with modern infrastructure. This resolution requires strengthening the integration of craft sectors with tourism in the regions.[1]. ¹The development trends of pilgrimage tourism in conjunction with the handicrafts of the Chust district are shown in a number of examples.

Analysis of the literature on the topic. The issues of developing pilgrimage tourism in our country are discussed in the works of a number of researchers. In particular, the works of Jo'rayev H, Khamidov K, Abdullayev M, Rasulov B, Avezov M, provide information on pilgrimage and handicrafts in tourism.

Analysis and results. The Chust district of the Namangan region has been known for centuries for its schools of knife-making and skullcap-making, which further enrich the cultural heritage of the region, which is rich in pilgrimage destinations. Chust handicrafts are an important part of the national brand of Uzbekistan, but their integration with pilgrimage tourism is still not sufficiently systematized. Therefore, the development of organizational mechanisms for integrating the Chust handicraft cluster with pilgrimage tourism determines the relevance of this article.²

¹ . O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti Sh.M. Mirziyoyevning "Hunarmandchilikni yanada rivojlantirish va hunarmandlarni qo'llab-quvvatlash bo'yicha qo'shimcha chora-tadbirlar to'g'risida"gi PQ-4539-son qarori. 28.11.2019 y.

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² O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti Sh.M. Mirziyoyevning "Nomoddiy madaniy merosni muhofaza qilish, ilmiy o'rganish va targ'ib qilishni rivojlantirishga oid qo'shimcha chora-tadbirlar to'g'risida"gi PQ-405-son

The art of Chust knife-making has been formed in the region since ancient times, and archaeological finds indicate a high level of metalworking culture. In the Middle Ages, Chust knives were famous for their durability, elegant decoration, and national identity in the markets of the Kokand Khanate, Russian fairs, and other trading centers[3]. The Chust skullcap was known as a traditional headdress widespread in the Fergana Valley in the 19th–20th centuries. The Chust skullcap, sewn in the Iraqi stitch method and decorated with symbolic patterns, expresses the aesthetic aspects of national culture[3]. Elements such as “almond”, “linen”, and “sun” in the patterns are symbols of ancient philosophical views.³

Today, more than 100 knife workshops operate in the Chust district, producing hundreds of thousands of knives per year[2]. The fact that the production process is carried out on the basis of manual labor creates a unique opportunity for tourists to observe and experience. It provides a meaningful basis for the younger generation to develop an interest in these crafts, to work hard on themselves, and to gain experience. A certain database has been formed as a theoretical guide to knife making.

Knife making includes the following main stages:

- steel selection;
- shaping;
- heating and hardening;
- decoration and engraving;
- handle making;
- polishing;
- packaging.

These and similar processes acquire their own uniqueness when performed sequentially, and if this principle is violated, the mechanism of knife making also loses its values and quality. Each stage is carried out individually by masters of their craft with attention and care, and is given its own form and charm.

Tourists can participate in the workshop process, make a knife with their name on it, or attend master classes, which gives additional meaning to the pilgrimage routes[4].⁴The Chust hat is made in several stages over a period of 12–18 hours. Today, about 300 women participate in this process, contributing to the increase in local employment. The fact that an average of 1.2 million hats are produced per year, most of which are purchased by tourists or exported, determines and confirms the economic potential of the craft cluster.

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³ 3. Abdullayev M., Xudoyqulov A. “O‘zbekiston hunarmandchiligi tarixi.” – Toshkent: O‘qituvchi, 2020. – 55–62-betlar.

⁴ 4. Rasulov B. “Farg‘ona vodiysi an‘anaviy hunarmandchiligi.” – Namangan: NamDU nashriyoti, 2018. – 41–49-betlar.

For pilgrims, observing the process of sewing hats, learning about symbolic patterns, and participating in small master classes further increase the importance of this product in cultural tourism[3].

Chust handicrafts create the following opportunities in the region:

1. Create new jobs;
2. Increase exports and trade;
3. Strengthen women's employment;
4. Serve to preserve national heritage;
5. Enrich pilgrimage destinations;
6. forms new services (workshop tours, master classes).

The total economic turnover from craft tourism is tens of billions of soums per year, which indicates the economic importance of the Chust cluster[2]. Let us consider the Chust craft cluster in the development of pilgrimage tourism using a SWOT analysis method:

Chust's proximity to pilgrimage sites increases the demand for its craft products and facilitates their recognition as a brand. The experience and knowledge of local craftsmen can create a basis for expanding the network, arouse great interest among pilgrims in purchasing national souvenirs, and allow the cluster system to improve state support mechanisms.

Some of the weaknesses of Chust are the lack of integration between pilgrimage destinations and the craft cluster, for example, the lack of coordination of advertising, routes and services. Insufficient development of marketing and digital advertising, as well as weak segments of tourist infrastructure, including transport and guide services.

If we analyze the opportunities, the annual growth of pilgrimage tourism has the opportunity to expand the market for handicraft products and create integrated tour packages by including the Chust cluster in pilgrimage routes. The possibility of including handicrafts in the UNESCO Intangible Heritage List will further promote the Chust brand to the world.

There are also some situations that threaten the brand of Chust products, for example, the proliferation of cheap and low-quality products on the market can reduce the value of original goods and damage the reputation of handicrafts. The decreasing generation of craftsmen and the decreasing interest of young people in this area pose a threat to the future of this industry.

The following organizational mechanisms are proposed to integrate the Chust handicraft cluster with pilgrimage tourism:

1. Integration of handicraft centers into pilgrimage routes
Creation of a "Chust handicraft route" for pilgrims;
combining workshops, skullcap schools, museums and shopping centers into a single direction.
2. Creating a regional brand
Festivals and competitions such as "Chust Pichoq Fest" and "Doppi Art Fest";
Certification of branded products and introduction of single design standards;
Development of products of different designs under a single name and presentation of them to tourists in an upbeat tone;
3. Digital marketing mechanisms
Official cluster stores on platforms such as Etsy, eBay, Amazon[4];
Promotion through virtual master classes and AR (augmented reality).
4. Cooperation model between cluster participants
Cooperation agreements between craftsmen, entrepreneurs, tourism organizations;
Inclusion of craft experiences in tourist packages.

Conclusions and recommendations. The integration of Chust crafts into pilgrimage tourism will create opportunities for the economic development, social stability and widespread

promotion of the cultural heritage of the region. The integration of knife-making and skullcap-making schools with tourist services will make Chust a leading center of crafts in Uzbekistan. The effective use of the craft cluster in pilgrimage tourism areas will increase the overall tourism competitiveness of the republic and strengthen the national brand potential, and will lead to a sharp increase in tourists' interest in these crafts.

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