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Ecotourism Cluster and Prospects for The Sangzor-Jizzakh Reservoir

Klaster Ekowisata dan Prospek Waduk Sangzor-Jizzakh

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Abstract

One of the ecotourism clusters in the Jizzakh region is the Sangzar-Molguzar ecotourism cluster, the creation of which is the basis for the systematic and sustainable development of ecotourism in the region, as well as the formation of local infrastructure.

Highlights:

Sangzar-Molguzar Cluster: Foundation for Jizzakh's ecotourism development.

Ecotourism Goal: Systematic, sustainable growth in regional tourism initiatives.

Local Infrastructure: Cluster drives infrastructure formation in the area.

Keywords: Ecotourism, cluster, ecology, Koytash, stones of various shapes, eco-routes, investments, benefits, ecotourism areas, Forish district.

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Introduction

Swedish economists K. Fredriksson and L. Lindmark [4] utilized the term "cluster" in the 1970s to define the concentration of enterprises within a geographically limited area of the economy. The establishment of tourism clusters serves as an effective and renowned form of organizing tourism businesses in specific tourism regions. Considering the high potential for ecotourism and recreation in the Jizzakh region, our esteemed President has emphasized the need to diversify tourism services and accelerate investment projects, creating more favorable conditions for the development of ecological tourism through the rational use of the country's existing resources. This includes attracting direct foreign investments and providing additional opportunities for entrepreneurial entities, to ensure employment for the population in mountainous and remote areas, as well as expanding their sources of income. The resolution No. ПҚ-21 on "Measures for the Rapid Development of Ecological Tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan" issued on January 12, 2024, is highly significant for our region. This resolution includes an approved targeted list of promising tourist cluster projects to be implemented in the field of ecological tourism.

In this context, we can categorize the ecotourism cluster in Jizzakh into five distinct ecotourism clusters that encompass various natural and cultural landscapes. These include the Nurata-Aydarkul, Qoytosh-Farish, Sangzor-Molguzaar, Zomin-Bakhmal, and Mirzachul-Tuzkon ecotourism clusters [1-figure].

The Sangzor-Molguzaar ecotourism cluster integrates the cities of Jizzakh and Sharof Rashidov district. As the regional center, Jizzakh city possesses developed infrastructure, including various museums, theaters, and recreational areas that are considered key cultural landscapes and serve as the core of this cluster. The ecotourism attractions within this ecotourism cluster include the Sangzor River, the Molguzaar mountain range, and the Jizzakh water reservoir. By organizing and developing tourism at these ecotourism recreational sites, it is possible to enrich and enhance the attractiveness of this cluster. In the territory of Jizzakh region, there are two rivers and approximately 100 large and small streams flowing. The Sangzor and Zomin rivers in Jizzakh region originate from the northwestern slopes of the Turkistan mountain range, and their waters are utilized for irrigating agricultural lands. It can be defined as the only river flowing northward within Uzbekistan's territory. After flowing from the Ilonut Pass, the Sangzor River merges with the water from the Eski Tuyatortar canal, supplying water to the Jizzakh water reservoir and the Jizzakh oasis. The Molguzaar mountain range is part of the Syr Darya basin, with Jizzakh plains occupying the widened lower section of the Sangzor River valley. To improve water supply for agricultural lands by collecting winter and autumn waters, as well as floodwaters, it is planned to construct a water reservoir in the Sangzor valley. This reservoir was built in 1969 at Yoyilmasoy gorge, located 9 km east-southeast of Jizzakh. It is situated within the Sharof Rashidov district and fully meets the water needs of 15,340 hectares of land while assisting in irrigation for over 10,000 hectares of protected land.

Objective of the Research. The aim of this research is to further enhance the tourism potential of the Jizzakh region and develop ecotourism clusters at local levels. Specifically, it seeks to analyze the significance of the Sangzor-Molguzar ecotourism cluster in the socio-economic development of the region. Additionally, the research aims to develop recommendations for establishing the Sangzor-Molguzar ecotourism cluster and elucidate its positive impacts on the socio-economic growth of Jizzakh city and Sharof Rashidov district

Methods

The research employs a cluster-based approach in tourism, focusing on the scientific substantiation of cluster concepts, objectives, tasks, and policy directions in tourism. During the study, the process of transformations in the field, methodological aspects of forming tourism clusters, and expert opinions were considered. The methods used include dialectical and systematic approaches, comparative and contrastive analysis, statistical methods, and grouping techniques.

Prominent researchers such as M. Porter, V.M. Kitsis, A.V. Eliseev, S.K. Volkov, B.N. Navruz-Zoda, N.S. Ibragimov, A.Q. Tukhtamishov, A. Ergasheva, D.H. Aslanova, and M.M. Khoshimova have published scientific works on tourism clusters.

For the first time, recommendations are being made regarding the comparison of the Jizzakh region's tourism potential from the perspective of clusters and its interpretation as ecotourism clusters. This includes suggestions for organizing the Sangzor-Molguzar ecotourism cluster, developing ecotourism routes, and establishing ecotourism clusters specifically in Sharof Rashidov district and Jizzakh city.

Result and Discussion

The Sangzor-Molguzaar ecotourism cluster, situated along the M39 international highway and in proximity to bus and railway stations, provides opportunities for local and international tourist market access. This cluster encompasses the areas of Gallaorol, Jizzakh city, and Sh. Rashidov district. The routes within the Sangzor-Molguzaar ecotourism cluster begin at the center of Jizzakh city, recommending stops at the Sh. Rashidov Museum,

the Sh. Rashidov House Museum, the Jizzakh Regional Studies and History Museum, the K. Olimjon and Zulfiya Museums, as well as the Orda Park. Establishing eco-museums and tourism neighborhoods within the cluster's territories remains a pressing issue, as Jizzakh city hosts a significant number of artisans who meet the region's primary needs. However, only three artisans are currently included in tourism routes, specializing in producing flower-printed fabrics, embroidered items, custom furniture, and crafting rubber, ceramic, and clay products. The central "Orom" market area is predominantly populated by blacksmiths, carpenters, producers of national quilts and pillows, and families that prepare traditional dishes at home. Despite this, a tourism neighborhood has yet to be established in Jizzakh city. The city features parks for children and ecological recreation. Additionally, there is a nursery and tree plantation covering 10 hectares organized by the Jizzakh Central Forestry. It is advisable to grant this area ecological park status and to create seating areas and sanitation facilities for public recreation. Prohibiting cooking activities, loud music, and various entertainment attractions in this space would facilitate post-work relaxation and rejuvenation for the city's residents. To study the essence of the tourist-recreational cluster, it is essential to examine the functions of tourism and its socio-economic role in society. Thus, the functions of the tourism sector encompass nearly all tasks of the socio-economic sphere within the classic triad of "tourism + accommodation + entertainment." In statistical concepts related to the cluster, "tourism" refers to a type of "migration" that does not involve changes in residence or workplace. With the development of tourism into a mass phenomenon, initial definitions emerged to statistically account for travelers. The following can be considered tourist centers (forms of tourist destination): cities; settlements; specialized service facilities; rivers, seas, lakes; administrative units; natural landscapes; national parks, reserves; mountain ranges; unique landscapes. Identifying types of activities related to tourism that fall under special customs, tax, and other preferential regimes designated by states constitutes one of the cluster's most crucial categories.



Figure 1.

The primary goals and characteristics of a tourism destination (cluster) are centered around leisure, the enjoyment and acquisition of new experiences by tourists, as well as health and wellness, professional-business, hospitality, and other related factors. In the Sangzor-Molguzaar ecotourism cluster, while the city of Jizzakh serves as the core of the cluster, excursions are conducted along the Sangzor and Molguzaar mountain ranges and the Jizzakh water reservoir. Specifically, tourists visit the Amir Timur Gate located on the banks of the Sangzor River, the Sa'd Ibn Abu Waqqas shrine in the Gallaorol district, and the Sayhontosh inscriptions in Saykhon village, where they dine at a national restaurant named after the Amir Timur Gate and relax in the area. The following day, they can visit the Jizzakh water reservoir, where they may swim according to the seasons, engage in fishing, or take boat rides. After that, tourists can be invited to villages located along the Molguzaar mountain range.



Figure 2. Schematic representation of the Sangzor-Molguzaar ecotourism cluster

It is well-known that the Molguzaar mountain range is a continuation of the Turkestan mountain system, and within its embrace lie the villages located in the Zomin, Bakhmal, and Sh. Rashidov districts. We have developed trekking routes along the mountain trails connecting these villages. The routes include the villages of Muzbulok, Aldashman, and Boyqunqir in the Bakhmal district; Peshagor, Toli, Karim, Achchi, Bushkubi, Uvol, Yetkichev, and Duoba in the Zomin district; and the villages of Korpasoy, Uvobsay, and Oltiqovuz in the Sh. Rashidov district (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Map of routes in Jizzakh region along the Turkestan and Molguzaar mountain ranges. Here, 1 indicates Jizzakh city, 2 indicates Jizzakh water reservoir, 3 indicates Ravot village, 4 indicates Korpasoy village, 5 indicates Uvobsay village, 6 indicates Oltiqovuz village, and 7 indicates Bosh Peshagor village, among others.

From these villages, visitors can explore the Uch Qiz stone ensembles in Ravot village, the Parpi Ata and Qirq Chiltan pilgrimage sites in Korpasoy village, as well as the ancient trees in Uvobsay and Oltiqovuz villages [4]. The area offers picturesque natural landscapes, riverbanks, slopes, and mountain springs for hiking. Although Korpasoy, Uvobsay, and Oltiqovuz villages along the Molguzaar mountain range possess stunning scenery and ethnic diversity, family guesthouses are not yet established.



Figure 3. Map of routes in the Jizzakh region along the Turkestan and Molguzaar mountain ranges.

Currently, the existing camping and recreation facilities do not meet demand levels. By transforming the village of Oltiqovuz into an eco-museum and developing routes, it is possible to provide additional income for the local population. Oltiqovuz is a village that lacks electricity, and the residents primarily meet their electricity needs

through water generators. The community is engaged in agriculture and livestock farming.

Along the M39 highway within the Sangzor-Molguzaar ecotourism cluster, numerous national teahouses and restaurants are located, serving both domestic and foreign tourists. It is possible to establish additional tourist complexes along this route for tourists traveling on the bus services between Tashkent and Samarkand. By offering camel and horse rides, tasting agricultural products, observing beekeeping and honey production processes, and allowing tourists to engage personally in honey harvesting activities, we can keep visitors in our region for 4-5 hours. In the Galalorol district of this international tourist destination, there are artisans who can welcome tourists into their homes and facilitate the purchase and demonstration of examples of our national crafts.

Conclusion

It is now possible to enhance the ecotourism and recreational potential of this village by transforming it into an eco-museum, organizing roads and other communications, reviving handicrafts in the area, and establishing new directions to enrich and increase the attractiveness of the routes. The population of more than ten villages under the jurisdiction of Bakhmal, Zomin, and Sh. Rashidov has historically traveled back and forth along the trails of the Turkestan and Molguzaar mountain ranges. It is advisable to equip these mountain paths as ecotourism trails, which includes installing signposts, constructing rest areas along the trails, developing maps, and organizing family guesthouses in the villages.

The village of Saykhon is located next to the M39 international highway within the Sangzor-Molguzaar ecotourism cluster. The rock inscriptions of Sayhonsay in the Molguzaar mountain cliffs are considered one of the main attractions of tourist routes in this village. Currently, the extraction of stones from this site to meet the needs of the local population is causing damage to these ancient historical tourist sites. Conducting promotional activities to protect and preserve these locations is one of the pressing issues of our time.

Considering that the Sangzor River crosses the territory of Jizzakh region, it is crucial to establish swimming complexes, boating areas, swimming pools, and water tourism facilities along the banks of the Sangzor River. The lack of specialists with high ecological literacy in the tourism business, the scarcity of skilled and qualified personnel in the sector, and the incomplete identification and development of ecotourism facilities at the national level are all obstacles to the full establishment of the Sangzor-Molguzaar ecotourism cluster.

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