



Development of Tourism and Hospitality in Tajikistan

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Abstract: *Tajikistan is a country located in Central Asia, which possesses majestic scenery and a long-standing culture, including the traditions of the indigenous people and the beauty of many religions. Tajikistan's tourism development potential is extremely open. In particular, statistics from visitors' activities have shown that eco-tourism, discovery/adventurous tourism or exploration are the experiences most chosen by visitors because they meet the needs for a different experience trip. To promote tourism, for a country like Tajikistan, the article points out that it is necessary to have State and Government policies to reduce cumbersome processes, shorten procedures, promote incentives, encourage tourism and ensure security.*

Introduction

“The growth of tourism, which itself is regarded as among the most trustworthy drivers of development of the country economy, is steady due to Tajikistan's rich historical and cultural heritage, distinctive landscape, and exquisite locations. As a proven method of luring local and foreign investment, producing new employment, generating money, and enhancing the state budget, tourism has made a substantial contribution to social and economic advancement inside this area. Since the authorities of Tajikistan recognize that tourism seems to be a significant factor in economic growth and job creation, it has implemented a variety of programs to enhance the country's appeal to tourists. Tajikistan, nevertheless, could do much more to increase tourism-related expenditure. This paper shall analyse the factors that affecting the development of tourism in Tajikistan as well as the strategies to promote this sector after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Types of tourist attraction

Tajikistan attracts travellers from all over the world with its natural splendour and cultural diversity. The nation is also seen as "exotic" due to its limited exploration (Shokirov et al, 2014). Especially for today's adventurous travellers who wish to visit remote locations, this is a major selling feature.

There are two types of adventure travellers who visit Tajikistan. The first category consists of independent travellers who explore the nation on their own without using tour guides. It often comprises bikers and trekkers who are drawn to the Fann Mountains, and most significantly, the kind and welcoming locals of the nation (Bidaki& Hosseini, 2014).

Tourists that go to Tajikistan via tour companies as part of Tajikistan-only or multi-nation itineraries make up the second segment of visitors. They travel there to enjoy the distinctive cultural landmarks all along Silk Road, including Sarazm (a UNESCO site), Hissor Fortress archaeological site, Yamchun Fortress, Khulbuk Castle, and many others.

Notwithstanding being close to Afghanistan, Tajikistan has a reputation for being a secure country. More than 50 percent of foreign and local respondents in a 2018 World Bank Group study of tour operators stated they are usually happy with the safety environment in the region.

As a travel destination, Tajikistan offers a lot of promise. But rather than focusing on the quantity of visitors, people should consider the potential economic benefits of tourism. So as to protect their cultural and natural resources, several nations have chosen a "low volume-high margin" tourism policy (Bidaki & Hosseini, 2014). Tajikistan would want to draw additional high-spending adventurous visitors who might visit local towns, consume local cuisine, and partake in the experiences that the nation has to provide in terms of nature and culture (Shokirov et al, 2014).

Attracting a lot of cheap travellers might result in mass tourism, which could endanger the nation's cultural and natural resources. It is this rationale for the recent trend in several locations, like Machu Picchu in Peru, of restricting visitor access to specific historical and cultural monuments.

The Development of Tourism in Tajikistan

To assist tourists in planning their vacation, a collection of suggested tour itineraries have been put together as Tajikistan tourist packages. Tourists are all welcome in Tajikistan. They can travel independently by conducting research in advance utilizing travel guides, online resources, and the countries' website's suggested tour itineraries. To save time and have an itinerary that meets tourists' needs, they can also ask tour-services to put together their Tajikistan travel package (Beheshti et al, 2013). In order to create a bespoke tour itinerary that fits schedules and interests, tourists will be drawn on the country's local expertise. Tajikistan includes recent advancements in tourism as well as comments from previous tourists into their itineraries. Additionally, tourists may sign up for one of their supervised small group trips, which have set departure dates all year round. These trips are particularly well-liked and offer the opportunity to cut costs by splitting expenses with other travellers.

Even individuals who wish to maintain a healthy lifestyle have alternatives in Tajikistan. Near Khorog are the GarmChashma Hot Springs, which have hot springs that may reach 64 degrees Celsius (150 degrees Fahrenheit). Because numerous people vouch for the mineral waters, travellers frequently claim that it is sacred. The sanatorium allegedly provides treatments for conditions affecting the cardiovascular, respiratory system, bones, muscles, and skins. There are several more mineral springs that generate carbonated water that may be utilized as medicine, including Zund, Khosguni, and Chursh.

Tajikistan is home to many beautiful natural areas, but it also has many interesting cultural and historical landmarks. The Russian Empire and Alexander the Great both invaded the ancient state of Tajikistan, which was once the location of Bactria and Sogdiana. Tajikistan has many stories to tell, from forts to Buddhist temples to madrassas and mosques, for those who are willing to listen. Khujand is unquestionably a Tajik must-see. Khujand, together with Samarkand and Bukhara, used to be a hub of culture and science in Central Asia, and several of the buildings from its heyday still stand today. Other options are to explore Sheikh Muslikhiddin's tomb, the Masjidi Jami Mosque, Sheikh Muslikhiddin's tomb, and the castle that was constructed in the center of Khujand over 2,500 years ago.

In Tajikistan, eco-tourism is a rapidly expanding subset of local tourism that aims to commemorate and protect the country's cultural diversity and unmatched beautiful natural (Yorov et al., 2019). Conscious visitors can be certain that their trip would not only enjoyable and unforgettable but would also have a positive long-term influence on the communities they experience (Yorov et al., 2019). People would be in store for renowned outdoor locations in the Pamir and Fann Mountain Ranges, several of which are still little-known to both residents and visitors. The Fann Mountains' slopes are home to the aquatic gems Iskanderkul and Seven Lake. These locations may be enjoyed in a single day, but staying the night at one of the neighborhood family-run homestays enables visitors to investigate the surroundings more leisurely while also helping the community.

Tajikistan is also seeing growth in agrotourism, which is still regarded as a cutting-edge kind of travel. Such kind of tourism has already been gaining popularity over time. The development of agricultural tourism, also known as agro-tourism (Yorov et al., 2019), is based on the ripe and ecologically sound fruit and vegetables of Tajikistan, including such apples, grapes, pears, etc. as well as their direct collection from gardens, as well as fresh veggies, melons like pineapples and watermelons, dried fruits, the most delectable honey, vegetable and fruit juices, and other products that are sustainable (KORČEKOVÁ, 2012).

Strategies to further improve Tourism in Tajikistan

The government of the nation has put in place a number of incentives to ensure the sector is appealing to both domestic and foreign investors, and at the outset it established the legal and economic strategy for the improved performance of tourist destinations and the construction of the infrastructure needed (KORČEKOVÁ, 2012). The established documents state that all through the first 05 years of their operation, tourism businesses are excluded from income tax in addition to value added tax as well as customs duties for the import of equipments and building materials for the constructions of tourism infrastructures, while the amount of import duties for the import of new vehicles for tourist activities has indeed been whittled down by 50%. Entrepreneurs' interest would grow as customs and tax incentives are granted, and currently, over 30 tourism infrastructure projects are now being carried out in the fields of building tourist complexes, cable cars, parks, resorts and hotels, and other tourist amenities.

Multi-entry 5-year visas are given to businesspeople who spend more than 1 billion dollars in the Tajik economy in an effort to further strengthen the investment climate and promote international investments. Multi-entry 3-year visas are given to Tajik nationals living abroad to make travel easier.

Owing to the implementation of an electronic visa, a unilateral visa-free regime with 52 nations, a simpler visa conditions with 126 countries, and the elimination of internal authorization of tourists, tourists and other foreign nationals would be able to travel internationally without having to apply at Tajik consulates but rather through "www.evisa.tj" to acquire an electronic visa as well as travel to the nation (FARRUKH, 2022). Tajikistan's e-visa systems has been classified 4th among the top 5 systems for issuing visas, as per international evaluations.

Within Tajikistan, police enforcement organizations play a vital role in safeguarding the security of both foreign and local tourists and providing safe tourist industry and entertainment for visitors is constantly the subject of special concern. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan has been overseeing the operation of a tourist police agency since 2018. In order to address the demands of travellers, there is direct collaboration and contact between this department and travel agencies. The impact of those strategies pays off as the market for tourism services now includes more than 239 travel agencies, 182 hotels, 29 hostels and motels, 49 sanatoriums, 8 health care facilities and clinics, 7 rest homes, 1 boarding house, 1 camping site, and 4 tourist and leisure bases (FARRUKH, 2022). There are 288 tourism facilities in all.

Conclusion

Tajikistan has now revised its development objectives and defined new ones. A significant position is also held by the tourist sector. Accordingly, given the existing environment, the creation of a tourist development plan was crucial. What is currently included in the tourist strategy? These are unquestionably new concepts for the growth of the tourist industry's commerce, administration, and education. Appropriate use of leisure time activities, and resolving and conquering problems with money, relationships, and education. There is no surprise that the tourist sector is now facing a severe crisis, and a key component of any tourism plan should be to reform the legal framework, account for tourist products, and invest within that sector. Without it, the nation's tourist industry won't be able to take use of the wealth of natural resources available to it.

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