

IMPACT OF COVID-19 VIRUS ON TOURISM IN UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT:

This article is about the global crises caused by the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic around the world, in particular, the negative impact of this pandemic on the tourism industry in Uzbekistan.

KEYWORDS: Pandemic, online tourism, startup, State Committee for Tourism Development, Safe Tourism Service .

INTRODUCTION:

Uzbekistan is one of the developing countries in the field of tourism. Many cities in Central Asia were major trading points on the Great Silk Road, which connected Eastern and Western civilizations. Today, the museums of Uzbekistan contain more than two million works that testify to the unique historical, cultural and spiritual life of the peoples of Central Asia living in this region. Uzbekistan attracts tourists with its historical, archeological, architectural and natural resources. Uzbekistan is also a member of the Regional Initiative (TRI), a regional umbrella for tourism-related organizations.

Samarkand has its own Registan, Bibi-Khanim Mosque, Gur-Amir and Shah-i Zinda, Bukhara has its own Po-i Kalyan complex, Ark Fortress, Samanid mausoleum and Labi House ensemble, and of course Khiva has its own Ichan city. Castles, mosques, madrasas, minarets, walls and gates are tourist attractions. Various

exhibitions, conferences and international competitions have been held in these historical places.

Many tourists visit Uzbekistan because of their religious beliefs, and dozens of historical sites of Islam are located in this country, such as the mausoleum of Sheikh Zaynuddin Baba, the mausoleum of Shaykhantaur and Zangiota in Tashkent, or the Bahovuddin ensemble in Bukhara, Bayan-Kuli. Khan Mausoleum, Sayfiddin Din Bokarzi Mausoleum and many other monuments.

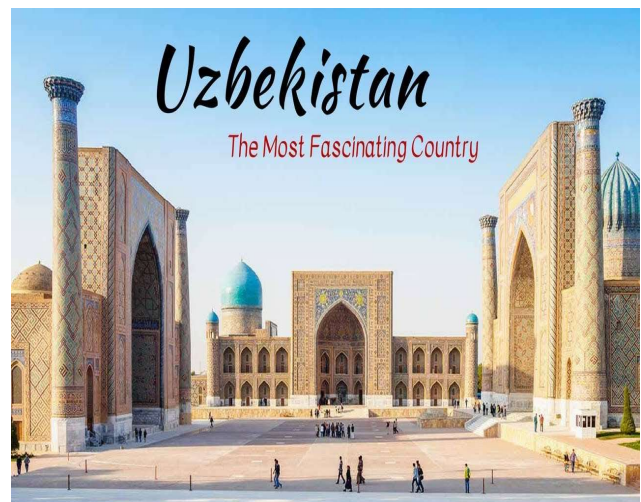


Figure1

These historical sites were visited by many tourists. Every year the flow of foreign tourists to Samarkand, Bukhara, Karshi, Khiva, Kokand and Tashkent was growing. In particular, if we look at the statistics for 2019, in

2019, 6,748,500 tourists visited Uzbekistan, and in 2018 this figure was 5,346,200. 51.3% of them are people aged 31-55 (52.1% in 2018), 20.2% - 55 years and older (19.4% in 2018), 19.5% - 19-30 years. Years (20.4% in 2018) and 9.1% - individuals aged 0-18 (8.1% in 2018). The largest number of tourists is from the Central Asian region - 5,764,500 people. 495.6 thousand Tourists came from the CIS countries.

The number of immigrants amounted to 488.4 thousand people. Most of the tourists came from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Afghanistan, China, the Republic of Korea and India. 81.8% of them came to Uzbekistan to visit their relatives and friends, and 15.5% - for leisure. For other reasons, attendance for treatment, shopping, business meetings, and study was 2.7%. These indicators show that the tourism industry in Uzbekistan has been developing over the years. But what will this figure look like in 2020?

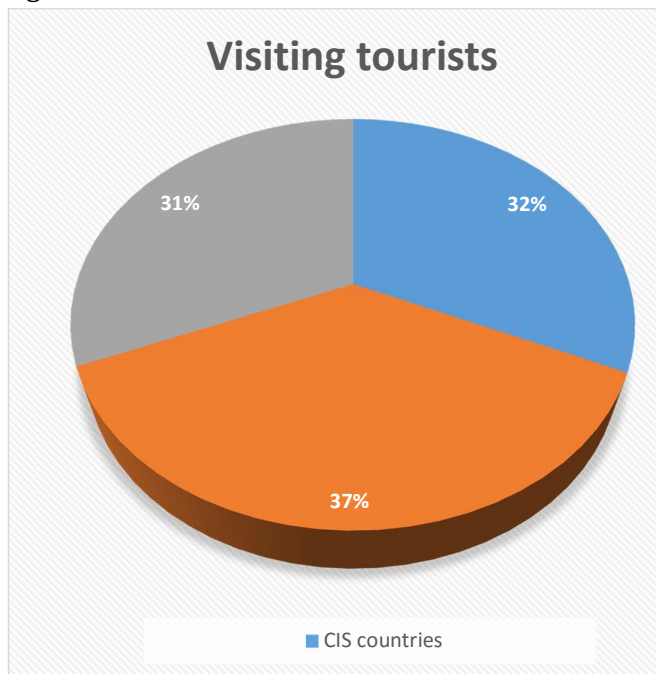


Figure2 (The data were prepared independently by the author)

Patients infected with the Covid-19 virus were first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, and the infection was recognized

as a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020. To date, more than 2,000,231 people living in more than 190 countries and regions have been infected with the virus. Outbreaks appear to be exacerbated in China, Europe, Italy, France and the United States. So how has this pandemic affected countries?

This has forced many countries to change their attitudes towards their socio-economic policies. The first industry to suffer from the COVID-19 pandemic is tourism. Due to this pandemic, the demand for tourism among the population has sharply decreased. While the tourism industry used to generate around \$ 1.7 trillion a year, the decline in the sector is now 70%, and this decline continues day by day.

Many countries around the world have been forced to close their borders to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and to protect the population. Various airlines, including rail and air, have canceled their flights. At the same time, many countries today face problems in the activities of tourism entities. According to exporters, tourist flows are expected to suffer huge losses. The coronavirus pandemic has completely transformed the tourism sector, causing many people to stop traveling abroad.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 has also been detected in Uzbekistan, and now the number of registered cases exceeds 1,300 people. This is the first time our country is facing such a challenge, so it is natural that there will be unknown fears. But there is no need to panic. Only by paying attention to our health and hygiene can we protect ourselves and our loved ones.

Unfortunately, this disease is causing great damage to the economy and tourism of Uzbekistan. When the Covid-19 pandemic entered the Republic, it took all measures to prevent the spread of the virus in our country. On March 16, it was declared Quarantine in Uzbekistan.

DURING THIS QUARANTINE, VARIOUS MEASURES WERE TAKEN:

From March 16, all governmental and non-governmental institutions (kindergartens, schools and universities) have announced a holiday and they are still conducting online classes.

"Restaurants, cafes and a number of other organizations have closed down and they have started accepting orders online," he said. The entry and exit borders to the provinces have been closed since March 23. Fines have been imposed on those who took to the streets without masks on March 26.

- As well as permits for cars. Individuals who do not comply with quarantine regulations are punished in accordance with the law.

According to experts, the spread of the virus will decrease in two to three months Kevin, and citizens will be able to organize trips, travel again. According to preliminary estimates, Uzbekistan has lost about a thousand Chinese tourists since regular flights to Beijing, Urumqi, Xi'an and Chengdu were suspended. In 2019, 61,900 Chinese citizens visited Uzbekistan, and in 2020 their number decreased. The break-up with China, one of the country's economic partners, has also taken a toll on tourism. If last year the number of tourists from China to our country was 40 thousand people, today their number is almost non-existent, which in turn leads to the possibility of damage of \$ 51 million. The number of tourists visiting not only China but also many other countries has dropped sharply.

The State Committee for Tourism Development has developed urgent measures to reduce the negative impact of restrictions on the tourism market of Uzbekistan and sent them to the Cabinet of Ministers. This was announced by Deputy Prime Minister Aziz Abdukhakimov. According to him, after the end of quarantine in Uzbekistan, it is planned to subsidize startup projects in the field of tourism, including

innovative business ideas, especially youth projects, as well as programs aimed at creating convenience for tourists. It also includes the involvement of the local population in the process of collecting audio, photo and video materials, and on this basis the registration of settlements with the status of "Tourist Village", "Tourist Neighborhood" and "Tourist Neighborhood".

The 'Discover Your Husband' project will take place. "Tourist Neighbors." "In addition, the campaign" Plan a trip "is expected to be held, and the committee, together with tourism organizations, will promote electronic proposals among the population and launch electronic systems for receiving online applications for travel to Uzbekistan. is taking steps to strengthen.

The main goal of these projects is to increase the number of tourists visiting our country after quarantine. Although this is a bit difficult, we need to implement more projects that can attract tourists. Once the COVID-19 pandemic is resolved, of course, most travelers will prefer to go to safer places.

Therefore, we must first carry out all disinfection work. We need to pay special attention to the cleanliness of our historic cities. Only then will we be able to attract more tourists. In this case, of course, advertising and information communications also play an important role. If we organize a "Safe Tourism Service" in our country and post various videos on social networks about its cleanliness and compliance with all sanitary and hygienic rules, the interest of tourists will also increase. And it will make Uzbekistan a "safe travel destination."

We can use electronic systems and conduct online surveys to popularize the proposals among the population. New business ideas for tourism and the organization of tourism online are planned by tourism organizations in the country. The "Impressions of Uzbekistan" campaign among foreign tourists

on social networks and the "My Journey" survey among local tourists, as well as programs such as "Milliy teleradio" and "Yosh sayyoh" are prepared in cooperation with the National Television and Radio. With the help of the company and manuals and other experts, it is planned to introduce new benefits to further reduce the negative impact of the pandemic.

What is being done in the field of tourism today in the period of stagnation associated with the coronavirus? This question was answered by Deputy Prime Minister, Chairman of the State Committee for Tourism Development Aziz Abdukhakimov.

According to Aziz Abdukhakimov, the State Committee for Tourism Development is currently working on the development of "online tourism", support for entrepreneurs and startups. "Currently, the State Committee for Tourism Development and its national PR center are working on launching a new website that will allow people to organize virtual tours in Uzbekistan.

It will be the first platform to offer virtual tours throughout Uzbekistan. According to him, the site covers three main routes, which allows people to make virtual trips throughout Uzbekistan.

Today, we are working in partnership with museums and other tourist attractions to launch virtual tours. Taking the opportunity, we want to attract talented professionals working in this field, with whom we can set up an online business. For representatives of the tourism industry.

Cooperation with hotel owners and managers, tour operators, guest houses, guides, etc. is being strengthened, and work is underway to further develop the industry. Webinars on news and online observations, online guides are provided. Their employment will be provided during and outside the crisis.

There will be opportunities for new tourism development projects, startups, online

consulting. It is planned to allocate grants to people with creative ideas for the implementation of projects," said the chairman of the State Committee for Tourism Development.

It was also identified as another task of the tourism industry to increase the number of domestic flights. In this difficult situation, special attention should be paid to financial support of local companies, providing benefits and preferences for the development of domestic tourism, and many other issues.

It should be noted that the development of domestic tourism depends not only on one organization or tourism entity, but also on everyone living in Uzbekistan. In these difficult times, if we all stand together and contribute to the development of tourism, which is one of the strategic directions of the country's economy, we will be able to create new jobs and thus improve the lives of people living in this country. We will have contributed.

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