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ISSUES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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ABSTRACT: This scientific text provides a comprehensive analysis of sustainable tourism and environmental protection issues. The impact of tourism activities on the environment, the necessity of rational use of natural resources, and ways to maintain ecological balance are highlighted. Furthermore, issues of environmentally sustainable tourism development based on eco-tourism, green transport, eco-hotels, and digital technologies are examined. The study also analyzes the prospects of sustainable tourism development in the context of Uzbekistan.

KEYWORDS: Sustainable tourism, environmental protection, eco-tourism, green transport, natural resources, climate change, tourism infrastructure, ecological balance, digital technologies, tourism in Uzbekistan

Today, sustainable tourism is emerging as one of the most important directions of the global tourism industry. It is a comprehensive approach aimed not only at generating economic benefits but also at preserving natural resources, maintaining ecological balance, and improving the socio-economic well-being of the local population. Along with the rapid development of tourism, its negative impact on the environment is also increasing. Therefore, the concept of sustainable tourism is studied in direct connection with environmental protection issues. The main goal of sustainable tourism is to meet the needs of the present generation without limiting the ability of future generations to use resources. This approach relies on three main pillars: economic sustainability, social justice, and environmental protection. Particularly, the environmental component is of crucial importance for the long-term development of tourism. Tourism activities often put great pressure on natural landscapes, historical monuments, and ecological systems. For example, in mass tourism areas, problems such as an increase in waste volume, overuse of water resources, and air and soil pollution arise. This, in turn, leads to the disruption of ecosystems, loss of biodiversity, and degradation of the natural environment. Environmental protection issues are one of the main directions in the development of sustainable tourism. In this regard, a number of measures are being implemented. First, it is necessary to improve the waste management system in tourist areas. Second, the use of renewable energy sources (solar, wind energy) reduces the environmental burden of tourism infrastructure. Third, it is important to introduce technologies for the rational use and conservation of water resources. In addition, eco-tourism is of particular importance as an important form of sustainable tourism. Eco-tourism is a type of tourism that does not harm natural areas, but rather serves to preserve and develop them. It helps to raise environmental awareness among tourists and to form a culture of respect for nature. Through eco-tourism, the income of the local population increases, and they actively participate in the process of nature conservation.

State policy also plays an important role in the development of sustainable tourism. In many countries, environmental standards have been introduced, and tourist facilities operate based on these requirements. In Uzbekistan, in recent years, along with the development of the tourism

sector, great attention has been paid to ensuring environmental safety. Especially in national parks, reserves, and historical areas, environmental control is being strengthened. In addition, the introduction of digital technologies in the tourism sector also has a positive impact on environmental protection. Guiding tourists through mobile applications, electronic ticket systems, digital maps, and online booking systems reduces paper consumption and ensures efficient use of resources. The participation of the local population is also very important in the development of sustainable tourism. If the local population is involved in the tourism process, they will approach nature conservation more responsibly. At the same time, their traditional culture and customs will also be preserved. This ensures the social sustainability of tourism. In conclusion, sustainable tourism and environmental protection are closely interrelated concepts. In the process of tourism development, maintaining ecological balance, rational use of natural resources, and protecting the environment are among the most important tasks. Only through such an approach can the long-term and sustainable development of the tourism sector be ensured.

When analyzing the issue of sustainable tourism more deeply, its direct connection with global climate change should also be emphasized. Today, the tourism sector accounts for a significant share of global greenhouse gas emissions. Especially, air travel, road transport, and the energy consumption of large hotel complexes place a heavy burden on the atmosphere. For this reason, within the framework of the sustainable tourism concept, creating "green transport" and energy-efficient infrastructure is an urgent issue. aylangan.Yashil transport system refers to electric vehicles, the development of public transport, the expansion of bicycle infrastructure, and the creation of pedestrian travel routes. This not only reduces environmental pollution but also creates opportunities for healthy and safe movement for tourists. In many developed countries, the practice of restricting the use of cars in tourist areas has been introduced, which contributes greatly to the preservation of the natural environment. Another important direction in sustainable tourism is the concept of "eco-hotels". Such hotels use renewable energy sources, establish a waste management system, and apply water-saving technologies. For example, rainwater harvesting systems, solar panels, and energy-efficient lighting systems significantly reduce the environmental load. Also, environmental certification systems are being introduced in the tourism sector. Through this system, hotels, travel companies, and tourist facilities are evaluated for compliance with environmental standards. Organizations with a "Green Certificate" enjoy more trust and demand among tourists. This encourages enterprises to be environmentally responsible. Education and promotion also play an important role in environmental protection issues. Various information campaigns, eco-tourism guidelines, and environmental trainings are organized to form an environmental culture among tourists. Tourists need to have information on not harming nature, proper waste disposal, and respecting local ecosystems. In Uzbekistan, a number of strategic programs for the development of sustainable tourism are also being implemented. In particular, work is being carried out to manage tourist flows in historical cities, introduce special protection regimes in ecological areas, and create eco-tourism routes. Especially, mountainous areas and national parks have great potential for developing tourism based on ecological principles. In addition, digital monitoring systems create opportunities to observe the ecological state of tourist areas. With the help of sensors and IoT technologies, air quality, water resource status, and waste volume are monitored in real-time. This helps to identify environmental risks in advance and take prompt measures.

Another important aspect of sustainable tourism is supporting local products and services. The integration of local crafts, national cuisine, and small businesses into tourism ensures economic sustainability. At the same time, transport and logistics costs are reduced, which decreases the ecological footprint. In conclusion, the development of sustainable tourism is not only an economic

issue but also an important part of global environmental security. Preserving nature, rational use of resources, and maintaining ecological balance are among the most urgent tasks of today. By widely implementing sustainable approaches in the tourism sector, it is possible not only to obtain economic benefits but also to preserve a livable ecological environment for future generations.

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