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## **THE EFFECTIVE USE OF TOURIST POTENTIAL OF DESTINATIONS (IN CASE OF NURABAD DISTRICT, SAMARKAND REGION)**

**Rakhmonov Shukhrat Shavkatovich\*; Rakhimov Abror Zafarovich\*\***

\*Master Degree Student of “Silk Road”,  
 International University of Tourism,  
 UZBEKISTAN

\*\*Master degree student of “Silk Road”,  
 International University of Tourism,  
 UZBEKISTAN

### **ABSTRACT**

*This article analyzes tourism potential of Nurabad district that is located in the western site of Samarkand region. The SWOT analyses are used to determine and identify tourism potential of the destination. Moreover, the economic situation of the district and its tourism resources has been analyzed and golden opportunities to develop tourism industry with the base of tourism resources have been studied. Furthermore, article highlights that except cultural, historical and ecological tourism, the district has potential to develop other niche tourism market and attract various tourist segments.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Tourist destination, Tourism potential, SWOT analyses, Samarkand region, Nurabad district, Tourism opportunities.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Samarkand is one of the most popular tourist destinations of the world, which was the main point at the crossroads of the Great Silk Road in history. The government of the Republic of Uzbekistan is paying a great attention to the development of tourism and hospitality industry in Samarkand region and adopting gradual decrees to improve tourism industry and to promote tourism attractiveness of the region. On June 30, 2017 The Cabinet of the Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted the decree “About measures for accelerated development of tourism potential of Samarkand city and Samarkand region in 2017-2019”, where government focused on effective use of tourism resources of the region and to improve tourist facilities and

infrastructure in the region [1]. Moreover, on September 30, 2019 the decree “About additional measures for the effective use and development of tourism potential of Samarkand region” was adopted by The Cabinet of the Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In this decree the main focus was on the creation of modern tourism infrastructure and analyzing socio-economic situation and tourism potential of the region. Furthermore, approaches and action plans directed to effective use of tourism potential of the region were highlighted in the decree [2].

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Tourist destinations may be defined in a variety of ways. According to the Dictionary of Travel, Tourism and Hospitality destination is a “geographic location to which a person is travelling” [3, p.165]. Dickman (1999) states that in the travel industry, a tourist destination refers to the five “A” main components: “attractions, access, accommodation, amenities, and activities” [4, p.118]. Morachat (2003) pluses some extra information to the definition of destination given by Dickman (1999) and says that a tourist destination must have all of these elements to some degree, although they need not be equally balanced on of the same quality and consistency for each potential destination [5, p.42].

It is obvious that destinations must have tourist attractions and resources which signify the tourism potential of the region. Tourism potential can be defined as the natural, man-made, cultural, historical, economic, and social components which show the potential tourist supply of a given area [6, pp. 50-54]. These factors, together with technical facilities and basic and tourism infrastructure, constitute the foundation of a tourist attraction for a given territory and help to deem the destination as either suitable or unsuitable for visiting and receiving visitors [7, pp. 183-186].

“Samarkand region is rich in tourism resources which create endless opportunities to develop cultural, sport, adventure, educational and eco-tourism” [8, p.22]. According to the statistics, in Samarkand located 1105 archeological, 670 architectural, 37 attractive, 18 monumental, 21 memorial, total 1851 tangible-cultural heritage objects [9, p.95].

### **Study Area**

We chose Nurabad district of Samarkand region as a study area for our research which is located 55 km to the western side of the Samarkand city with total area 4 860 sq. km. The center of the district is Nurabad city. The total population is 147 256 people [10, p.5].



**Figure 1 Geographic map of Nurabad district**

The district was established in 1975 and there are 8 sub-districts (villages) in the area including: Nurdum, Djam, Djarkuduk, Norbulak, Tim, Sazogon, Ulus and Tutli.

#### **METHODS AND METHODOLOGY**

For better analyzing and understanding the tourism potential of the destination SWOT analyses is used in order to know the strong, weak points and to take into consideration further opportunities and threats. Usually, SWOT analyses are used in enterprises and companies to determine their power and weaknesses and future prospects. According to Stăncioiu (2009), SWOT analyses may be used also for a tourism destination as well, in order to take into consideration destination's tourism potential [11].

#### **SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE DESTINATION**

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ An appropriate geographical location (along the Great Silk Road);</li> <li>✓ Rich in architectural and cultural tourist attractions (Arab ata mausoleum is in the list of World Heritage Sites);</li> <li>✓ Growing economy;</li> <li>✓ Far from urbanism;</li> <li>✓ Pleasurable whether and climate;</li> <li>✓ Untouched natural resources;</li> <li>✓ Regional and governmental support and cooperation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Poor infrastructure and tourism facilities;</li> <li>✓ Lack of tourist accommodation;</li> <li>✓ Lack of identity (website, image);</li> <li>✓ Language barrier;</li> <li>✓ Lack of marketing and promotion activities.</li> </ul>

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Investment opportunities;</li> <li>✓ Collaboration with regional tourism stakeholders;</li> <li>✓ Great opportunities to develop tourism industry;</li> <li>✓ Opportunities to develop niche tourism markets (agritourism, star-gazing tourism services, rural tourism);</li> <li>✓ Organizing various events in the open field.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Environmental impacts of tourism;</li> <li>✓ Socio-cultural impacts of tourism;</li> <li>✓ Competition amongst other districts;</li> <li>✓ Lack of funds for investing in further development of tourism industry.</li> </ul>

### The Pivotal Strength of the Destination

One of the vital strong points of the Nurabad district is its economic development. The economic situation of the district is stable and it is showing increasing results. Limited Liability Companies are dominating in the district amongst enterprises with total number 228, that is followed by private enterprises accounting for 228. It has to be mentioned that nominal average salary in the district is \$156, 3. The main business entitles of the district are agriculture and trade, that made up 27 % and 25 % respectively in 2019 (Figure 2).

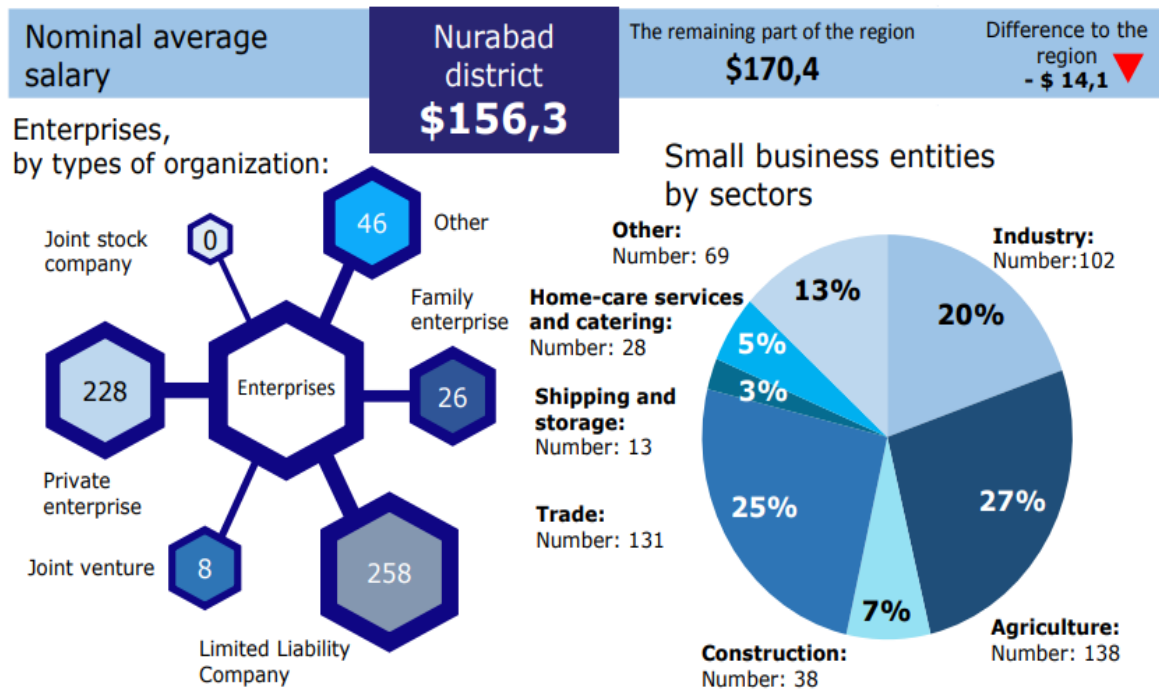


Figure 2 Economic overview of Nurabad district [12, p.7]

Another strong point of the district is there are 50 archeological and 5 architectural and religious tourist attractions, overall 55 cultural heritages cites that are main resources of cultural, historical and architectural tourism [13, p.11]. The most significant architectural tourist site of the district is mausoleum of Arab ata which is able to attract both international and local Muslim visitors.

Arab ata mausoleum which is in the World Heritage list located in the south-eastern part of the district, in the village called Tim. This mausoleum is one square room that occupies 5,60 x 5,60 m. External sides of the mausoleum is 8,0 x 8,70 m. It is analyzed that proportional mechanism was used in the construction of mausoleum which can be clearly seen in façade of the building. The building style and construction is really the same with the mausoleum of Samanids that is located in Bukhara. Arab ata mausoleum keeps its uniqueness and represents type of portal-dome tomb and powerfully entered into the list of the foremost creations of the East. Indeed, the mausoleum is located on the route of the Great Silk Road [14].


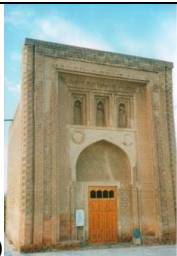




Nature-based tourism resources	Cultural, historical and architectural tourism resources
1000 years old fir tree 	 Arab ata mausoleum (XI century)
Picturesque mountains 	Oq masjid (XII century) 
Small rivers (water streams) 	Hazrati Davud ((XVII-XIX centuries)) 

Figure 3 the main tourism resources of Nurabad district

### The Golden Opportunities of the Destination

Except the cultural, historical and architectural tourism resources, there are golden opportunities to develop eco-tourism and agritourism in the district. There are all necessary natural and geographical prerequisites, including pleasurable climate, picturesque mountains, small rivers, 1000 years old fir tree, fruit and vegetable production fields that are basics of eco- and

agritourism. According to the statistics, agricultural sector has a great importance in the Nurabad district, accounting for 2,3 % of the region's gross yield of agricultural products [15, page 7].

Moreover, there is also an opportunity to develop recreational and health tourism on the base of available mineral sources (radon water) in the city of Nurbulak, which is widely used in the treatment of arthritis, sciatica, polyneuritis, chronic inflammation of the small intestine, chronic spondylarthritis (inflammation of the spine).

Furthermore, various types of tourism activities can be organized in the district. For instance, most European tourists are eager to hiking and trekking and they prefer to spend their time in the heart of nature. It is possible to create special hiking trails and to promote it in order to attract tourists who love physical activities.

Indeed, the district is a wonderful and ideal place to organize star-gazing services that is becoming popular in recent years. As a result of urbanization and high rate of air pollution in major cities, contemplating the stars in a pitch-black sky is fast becoming a rarity that tour operators are banking on as a new selling-point. Well-known astronomer and director of the Stars without Borders workshop Harald Bardenhagen stated that "many Europeans have never seen accurately the Milky Way" [16]. Today, most tourist destinations have already organized the proper facilities for this service (Oman, Iceland, Namibia, Norway, Chile, the Canaries, Jordan, Scotland, Swiss Alps, Southampton) [17] and seeing it as a perspective direction in tourism. We also can organize and offer this service for tourists, since we have a clear "open sky" without smokes and harmful gases.

### **The Main Weaknesses**

Region has weaknesses that are main obstacles to the development of the tourism industry in the district. The most crucial problem that should be tackled is bad infrastructure and tourism facilities. Another important one is unfamiliarity of the district for tourism because of less efforts and actions in destination branding. Moreover, language barrier is also an issue which is lowering the development of the district as a tourism destination.

### **Threats**

Environmental degradation and adverse socio-cultural impacts of tourism development, increased competition between other districts of the region and less attention and regional support are the threats to the further development of the tourism industry in the region.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Taking into consideration all aforementioned thoughts, it can be said that Nurabad district is one of the most appropriate destinations of Samarkand region to develop tourism. The district carries golden opportunities to develop cultural and historical tourism. Indeed, niche tourism market can be developed through establishing infrastructure and tourism facilities in the district. Government has to pay attention to reconstruct tourism attractions of the destination and should allocate the fund to increase socio-economic living standard of areas where tourism resources are located. Moreover, regional tour operators have to think about creating new tour products and travel trails which leads tourists to the district. Forming tourism cluster based on available resources can be one of the important factors of economic development in the Nurabad district

and will contribute to raising the income level of the rural population, providing employment, and developing social and engineering infrastructure in rural areas.

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