

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**ISSUES OF INCREASING THE ROLE OF TOURISM IN THE
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOUNTAIN
REGIONS**

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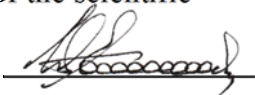


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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESEAR

The actuality and the degree of problem development of the research. Currently, the development of non-oil fields in Azerbaijan is a very urgent issue. This is one of the factors that help the national economic system to decrease its dependence on oil and, of course, to further develop it. During the development of the non-oil sector, it is important to pay special attention to the service sectors. This proves that the service sectors play an important role in ensuring economic growth, development and employment. From this point of view, the development of tourism, which is one of the service areas whose development is considered a priority, is of great importance. The role of tourism in the country's economic life is determined by its stimulating effect on the development of regions, especially the creation of new areas of production of material products and services planned for the negative flow of foreign tourists. Tourism also provides employment in related fields. The consumption of tourists stimulates the development of the areas that produce the relevant goods and services, which increases their opportunities for capital investments in the tourism sector. At the same time, if the amount of production in these areas is reduced, tourism has an additional strong effect on them. The formation and development of the tourism market in our country is directly ensured by the activities of tourism enterprises and organizations specializing in this field and the availability of tourist facilities. In order to specialize in tourism in a certain region, the main thing is to get maximum profit with minimal use of resources, and to be recognized in the national and even international market.

The development of mountain regions has always been the focus of attention of the state of Azerbaijan. In this regard, in 1986, the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR adopted decision No. 100 on accelerating the socio-economic development of mountain regions in the Azerbaijan SSR.

The development of tourism requires the improvement of transport infrastructure as well as related areas. Therefore, the development of tourism in mountain regions will allow the

reconstruction of the road-communication infrastructure, which is one of the main problems for these regions, and its adaptation to modern standards.

The creation of tourism service areas in mountain regions, the formation of tourism market infrastructure, can be considered one of the priority directions in the development of the non-oil sector, important activities in increasing the competitiveness of the national economy, integration into regional and global economic systems, and effective use of existing natural resources. At the same time, the development of tourism in mountain regions encourages the involvement of existing natural and anthropogenic resources in the economic cycle, the creation of new tourism facilities, and the production of different tourism services and products based on the unusual natural resources located in these areas. In a word, it forms the basis for the creation of additional incentives for the development of important positive areas of activity, and expands the possibilities of introducing the specific cultural and household traditions of the territories. All this leads to an increase in the flow of tourists to the area.

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Aliyev, noted in one of his speeches: *“The field of tourism is a very important tool for both the development of regions and the strengthening of the country's economic potential, the image of Azerbaijan, and its integration into the world.”*¹

In our country, a consistent state policy is implemented regarding the systematic and sustainable development of the tourism industry. In order to develop the national tourism industry, many programs, strategies, and strategic road maps have been adopted and implemented, and the development of this field has been considered as one of the main priorities in the prospective period. “State Program on the Development of Tourism in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2002-2005” (August 27, 2002), “State Program on the Development of Tourism in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2010-2014” (April 6, 2010), “2019 - State Program for the socio-economic

¹ https://www.anl.az/download/medeniyyet2007/mart/medeniyyet2007_mart_151.htm

development of the regions covering the years 2023” “On additional measures related to the development of tourism in the Republic of Azerbaijan” Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated September 1, 2016, “Strategic Roadmap for the development of the specialized tourism industry in the Republic of Azerbaijan” (December 6, 2016), Order dated February 20, 2017 “On additional measures to accelerate the flow of tourists to the Republic of Azerbaijan”, “Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for socio-economic development” and other directive documents, normative-legal Acts are important elements of the tourism policy implemented in recent years.

In addition, structural changes were made in order to effectively manage the national tourism industry, and the structure-State Tourism Agency was established, which ensures the flexibility of tourism management across the republic.

In order to accelerate the socio-economic development of the country and regions, including mountain regions, there is an additional need to prioritize the development of tourism on the basis of current tourism resources. Sufficiently rich and colorful natural tourism resources, natural monuments, mineral and thermal waters, biodiversity, flora and fauna, water basins, ecologically clean areas and landscapes create ample opportunities for the development of tourism in mountain regions. The development of tourism, in turn, will give a serious impetus to the solution of socio-economic, ecological, cultural and other problems of the mountain regions and the comprehensive development of the territories. The strong multiplier effect of tourism acts as one of the main driving forces in ensuring the development of other areas of activity in the areas, and will provide a basis for increasing the income of households and family farms, improving the quality of life of the population, and will further expand the opportunities for improving the material well-being, preventing the migration of the rural population, will create the basis for efficient use of local labor resources.

The dissertation topic chosen for the research is devoted to issues of increasing the role of tourism in the socio-economic development of mountain regions. Knowing the role and importance of tourism in

the socio-economic, cultural, ecological, sustainable and sustainable development of the regions, we consider it urgent to investigate the role and socio-economic effects of the development of tourism in the regions, especially in the mountain regions, in the scientific-theoretical, conceptual and practical aspects. At the same time, the lack of studies devoted to the role of tourism in the socio-economic development of mountain regions in our country reinforces the idea that additional research is necessary in this regard.

Regarding the development of the topic, it should be noted that the role of tourism development in solving the socio-economic and other problems of the regions and society, and the multiplier effects in the development of territories and fields of activity have always been the object of research. Local and foreign researchers are continuously conducting research in this field. Samadzade Z.A., Guliyev E.A., Atashov B.Kh., Ibrahimov E.R., Ibrahimov I.H., Hasanov A.N., Azizov A.A., Mammadov Z.S., Salmanov A.H. Ayyubov A., Bilalov B.A., Gafarov N.C, Ismayilov V.I., Alirzayev A.G., Aliyeva N.R., Kasumov R.M., Yeganli S.T., Mammadov C.A., Soltanova H.V., Rahimov S.H., Mammadov E.G., and other local scientists have done some research on certain aspects of the development of mountain regions, development of tourism in our country and on the socio-economic development of territories, including mountain regions.

Fundamental approaches to the study of problems related to the development of the tourism sphere were developed by scientists from foreign countries, I.T. Tverdokhlebov, Zorin I.V., Vedenin Y.A., Kvartalnov V.A., Ahmadkhanova S.T., Chudnovsky A.D., Aydayev G.A., Balabanova A.A., Vijina I.G., Dynkin Y.V., Kovalyov V.V., Seleznyov A.Z., Chaynikova L.N., Camilleri M.A., Cholik M.A., Israel D. Nebenzahl, Hindle T. Field, etc. has reflected in their studies.

The object and subject of the research. A collection of farms and organizations engaged in tourism activities in mountain regions was taken as the object of the research.

The subject of the research is organizational-economic mechanisms, methods and means of increasing the role and influence of tourism in the socio-economic development of mountain regions.

Research goals and purpose. The purpose of the research work is to put forward important conceptual, scientific-theoretical and experimental proposals and recommendations in the direction of forming mechanisms for increasing the role of tourism industry in achieving sustainable socio-economic development in the mountain regions of Azerbaijan. To achieve this goal, the following tasks have been set:

- investigation of the current state of tourism potential in the country;
- Analysis of the current state of tourism development in the mountain regions of Azerbaijan;
- conducting a balneological analysis of the country's tourism regions;
- Evaluation of state policies and programs implemented in the field of tourism in Azerbaijan;
- researching ways to develop and improve tourism in mountain regions;
- development of new approaches to the impact of tourism on the development of the country's regions and economy in general.

Research methods. Observation, analysis, comparison, synthesis, induction, deduction, logical, mathematical-statistical, etc. methods were used.

Main clauses defended. The main provisions defended in the thesis are the following:

- if we get from the development of tourism in mountain regions, general efficiency has become a requirement of our modern times;
- identification of factors that have a negative impact on the development of tourism and recreation activities in mountain regions and reducing their impact is a priority from the point of view of the development of the field;
- In terms of the development of mountain tourism in Azerbaijan, methods proven in the world economy should be studied;
- it is important to investigate the necessity of investment in the development of the tourism industry;

- It is one of the important issues to involve relevant fields in research related to the development of mountain tourism in Azerbaijan;

- It is necessary to improve the organizational and economic aspects of the development of the tourism industry in the direction of preparing a new tourism trademark of Azerbaijan.

Scientific novelty of the research. The scientific novelty of the research mainly consists of the following:

- theoretical approaches to tourism services were analyzed in detail and factors affecting the development of tourism were classified;

- directions for increasing the role of tourism in the socio-economic development of the mountain regions of our country have been determined;

- the possibilities of applying methods and economic mechanisms that are widespread in the world experience on the development of tourism in mountain regions have been studied.

- the ways of increasing the socio-economic efficiency of tourism development in mountain regions were investigated;

- the current situation of tourism in the liberated territories has been comprehensively studied, the development potential has been revealed;

- Azerbaijan's tourism policy and its main directions were examined and a number of suggestions and recommendations were given.

Theoretical and practical significance of research. The theoretical issues of the research will be used as teaching materials in the future as the economics of tourism, tourism of Azerbaijan, development and management of tourism, etc. can be used in the teaching of subjects. The practical significance of the work is that the suggestions made here can make a positive contribution to the organization of effective tourism in mountain regions.

Approval and application. The main scientific-theoretical claims, results and proposals of the dissertation are reflected in 5 articles and 4 theses published in prestigious journals and conference materials recommended by the High Attestation Commission under

the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Among the conference materials reflecting the main content of the dissertation are “Socio-economic nature and characteristics of tourism service areas (Italy, 2022)”, “Mountain tourism and its development prospects in Azerbaijan” (Sumgayit, 2022), “Factors shaping the development of tourism services in mountain regions (Poland, 2023)”, “The role of Heydar Aliyev in the development of tourism in the mountain regions of Azerbaijan (Baku, 2023). During the research, the author also discussed “Modern trends of tourism development in Azerbaijan (Baku, 2018)”, “Regulation of tourism infrastructure development in the Republic of Azerbaijan (Baku, 2020)”, “Ways of increasing the efficiency of tourism services in mountain regions (Baku, 2022)”, “The role of tourism in the development of mountain regions (Poland, 2022) has been published.

Name of the organization where the research is carried on. Azerbaijan Cooperation University.

The total volume of the dissertation with a sign indicating the volume of the structural sections of the dissertation separately. Dissertation consists of introduction, three chapters, conclusion and list of used literature. In the process of writing the dissertation, 145 names of scientific literature were used. The total volume of introduction (11800 characters), chapter I (71135 characters), chapter II (71456 characters), chapter III (52584 characters), conclusion (8781 characters) and bibliography (14771 characters) is 240870 characters. The number of marks of the dissertation is 215756 marks, excluding the tables and the list of used literature.

THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH

In the **Introductory** part of the study, the relevance of the topic, the degree of development, the object and subject, goals and tasks, research methods, the main propositions defended, and information about the scientific innovation, theoretical and practical importance, approval and application, the name of the organization where it is performed, structure and volume are presented.

The first chapter of the dissertation work is called **“Theoretical-methodological foundations of tourism development in Azerbaijan”**. It is noted that paying special attention to the tourism sector is important not only for stimulating the development of the economy, but also for its diversification. Although the oil sector is one of the driving forces of the economy in Azerbaijan, using the budget as the main source of income is considered somewhat risky due to the fluctuating nature of oil prices in commodity markets. The author rightly states that the development of the tourism sector will lead to an increase in the specific weight of the non-oil sector in the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Also, foreign currencies brought to the country by foreign tourists within the framework of international tourism lead to the strengthening of the national currency of Azerbaijan, the manat. This is if we help Azerbaijan to achieve stability against internal and external influences, which is reflected in the national priorities covering social and economic development issues, which are planned to be implemented by 2030.

The socio-economic essence of tourism, theoretical evaluation is important from the point of view of ensuring economic development and stability in modern times. The role of tourism in the formation of economic potential in the country, in more efficient use of resources, and in determining the dynamics of development is important. In addition to being a separate type of activity, another important aspect of the theoretical evaluation of tourism is the balanced development in other fields of the economy, the improvement of the territorial potential and the well-being of the population.

As a result, the aforementioned deepened research in the field of tourism. The first studies began to spread widely in France in the middle of the 20th century, and later in England and other countries. In France, tourism development programs were first adopted, and later, the need for balanced development of other fields appeared for the realization of this program. All this proved both theoretically and practically that tourism as a type of activity plays an important role in the development of the economy and society.

In different economic systems, we find different explanations of the essence of the concept of tourism. As a result of his researches,

the author determined that tourism, both as a field of activity, and in a broader profile than health, was investigated in the market economy system.

Thus, although the tourism sector is characterized as a separate sector in the market system, it would be appropriate to consider it not as a pure sector, but as an auxiliary sector that ensures sustainability. It is at the basis of this approach that the terms characteristic of the tourism field are used more in the market economic system and considered in unity. It is considered that these include tourism resources, tourism potential, tourism product, tourism management, tourism services, tourism market, etc. One of the most important concepts for the market economic system has been the tourism market. Historically, concepts of tourism have been formed and developed in the following directions. Decentralized tourism markets serving international integration and deepening the division of labor can be an example of them.

It should be taken into account that the existence of various objective economic laws and economic mechanisms operating in normal markets is also characteristic of these markets. However, unlike traditional markets, economic relations in the tourism market are necessarily realized by intermediaries.

It is mentioned in the economic literature that the demand for tourism products is directly based on human motivation and behavior. According to this theory, the main driving force of the demand for tourism products is to make the trip more interesting and to provide a sense of joy. The main author of this idea was P. Bernekker. According to R.M. Gasimov, the demand for tourism products is a natural demand of a person and is considered as an act realized during a trip.

It should be noted that V.A.Kvartalnov, V.I.Azar, local researchers A.G.Alirzayev, R.M. Gasimov and others can be examples of scientists who study the theoretical and methodological aspects of tourism. When analyzing the concept of tourism, it comes to the conclusion that it includes relations between people with the purpose of looking for work by leaving the place where they live for no less than 24 hours (except for trips with a change of permanent

residence), as a social group or individually as a traveler or a person who has free time.

Determining the group of factors influencing the formation of tourism is one of the main points that draw attention in its theoretical and methodological aspect. According to the author, this approach has developed in two directions:

Socio-economic factors are taken as the first direction. This group of factors includes, first of all, the production of services and its structure. The basis of the influence of socio-economic factors is the formation of personal and consumer demand. The circulation of goods (services) is carried out in the tourism sector as well as in the economy of the country as a whole. Of course, this also manifests itself as a part of the general income and expenditure cycle in the national economy.

Among the psycho-physiological factors defined by the plaintiff as a sexual direction, the psychological state of the consumers (tourists) of tourism products (services), their level of cultural development, the mood that unites with the demands of fashion, etc. is taken as a basis.

In modern times, the concept of tourism, tourism potential, mechanisms of using this potential and external factors affecting it have been studied more widely in the literature. Tourism potential means investment, household resources (material and financial), household labor resources, etc. In terms of activity, mechanisms include cost, assessment, income (profit), taxes, subsidies, other payments, etc. These are mechanisms corresponding to traditional economic mechanisms. Whether the tourism product or its potential and implementation mechanisms are based on external factors (this is the case in the case of many IEOs), the tourism market as a whole is characterized as an field completely dependent on external factors.

The researcher believes that the problems in the field of tourism should be considered from the socio-economic aspect. Therefore, not only economic, but also social issues should be in focus here. These include population settlement, geographical displacement, demographic processes, the extent to which their customs and traditions influence decision-making, employment habits, etc.

Natural resources are one of the leading factors for recreational use of the territory. Although, according to A.A. Mints, “the effect of natural factors on production activity is carried out through certain techniques”, the nature of natural conditions has a significant impact on the formation and development of recreation complexes. Because natural resources play a major role in choosing a recreation and travel region by vacationers. Vacationers take into account the features of the landscape and climate, the richness and diversity of the flora and fauna, the opportunities to engage in sports, hunting, and fishing. The organization of types and forms of recreational activities, the type of complex depends on the set of natural resources the territory has. The diversity in the value of resources depends on one hand on their belonging to certain natural complexes, and on the other hand on the role they play in h.

Determining the initial conditions for the development of recreation territories requires studying the physical and geographical characteristics of the region. In this regard, foreign and local experts have sufficient experience.

In recent years, the methodological approach to the principles of recreation evaluation of natural complexes has become widespread. Among them, V. Stauskas' approach to the development of landscape evaluation criteria during the design of recreation areas is of interest. On the basis of this study, the author takes into account economic factors (forests, rivers, terrain, roads, etc.) along with natural factors. The results are evaluated with a five-point system.

In M.G. Bojko's work, recreation regions are evaluated not only by their natural features, but also by the direction of economic development of the territory. The authors conduct an engineering-construction assessment of the territory and determine the feasibility of using the land for economic purposes.

The research work of Y.A.Veden and N.N.Miroshnichenko on the methodology of recreation monitoring of territories is of interest. Here, the authors evaluate the recreation territories according to the system they prepared based on the physical-geographical atlas of the world, the climate atlas, and the climate handbook.

Assessment of natural conditions for recreation and tourism is very complex. In contrast to the assessment of treatment resources, the harmony of landscapes, their unpredictability, exoticism, and unrepeatability are of special importance here.

According to the system developed by the British, typical English landscapes are evaluated with 18 points, and landscapes in the Himalayas with a 32-point system. According to M. Claus (Germany), the design of recreation centers in the district of Rostock is carried out based on the assessment of natural-climatic conditions (in general, landscape, relief, climate, vegetation). Y. Warchinskaya (Poland) proposes to carry out the assessment of natural resources for the purpose of recreation and tourism according to a model calculated on the basis of a mathematical function. This proposal was tested during the evaluation of the Kraków region for the purpose of mountain tourism. At that time, the main landscape features of the territory (relief, hydrographic network, vegetation) were taken into account.

V. Reinhard (Germany), after reviewing more than 20 methods of landscape recreation assessment, came to the conclusion that such an assessment should be based on the study of different types of capacity of the territory: technical or release capacity (number of roads, parking lots, tourist cattle, etc.), economic capacity resulting from the load if we can get into the landscape, psychological capacity measured by the amount of visitors who do not hinder normal recreation, and finally financial capacity (financial capabilities of the land owner). Another German expert, Z. Günter, suggests using multiple criteria when evaluating the suitability of the territory for recreation and tourism. The first criterion is the area of the territory, the second criterion is the variability of the landscape within a recreation territory, and the third criterion is the negative impact on the recreation territory (noise, dust, odor, etc.).

According to the researcher, when evaluating various factors, their importance for recreational activities should be taken into account. In this regard, the main factors that form the basis of the assessment should include the following: the duration of favorable temperature conditions, the availability of sea coasts, the features of the relief, the

availability of forests, rivers, lakes and reservoirs. On the other hand, the level of provision with transport highways should also be taken into account.

Based on the above, the author distinguishes the following recreation territories:

1. Shamakhi-Zagatala,
2. Gusar-Shabran,
3. Gansa-Mingachevir,
4. Kalbasar-Karabagh,
5. Kura plain,
6. Absheron-Gobustan,
7. Nakhchivan,
8. Lankaran.

The following 56 recreation territories have been identified in the selected 8 recreation districts:

1. Shamakhi-Zagatala region: Gabala, Sheki, Bugur, Oguz, Ismayilli, Gakh, Ilisu, Zagatala, Korug, Shamakhi, Chukhuryurd, Pirgulu, Kaleybugurd, Lahis, Basgal.

2. Gusar-Shabran region: Yalama-Khudat, Guba, Laza, Afursin, Gonaqkend, Gilgilchay, Galaalti.

3. Gansa-Mingachevir region: Goygol, Hasikand, Goygol-Maraljol, Gazanbulag, Naftalan, Gadabey, Tovuz, Agstafa, Mingachevir, Kura surroundings.

4. Kalbasar-Karabakh region: Sugovushan, Khankendi, Shusha, Lysogorsk, Istisu, Levchay, Lachin, Gubadli.

5. Kura lowland region: Sabirabad, Ust-Kur.

6. Absheron-Gobustan region: northern shores of Absheron, Shikhov-Primorsk-Gobustan, Altyagas.

7. Nakhchivan region: Bichenak, Shirvan, Badamli, Nakhchivan, Ordubad, Sirab.

8. Lankaran region: Lankaran, Astara, Lerik, Masalli, Yardimli, Kurkosa.

The second chapter of the research work deals with **“Factors affecting the development of the structure of tourism services of mountain regions”**. The author notes that the increase in hotels and hotel-type establishments is one of the factors that can lead to an increase in the number of the employed population, in addition to better service to tourists. The opening of new jobs in mountain regions can be ensured as a result of the development of the tourism sector, especially the construction of hotels and similar establishments. At the same time, this will help to prevent the

population of the region from flocking to Baku for work and good living.

Based on the accepted principles and methodology, the plaintiff studied the natural-climatic, resort and economic conditions of the selected areas in Azerbaijan. This makes it possible to give their quantitative and qualitative characteristics.

Shamakhi-Zagatala recreation region covers the south-eastern part of the Greater Caucasus and the south-eastern part. The variety of natural-climatic conditions allows to use the territory for the purpose of sanatorium-resort, recreation, tourism and sports recreation.

The recreation territories of the region allow to create climatic (Gabala, Sheki, Bugur, Oguz, Gakh, Ilisu, Zagatala, Chukhuryurd, Pirgulu, Lachin, Basgal) and balneoclimatic (Shamakhi, Kaleybugur, Ilisu, Chukhuryurd) resorts here.

In addition to the natural and climatic conditions, the presence of mineral deposits rich in iron and sulfur in the region also conditions the creation of resorts.

Climatic conditions (long hot summer season, plenty of sunny weather, weather conditions with little or no wind, etc.) make Shamakhi-Zagatala region a promising zone for active recreation and tourism.

The climatic conditions of the region allow to develop both summer and winter types of recreation and tourism. The most favorable period for the implementation of car, pedestrian and water tourist routes is considered to be from mid-May to October. This period is shorter for routes passing through mountain passes and is from June 1 to October 1. In winter, the activity of tourist bases in the mountainous area is not appropriate due to the lack of stability of the snow cover. An altitude of 1500-2000 m is considered more favorable for ski tourism.

Natural-landscape conditions, picturesque forests, subalpine and alpine meadows, rich animal world, numerous rivers, mineral deposits can attract nature lovers who have not reached here. The Zagatala reserve can be used as a special object for familiarization with flora and fauna.

Favorable natural opportunities and, above all, mountain climatic conditions, together with the recreational landscape, turn the region as a whole into a large recreation zone.

Excursion facilities such as waterfalls, Sheki Khan's palace, castles in Zagatala and Ilisu, historical monuments of Shamakhi, Lahis and Gabala make the region interesting for travelers and tourists. A large variety of agricultural products - meat, milk, fruits, grapes, vegetables - provide food for travelers.

The Gusar-Shabran recreation territory stretches along the relatively sloping northeastern slope of the Bash and Yan ridges and along the Samur-Devachi plain. The study of the geographical conditions of the region, its economy, transport conditions, sights, etc. proves that it has universal opportunities for the development of all types of recreational activities.

The seaside part of the region, its picturesque forests, beautiful beaches with warm waters of the Caspian Sea allow the area to be used as a climate resort, recreation, excursion, small tourist trips, hunting and fishing zone.

The snow-covered mountainous part of the region can be recommended for the development of mountain-pedestrian tourism, ski tourism, mountain-climate and balneo-climate resorts with mineral deposits and favorable natural-climatic conditions.

It is reasonable to organize summer and winter tourist bases and use them as climatic resorts from the middle mountainous belt of the region (1800-2200 m). The study of climatic conditions shows that the routes in the mountain passes can be used from June 1st to October 1st.

The favorable geographical position of the country should be reconciled with the establishment of relations with neighboring countries during the placement of the TRC, tourist farms and routes of Azerbaijan.

It should be noted that the Baku-Rostov railway line, the wide network of highways that ensure the movement of vacationers to the sea and the interior of the region, as well as the availability of mountain cattle from the Greater Caucasus, have a positive effect on the use of the region for recreation and especially tourism purposes.

The variety of recreation landscape, oak forests, mountain valleys, sand-gravel sea shores of Yalama-Khudat allow to develop climatotherapy, active tourism and hiking tourism here. The availability of marine waters creates conditions for sea trips.

Historical and architectural monuments located in the region, as well as interesting events from the point of view of information, allow organizing various excursions.

The specialization of the region in the production of fruits and vegetables, meat and milk and local food products allows to provide vacationers with various types of food.

Kalbajar-Karabagh recreation region covers the Karabakh volcanic plateau and the mountainous part of upper Karabakh with complex terrain. Studying the geographical characteristics of the region suggests that it is suitable for recreational use. This is the homeland of mountains and forests, picturesque corners and mineral deposits, beautiful waterfalls. Among this wealth and diversity of nature, numerous ancient monuments have been preserved.

Different parts of the region belonging to the mountain climate can be used for the development of sanatoriums and active recreation. A large number of mineral deposits, especially carbonate ones (Istisu, Bagirsar, Gizilchay, Turshsu, Nuraddin) and their flow climate allow to organize balneological resorts. It is possible to treat some diseases of the digestive organs, cardiovascular system, etc. here.

The nature of the relief of the area, the significant differences in absolute heights, as well as the newly built roads create an additional basis for the development of mountain-walking, skiing, as well as automobile tourism.

The geographical position of the region can be considered favorable from the point of view of establishment and development of tourism relations. The climatic conditions of the region allow the development of summer and winter types of tourism. The most favorable climatic conditions for the development of both summer and winter types of tourism are found in the middle mountainous zone (1500-2000 m altitude).

Extensive scientific research and historical facts prove that the natural and geographical resources of the Karabakh region, a single river network, and an ecological system make up a whole complex.

The wealth of natural resources and their tourism potential can be the main aspect of complex development in the assessment of the region. Karabakh, as a region with a favorable economic-geographical position, rich resources, irreplaceable natural-climatic features, rich flora and fauna, can breathe life into the development of the country's tourism industry. The wealth of Karabakh with many mineral and thermal water resources is also a positive influence on increasing the tourism potential of the region. In general, Karabakh is the region with the richest tourism potential of our country. Here, the presence of fascinating examples of art, ancient culture and history, and wonderful natural examples takes a favorable place in the creation of a tourism complex.

If we allow the development of agriculture in the region to provide tourists with food products.

Nakhchivan recreation district occupies the most remote part of Azerbaijan. Its borders are the same as the borders of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

Not all parts of Nakhchivan region are suitable for recreational purposes. Individual high mountain ranges are not suitable for recreation and tourism because they are difficult to access and lack vegetation. The same can be said about desert and semi-desert areas.

For the development of summer and winter tourism, the plains of Nakhchivan and Ordubad, Bichenak, Badamli, Sirab, Batabat, Shirilan and Daridag with mineral deposits are more favorable. Climatic conditions with mineral deposits allow to organize climatic and balneoclimatic resorts here. Many diseases can be treated here: gastrointestinal diseases, gallbladder and bile duct diseases, kidney diseases, cardiovascular and nervous system diseases, gynecological and skin diseases.

The transport conditions of the region create conditions for the development of automobile tourism. There is a railway network. The natural conditions of the area do not allow long walks. Small walking tours can be organized here.

Lankaran recreation district occupies the south-eastern part of the republic. It combines Talysh mountains and Lankaran plain. The physical-geographical, economic, transport and other conditions of the region make it one of the most favorable regions for recreational purposes in the republic.

Railways, wide asphalted highways, sea routes allow establishing inter-regional connections.

For recreational use, the Lankaran plain from Liman to Astara and the middle mountainous area of Talish are more suitable.

The Lankaran lowland, surrounded by Talysh mountains covered with orchards and vineyards, is very scenic. This is the Riviera of Azerbaijan. It is advisable to build resort towns and tourism bases here. Here there are beautiful sandy beaches, distinguished by folded pebbles from the Black Sea.

Sulphurous (Masalli), salty (Astara) mineral deposits in the region allow the creation of balneological resorts.

Taking into account that precipitation is more in the winter season, the conditions for recreation in the summer are more favorable. The abundance of sunny days, mild summer weather, and the absence of intense heat also create conditions for this.

The fact that the region is rich in subtropical fruits, the abundance of fruits and vegetables, meat and dairy products allows recreation farms to be supplied with food products.

The number of tourists who came to Azerbaijan in 2011-2022 is shown in table 1.

Table 1.

The number of businessmen and stateless persons who came to Azerbaijan for the purpose of tourism in 2011-2022 (thousands of people)

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1561.9	1985.9	2129.5	2159.7	1921.9	2044.7	2454.0	2605.3	2863.5	519.4	1979,5	3779

The third chapter of the dissertation work is devoted to the issues of **“Ways of improving the development of tourism services in mountain regions”**. The development of the tourism sector is one of

the factors affecting the increase in the budget and income of the population in the country and in the region. Thus, the development of tourism stimulates the mechanisms necessary for the protection of the environment and its reproduction in the region.

There is a need to take additional measures for the development of tourism in the regions. The author believes that there are several advantages of foreign investment in the tourism sector:

1. Favorable conditions for foreign investments:
 - The highest indicator of foreign direct investment per capita in the region.
 - Legal guarantees for investors.
2. The existence of a rapidly developing market economy.
3. Broad opportunities in the non-oil sector.
4. Natural resources: minerals and fertile land.
5. Favorable strategic position:
 - Direct access to Central Asia and the Caspian region.
 - Participation in international trade projects (Silk Road, North-South Corridor).
 - Joining the European factor and the New Neighborhood Policy.
6. Availability of competitive local workforce.

The creation of recreation facilities in mountain regions is also important in terms of solving the employment problem. In connection with the development of the tourism industry, employment of the population in mountainous areas has increased in several countries. Poland, Austria, Switzerland, France and the Balkan countries are examples of those countries. In these countries, people living in mountain regions work as escorts, waiters, and souvenir makers.

Undoubtedly, the First State Program on the Great Return to the territories freed from occupation will play a big role in the socio-economic development of mountain regions.

Taking into account the potential and geographical conditions of the territories freed from occupation, their use for tourism purposes is especially mentioned in the program. It is planned to develop tourism in those areas together with other areas of the economy. In this regard, taking into account the possibilities, an action plan was

prepared for the transformation of the region into a competitive tourism destination.

The researcher notes that when providing recreational facilities with labor resources, it is not sufficient to consider the number, density and location of the population alone. At the same time, it is necessary to pay attention to its demographic composition. Above all, this requires taking into account national characteristics and the extensive use of women's labor. Women make up a large part of labor resources in Azerbaijan. Although the world has reached a high level of development, there are still differences between men and women in terms of health, physical strength, and their position in the household. The use of women's labor in tourism farms in mountainous areas is of urgent importance.

As many economists have noted, the concept of rational use of male labor resources and rational use of female labor resources cannot be equated. So, as a rule, all able-bodied men of working age work in the regular labor sphere. By rational use of women's labor, we are already talking about their effective placement in the sphere of regular and personal labor, so that their personal development is appropriate both from the point of view of economic and social point of view.

Small settlements are the majority in mountainous regions. On the basis of our research on the republic, we can note that the employment problem of the population in small settlements and the consideration of the gender problem at this time are very prominent.

Analysis of the qualitative composition of the unemployed population in small settlements suggests that their level of literacy is of great importance here. The study shows that the vast majority of the population of small settlements have primary and incomplete secondary education.

High development of scientific and technical progress requires increasing the level of professionalism of personnel. This recreation is of special importance for farms. The characteristics of work in such farms are related to services to a large contingent of vacationers, so they require civility and literacy.

The productivity of the tourism sector as a whole is considered from the perspective of the distribution of interests by subjects and objects. Tourism has its own system of criteria and indications. The criterion of tourism is formed depending on the nature of the issue and the object, ownership relationship.

Choosing a tourism model allows you to evaluate its effectiveness and benefits. In the social sphere, it is necessary to pay attention to the management of all interfaces. Under the assumption of ideal operation, the evaluation of competence is considered independent of gross productivity.

Azerbaijan acted as the fruit and vegetable base of the former Union. As a result of the research, the claimant tentatively divides the territory-recreational complexes of the country into four groups in terms of providing fruits and vegetables:

I. they cannot provide tourists with fresh fruits and vegetables;

II. they can provide tourists with fresh fruits and vegetables, but do not have the resources to process them;

III. they can provide tourists with fresh fruits and vegetables and have not great resources to process them;

IV. they are able to provide tourists with fresh fruits and vegetables, they have enough resources to process them and take them out of the area.

Area-recreational complexes are located according to the mentioned groups as follows (table 2):

Table 2.

Features of the location of the territory-recreational complexes

	Vegetables	Fruits
Shamakhi-Zagatala	II	III
Gusar-Shabran	IV	IV
Ganja-Mingachevir	II	III
Karabakh-East Zangezur	III	III
Kur plain	I	I
Absheron-Gobustan	I	I
Nakhchivan	I	I
Lankaran	IV	I

As can be seen from the table, ARC are provided with fruits and vegetables at different levels. For example, Gusar-Shabran ARC is provided with fruits and vegetables as long as we provide tourists. Absheron-Gobustan ARC supplies them from other ARCs.

The geographical position of the country or region plays an important role in the formation of area-recreational complexes (ARC) and the formation of various recreational facilities. In other words, proximity to the sea, mountain and forest massifs, convenient location in relation to the main stream of vacationers and major transport hubs are of great importance.

Table 3 provides information on the investments made in the tourism sector of our country in 2013-2020.

Table 3.

**The total amount of investments in the tourism sector in
2013-2020 (million manats)**

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1371.0	2204.0	1063.9	363.0	267.3	229.7	133.7	79.3	97.2	99.3

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion of our research on increasing the role of tourism in the socio-economic development of mountain regions, it is emphasized once again that the tourism sector can play a stimulating role not only in the economic development of mountain regions, but also in the country as a whole.

- The general effect to be obtained from the development of tourism in mountain regions is scientifically justified.

The socio-economic essence of tourism, theoretical evaluation is important from the point of view of ensuring economic development and stability in modern times. The role of tourism in the formation of economic potential in the country, in more efficient use of resources, and in determining the dynamics of development is important. In addition to being a separate type of activity, another important area of the theoretical evaluation of tourism is the balanced development

in other areas of the economy, the improvement of the territorial potential and the well-being of the population.

- Factors that have a negative impact on the development of tourism and recreation activities in mountain regions have been identified and the possibilities of reducing their negative impact have been investigated.

The development of tourism in mountain regions is more favorable at low and high average daily temperatures. Therefore, the days when the air temperature fluctuates between 10-22⁰ in such areas are considered favorable for tourism and recreation. In the mountain regions, the average daily temperature is observed from the second half of May to the middle of September in the hot season.

The favorable geographical position of the country should be reconciled with the establishment of relations with neighboring countries during the placement of Azerbaijan's ARC, tourist farms and routes.

- In terms of the development of mountain tourism in Azerbaijan, proven methods have been studied in the world economy.

Azerbaijan is one of the countries with high potential in the field of tourism due to its relief (mountains, plains, rivers, lakes, etc.), favorable climate, mineral water resources, and rich historical development. For example, from the point of view of the development of health tourism, volcanic muds, salt lakes, muds and mud oils are very important. Or, if we look at high-relief areas such as the Greater Caucasus, the Lesser Caucasus and Talysh mountains, we will see that mountain and hunting tourism in our country has the development potential.

- There is a need to invest in the development of the tourism industry.

On the one hand, the tourism sector has a direct impact on the country's economy due to the role played by the money spent in the formation of tourism income in the area and the personal income of the population. On the other hand, tourists' spending is directed towards the consumption of goods and services. Incomes, incomes, incomes is a formula that can be used to express how easy it is. Thus, the actions of tourists indirectly lead to the development of the

tourism sector. This is very important for the development of the country and the region. The multiplier effect is the name given to such an effect. The impact of tourism on the country's economy can be direct or indirect.

Expenditure and business income from visitors, taxes paid to state and local governments, wages and welfare payments ultimately contribute to capital growth in the tourism industry.

- The development of mountain tourism in Azerbaijan requires the study of the development of related areas.

The priorities of the creation and development of trade and logistics centers in the country were reflected in the document “Logistics and trade in the Republic of Azerbaijan” adopted by the country's president in 2016. In Azerbaijan, this industry accelerates the country's transformation into a regional trade and logistics center. Thus, this victory created conditions for the elimination of foreign capital, which was spent on the restoration of the region.

The construction and major repair of facilities in education, culture, health, sports and other spheres will lead to an increase in employment and living standards in mountain regions. This, in turn, prevents migration and creates an additional basis for the development of mountain tourism. Teachers, doctors and other young professionals can be brought to the mountain regions by means of salary differentiation (by setting salary supplements).

- Improvement of the organizational and economic aspects of the development of the tourism industry should be determined in the direction of development and preparation of the New Azerbaijan Tourism trademark.

The current opportunities for the transformation of our country into a mountain tourism profile region are not fully used. We believe that it is possible to solve a number of problems by using both natural and anthropogenic tourism resources.

Relevant institutions should support the development of mountain tourism. First, the public should be informed and educated about mountain tourism. There are many natural, cultural, historical, authentic and exotic places in the highlands. These places are very suitable for tourism. In order to promote these places, marketing

research should be conducted at a professional level, business plans should be drawn up, and advertising work should be organized.

- In modern conditions, the following proposals and recommendations have been put forward for the development of mountain tourism in the republic:

- Provision of preferential loans for the development of tourism in mountainous areas (at the same time, rural tourism);
- Protection of tourism resources and provision of efficient use of these resources;
- Agrotourism, ecotourism, forest, business, adventure-extreme, mountain, ethnic, religious, virtual, etc. in the region. using international experience to develop tourism areas and increase competitiveness;
- Increasing the number of free or motel-type hotels operating in the region in order to provide tourists with cheap and profitable tourism opportunities. At the same time, if we help ensure employment in the region;
- To increase the level of professional training of tourism personnel by expanding international cooperation by exchanging experience with countries with rich experience in the field of tourism;
- As a result of the opening of tourism management and tourism activity-oriented training centers in the region, implementation of measures to attract small and medium-sized business entities to this field.

Shusha, which is considered the cultural center of the Karabakh region, as well as other famous tourist places, are reflected in its material and spiritual history. It is important to carry out international advertising activities from the point of view of tourism.

In the Karabakh economic region, the issues of ecology and environmental protection should be kept in focus. Therefore, along with mountain tourism, it would be appropriate to develop ecotourism here.

In order to develop tourism in the lands freed from occupation, it is important to attract local and foreign investments. If created at this time, it is possible to increase employment in the region by attracting

local people to new jobs. Regional development projects related to tourism cannot be successful by relying only on non-regional resources. It is important to ensure the participation of the local population at every level of the planning process that realizes the potential of tourism with the long-term preservation of historical and cultural values.

The launch of the Zangezur transport corridor will improve Azerbaijan's position in the logistics and transport networks of the region.

The creation of high-tech, ecologically conscious habitats in mountainous areas, as well as the development of tourism in this area, necessitates the development of programs, projects and strategies related to the development of the following.

The main content of the dissertation work is reflected in the following scientific studies:

1. Ways of increasing the socio-economic efficiency of tourism in mountain regions. // – Baku: “Azerbaijani Agrarian Science”, 2018, No. 5. – p. 161-164

2. Modern trends of tourism development in Azerbaijan. // – Baku: “Cooperation” scientific and practical magazine, 2019, No. 4. (55). - pp. 186-190

3. Regulation of tourism infrastructure development in the Republic of Azerbaijan. // – Baku: “Cooperation” scientific-practical magazine, 2020, No. 4 (59). - p. 160-165

4. The role of tourism in the development of mountain regions. Colloquium – journal economic sciences, //– Poland, 2022, No. 27 (150). etc. 26-29

5. Factors shaping the sustainable development of tourism services in mountain regions of Azerbaijan. // – Baku: “Audit” scientific and practical journal, 2022, No. 4 (38). - p. 90-100.

6. Socio-economic nature and characteristics of tourism areas. 1st International Scientific Conference “Scientific Results”, // - Italy, 2022, - p. 102-111.

7. Mountain tourism and its development prospects in Azerbaijan. Republican scientific conference on “Actual problems of socio-

economic development of the Republic of Azerbaijan”, // - Sumgayit, 2022, No. 6. p. 39-41

8. Factors shaping the development of tourism services in mountain regions. // – Poland: The scientific and technical online conference “Research Retrieval and Academic Letters”, 2023, No. 1. p. 48-55

9. The role of Heydar Aliyev in the development of tourism in the mountain regions of Azerbaijan. // – Baku: international scientific-practical conference on “Heydar Aliyev and the modern Turkish world” on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Heydar Aliyev's birth, May 2, 2023.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Heydar Aliyev', is located in the lower right quadrant of the page.

The defense of the dissertation will be held on June 27, 2024 at 16:00 at the meeting of the Joint Dissertation Council of Azerbaijan Cooperation University and Baku Business University, ED 2.46 of the Higher Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, operating under Azerbaijan Cooperation University.

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