

# EARTH SCIENCES

## A ROLE OF THE TOURISM SECTOR IN IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OF THE POPULATION IN THE GREATER CAUCASUS PROVINCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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### Abstract

The role of the tourism sector in the solution of challenges related to employment and improving the life quality of the population in the Greater Caucasus province was scrutinised in the research paper. The income and expenditures of the establishments engaging in the tourism sector were analysed with the help of statistical indicators. In addition to this, the prospective tourism sectors were noted. At the end of the article, the problems discovered during the investigation and their elimination expedients were determined, and the suggestions substantiating scientifically were put forward.

**Keywords:** Greater Caucasus province, life quality, workplaces, employment, tourism.

The tourism sector is one of the essential sectors which provide people with business opportunities. The involvement of recreation and tourism resources in public production and their effective use opens up great opportunities for economic development in the area on the one hand, and solving social problems, especially the employment problem, on the other hand. The development of the tourism sector is of great importance in opening novel workplaces, reducing unemployment, and creating new settlements.

Favourable natural conditions, recreation opportunities, and ancient monuments of the Greater Caucasus region create convenient conditions for the development of the tourism sector at this place. The existence of various climate and relief features in the region has caused the development of numerous types of tourism [2]. The high temperature of the air in the coastal zones of the Caspian Sea allows for the wide use of natural and recreational resources at this place. Receiving plenty of natural energy from the Sun in the summer months in Absheron, Guba-Khachmaz economic-geographic regions creates suitable conditions for the development of beach tourism in these areas. Beach tourism organized mainly in Pirshagi, Bilgah, Buzovna, Mardakan, Shuvelan, and Shikh zones of the Absheron

peninsula and the Nabran-Yalama zone of the Guba-Khachmaz economic region provides recreation for both the local population and foreign tourists in summer months [4].

In order to achieve sustainable tourism in the Republic of Azerbaijan, it is necessary to create a winter tourism base and eliminate the concept of seasonality. The southern slope of the Greater Caucasus, where the number of snowy days and the thickness of the snow cover is large, has favourable natural and geographical conditions for the development of winter tourism. For this purpose, winter tourism was created in Azerbaijan. "Shahdag" Summer-Winter Tourism Complex in Gusar administrative district differs from other complexes of this type in the world with its modernity and universality. The complex is the first mountain-ski resort in the history of Azerbaijan. Another winter tourism centre is the "Tufandagh" Mountain-Skiing Summer-Winter Recreation Complex in Gabala administrative district [5]. Both complexes are located in the Greater Caucasus province. Cableways and ski tracks, chair-type lifting devices were built in the "Shahdag" and "Tufandagh" Winter-Summer Tourism Complexes, and infrastructure was created for practicing mountain-skiing sports.

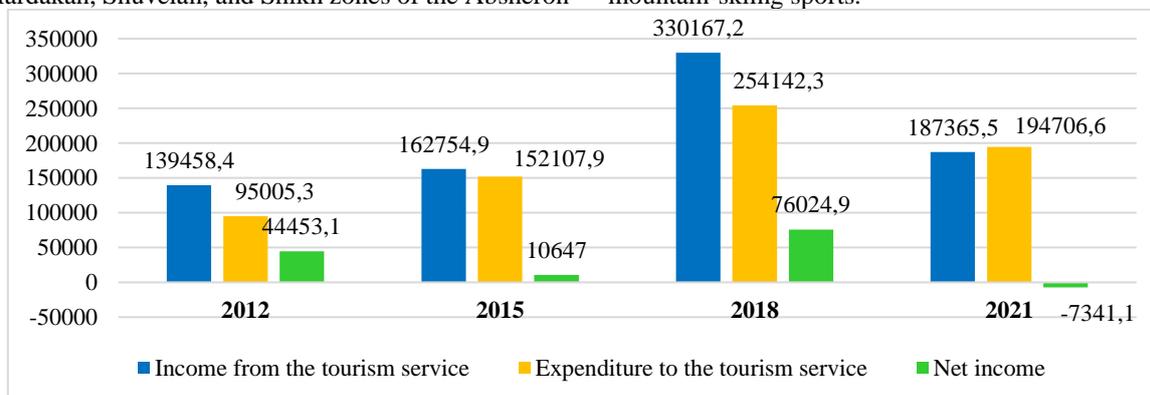


Figure 1. Income and expenses of establishments engaged in tourism activities, thsd. manat [1]

If we look at the details, in 2012, the income from tourism services was 139458,4 thousand manats, the expenses for tourism services were 95005,3 thousand manats, and the net income was 44453,1 thousand manats in the Greater Caucasus province. In later periods, sharp differences between incomes and expenses have been witnessed (Figure 1).

On further examination, it is also clear from the graph that in the year 2021, tourism facilities operated at a loss. Thus, the income obtained by the province was 187365,5 thousand manats, and the incurred expenses were 194706,6 thousand manats, which caused the enterprises to work with a loss of 7341,1 thousand manats. From 2020-2021, restrictions on travel both abroad and within the country due to the pandemic left the tourism sector inactive. This is the reason why, in the last year, as in the entire country, a negative trend was observed in tourism activity in the Greater Caucasus province (total income for the country – 21780,7 thousand manats).

One of the main conditions for increasing the income from tourism services is the attraction of local and foreign investments in this field. In addition to the development of tourism, investment has a positive effect on increasing the quality of life of the population. As in every country, various state programs have been adopted in Azerbaijan and measures have been taken to improve the living standards of the population. The implementation of these reforms is based on the development of regions. Within the framework of these programs, special attention is paid to the employment of the local population. Moreover, the activities of tourism companies are directed at improving the quality of life of the local population, this means that novel workplaces have been opened and the population has been provided with business opportunities. The creation of new workplaces in the tourism sector leads to the development of various service areas related to infrastructure and tourism. This, in turn, leads to the employment of the population [3].

During our analysis, it can be concluded that the natural-geographical conditions and potential opportunities of the Greater Caucasus province are favourable for the development of tourism. However, based on world experience, it is necessary to evaluate these opportunities from the point of view of tourism. Protection of the newly created high-level infrastructure, provision of quality service by international requirements, and the holding of various tourism exhibitions and

training among the rural population can create fertile conditions for developing this field. Developing rural tourism is one of the important factors to ensure the employment of the population in villages where agriculture is poorly developed. By developing rural tourism, it is possible to employ the local population, and by attracting foreign tourists, it would be possible to increase the income of the rural population.

Thus, woodworking, pottery, carpet weaving, copersmithing, carving on metal and wood, dishes, and ornaments made by jewelers have developed in the aforementioned region from ancient folk arts. In the villages of the region, women weave carpets with original patterns. Some villagers produce wine at home. The region has ample opportunities to develop these areas and increase the employment of the population. The indicated existing opportunities prove that there is a rich reserve potential for the development of tourism along with various fields of industry and agriculture in the research region, and they can be used more efficiently and create conditions for increasing the employment of the population.

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