

## **ECOTOURISM AND ETHNOGRAPHIC TOURISM AS THE MAIN DIRECTIONS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN**

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Ethno-tourism is a branch of tourism focusing on exploration of indigenous populations and their culture, customs and traditions. Ethno-tourists usually want to learn more about native people of some countries, their livelihoods and livings. In Kazakhstan, the ethno-tourism industry is poorly developed because of its relatively recent growth and overall slow tourism development. It is necessary to recognize that growth dynamic in ethno-tourism are direct linked to the dynamic in the whole tourism industry. The world tourism industry has experienced significant growth in recent years and is predicted to continue growing. Somehow, cultural and ethno-tourism has grown more promptly than other sectors of the tourism industry. However, this optimistic dynamic can be weakened by the awareness that tourism is an intensely sensitive industry that is influenced by outside forces and circumstances. The ethno-tourism sector makes the following essential benefactions on different levels to the countries, including:

- expanse of employment;
- generating income for population;
- strengthening of cultural and historical morals;
- building cultural, historical, and overall national boundaries;
- promoting the development of small and medium enterprises and businesses;
- providing the growth of auxiliary and service industries;
- facilitating community development (whether it's city or a whole country);
- and empowerment of local and indigenous communities as well as their language

and history [1, p. 7].

Mangystau region, widely known in Kazakhstan as the land of 360 saints, has long been a subject of interest not only to tourists within the country, but also abroad. As part of the state program for tourism development, the region entered the top 10 places in Kazakhstan with a high potential for developing the volume of tourist flow. This is evidenced by statistical data: only for the first half of 2018, the number of tourists served increased by 23%, and for the year – number of excursionists and tourists increased on 200 thousand people. Each year, this indicator changes in the direction of rapid progress. In the long term, according to the plan of the tourism Department of the Mangystau region, up to 700 thousand tourists will be served by 2025. Ecological and ethnological tourism is the least expensive type, but it has the prospect of gradually improving its service. It is planned to develop ethno-tourism on the territories of Mangystau and Tupkaragan districts, where there is a high concentration of natural, sacred, and cultural objects. Unique natural monuments, the extraordinary natural landscape that creates associations with Indian prairies, American canyons, the Arab desert or unearthly, cosmic objects arouse the greatest curiosity among foreign tourists and domestic visitors.

Mangystau is also considered to be home for the famous ethno-village, which is called Ethnoaul. Ethnoaul is located in the area Kogez between legendary mountain Sherkala and Airaktin mountains in the valley of Shumanay-Airakty. This landscape possesses sand dunes and a chain of mountains in the form of ancient forts and castles. Local population calls it the "Valley of Castles". Ethnoaul made Mangystau famous throughout the West of Kazakhstan. Village opened its doors at the end of April 2019 for the third time. Located on six hectares in the Mangystau district of the Mangystau region, the tourist service center is already widely known outside the CIS. Since

opening in 2017, working for only two seasons, it has been visited by Chinese, Japanese, Russians, Serbs as well as tourists from other countries. Nowadays, five yurts are open for guests, and ten more are being installed. Their interior and design is implemented in a traditional way of Kazakh style with the use of the patchwork quilt (korpe), as well as modern bed, bedside tables, and wardrobes. The season which is planned to be opened this April will probably last until late autumn. In 2017, after the opening, Ethnoaul was visited by more than 700 people and in 2018 by 1200 guests. Excursions to mountain Sherkala by walking through the field with nodules of spherical shapes, ascent to mountain Airykty with a view on the gallery of geoglyphs, trips to the underground mosque Beket-Ata – Tobykty, the sacred place of Kulbarak-Ata, the picturesque chalk canyon Zhylshy, the tract Kokala, known for colored sedimentary rocks were organized for guests. An additional attraction for travelers was the gallery of geoglyphs made by the archaeologist and historian Andrey Astafiev in the Airykty-Shomanay valley. There were five images, and the largest was 350 meters by 270 meters. Visitors could see this masterpiece from the top of Airykty Mountain. The project will continue with the creation of ornamental images. For this purpose rock patches on the walls of the mountains would be suitable option [2].

Despite the fact that Mangystau region has a great potential for the development of ethnological tourism, it seems there is not corresponding infrastructure in the region. To give an example, the underground mosque Beket-Ata, which Kazakh tourists visit in large numbers, is located 230 kilometers from the city of Aktau. The road to this area was hardly paved, besides it is a grader road, without asphalt pavement. Asphalt roads are laid only to the administrative centers of all districts in the region. Even with this fact in mind, the quality of these roads leaves much to be desired. All other roads in the region are virtually unpaved. Furthermore, it seems that there is not a place to stop and rest for the travelers all the way to the attractions. Despite the fact that Mangystau region is distinguished by its hot, dry climate and desert lands, there are not points with clean drinking water. In the area where the sacred tracts are located, there are not hotels around. Additionally, the sanitary and hygienic condition of the places of pilgrimage might need serious attention for improvement. The shortage of amount of toilets, or even their complete absence, along the entire route is also a major issue of local infrastructure. Despite these inconveniences, the number of tourists coming to the Mangystau region is growing. Consequently, local authorities should attempt to handle these problems [3].

The implementation of ethnographic tourism is impossible without a long-term state program. It is difficult and quite expensive to solve such problem as the development of infrastructure, including accommodation, food, and transportation services. Therefore, in the article "Looking to the future: modernization of public consciousness" the Former Head of state N.A. Nazarbayev offers the program "Tugan Zher". The implementation of this program will naturally strengthen the ties of man with his homeland, where he was born and grew, through experience and actual support, protection, and assistance to a small homeland. It will develop a culture of charity in the country. Moreover, it will help to provide scientific, academic, educational as well as infrastructural support - research of history, culture, country's geography, and historical objects of the native land [4]. Thus, many businessmen and businesswomen born in the Mangystau region can provide all possible support for the development of infrastructure in their native area. In addition, the Agendas of tourism reforms in different countries recommend realization and implementation of certain activities in order to enrich the offers of the ethnoauls and ethno-areas. One of them relates to finance expenditures into development of old crafts in certain parts of the country. Demonstration of crafts with the possibility for tourists and excursionists to participate in some parts of the production process would become an interesting segment of certain destinations' offer, such as production of saz syrnai or tuyaqtas (traditional musical instruments) or wooden dishes. As a result, money raised by such activities could go to state budget for improving conditions of local area. Moreover, the construction of the first five star international hotel complex "Rixos Aktau Hotel" in Aktau city, which is planned to be completed by the summer of 2020, can be considered as positive factor in attracting a large number of domestic and foreign tourists and excursionists, and in increasing the percentage of employment in this area [5].

Taking into consideration the all mentioned information, it can be concluded that ethno-tourism in Mangystau region can obtain impressive growth among other types of tourism as the most environmentally conscious and culturally enriching tourism, if outside forces and circumstances weakening this sphere would be taken into account. In other words, Mangystau region can have a great potential for the development of ethnological tourism, if there will be corresponding infrastructure which is the main concern of the region.

### **Literature**

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