

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

AZERBAIJAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

MASTER DISSERTATION

on the topic

**PROSPECTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM AND
MEDICAL TOURISM IN THE KARABAKH REGION**

Toghrul Hummatli Sahib

BAKU – 2022

**THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN
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MEDICAL TOURISM IN THE KARABAKH REGION”**

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Elm andı

Mən, Hümətli Toğrul Sahib and içirəm ki, “Prospects for the development of ecotourism and medical tourism in the Karabakh region” mövzusunda magistr dissertasiyasını elmi əxlaq normalarına və istinad qaydalarına tam riayət etməklə və istifadə etdiyim bütün mənbələri ədəbiyyat siyahısında əks etdirməklə yazmışam.

QARABAĞ BÖLGƏSİNDƏ EKOTURİZM VƏ MÜALİCƏVİ TURİZMİN İNKİŞAF PERSPEKTİVLƏRİ

XÜLASƏ

Tədqiqatın aktualığı: Turizmin inkişafı üçün təbii zəngin sərvətlərə malik Azərbaycanın regionlarının ekoturizm və müalicəvi turizm potensialından istifadə etməklə, turizm marşrutu yaratmaqla iqtisadi inkişafa töhfə verəcəyi, ətraf mühitin mühafizəsi və sosial-mədəni inkişafına şərait yaradacağı proqnozlaşdırılır.

Tədqiqatın məqsədi: Tədqiqatın məqsədi Azərbaycanın ekoturizm və müalicəvi turizm potensialı üzərində işğaldan azad edilmiş Qarabağ bölgəsinin əlavə dəyərini aşkar etməkdir. Bu araşdırma çərçivəsində hər iki anlayışı, onların qaynaqlarını və iqtisadiyyata təsirlərini müzakirə etmək məqsəduyğundur.

İstifadə olunmuş tədqiqat metodları: Araşdırma Azərbaycanda ekoturizm və müalicəvi turizminin vəziyyətini təhlil etmək məqsədilə aparılıb. Bundan əlavə, Azərbaycanda turizm sektorunun rolunu daha ətraflı təhlil etmək üçün qrafik və cədvəllərdən istifadə edilmişdir.

Tədqiqatın informasiya bazası: Tədqiqatın məlumat bazası, statistik məlumatlar, nəşrlər, müsahibələr, elmi jurnal məqalələri və internet səhifələri kimi müxtəlif milli və beynəlxalq mənbələri əhatə edir.

Tədqiqatın məhdudiyyətləri: Məhdudiyyətlərdən biri turistlərin Azərbaycanı gəliş məqsədi ilə bağlı məlumatların çatışmazlığı hesab edilə bilər. Azərbaycanda ekoturizmə və müalicəvi turizminə olan tələbatı müəyyən etmək üçün turistlərin gəliş məqsədləri haqqında məlumat olsa, çox əlverişli olardı.

Tədqiqatın elmi yeniliyi və praktiki nəticələri: Bu araşdırma nəticəsində belə qənaətə gəlmək olar ki, Azərbaycanın, xüsusən də bu yaxınlarda işğaldan azad edilmiş Qarabağ bölgəsinin ekoturizm və müalicəvi turizminin inkişafı üçün geniş potensialı var. Həmçinin müəyyən edilmişdir ki, turizm sektoru iş yerlərinin açılması ilə iqtisadiyyata əhəmiyyətli və Azərbaycanda ÜDM-i artırır.

Nəticələrin istifadə olunma biləcəyi sahələr: Bu araşdırmanın nəticələrinə əsasən, ölkənin ekoturizm və müalicəvi turizminə diqqəti daha çox cəlb etmək tövsiyə olunma bilər. Hazırkı tədqiqat mövcud ədəbiyyatı hər iki sektorun Azərbaycan iqtisadiyyatındakı rolu ilə bağlı dəyərli müzakirələr və nəticələrlə zənginləşdirir.

Açar sözlər: turizm, ekoturizm, müalicəvi turizm, Azərbaycan

PROSPECTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM AND MEDICAL TOURISM IN THE KARABAKH REGION

SUMMARY

The actuality of the subject: Regions of Azerbaijan, which have naturally rich assets for the development of tourism, is predicted to contribute to the economic development, to protect the environment and to enable the socio-cultural development by utilizing ecotourism and medical tourism potential, and creating a tourism route.

Purpose and tasks of the research: The purpose of the study is to reveal the ecotourism and medical tourism potential of Azerbaijan added value of the liberalization of Karabakh region. Within the scope of this study, it was aimed to discuss the both concepts, their recourses and impacts on the economy.

Used research methods: The qualitative study was conducted to analyse the state of ecotourism and medical tourism in Azerbaijan. Moreover, graphs and tables were utilized to display more detailed analysis about the role of tourism sector in Azerbaijan.

The information base of the research: The information base of the research encompasses various national and international sources such as statistics, publications, interviews, scientific journal articles, and web pages.

Restrictions of research: One restriction can be considered is the lack of data on tourists' purpose of visit to Azerbaijan. It would be ideal if there was a data on the intentions of visits of tourists to be able to determine what is the demand for ecotourism and medical tourism in Azerbaijan.

The novelty and practical results of investigation: As a result of this study it can be concluded that Azerbaijan, especially recently liberated Karabakh region, has a vast potential for the development of ecotourism and medical tourism. It has also been determined that tourism sector has a significant impact on the economy so as it opens up many employment places as well as amplifies the GDP of Azerbaijan.

Scientific-practical significance of results: Deriving from the results of this study, it can be recommended to draw more attention on the ecotourism and medical tourism of the country. The current study enriches literature with the valuable discussions and conclusions about the role of both sectors in the economy of Azerbaijan.

Keywords: tourism, ecotourism, medical tourism, Azerbaijan.

ABBREVIATIONS

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Tourism Organization
IUCN	The International Union for Conservation of Nature
ATB	Azerbaijan Tourism Bureau
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
TIEA	The International Ecotourism Association

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	INTRODUCTION.....	8
CHAPTER I.	HISTORY OF ECOTOURISM, ITS IMPACTS ON THE ECONOMY, SOCIETY, AND ENVIRONMENT.....	11
	1.1. Specific features and historical aspects of the development of ecotourism.....	11
	1.2. Global trends in the development of the tourism industry.....	17
	1.3. Development and Management of Ecotourism and Medical Tourism.....	25
CHAPTER II.	Analysis of the development of the tourism sector in Azerbaijan.....	36
	2.1. Socio-economic indicators of the development of tourism in Azerbaijan.....	36
	2.2. The current state of the development of ecotourism and medical tourism in Azerbaijan.....	43
CHAPTER III.	PERSPECTIVES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM AND MEDICAL TOURISM IN THE KARABAKH REGION.....	49
	3.1. Historical and socio-economic factors affecting the development of ecotourism and medical tourism in the Karabakh region	49
	3.2. Assessment of the potential development resources of ecotourism and medical tourism of the Karabakh region...55	
	3.3. Predictions and Strategic Methods about the Prospects of Ecotourism and Medical Tourism in the Karabakh Region...62	
	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	70
	REFERENCES	72
	List of tables	75

INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the research topic: Tourism has become increasingly important economically and socially in recent years and has become a rapidly developing sector. Tourism, which was previously perceived only as entertainment, vacation, historical and cultural travel, is now seen in different areas (K. Demir, 2020). With the development of the tourism sector in the world, the reasons for people to travel have also changed. However, alternative tourism types have emerged. Today, tourists have started to seek quality solutions for health problems as well as traveling and temporary accommodation needs within the scope of tourism. These movements of tourists who travel and aim to be treated by staying temporarily have revealed the concept of ecotourism and health tourism. Traveling for health reasons is not a new movement and has long been a driving force for tourists to spas and coastal areas (J. Hall, 2011). The importance of health tourism today is understood by the fact that the first priority of some countries to go abroad is health tourism.

Statement of the problem and learning level: With the development of the tourism sector, people's wishes and needs have also changed. However, health tourism has also developed with these demands and needs. The biggest impact on the development of medical tourism has been that people prefer health services that follow a high-quality low-price policy (S. Lanin and R. Silvia, 2017). People's search for the balance of body, mind and spirit has been effective in this choice. It is seen that intangible benefits such as healthy lifestyle, mental rest and relaxation are also demanded in addition to tangible benefits such as treatment, wellness, and healthy nutrition (L. Langviniene, 2014).

Medical tourism and ecotourism have an important place as it contributes to countries economically. Reasons such as the increase in people's health expenditures, aging population, high costs, problems in the health system, long waiting periods,

problems in the social security system, rapid increase in the geriatric (over 65 years old) population in developed countries and the development of comfortable travel technologies have contributed to the development of health tourism and ecotourism (K. Demir et al., 2020). Those that take a large share from the growing health tourism in the world are the countries that have structured the processes of ecotourism and medical tourism correctly and have determined their strategies and policies beforehand.

Purposes and objectives of the research: Within the scope of this research, the history and development of ecotourism and medical tourism and their effects on economy, environment, society, and local community are analyzed. Further on the prospects of both ecotourism and medical tourism in Azerbaijan are discussed.

Object and subject of the research: In the 90s, when ecotourism and medical tourism began to be expressed more frequently, people whose education level increased and who reached a certain level of economic prosperity became more sensitive to the environment and health. However, the high environmental awareness and protectionist approach to nature significantly increased the demand for ecotourism (B. Chand, 2020). Ecotourism, with its approach that protects the environment and supports conservation, is seen as a development strategy used to generate income for the local people. Ecotourism supports economic development by ensuring the sustainable use of protected areas, creating employment for local people, and using the income obtained in the same place (E. Jalani, 2012). Although Azerbaijan, which is the subject of this study, has natural elements in terms of carrying out ecotourism activities, touristic development is weak and lacks in terms of information and promotion. It is possible to promote the region by determining the existing potential. The realization of ecotourism activities in touristic destinations depends on determining the areas where ecotourism activities can take place in the specified destination (A. Pasli, 2019). In addition, the lack of development of industry creates problems in terms of employment of local people and reveals the problem of unemployment.

-Research methods: The study is the qualitative type with some referal to the statistics retrieved from both the national and international statistical bureaus.

Research database: Research database consists of the numerical data retrieved from the Azerbaijani State Statistical Committee and information which roots in the journal publications and official sources, UNWTO sources.

Research limitations: One restriction can be considered is the lack of data on tourists' purpose of visit to Azerbaijan. It would be ideal if there was a data on the intentions of visits of tourists to be able to determine what is the demand for ecotourism and medical tourism in Azerbaijan.

Scientific novelty of the research: As a result of this study it can be concluded that Azerbaijan, especially recently liberated Karabakh region, has a vast potential for the development of ecotourism and medical tourism. It has also been determined that tourism sector has a significant impact on the economy of Azerbaijan so as it opens up many employment places as well as amplifies the GDP of the country.

Scientific and practical significance of the results: Deriving from the results of this study, it can be recommended to draw more attention on the ecotourism and medical tourism of the country. The current study enrichs literature with the valuable discussions and conclusions about the role of ecotourism and medical tourism in the economy of Azerbaijan.

CHAPTER I. HISTORY OF ECOTOURISM AND MEDICAL TOURISM, ITS IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY, SOCIETY, AND ENVIRONMENT

1.1. Specific Features and Historical Aspects of the Development of Ecotourism and Medical Tourism

In the periods when tourism first started to develop, the tourism sector was handled with its economic development and employment-providing benefits. This situation has created negative social, environmental, and cultural effects over time. With the accommodation establishments, infrastructure services and other social facilities built for the visitors, the local people have been displaced and their lifestyles have changed. In addition, with the increase in the number of tourists, natural life was negatively affected and threatened animal life (L. Ahmadova and N. Akova, 2016). The sustainability of the tourism sector can only be achieved by preserving and using the historical, natural and cultural values specific to the regional and local areas that are the source of tourism. With the importance of tourism and environmental relations, the sustainability discussions brought the concept of ecotourism to the agenda and became popular.

The negativities such as the increase in environmental pollution and the gradual destruction of nature make people more thoughtful and sensitive about the environment. This situation plays an effective role in changing people's holiday understanding in order to preserve areas with natural beauties and transfer them to future generations. As a result of the negativities arising from the structure of mass tourism and the search for alternatives to this situation, new types of tourism have emerged. Ecotourism emerging among these alternatives constitutes the most effective alternative tourism type in terms of natural resources and their protection (Durbarry R. (2004).

Technological developments, political and economic changes experienced throughout the world have caused changes in the tourism sector as well as in all sectors.

The changing tourism sector has reached an important dimension for the country's economies. Every expenditure made in the tourism sector has revitalized the economy by activating it. In addition, with the devastating effect of coastal tourism in recent years, their carrying capacity has been filled and the destruction of the coasts has gradually increased. Tourists have increasingly started to seek alternatives to nature and away from coastal tourism, and they have turned to conservation tourism, which is less harmful to nature. As a result of this emerging trend, new concepts such as sustainable tourism, green tourism and ecotourism have emerged (Proencha, E. S. 2008).

The origin of the concept of ecotourism comes from the combination of the Greek *oikos* (house) and *logos* (word). The word scientifically called ecology is used to examine organisms and their relationships with their environment. As a result of people taking care of their own vital interests, the awareness of the necessity of living by preserving the balance of nature increases and the possibility of destroying the ecological order decreases. This situation is also a factor in the change of tourism activities.

Ecotourism is seen as a potential strategy for maintaining the natural ecosystem balance and promoting sustainable local development. Considering ecotourism as an important sustainable development tool brings it to be a niche market within the travel industry. Ecotourism is seen as a potential strategy for maintaining the natural ecosystem balance and promoting sustainable local development. Considering ecotourism as an important sustainable development tool brings it to be a niche market within the travel industry (Yeo, M., & Piper, L. (2011).

Ecotourism, which has an economically more important position in terms of underdeveloped or developing countries, serves as a tool to help sustainability and development in subjects such as population, migration, competition, agricultural activities and employment. It has a positive effect on many institutions and organizations in the region, including the local people, with the benefits it provides in the mentioned issues. In addition to its economic impact, it ensures the preservation of

local products and local handicrafts and their transfer to future generations (S. Yildiz, 2019).

The importance of ecotourism should not be seen as only benefiting the local people and protecting natural areas. Although these benefits are important, ecotourism also has a sensitive task in terms of raising awareness and education of tourists (M. Mirsanjari, 2012). Tourists visiting the destination can learn about local peoples and cultures and enrich their perspectives on the world. In addition, concepts such as environmental problems, hunger, migration and poverty can become more effective in their memories, and they can act with a sense of social responsibility in their own country and take part in the construction of a more livable world.

As a result of the acceleration of modernization and urbanization, people have turned to ecotourism with feelings such as longing for nature. Individuals who return to their destination as a result of ecotourism activities begin to act with a sense of protection and responsibility and develop behaviors in this direction. This situation, which occurs in individuals, lays the groundwork for the creation of societies that are more livable and social relations are stronger. On the other hand, it can be said that in ecotourism, which is based on protecting nature and the environment as well as ensuring the economic development of the local people, the local people's awareness of the necessity of protecting biological diversity and natural resources increases and they are more sensitive to the environment (Garcia, J. H, 2013).

The beginning of the tourism movement with the Olympic races in the ancient Greek era is considered an important event. Traveling for the purpose of participating in the Olympic races is considered the first tourism movement, but it is also considered the beginning of sports tourism. The health tourism movement or health services has been used since the Roman Empire period. During the Roman period, health travel became widespread with the tendency of people to travel to the hot springs in the Egyptian pyramids in order to regain health. In the early days, the purpose of these travels was related to the improvement of well-being and health. The hot springs in the

world are shown as the most important indicator of this (D. Muhi and I. Durkovich, 2020). When health tourism is mentioned, thermal tourism comes to mind first. But recently, there are also foreign trips for the services of hospitals. This has led to an increase in economic income and an interesting area with international travels (T. Sequeira, Carla Campos, 2005).

The concept of health tourism is explained with different definitions according to each researcher. According to W. Moore (2012), medical tourism is defined as the whole of events and relationships arising from travels, accommodation and organizations that start with the aim of promoting health, protecting health, and restoring health in general and includes holiday elements as well as health services. According to B. Aslan (2019), medical tourism is defined as the process of traveling outside the country of residence to receive medical care. Q. Shahbaz et al. (2012), medical tourism is defined as a type of tourism that allows health institutions to grow by using international patient potential together with those who need physical therapy and rehabilitation. Medical tourism is defined as the whole of activities that include accommodation and other establishments that aim to improve and protect health or to improve health and to use holiday elements in health service procurement processes. According to P. Rinaldi (2014), medical tourism is defined as the sum of all touristic travels that a person makes in order to regain, improve or protect his health. The main purpose of health tourism is to improve or protect health (Lanza, A., and Pigliaru, F, 2000). Based on all these definitions, medical tourism can be defined as traveling outside of one's place for health purposes.

Medical tourism differs in terms of meaning in the past and present. In the past, only the rich people traveled to developed countries for treatment, today the middle class prefers developing countries for low-cost and high-quality treatment. In the last century, health tourism has become popular within the competitive conditions in the sector. Countries that want to take place in the international market are also competing to compete (E. Agudaru, 2020). Medical tourism has recently become a very important

phenomenon due to its economic return. Nowadays, people want to have different experiences besides being able to travel comfortably. Reasons such as long waiting times in their own countries, out of coverage of insurance, high prices have pushed people to go to different countries. Along with this situation, the orientation to external resources gave birth to health tourism. Evaluating all these, the reasons for a patient to receive treatment from another country can be listed as follows (Russell, A., & Wallace, G, 2004):

Lack or low availability of high-tech medical equipment and specialist healthcare personnel in the patient's country

- Willingness to combine treatment with touristic activities
- Desire to take advantage of the price advantage in other countries
- Desire to be treated in a country with a good health system
- Desiring to have an operation due to a problem that would be shamed in his own country or that he would not want the people in his country to know (cosmetic, etc.),
- Elderly or chronic patient wanting to be treated in another country, wanting to see a different environment
- The patient who is addicted to drugs or any other substance wants to be treated in a comfortable environment
- It can be counted as the patient's desire to hold on to life, to live.

Medical tourism is a different sub-branch from other tourism branches. It includes many economic, social, cultural or general aspects. Accordingly, the general characteristics of health tourism are as follows (A. Albin et al., 2012):

- Temporary travel and accommodation for humanitarian needs for a certain period of time
- Covers non-profit travel and stays
- Done under one's individual liberty

- Covering a personal or mass movement
- Enabling countries to compete in health
- Being result-oriented from the patient's decision on treatment to his/her return after treatment
- Helping to provide services in accordance with international standards
- Being a social phenomenon
- Increasing the quality due to the patient's desire, expectation and satisfaction
- Covering the entire tourism sector as a result of its combination with touristic activities
- Health tourism is an area that requires more technical equipment and has a higher workforce, having accreditation documents, especially in the field of medical tourism, in order to provide an international service
- Availability of trained personnel who speak a foreign language
- Creating added value by combining it with different touristic products, considering not only the health tourist but also the accompanying person
- State-supported promotion, advertising, and marketing tactics related to the target market can be counted.

1.2. Global Trends in the Development of the Tourism Industry

The phenomenon of tourism is a concept that has been on the agenda since the existence of people. In every period of history, people, health, religion, sports and so on. For reasons, he moved as a missionary, philosopher, scholar, merchant, sailor and adventure seeker. Tourism event in the historical process BC. It dates back to 3000 years. B.C. Travelers used to come here to see the pyramids and other artifacts in Ancient Egypt around 3000 BC. As a result of these visits, there was also an improvement in accommodation facilities in Egypt in the same period. It is accepted that the tourism event in the modern sense started in Ancient Greece with the Olympic Games that started in 700 BC. It is known that many tourists came to the country during the games (R. Kozak et al., 2015).

In the early ages, tourism was made for four main reasons. These; reasons related to sports, belief, economy and health. The richest Romans traveled in this era. Travels made in order to see and get to know the natural beauties, historical buildings and artifacts were generally to the Aegean region and its surroundings, and to Egypt (F. Usta, 2016). The fact that the society with the highest level of welfare in this period was Romans is a major factor in this. The extension of the borders of the Roman Empire to three continents provided the development of the road network and the comfort of horse carriages in terms of facilitating travels.

In the Middle Ages, in Europe, which was under the dominance of feudalism, Roman and Greek culture was replaced by a strict understanding of religion. Both in this period and in the following periods, people started to visit holy places due to their beliefs, and thus, religion-based tourism movements developed. On the other hand, intercontinental human movements started with the Crusades to the Middle East. The emergence of human interactions on the round-trip route during these expeditions aroused the desire of individuals to get to know different cultures and civilizations and

to travel the world. As a result of the tourism activities, which were largely formed by the visit of religious places in the Middle Ages, large pilgrim convoys were formed in places such as Jerusalem, Mecca, Medina, Ephesus and Benares. The wealth and prosperity seen in these holy cities of the Middle Ages came about as a result of religious travels. In addition to religious activity, intercontinental relations increased in the commercial activities carried out on the Silk Road in the same period, and a route from the west of Europe to India and China emerged. Travels that developed only within the Roman Empire in the first age gained an intercontinental dimension in this period. In addition, there has been an increase in tourism movements with the long travels of Marco Polo, the famous traveler of the middle age, and the notes he kept about these travels. Thanks to Marco Polo's journeys that lasted for years and exceeded thousands of kilometers, it has been proven that there is an intercontinental order in which life and property safety is ensured. This is one of the conditions that contribute to the development of tourism (S. Master, 2016).

Thoughts that changed with the effect of the Renaissance, the discovery of the American continent and traveling around the world increased the sense of interest and curiosity in distant places and made individuals more excited. With the successful sea voyages of famous sailors Vasco De Gama, Magellan and Christopher Columbus, the desire to travel all over Europe increased rapidly. On July 5, 1841, he carried 570 passengers for the price of 1 shilling round trip, and this is believed to be the first trip to be made public. This organization by Thomas Cook has enabled it to be described as the first rail travel agency, and this has set an example in different parts of the world. As a result of this successful initiative of Thomas Cook, his company has grown rapidly and started to organize tours to different continents, the United States and various geographies of the world. Thomas Bennett, who worked as a secretary at the British consulate in Oslo, Norway, and was considered the first expert on individual travel, frequently organized nature-based tours for British dignitaries in Norway. By 1850, he had established his own company as a trip organizer and offered cars, excursion routes,

catering and travel kits for individual tourists. He made hotel reservations for his customers in advance (O. Goldner and T. Ritchie, 2011).

The importance of the sea-sand-sun trio, which is the basis of mass tourism today, dates back to the post-Industrial Revolution. The convenience that emerged in post-industrial production and the improvement of the transportation and infrastructure required for the transportation of the produced products also facilitated the travels (R. Kozak, et al., 2013). From the end of the 18th century, places that developed on the sea coasts of Europe and considered as an example for mass tourism began to emerge. Places such as Blackpool and Scarborough in England are among the places preferred as a holiday region in this period. Diving in salt water in Brighton was important both in terms of health and as the fashion of the day. These activities, which were popular with the upper classes at first, spread throughout the society over time. The region, which was pioneered by England and was unrivaled in the first periods, extended over time to Arcachon in France, San Sebastian in Spain, Bad Doberan near the Baltic coast and Helgoland in Germany (Yeo, M., & Piper, L. (2011).

The modernization process, which started with industrialization in Europe in the 17th century, became effective all over the world in the 20th century. In the 13th article of the human rights declaration included in the United Nations founding declaration established after World War I, people are given the right to move freely in a country (R. Kozak, et al., 2015). In addition, as a result of the start of union activities, the demand for paid leave came to the agenda and the workers were given the right to paid leave. The Worker's Travel Association, which helps workers to evaluate their paid leave, was established in England and made 24,000 reservations in 1937 (R Kozak, et al., 2013). In 1908, when the American Henry Ford introduced the automobile for people's use, the choice of vehicle used for travel changed. With the introduction of the automobile into human life, improvements in the transportation network and more regular roads began to be made. By 1920, automobiles began to dominate the travel industry and many travels began to be made with automobiles. The heavy use of automobiles

between 1920 and 1930 laid the groundwork for today's motels. Thanks to automobiles, people have had the opportunity to travel more comfortably and have enabled positive developments in terms of tourism (O. Goldner and T. Ritchie, 2011).

After the First World War, passenger and freight transportation started with the commercial use of airplanes. The first touristic trips by plane were arranged by Thomas Cook between New York and Chicago. In the later periods, flights were arranged from London to the French cities of Cannes and Nice, but because it was more expensive than the train, rich people generally preferred it. With the development of air transportation, the concept of package tour emerged and started in charter flights as well as scheduled flights. These developments in the airway have enabled people to reach long distances in a shorter time and tourism mobility has gained an international dimension.

Although World War II put a pause in the development of international tourism to some extent, in 1939, close to 50% of Britons spent at least one night away from their homes for holiday purposes. However, the number of vehicle owners, which was 200,000 in 1920, exceeded 2,000,000 in 1939. On the other hand, developments in air and sea transportation maintain their influence in this period. During this period, Russian tourism developed by creating areas such as resorts on the Black Sea coast and other regions for its citizens. In the same period, holiday homes close to the city centers were built for the elite (O. Sage, 2019).

The period between 1918-1920 is shown as the beginning of tourism in the modern sense. Between these years, tourism has become a big sector with hotels, motels, transportation vehicles and roads, accommodation facilities, entertainment venues, beaches and infrastructure (T. Albayrak, 2013).

By the end of the 1990s, Azerbaijan has become a popular destination in terms of tourism, although it does not have sufficient infrastructure and superstructure. With the rapid increase in the number of tourists, accommodation establishments and other tourism facilities were put into service without adequate planning. After 1994, there

were incentives for tourism types such as winter tourism, congress tourism, and third age tourism, and relevant policies were developed to develop them. By the year 2000, a policy of spreading tourism throughout the year was followed in addition to seasonal activities, activities for cultural and natural beauties, as well as sea-sand-sun tourism (R. Aliyev, 2020).

Tourism has long been considered as a sustainable source of economic growth. The program called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in the 70th summit of the UN's General Assembly embodies tourism as a robust constituent of the economy of one country. Among the 17 Sustainable Development programs (SDGs) and 169 other economic models, the potential of tourism to stimulate growth is explicitly elucidated in the SDGs numbered as 8, 12, 14, and 16. The merits of tourism in maintaining the sustainable consumption rates, conservation of the natural resources of one country, and contending for the better socio-economic state of affairs are the main subject matters of the adopted SDGs.

According to the data retrieved from the United Nations World Tourism Organization, before the pandemic taking over the world, on average more than 1.4 billion international arrivals used to take place each year. It constitutes 10% of the world's GDP, and 7% of all the countries' exports in total, and every 11th person is employed in the tourism sector (UNWTO, 2016). These numbers reflect the catholic implications of the development of tourism as so there is a vast potential of tourism in expanding the economy, ameliorating the socio-economic situation, conservation of the natural resources and hereafter the pristine state of the environment, diverging from inclusive development (observable in Azerbaijan).

Tourism is marked as the chief component of the service exports in international trade. Spending on the international tourism has surged throughout the decades, and what was paid off by bringing high incomes for the budgets of states as well as for the households, by stimulating growth, improving current account balance, bringing in large number of jobs whereby reducing unemployment rates. Tourism accounts for the

7% of overall world exports and 32% of total world services exports, and the share of tourism in the world exports increased by 15% in 2015 relative to 2014 (from 6% to 7%). One can observe a positive upward trend without any busts in the volume of tourism income till 2020, even its share has outstripped the share of merchandise trade in the international trade from 8 years at a stretch from 2011.

The economic impacts of international tourism has always been a focus of tourism theorists. After the deliberate investigation, the most common mentioned and the most pragmatic findings of the researchers are utilized in this paper. Vas, Margarita and Silva (2010) analysis substantiated the relation between national production and tourism claiming that an inflow of tourists into a country creates a supplementary demand for goods and services. As an imaginary representation of the finding that the stimuli of the relevant sectors triggered by an increase in the demand, the following case can be considered: an increase in the demand for food (as an excess supply of population will lead to a higher demand for restaurants etc.) would cause an increase in the production of agriculture or food sector. Likewise, the expansion of the production in the interest sector to meet higher demands would be likely to attract higher investments. (Gokdemir L., Durdu, K., 2007)

Brida and Risso' (2009) pragmatic study on the economic impacts of tourism corroborates that tourism is a sound source of growth by examining the correlation between balance of payments and tourism sector. Findings of Cruz (2004) also point out that balance of payments is affected by tourism so that tourists inflow can be viewed as the foreign currency inflow, and residents who travel abroad - as the import of services. The study conducted by Soukiazis and Proencha reveals that tourism is the sustained beneficiary of the public sector, and is a tool for diversifying away the economic activity from being concentrated in some specific regions. The analysis of the paper illustrates that in the countries with the developed tourism sector, the regional convergence and equal development of different regions are more examined than in the countries that are not very desired destination of tourists. Tourism positively contributes

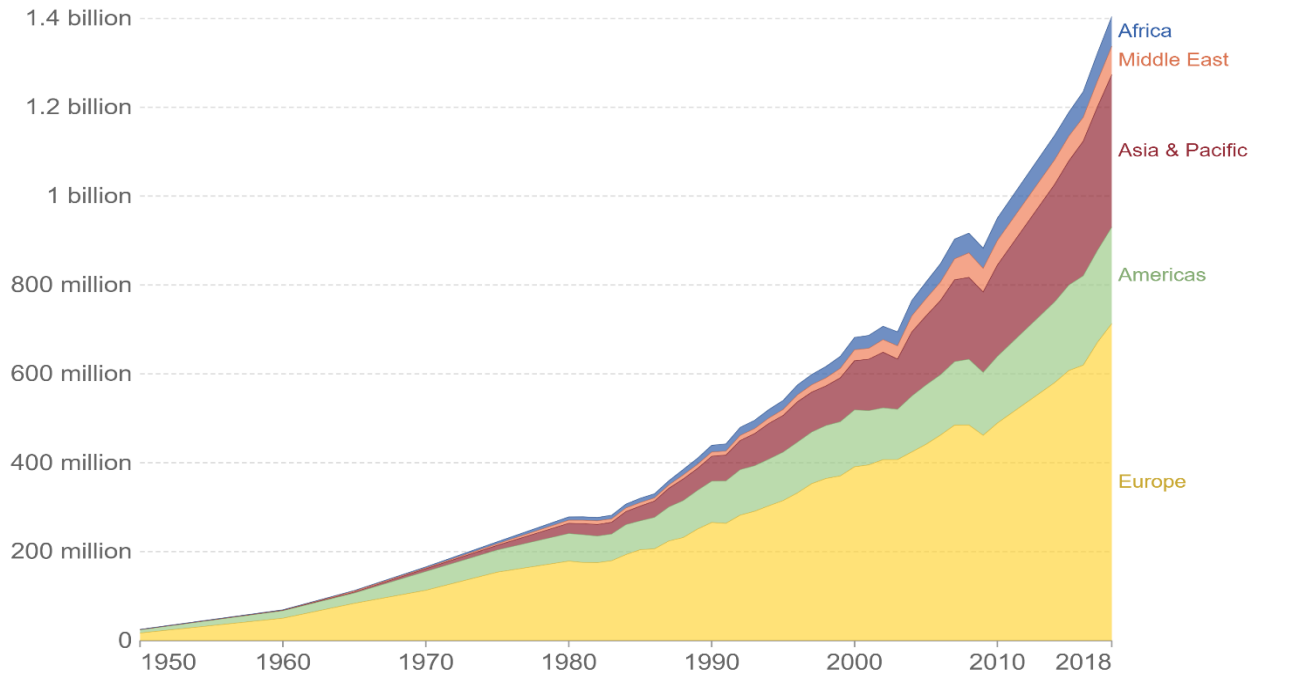
to the overall welfare of a country by reducing unemployment rates, positioning a country as a hub for investors, improving balance of payments.

Alp and Genc (2015) have utilized autoregressive error correction methods and determined that there exist a long-term relation both between the volume of tourism receipts and balance of payment and between the volume of tourism receipts and current account balance. Similarly, Rasheed et al. (2019)'s study which was focused on the one specific country, namely Pakistan, encompassing the span of time from 1976 to 2005 points to the significant negative relation between balance of payments deficit and the number of tourism arrivals.

By looking to overall impact of tourism sector on GDP we should consider data for other countries as well through the same time period. According to data for recent years (not considering 2020, because there is no data for this year, yet) we can observe an upward trend in the growth of tourist arrivals all over the world. The data shows that in 2019 there was a worldwide grew of 4% in tourist arrivals which makes 1.5 billion US dollars. This percentage is considered as high growth rate despite the fact that there was a higher growth in 2017 (7%) and in 2018 (6%). Observing this data by regions we can see some variations in the growth levels. Data shows that Middle East enjoyed the highest arrival growth with 8%. Asia and Pacific also had high growth rate with 5%. However, US and Europe had comparatively lower growth (2% and 4%, respectively), despite France is listed among top countries of tourist arrival growth. Let us now focus on tourism sectors of two leading countries and compare their results with Azerbaijan's data.

Figure 1: World Tourism Industry.

International tourist arrivals per year by region



Source: United Nations World Tourism Organization - World Tourism Barometer (2019)

OurWorldInData.org/tourism/ • CC BY

Source: World Development Indicators, (<https://ourworldindata.org/tourism>)

The graph above shows the tourist arrivals per year by region. The trend is increasing without any downfalls from 1950 till 2018. The most visited destination of tourist is Europe, hosting more than 600 million tourists each year. The least visited region is found to be Africa, with less than 100 million tourist visits each year.

1.3. Development and Management of the Ecotourism and Medical Tourism

As globalization continues, some known destinations around the world become popular tourism areas, while others are less known and remain undeveloped (D. Dologlou and V. Katsoni, 2016). Popular areas are mostly evaluated for mass tourism, unknown or less known places are gaining new value. There are differences from country to country, social and cultural structure, race and gender about the experiences of tourists or what they want to experience, and this situation may vary over time (O. Stronza, 2011). In parallel with the economic, political, and technological developments in the world, the preferences of individuals are also changing significantly. These changes are also observed in the tourism sector and the participation of individuals in mass tourism is decreasing compared to the past, and their orientation towards environmentally sensitive tourism activities intertwined with nature is increasing (P. Palacio and J. McCool, 2017). In particular, the tendency of third world countries to alternative tourism has started to reduce mass tourism, which has a negative socio-cultural and environmental impact, and has started to be a factor in directing the people of developed countries to alternative tourism activities (J. Cater, 2013).

However, the use of the term - Ecotourism was found in the 1980s. As a result, concepts such as ecology, ecosphere and ecosystem, which combined with the term eco and revealed a positive image, became more popular by combining with tourism (Y. Orams, 2015). Although the origin of the concept of ecotourism is not known exactly, it is accepted that it was first used by Hetzel in 1965. On the other hand, S. Orams (1995) and Hvenegaard (1994) argued that the concept was used towards the end of the 1980s, while Higgins (1996) argued that it was used by Miller in the late 1970s (J. Fennell, 2003). In terms of general acceptance, the term ecotourism was first used in Spanish by Mexican ecologist Hector Ceballos-Lascurain in 1983, and its definition was made by Hector Ceballos-Lascurain in 1987 (K. Korkmaz, 2019;J. Fennell, 2003).

With the increasing interest and demand for ecotourism, the United Nations declared 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism. In the declaration of the year of

ecotourism, it was aimed to show the importance of ecotourism worldwide (C. Sharpley, 2006). In addition, factors such as ecotourism's potential for economic development, if it is well managed and controlled, can be considered an important tool for the protection of the natural environment, played an active role in the declaration of the year of ecotourism. World Ecotourism Summit was convened in Quebec, Canada under the leadership of UNEP on May 19-22, 2002, and ecotourism was discussed as a sustainable development tool and discussed as a solution to combating poverty in underdeveloped regions (R. Kuter, 2009). The concept of ecotourism and medical tourism are a concept that have become widespread with the increase in the relationship with the natural environment and the interest in the natural environment, and accordingly the awareness of the necessity of protecting the natural environment and the understanding of its importance. With the emergence of this concept, basically visiting natural areas (O. Eagles, 2012), preventing possible damage and protectionist approaches have increased and gained a marketable quality (Z. Tetik, 2012).

Medical tourism has become the fastest growing market all over the world. Although medical tourism is seen as having the same meaning as health tourism, it is a sub-branch of health tourism. Health tourism is a travel movement made to protect and improve the body, soul, and mind balance of the individual. Medical tourism, on the other hand, is an organized travel movement to improve or enrich the patient with medical intervention (N. Gill and L. Singh, 2011). The concept of medical tourism is also called medical tourism in the literature. It is a niche market for cosmetic surgery, dental treatment, and medical services, which profits healthcare providers and local economies (C. Connell, 2010). The concept of medical tourism is explained with different definitions by researchers in the literature. According to F. Ruffolo (2016), medical tourism is defined as travel to destinations that will undergo medical treatment, such as surgery or other special interventions. According to L. Yeli (2016), medical tourism is defined as the medical applications made for the tourist to regain his health or to improve his health. According to K. Jiang and E. Poorani (2017), medical tourism is defined as the

planned travels of those who want to receive medical service but do not need emergency treatment. According to S. Schmerler (2018), medical tourism is defined as the movement of tourists who undertake direct or indirect costs in order to obtain medical treatment by traveling to a country other than their place of residence for a short time with a conscious choice. According to F. Clevenson and B. Crescioli (2020), medical tourism is defined as therapeutic trips to places with cheap prices, good service, qualified personnel, no legal restrictions and other types of tourism. Based on all these definitions, medical tourism can be defined as medical, cosmetic, dental treatment etc. from the country where the person is located to another country. can be defined as the travel they make in order to receive services.

Medical tourism is medical practice that includes all surgical operations. With the advances in medicine and technological developments, the interest in medical tourism has increased. The reason for this is that health services in developed and developing countries are expensive. With the aging population, the interest in medical tourism is increasing, and with it, the expenditures on health are also increasing. Countries that cannot afford health-related costs encourage the revival of the health tourism movement by making bilateral agreements with countries that make the treatment more affordable. It saves up to 80% financially when patients go to other countries for treatment. In short, the most important factor in the development of medical tourism is low prices, the development of medical technology, convenience in transportation, internet marketing and quality service provision. Medical tourism makes great contributions to the economy of many countries around the world (J. Lee, 2009).

The development of medical tourism started in the Asian region. Aesthetic surgery started in Thailand in the 1970s with the increasing demands for gender reassignment. With the individualization of the economy in the 1990s in India, hospitals improved their infrastructure by importing technological and medical supplies. However, doctors who went to other countries returned. The experience of these doctors abroad has turned into a move towards India's strategy. The fact that the doctors have

both experience and knowledge of European procedures, the technology being at the same level with European countries, low employee costs, and more affordable insurance have enabled India to be successful in medical tourism. Thus, the development of medical tourism began (Garcia, J. H, 2013).

The first traces of the development of medical tourism date back to the 1980s. But there are very few examples. In the 1990s, medical tourism gained a great momentum. There are several reasons for this acceleration. These reasons are as follows (S. Connell, 2010):

In developed countries, people's inability to meet their health expenses and the increase in insurance costs

- Prolongation of waiting times with demand
- Cheap transportation by airline companies
- Access to the internet with technological progress
- Increasing demand for aesthetic surgery
- The sudden increase in population around the world and the new needs arising with it
- Opportunity to cover treatment costs in other countries
- Depending on the increase in leisure time, people's involvement in medical care and touristic activities can be counted.

Effects of Ecotourism and Medical Tourism

Economic activities are carried out by the society and enable people to live in prosperity. In order for economic activities to take place, the natural environment must be present. Individuals experience cultural interactions in their natural environment and affect each other. This is an ongoing interaction for years (F. Driver, 2016). Tourism does not only create an economic effect, but also brings social and environmental effects. When examined from a social point of view, it can create positive and negative effects on tourists and the people of the region who accept them. Today, ecotourists and medical tourists want to meet people in the regions they visit, experience their lifestyles,

taste their local foods and get to know their cultures as a result of their travels (O. Tuinabua, 2015). This situation increases social interaction between people and creates effects on each other. The effect of tourism is important on societies in terms of creating a new lifestyle and creating a social trend. It can be said that tourism has effects on the socio-cultural environment in terms of the relations between the local people and the tourists and the effects arising from the results of these relations, and it is one of the most important factors in the beginning of the social change processes. It is possible to say that the interaction of local people and ecotourists in ecotourism, being in direct and warm contact, accelerates this situation. Ecotourism brings with it economic, environmental and cultural effects and interactions, just like in individuals. These effects are explained in detail below.

Economic Effects

Due to its positive contribution to the economies of developing countries, the economic aspect of the tourism sector comes to the fore even more. It plays an important role especially in solving national or international economic problems that the country's economies may encounter and overcoming bottlenecks. In developing countries, tourism has important duties in terms of insufficient export opportunities and resources, increasing foreign debt, making investments necessary for development, opening new business areas and meeting the foreign exchange need effortlessly and easily (M. Kasalak, 2014).

Tourism emerges as an important factor in terms of providing income, employment, creating tax revenues, contributing to the balance of payments, and ensuring the development of the regional and national economy. The main reasons why governments support and contribute to tourism worldwide is its positive impact on economic development and economic growth (V. Ivanov and M. Webster, 2008). In the tourism industry, which is one of the largest sectors in the world, it is estimated that the ecotourism sector will grow from 10% to 30% annually. Ecotourism is promising in terms of preserving the natural beauties as well as ensuring the continuity of its cultural

characteristics. With its current situation and its foreseen future, it offers some economic opportunities and has direct and indirect effects on society and states (R. Kuter, 2009).

The economic effects of ecotourism and medical tourism are as follows (F. Tisdell, 2016):

- Ecotourism and medical tourism contribute to the profitability and development of local economic activities of hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops and businesses, businesses that support these sectors, and businesses that provide travel services
- It allows to increase the foreign exchange input
- By providing diversity in the local economy, it provides direct or indirect employment to the local people, especially in areas with agricultural employment
- It allows the development or construction of areas such as the airport or village roads used by local people
- It increases the demand for local products and in this way, the production of local products maintains their sustainability
- It encourages the use of lands more efficiently and without disturbing the natural vegetation
- If well implemented, it can be self-financed and ensures the protection of the natural heritage
- Ecotourism and medical tourism can be tools that provide economic support for the preservation of local culture. The sale of cultural handicrafts produced by the local people provides economic support to the local people.

Environmental Effects

Environmental resources are the most important factor driving tourism demand. When we look at the types of tourism evaluated within the scope of ecotourism, it is seen that nature is the basis of all of them (O. Haberal, 2015). Programs on environmental protection and improvement are now an integral part of many development strategies,

and such considerations are much more important than in the twentieth century (Goodwin, H. 1996)

As a result of the increasing interest in ecotourism and medical tourism, sensitivity towards the environment has increased and it has brought many positive effects. In many parts of the world, governments have declared certain areas as natural and national parks and conservation areas in order to protect natural areas. As a result, natural areas used as mining and timber trade and agricultural areas were saved from being destroyed and losing their ecological characteristics (R. Kuter, 2009). Environmental positive effects of ecotourism and medical tourism can be listed as follows (D. Tassarar, 2012; E. Wang and C. Tong, 2012).

- The fact that ecotourism is environmentally friendly and has a sustainable potential ensures that places and resources suitable for ecotourism are protected in the long term
- It prevents the destruction of ecosystem and biodiversity and allows its protection
- As a result of the creation of natural parks and protection areas, it protects nature from the negative effects of economic activities in natural areas (such as mining, timber, unconscious agriculture)
- It allows the use of energy resources more efficiently and by minimizing the damage to the environment
- By providing the development of infrastructure in the countryside, it prevents the emergence of problems such as waste and garbage that will be mixed with nature.

Controlled ecotourism and medical tourism activities will prevent the destruction. Degraded areas can be restored and repaired, new nature reserves can be created, and national parks can be expanded as a result of actual and anticipated interests in ecotourism. In uncontrolled and uncontrolled activities, the situation can be reversed. However, negative effects do occur and the nature and degree of these effects may increase and their importance may change depending on the activity and situation (Lanza, A., and Pigliaru, F, 2000).

The damage that will occur on the environment will not be restored, no matter how much effort is made in terms of economics. The important factor here is to prevent the formation of destruction and to minimize the damage to the environment. The frequency and degree of impact of tourism on the environment may vary according to the type of tourism activity and the ecosystem structure. In addition to the positive effects mentioned, if the necessary regulations and measures are not taken, it may also bring about negative effects. These adverse effects are summarized as follows (Durberry, R. 2004):

- It can cause the loss of forests and habitats in different areas to protect biodiversity
- In areas close to very sensitive areas such as wetlands, rivers, and lakes, unnecessary natural disturbances can create unaesthetic situations in terms of appearance
- It can cause excessive water resource consumption for fauna and flora that need protection, especially in arid or semi-arid regions
- If the sewerage systems of the enterprises in the ecotourism destination are not properly constructed, underground and surface resources and water resources may be destroyed
- It can increase the dependence on non-renewable energy sources
- Environmental pollution may occur due to unconscious visitors, as a result, wild animals and vegetation may be affected
- Behaviors of wild animals may change with the effect of noise and light
- As a result of not performing the necessary inspections regularly, illegal structures may be built in natural and cultural areas and these areas may be destroyed.

Cultural Effects

It is an important element to transfer cultural values to the next generations in a healthy way. The people who will transfer the cultural values to the next generations are the individuals who live that culture in the present time. In this cultural transfer, teaching and learning cultural elements correctly is one of the most important elements. Tourism is a sector that affects the social, physical and psychological needs of people and therefore affects every part of the society directly or indirectly, has an important role in social life and can affect the individual and society culturally (I. Cornell, 2016).

When the effects of tourism on the socio-cultural environment are examined in terms of demographics, it is seen that this is mostly related to population movements. When examined in Turkey, the urbanization and industrialization movements that started in the 1950s also revealed the phenomenon of migration. Migration from rural areas to big cities has brought along problems such as housing, health, education, and cultural conflict (S. Avon, 2017). Considering the feature of providing benefits to the local people, which is one of the primary purposes of ecotourism, which is included in the tourism phenomenon, this situation will reduce the negative migration effect and the local people will not have to leave their geography.

The positive cultural effects of ecotourism and medical tourism can be listed as follows (Lanza, A., and Pigliaru, F, 2000):

- It preserves folklore and past life
- It allows tourists to experience local history, tradition, culture, religion and lifestyles
- Scholarships can be provided to local students through ecotourism revenues. This situation contributes to the literacy of people with financial inadequacy in the society
- It contributes to cultural education and interpretation of local life for visitors
- It contributes to the continuation of traditional architecture

- The people of the region can improve themselves by reading and researching, learning new languages in order to express themselves better and to explain themselves to foreigners better.

In addition to the positive cultural effects of ecotourism and medical tourism, negative effects can occur when it is not well managed or directed. The negative effects that may arise are as follows (R. Clifton and J. Benson, 2016; M. Swarbrooke, 2009):

- The culture and traditions of the local people within the destination may change over time due to visitors
- As a result of the commercialization of cultural and traditional products, the local people may turn to fake traditions and as a result, they deviate from originality
- Cultural conflicts may arise as a result of tourists not wearing clothes suitable for the culture of the local people and their behavior
- Tourists can complicate or hinder the daily lives of local people
- Distortions in the local language may occur. Words of foreign origin can become embedded in the local language over time
- There may be an increase in migration to ecotourism and medical tourism areas.

Local Community Effects

With the more widespread use of natural and cultural features in the tourism sector, the participation of tourists in environmentally friendly activities and their preference are increasing. This situation, together with the protection of the environment, contributes economically to the local people. For this reason, before the ecologically sensitive areas are opened to tourism, the socio-economic status of the local people should be examined, their approaches to tourism developments and their views on the values around them should be determined, and the socio-economic contributions of tourism developments to the local people should be explained in the light of the obtained data. In short, the local people should be included in these studies from the beginning of the studies on tourism (N. Manlon, 2016).

The protection of natural and cultural areas, which are the basis of ecotourism, and providing economic support to the local people living in these regions are important in the development of ecotourism. It cannot be expected that any ecotourism project that the local people do not adopt, support, or participate in will be successful.

With the emerging social interaction, some local people may tolerate some situations, but in the future, problems may occur between generations, between local people and tourists, or between local people and administration (K. Karabulut, 2016). Especially in cultural matters, young individuals in the local community can act by adopting the cultures of tourists and cultural conflicts may occur between family members.

In terms of being sustainable, ecotourism and medical tourism have positive and negative effects on the cultural heritage, language, religion, traditional arts, lifestyle, and behaviors of the local people (Cruz M., 2016). Improving the quality of museums, more protectionist policies by the public sector and local people, more emphasis on the preservation of local languages if seen as attractive to tourists, respect for local people's religion by tourists, emergence of new markets for traditional crafts or arts, other life in the world The increase in interest in lifestyles, the adoption of tourist behaviors and values such as protecting and treating animals have positive effects on the mobility of dynamic human migration working within the local population and preventing emigration. On the other hand, the construction of buildings that are not suitable for traditional architecture, the stealing of traditional or historical artifacts by tourists, the censorship of some cultural stories in order not to hurt the tourists, the placement of foreign words in the language of the local people or the pressure on the local people due to the inability to communicate with the tourists because of the local languages, and the religious beliefs of the local people. The negative effects are the loss of pressure and moral values, the deterioration of traditional art forms due to the production of products for the needs of tourists and the replacement of traditional handicrafts, the influence of foreign media, the acquisition of new eating and drinking habits such as fast food, the increase in crime rates and the threat of immigration from abroad (M. Swarbrooke, 2009).

CHAPTER II. ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM SECTOR IN AZERBAIJAN

2.1. Socio-Economic Indicators of the Tourism Sector in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan, with its natural beauties, historical monuments and artifacts, and unique artistic potential, has more opportunities for the development of the tourism sector compared to many other countries. Summer days in Baku and Absheron in general are longer and sunny, and the average annual sunshine duration is above the average of many countries. In addition, the temperature of sea water is above 20 degrees for about 5-6 months. These sea shores can be considered as a holiday destination, especially for those living in the cold, foggy and rainy regions of the European region. In the Nabran, Yalama, Xachmaz region, unique clean and fine sandy beaches, rich forests with underground water resources will attract the attention of tourists. Caucasus Mountains, Kura-Araz rivers, Goy Lake, plateaus, forests; Volcanic mountains and erupting mud volcanoes increase the tourism potential of Azerbaijan (X. Novresli, 2010). Seven regions that are suitable for development in terms of tourism stand out in Azerbaijan. These regions are as follows (S. Seferov, 2006):

- Absheron
- Gobustan-Shamakhi-Agsu-Goychay-Ismayilli-Kürdemir-Zerdab-Aghdash
- Siyezen-Devechi-Khachmaz-Guba-Gusar
- Gebele-Oghuz-Sheki-Qakh-Zaqatala-Balaken
- Ganja-Goranboy -Gedebey-Tovuz-Gazakh
- Salyan-Lerik-Lenkeran-Astara
- Nakhchivan-Shahbuz-Sharur-Sederek-Ordubad-Julfa-Babek.

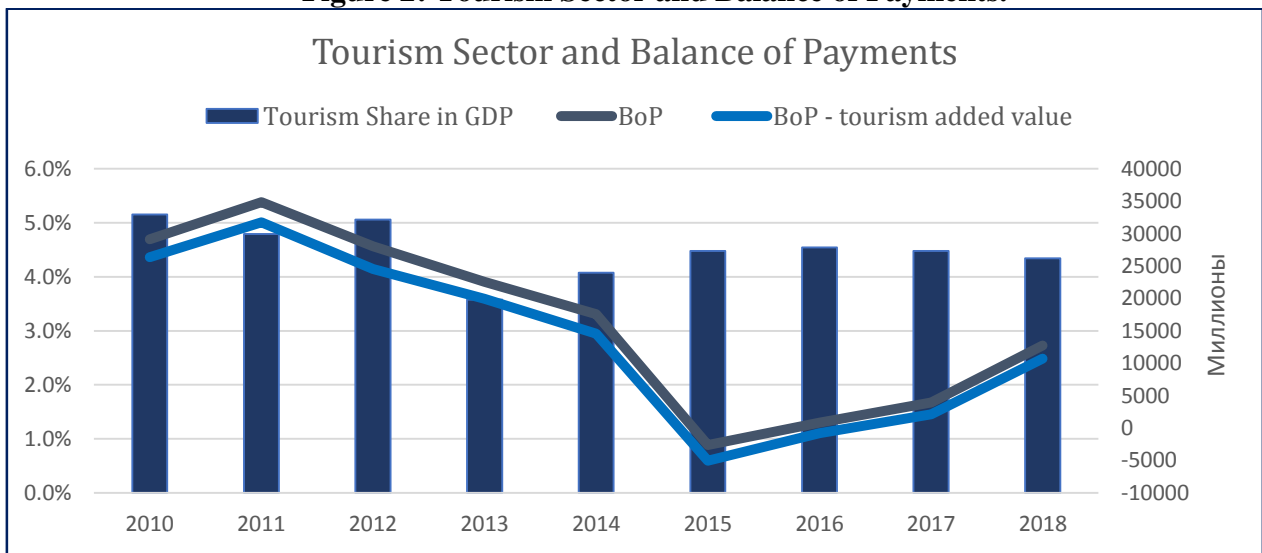
Compared to the eastern half of Azerbaijan, the recreation-tourism sector is underdeveloped in the central and western regions. There are some therapeutic and recreational facilities operating seasonally in these large lands. In the city of Naftalan,

located at the foot of the Lesser Caucasus Mountains, there is the only therapeutic mud oil in the world. In addition, there is a health center in this city that serves all year. In this study, Azerbaijan health tourism will be examined through the Naftalan region. It is possible to state the importance of Naftalan for Azerbaijan as follows; According to the information received from Strabo, Naftalan treatment oil was used in wound treatment even in ancient times. For this reason, many people who came from Anatolia, the Caucasus Region, Iran and India for treatment in the mentioned periods took this oil with them in the form of mud on their return. In the second half of the 19th century, Naftalan attracted the attention of western countries, and in 1887, an ointment was produced in Germany from a sample taken by a German engineer from an oil well. Today, many tourists from Turkey and other countries come to the facilities in Naftalan for the treatment of various diseases (low back, spinal cord, joint, muscle, nervous system, vascular, liver and gynecological diseases) under doctor control (S. Seferov, 2006).

When the historical process of tourism activities of Azerbaijan is examined, it is seen that there are many changes. Especially due to the occupation of Karabakh by Armenia and the economic bottlenecks and socio-economic problems experienced in the first years of the country's independence, there were some negative fluctuations in tourism activities and the number of tourists. The state of war in the country has an important role in these negative situations. Thus, the change in the number of foreign tourists coming to the country during the said periods had a significant impact on the tourism sector. State Program covering the years 2002-2005 was prepared by the Azerbaijan State for the development of the tourism sector in Azerbaijan. In the said program, the construction and restructuring of modern new touristic facilities was envisaged at the beginning of the studies aimed at increasing the attractiveness of the country, that is, attracting foreign tourists. As a result of the studies carried out in line with this program since 2002, progress has been made in terms of new and modern facilities in Azerbaijan, and efforts have been made to build touristic facilities in

accordance with international standards in the touristic regions of the country. For the development of Azerbaijan, especially in the tourism sector, with the decision of Heydar Aliyev on August 27, 2002, on the Development of Tourism in the Republic of Azerbaijan 2002-2005, the state program came into force, the investments in the development of tourism were spent on important places, the improvement of roads and infrastructure, etc. A certain amount of progress has been made in the sector.

Figure 2: Tourism Sector and Balance of Payments.



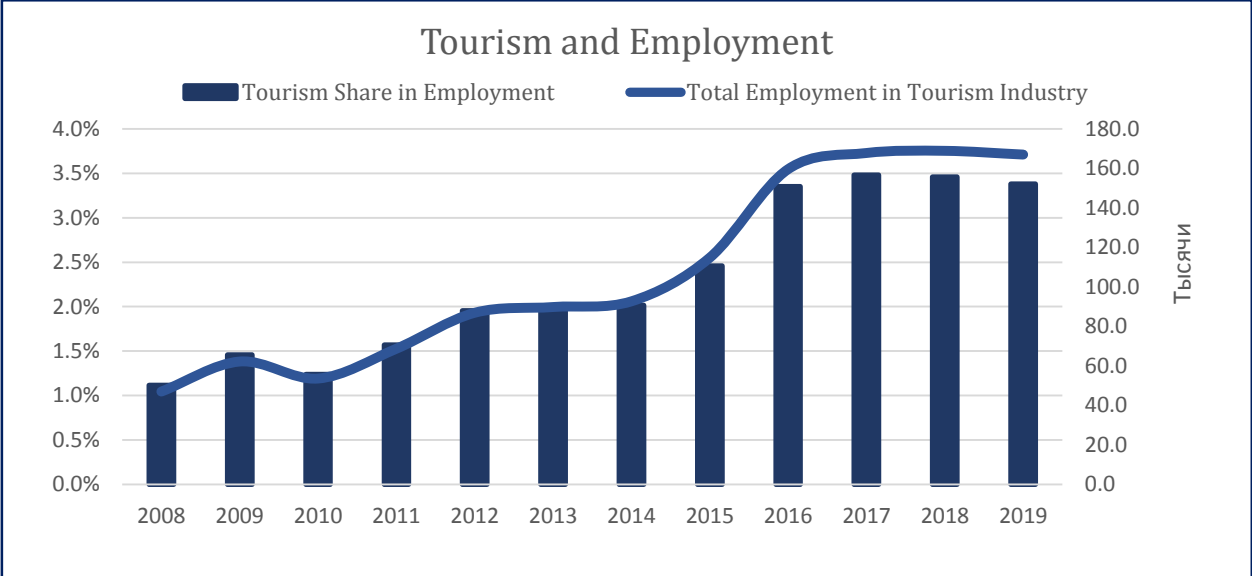
Source: compiled by the author based on the data from Azerbaijan Statistical Information Service (https://www.azstat.org/portal/tblInfo/TblInfoList.do;JSESSIONID=BD12FB0F4E5AB13A1DF988BF6BCD66AB#994_024)

As it can be discerned from the chart above, the share of tourism in the total output is modest and ranges from 3% to 5% throughout the histogram. Although the contribution of tourism industry to the total GDP is not in the same league with Turkey (11.3%), Mexico (15.5%), Spain (14.3%), it has its ameliorating effects on the balance of payment deficit. Tourism exports is a constituent part of the total exports and have composed 7.2% of total exports of goods and services in 2013 and 9.2% in 2014 respectively. From the theory we have that current account balance, financial account balance, and capital account balance all together make up the balance of payment, which is defined as the statement summarizing the economic transactions of a domestic

economy with the world. Traditionally, balance of payments adjusts to zero, as when deficit being financed from reserves and surplus amassing in reserve assets. Therefore, tourism receipts is a considerable factor in accumulation of state reserves. (E. Alp, 2015)

The chart above illustrates the merits of tourism industry in mitigating the balance of payment deficits and bolstering up the balance of payment surpluses. Two parallel lines represent two variables, namely balance of payment (the upper line) and balance of payment without the gross output of tourism industry. The behavior of these two lines and the area in between them throughout the years from 2010 to 2018, infers that tourism sector makes BOP surpluses even higher and Bop deficits less abrupt. If 3-5% tourism share change is detectible with the binocular vision, the effects of the higher shares of tourism sector in the total exports will bring even more positive outcomes in mitigating balance of payment busts.

Figure 3: Tourism and Employment.



Source: compiled by the author based on the data from Azerbaijan Statistical Information Service (https://www.azstat.org/portal/tblInfo/TblInfoList.do;JSESSIONID=BD12FB0F4E5AB13A1DF988BF6BCD66AB#994_024)

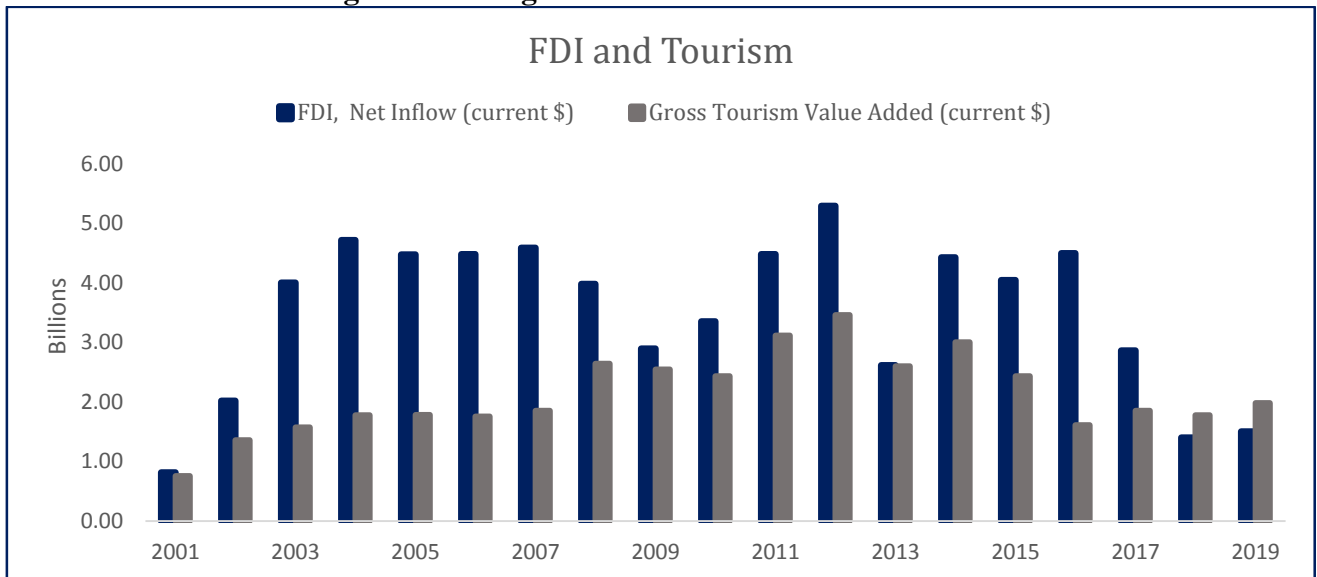
The share of tourism in the employment instantiates predominantly the positive upward trend throughout the years from 2008 to 2019. Relative to the volume of tourism

industry in the total output, the share of tourism employment is considerably high. It can be observed that tourism share in the employment has risen from the very bottoms, from around 1% of total employment to 3.5-4% of total employment whereas the share of mining employment never exceeded 1.5% of total employment throughout the history. The employment in tourism industry has not only outstripped the mining industry but also it was at a stretch higher than employment in information and technology, real estate, electricity, gas and steam production and other economic activities.

Worldwide tourism is deemed as an enduring and at the same time seminal source of employment. It is in capacity to meet higher labor demands of the population, especially those with lower education. Employment in tourism related jobs varies from short term to medium and long-term engagements and is considered as the industry with the most mobile labor force. There is also an indirect employment jobs that are affected by tourism as so the supply of goods and services to the tourists serving enterprises contributes to the employment of other sectors as well. For example, it can indirectly expand the demand for agriculture products, food sector, transport and communication sector and so on. (Hosseini, S. M., Paydar, M. M. 2021)

In this part of the paper, it will be explained how foreign direct investment correlates with the revenue the Azerbaijani government gets from the tourism sector. Because over the year's oil and gas sector dominated Azerbaijani GDP and our government wants to find a substitute for this sector, we believe that by attracting foreign investors we can develop the tourism sector as well as the GDP of the economy. Why we have to rely on FDI in the tourism sector? Because Azerbaijan is the main FDI destination in the region, approximately 70 billion US dollars were invested by foreigners to our economy. Moreover, Azerbaijani government and policy stability, as well as safety ensures secures a good business environment. By considering all of these cases we bring foreign investors to our country.

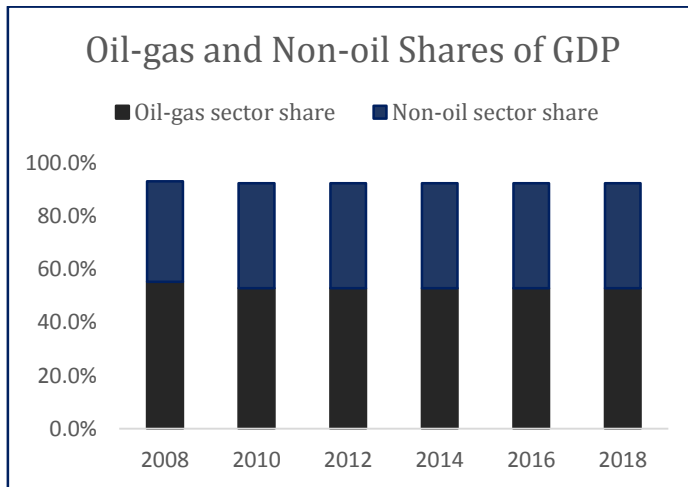
Figure 4: Foreign Direct Investment and Tourism



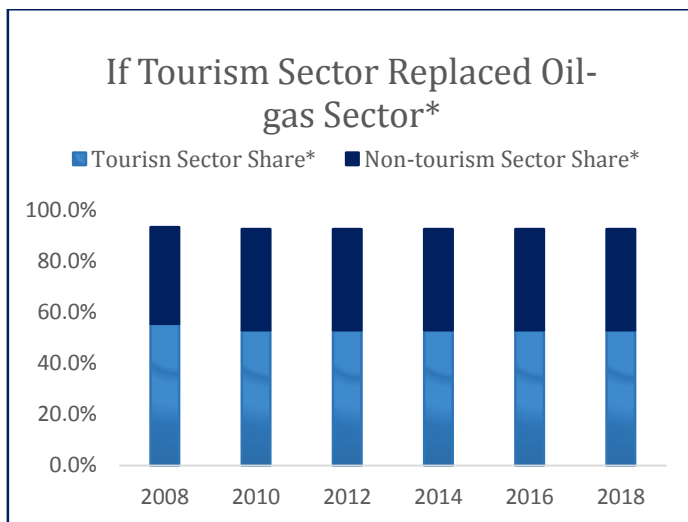
Source: compiled by the author based on the data from Azerbaijan Statistical Information Service (https://www.azstat.org/portal/tblInfo/TblInfoList.do;JSESSIONID=BD12FB0F4E5AB13A1DF988BF6BCD66AB#994_024)

As you can see from the graph foreign direct investment increased sharply between 2002 and 2003. Moreover, between the years 2008 – 2010 FDI decreased because of the global financial crisis. However, despite FDI decreased there is no significant effect on the tourism sector. After the global financial crisis, we can see that FDI started to increase again and reached its peak in the year 2012. Not surprisingly, after 2015 we can see that FDI started to decrease significantly. This is because of the devaluation of the Azerbaijani AZN. Despite the fact that revenues from the tourism sector should be increased in the devaluation period, however, it decreased notably. We came to the conclusion that FDI and the tourism sector are positively correlated. If we attract more foreign investors we can boost the revenues from the tourism sector. (Ibadoghlu, G., Alasgarov K., Bayramov G., 2013)

Figure 5: Oil-gas and Non-oil gas Sectors Share in GDP.



The dependence of the national economy on the oil prices is well-understood as oil price shock in 2011 and then 2015 incurred weighty downward pressure on the total output. The 0.83 correlation between oil prices change with 7-year moving average and the GDP growth with 5-year moving average verifies the high dependence of Azerbaijan on oil prices so that GDP fluctuates in accord with oil price fluctuations.



It can be concluded that oil-gas production is not the sustainable source of income and one state should not rely on such a volatile source of income. For that, the simulation was computed so that holding other variables constant the inherent share of oil-gas sector in the GDP was replaced by tourism sector. In the new model, there exist two major differentiation of economic sectors: tourism sector and non-tourism sector, which previously was oil-gas sector and non-oil sector. In the chart on the left-hand side, it can be observed how the share of oil-gas sector in the GDP is replaced by tourism sector so as tourism sector constitutes almost the half of the GDP and possesses the same growth rates as the tourism sector value added to the GDP possesses.

Source: compiled by the author based on the data from Azerbaijan Statistical Information Service

(https://www.azstat.org/portal/tblInfo/TblInfoList.do;JSESSIONID=BD12FB0F4E5AB13A1DF988BF6BCD66AB#994_024)

By examining the world data, it was found out that the countries with the high shares of tourism in the national income appeared to be more prone to the world recessions. To compute the simulations, the country which has similar shares of tourism in the GDP likewise Azerbaijan has oil-gas sector share in the GDP was examined.

2.2. The Current State of the Development of Ecotourism and Medical Tourism in Azerbaijan

Baku-Absheron region has a favorable geographical location by being located in the east of Azerbaijan, on the coast of the Caspian Sea. The region specializes in faith, health, sports and congress tourism. The sandy beaches on the shores of Bilgeh, Nardaran, Pirshagi, Buzovna, Zugulba, Novhani of the Caspian Sea are favorable for the development of tourism. In the region with balneological climate, health tourism centers such as Youth International Tourism Center, Neptun tourism center, Bilgeh, Merdakan and Buzovna operate. Bukhara and Multani caravanserais, which are among the historical and architectural centers of Baku, are used as touristic objects today. Baku Entertainment Center, Aqua-park, Amusement park, Lido recreation and entertainment centers show high service to tourists.

Gobustan State Historical-Art Reserve, Altiaghac National Park, Absheron National Park, Garden of Eden resting and entertainment destination are located 70 km south of the city. Shih Thermal and Spa tourism complex operates in the south-west of Baku. From Baku, tourists travel more in 4 directions: the western, northwestern, northern and southern parts of the country. Modern Olympic and other sports complexes provide great advantages for the development of sports tourism. It is located in the southeast of Azerbaijan, on the Baku-Astara tourism route. It is surrounded by the Caspian Sea from the east. Its border with the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches importance to the expansion of tourism ties between the two countries. Tourism specialization in this region, which has a subtropical climate, is in the direction of recreation, treatment, thermal and eco tourism. The climate, rich mineral waters created

favorable conditions for the development of balneological facilities. Meshechi guesthouse, Khanbulanchay recreation center, Hirkan motel, Istisu sanatorium, Masalli and Dashtvend hotels (Masalli) are located here. The Gizilaghac Choir (State Nature Reserve) and Hirkan MP (national park) with rich flora and fauna are located in this region. The old mosques, local history museums, Babek castle, tombs and caravanserais are among the important historical and architectural monuments of the country. The region has great potential in terms of tourism development. The abundance of tourism resources provides great opportunities for the creation of new recreation and entertainment centers, the development of mountain tourism in Lerik, and the expansion of the sanatorium network in Lankaran and Astara.

This region is located in the north-west of Azerbaijan, on the southern slope of the Greater Caucasus Mountains, on the Baku-Balaken tourism route. The city of Sheki, rich in mountainous and foothill landscapes, mineral springs, mountain lakes and waterfalls, was known as an important trade and craft center in ancient times. The region has great potential for mountaineering, rafting, eco tourism, cultural tourism and entertainment tourism. Upper Bass Historical and Architectural Protection Area, Kish temple, Isfahan, Tabriz, Lezgi caravanserais, Gelesen-Goresen fortress etc. ancient castles, Zagatala and Ilisu choirs, and many historical and natural resources are the interesting tourist attractions of this region. Sheki Kervansaray hotels, Seadat, recreation and entertainment centers (Sheki), Coast, Cenlibel destinations, Caucasian mountain tourism bases (Gabala), Ilisu, Safa hostels serve tourists.

Since the city of Nakhchivan is one of the oldest cultural centers of the Caucasus and the Middle East, it is very rich in historical artifacts. Examples of these are the tombs of Momine Khatun, Gulistan and Yusuf ibn Kuseyir, the Karabakh Historical and Architectural Complex, the tomb of Fazlullah Nayimi, mosques, Gizlar Bulagi complex, Elince Castle (Julfa), Ordubad Historical and Cultural Protection Area and many priceless touristic objects. can be displayed. Nakhchivan region is rich in natural mineral water resources such as Badamlı, Sirab, Vayhir and Daridagh.

Our country has the necessary natural and therapeutic resources for the development of health tourism. In this respect, Naftalan petroleum oil, Lankaran, Gedebey, Nakhchivan mineral waters, the mud volcanoes of Absheron etc. has a therapeutic effect. The sanatorium and spa resources in Azerbaijan are so large that 2 million patients can be treated (Balasenli, 2018: 44-45). Naftalan oil is one of the most important medicinal resources of Azerbaijan. Naftalan oil is a well-known medicinal resource not only in the country but also internationally. Naftalan oil is used in the treatment of many diseases, musculoskeletal system diseases, metabolic disorders, skin and gynecological diseases. The number of tourists visiting Naftalan for treatment and recreation increased by 40% in 2017 compared to 2016. During this period, Naftalan's touristic facilities were visited by more than 35,000 tourists from 62 countries, 7,309 of which were foreign tourists.

As we all can observe 2020 was one of the most difficult years for tourism not only in Azerbaijan but also in the whole world. However, despite pandemic and lockdown there was also positive side of this year such as liberation of our heritage – Karabakh, which was under occupation of Armenian forces for nearly 30 years. Karabakh is one of the most beautiful regions of Azerbaijan and now with the glorious victory of our army it opens up new capabilities for the whole economy as well as for tourism sector. Geographic location of Karabakh is abundant with Flora and Fauna with more than 2 thousand plant species. Also, there are water resources such as Turshsu, Shirlan, Kura river and so on which gives us a big opportunity to attract tourists from all over the world to our country. One of the advantages of this war in terms of tourism is that now people from most countries started to explore history of Karabakh and its touristic places. Despite the fact that Islam monuments were completely ruined. Albanian Christian monuments, writings, and temples were wiped out by nasty enemy there are still some historical places which they could not destroyed such as Azikh cave which is the one of the most significant heritages not only for Azerbaijan but also for whole world. Mountains of Shusha can be extremely suitable for the ski resort which

will attract tourist from all over the world and make our country richer and economy bigger. Of course, with the current situation we cannot attract tourist to Karabakh because there is no stable situation over there. However, it will increase our potential to make these places one of the most beautiful touristic regions in the future. On the contrary, there is also disadvantage of the war. As we know, nowadays mine cleaning process goes on in liberated territories. Even though we use the most effective technologies in this process tourists can still do not want to come to Karabakh because they can be afraid for their safety. That is why it is crucial to make them believe that there is stability over there and nothing threatens their life. The only way of doing that is through marketing, by making videos about peaceful life and beauties of these places. By doing this we will be able to encourage people to come to Karabakh and spend a great time in wonderful place.

As a result, these problems need to be solved for the development of the country's tourism, especially ecotourism and health tourism, and to increase tourism revenues. Tourism activities in Azerbaijan, which is the research area, have undergone many changes in the historical process. Especially due to the economic bottlenecks and socio-economic problems experienced in the first years of Armenia's occupation of Karabakh and independence, there were some fluctuations in tourism activities and the number of tourists. Of course, the war situation in most countries played a role in this. Thus, the change in the number of tourists visiting the country during these periods had a significant impact on the tourism sector. In 1993, as Heydar Aliyev came to power in Azerbaijan and the war with Armenia was stopped, there was a revival in the country. With the achievement of political stability, the economy began to develop rapidly. Although the development of the economy has a positive effect on the tourism sector, this sector has still not developed at the desired level. With the coming to power of Ilham Aliyev in 2003, investments in the tourism sector increased even more; Tourism was further revived by making new investments in Shahdagh, Nabran, Gabala and Naftalan.

Azerbaijan has a high potential in terms of ecotourism and health tourism and making new investments is important for the development and diversification of tourism. The main recommendations developed in the light of the findings of this research carried out, and developed for the development of the country's ecotourism and health tourism and increase in tourism revenues are listed as follows:

- The number of modern touristic facilities should be increased
- The service quality of tourism enterprises should be increased, Studies should be carried out for the employment of trained personnel in tourism enterprises
- Comprehensive sightseeing tours should be planned, which will include other touristic products in addition to health tourism
- Successful applications by examining the practices of developed countries in health tourism,
- The number of participants, especially from abroad, should be increased by making agreements with important tour operators in the world
- State and local government investments related to ecotourism and health tourism and infrastructure services in general should be increased
- Tourism and especially University-tourism sector cooperation should be developed regarding health tourism
- Local tourism centers should be established in regions and small towns.

The developments that will occur within the framework of all these suggestions will contribute greatly to the economy of Azerbaijan, and as a result, health tourism will become an important sector in the country. Especially in today's world, economically developed countries with a high level of welfare and a high per capita income provide significant benefits from health tourism. On the other hand, even though their natural resources are high, countries that are not developed enough and have some internal unrest cannot utilize their tourism potential, and as a result, they cannot get a share from the world tourism revenues. (Wong, F. K., & Fung, T., 2016)

In addition to promotion, modern facilities should be established and the capacity for health tourism should be increased. Along with the capacity, it is necessary to increase the number and quality of the medical personnel who will provide health services. It is known that there are some problems related to the service sector in Azerbaijan, especially after independence. In order to eliminate these problems, it is necessary to increase the quality of service and to meet customer demands and needs.

One of the important factors for success in health tourism is the state's support for infrastructure services. Infrastructures such as transportation, communication, internet, health and security need to be fully developed both in terms of tourism services and regional development in general. In order to ensure that especially foreign tourists prefer Naftalan, these infrastructure works must be completed completely. Local tourism centers should be established in the development of health tourism. Another activity is the establishment of university-industry cooperation for the development of tourism and especially health tourism. As stated above, the Tourism University in Azerbaijan has just been established and the number of experts in this field is low. This slows down university-industry cooperation. However, although it is slow, this cooperation must be supported. Because the implementation and success of a significant part of the suggestions listed above is possible with the cooperation of scientific knowledge and practice. This kind of cooperation in health tourism will increase the quality of service and provide new job opportunity.

III CHAPTER. PERSPECTIVES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM AND MEDICAL TOURISM IN THE KARABAKH REGION

3.1. Historical and socio-economic factors affecting the development of ecotourism and medical tourism in the Karabakh region.

Karabakh was one of the most ancient and ancient lands in Azerbaijan, and due to ideal climatic situation and natural factors, it was inhabited by the most ancient people. Azykh and Taglar caves, one of the ancient human settlements in the world near Fizuli city in Karabakh exactly proves this, as Azykh cave is the oldest human settlement in Azerbaijan. The lower jawbone of primitive type of human, discovered by archeological excavations realized by Mammadali Huseynov in 1968, is an indication of this fact. Primitive humans who choosed this cave for the settlement were named Azykhanthrop, which means Azykh man, and it is assumed that they lived nearly 350,000 years and even earlier. Traces of a hearth assumed to date back 700,000 years have also been found in this area. Azykh Cave, located in the left valley of the Guruchay River, at an altitude of about 900 meters above sea level, is also characterized as one of the largest caves in the Caucasus. The discovery of stone tools from the Paleolithic and Mesolithic periods and the period in which these primitive tools belonged are also characterized by the Guruchay culture. (Y. Yusifov and Z. Bunyadov, 2007)

Most areas in Karabakh consist of high plateaus, the climate is temperate and the soil is fertile. Throughout the history, these conditions have been the focus of attention not only of the ancient humans but also of the rulers. It is no coincidence that on his return from Georgia in 1064, the Great Seljuk ruler Malikshah chose Karabakh in winter. The winter residence of the Elkhani rulers was also located in Karabakh. Amir Teymur and later the rulers of Aghgoyunlu also maintained Karabakh in the center of their attention. With the establishment of the Azerbaijani Safavid state in 1501, the foundation was laid for the uniform centralization of Azerbaijani lands, and this event ended approximately in the middle of the 16th century. The annexation of Karabakh to the Safavid state, in

turn, led to the emergence of a separate nobility - the Karabakh nobility. It consisted of a very large area of the Karabakh nobility between the Kura and Araz rivers, extending to Lake Goycha. At the beginning of the 18th century, with the decline of the Safavid state of Azerbaijan, the political struggle between Iran, Russia and the Ottomans for the occupation of Azerbaijani lands intensified and our lands became a field of military operations. During this period, the position of Nadir, a member of the Afshar dynasty gained special fame in the fight against the invaders and was strengthened in the area. In turn, due to the collapse of the Nadir Shah's empire, small feudal states with separate khanates were formed within Azerbaijan. The foundation of the Karabakh khanate was laid by Panahali bey, a statesman and commander of the Javanshir dynasty from the Sarjali carving of Aghdam.

The Karabakh khanate was located in the south-east of the Lesser Caucasus, mainly between the Kura and Araz rivers, and covered a large part of the most significant, fertile lands in Azerbaijan. Favorable natural and geographical conditions of the Karabakh khanate allowed the population living here to diversify their agricultural activities. Although the development of the economy was somewhat delayed due to the lack of productive forces and means of production at any level, the overall productivity in the khanate continued to grow. The certain relief of the Karabakh khanate was not considered suitable for agriculture, as part of the total area of the valley, consisting of numerous valleys in the north-eastern and south-western directions, was rocky. Thus, due to the natural conditions of the khanate, which is mainly considered to be mountainous and lowland, the population was engaged in cattle breeding, agriculture, horticulture, grain growing, and other such agriculture. Some large and small rivers and natural springs in the mountainous areas, especially not only the Araz River but also the Tartar River were of great importance in the agricultural life of the population. The Tartar River, which begins from the Murovdagh mountain range, is formed by small rivers that join it, flowing rapidly through deep ravines and slowly into the Kura River in the plains. Even in the Aran zone of the khanate, the fields of about 140 villages were

irrigated with the water of the Tartar River. The water resources were widely used not only for irrigation of fields and gardens but also used for the grinding of grain in mills from the waters of other large and small rivers in the Karabakh khanate. There were eight water mills on the left bank of the Dashalti River, which flows through near the city of Shusha. The Istisu and Turshsu mineral natural springs, which are considered invaluable for the healing properties of many kahriz wells in the territory of the khanate, are also of particular importance. The diversity of the unique relief and climatic conditions of the Karabakh khanate, in turn, influenced the diversity of soil, flora, and fauna. The land fund of the khanate was very diverse, so along with the very fertile soil in the Aran area, irrigation was also significant. Due to the temperate climate, autumn wheat, millet, flax, and barley were planted in these areas.

Certain regions of the Karabakh khanate were covered with dense forests and fertile gardens, and most of them were valuable and rare trees. Poplar, pine, maple, oak, linden, and other species of trees were widespread. Pear, cornel, and crab apple trees were also found in the forests. The population used the forests both for construction and for fuel. Craftsmen were engaged in making various items from these trees. The richness of the forests led to an abundance of natural fodder resources. Thus, there were ideal conditions for animals and birds to live here. Mainly Caucasian deer, mountain goat, roe deer, wolf, bear, fox, leopard, and wild boar were in the majority. Birds such as eagles, partridges, and pheasants were also widespread. Natural resources of the khanate, which had been unused for a long time, included limestone, copper pyrites, marble, and others. The clay used in pottery and the alum used in the making of swords were known to the local people from the very beginning. The salt extracted from the lakes was very good for cattle. Agriculture had an important place in the life of the Karabakh khanate. However, arable land was in short supply. As a large part of the area is covered with forests and bushes, and other certain problems regarding the irrigation process, most of the arable land was not used. The nomadic part of the population was not interested in agriculture. (M. Abdullayev, 2005)

Socio-economic conditions of the rural population had a huge impact on soil fertility. The general situation was further complicated by wars, droughts, and various diseases in the territory of the khanate. The vast majority of land, the main means of production, belonged to the feudal lords. The feudal lords, who owned large tracts of land, imposed heavy taxes on the peasants and created other difficult obligations for the peasants. The situation in the mountains was more difficult for the villagers. Since the fundamental plowing process became a serious problem, the villagers were inclined to soft lands. In the plains, there were several problems with irrigation.

Although the non-agricultural part of the population was a minority in the khanate, farmers still had problems with the provision of agricultural tools. Poor peasants, who did not have working animals and tools, temporarily rented land, working animals, and tools from wealthy neighbors under difficult conditions and obligations. Those who could not afford it rented their land and moved elsewhere to earn money. The application of scientific innovations in the organization of agriculture in the khanate did not happen. Simple methods such as adding animal manure as fertilizer to the soil remained. In order to increase the productivity of the land, it was preferred that some of the cultivated lands be set aside and used as pastures. Large orchards belonged mainly to the khan and his dynasty. Thus, pears, pomegranates, cornel, apricots, and other fruits were grown in these gardens. The villagers were obliged to cultivate and control these gardens. There was a huge demand for melons in the Karabakh khanate. Watermelons, melons, pumpkins, and cabbage were mainly grown in the orchards.

Carpet weaving is considered to be one of the oldest occupations of the Azerbaijani people and has developed mainly in the territory of the Karabakh khanate.

High-quality Karabakh carpets became famous not only in the territory of the khanate but also in other regions and even beyond the borders of Azerbaijan. It is no coincidence that some examples of Karabakh carpets are preserved in museums in different countries. This is evidenced by the fact that the 17th-century Karabakh silk carpet is in the Museum of Art in Berlin, and the 18th-century Shusha carpets are in the American

Textile Museum and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum also houses a unique collection of Karabakh carpets. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Karabakh carpets were exported to several European countries and Istanbul. At that time, the Karabakh carpet region was completely different in size from the carpets produced by other regions.

Karabakh carpets were ahead of other regions in terms of the production volume and variety. Karabakh carpets were mainly made in Shusha, Jabrayil, and Zangazur regions. Despite the factors including nature, weaving, and size were similar to Persian carpets due to the proximity of these territories to the Persian borders, Karabakh carpets were mainly woven from wool, unlike others. Shusha was considered the center of carpet production and trade, and craftsmen from other regions also came here to get acquainted with the requirements of foreign markets. The painting was also an area of crucial matter. The process of making yarn from wool, dyeing objects, and fibers was carried out by special means involving various plants. In the Karabakh khanate, leather polishing was of particular importance. Horse skins were generally never used. Boots were made of cowhide, and fur was made of wool. The art of woodworking also developed rapidly in the Karabakh khanate. The richness of the forests, which are considered raw materials, was also one of the influencing factors. The village of Chanagchi got its name from a special bowl made of wood. In addition to silk, Karabakh carpets, Karabakh horses, large and small horned cattle, and agricultural products played a huge role in exports. Donkeys, mules, and horses, which considered main means of transportation, were used in the internal and external relations of the khanate, as well as in trade. Customs duties charged on foreign trade when entering the territory of the khanate and other issues created several difficulties. (K. Tahirov, 2012)

Azerbaijani horses have undergone crucial changes throughout history for several reasons, and as a result of selection, local horse breeds and types have emerged. The best Azerbaijani horses are Karabakh horses. Karabakh horses were compared to Arabian horses in several respects. It is noteworthy that the horses of this breed have

slightly smaller heads, wider nostrils, and larger eye sockets. In the history of Karabakh horses, the golden age of this breed is mainly considered to be the XVIII-XIX centuries. During the constant feudal wars and raids, the horse played an irreplaceable role in the battles as a means of transportation. They were rarely used in agriculture in the Karabakh khanate. The most typical examples of horses of this breed were bred in the private equestrian farms of Karabakh khans Panah khan, Ibrahim khan, Mehdigulu khan, Jafargulu khan, and Khurshidbanu Natava, and other khans.

When the Karabakh Khanate was invaded by Russia in 1805, Karabakh horses were widely used as a breeding material in equestrian factories in Russia and Ukraine and were widely used in the formation of other horse breeds in other countries. In 1817, in the Kingdom of Württemberg, six of the eighteen horses imported from the east to establish new equestrian factories in Germany were Karabakh horses. Karabakh beys Farajulla bey Ugurlubeyov, Allahyar bey Zulgadarov and other beys were engaged in opening equestrian factories outside of Karabakh, in Tbilisi and Tbilisi province. Although Karabakh horses were mostly owned by Karabakh khans as horses of high value, their range was very large. On January 1, 1879, there were 54 male Karabakh horses in a cavalry depot set up in Russia to improve the Kuban breed.

Karabakh horses have participated in international horse exhibitions and won prizes at exhibitions in Moscow in 1866 and in Paris in 1867. A stallion named Alyetmez belonging to Khan's daughter Natavan was awarded a silver medal at the All-Russian Horse Exhibition in 1867, and a horse nicknamed Khan was awarded a silver medal at the exhibition held in France that year. The equestrian factories established by the Karabakh khans ceased to exist in 1905. After that, the establishment of the Aghdam Equestrian Plant became a very important event in the history of Karabakh horses. In 1956, after the head of the Soviet Union NS Khrushchev presented the Karabakh horse Zaman to Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain, Karabakh horses became of interest to European researchers. However, despite all this, unfortunately, the value of equestrianism in the Soviet era was declining. Due to neglect, the breed of horses was

seriously slaughtered. At the end of the century, thanks to the mass genocide of Azerbaijanis in Karabakh by Armenia, the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, and the aggressive policy that resulted in the occupation of the Aghdam region in 1993, Karabakh horses, considered a national treasure of Azerbaijan, were expelled from their lands. (F. Hacıyev, 2016)

Orders No. 1365 dated August 21, 2015 On measures to improve the logistics of livestock and No. 2688 dated February 22, 2017 on additional support for the development of the Karabakh horse breed, signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and in the area called Khamtorpag in Agjabadi district The construction of an equestrian complex that meets international standards and is equipped with modern equipment is proof that the country's leadership is paying close attention to this issue. (<https://www.agro.gov.az/az/heyvandarliq/atciliq/qarabag-ati>)

3.2. Assessment of the potential development resources of ecotourism and medical tourism of the Karabakh region

The tourism potential in the Karabakh region is particularly significant due to the predominantly mountainous and forested terrain. As a result of the richness of these and other natural characteristics, there are numerous tourism options, most of which are tied to ecotourism. The Karabakh region's resources enable it to become a significant ecotourism destination not only in Azerbaijan but also in neighboring nations.

In Karabakh region, there are 606 medicinal plant species spanning 110 seasons and 397 genera, 66 of which are being employed in medicine. The biological activity and therapeutic qualities of these plants are also highly diverse, with over 160 species having diuretic effects, up to 150 species having antibacterial properties, over 140 species having therapeutic properties, and over 20 species having antiviral activities. Cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, renal, biliary, and hepatic disorders, as well as diabetes, can all be treated with medicinal herbs from the Karabakh region. Karabakh has long been involved in the treatment of people using natural methods and diverse

medicinal plants, dating back to when folk medicine was widely practiced in Azerbaijan. The richness of the flora is primarily responsible for the extensive usage of folk medicine in Karabakh, which has a long history. The Karabakh region's distinctive flora holds considerable promise for the manufacturing of herbal medicines and the development of novel medications. (N. Mehdiyeva, 2011)

The importance of concerns such as mountaineering and mountaineering should be taken into account when analyzing the region's tourist potential due to the prevalence of hilly terrain in the landscape. Special walking tours of the area, as well as other extreme tourist spots, are included. It is vital to examine the potential treasures of Azerbaijan, which has a long history and abundant natural resources, including flora and wildlife, springs, historical sites, and other attractions that will attract tourists.

Shusha, the cultural cradle of Karabakh, is strategically important due to its geographical location as well as historical and cultural opportunities. The brutal destruction of historical and cultural treasures in Shusha has persisted as a result of the Republic of Armenia's long-term military aggression. Shusha was liberated from occupation on November 8, 2020, owing to the gallant Azerbaijani Army. Shusha received the first special envoy of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the liberated regions. Related to infrastructure operations in Shusha, vast distances have already been covered. Thus, the reconstruction of the monument to the great Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hajibeyli and the restoration of his destroyed house, as well as the restoration of the mausoleum and bust of Mullah Panah Vagif, the restoration of the Natavan spring, and other works are just a few examples of Shusha as a cultural symbol. how many. It is no coincidence that by the order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, in 2021, the city of Shusha was declared the capital of culture.

Apart from its unique architecture, and cultural and historical monuments, it has been known as a sanatorium-resort town since Soviet times due to the abundance of fresh air and spring water from the surrounding forests and meadows. Looking at the

geographical capabilities of the Shusha region, it is known that the Lesser Caucasus Mountains are formed by nature, flora, and fauna due to their location in the center of the Karabakh range. At the foot of the mountains in the ridge, in a northeastern direction, many healing springs, such as Turshsu and Isa spring, are boiling. The sour spring is located in the southwest of the city, at an altitude of 1700 meters. The water is enriched with trace elements such as magnesium, calcium, and sodium carbonate. Turshsu spring water cures gallbladder and gastrointestinal diseases. The spring water is also indispensable for those suffering from cardiovascular, liver, anemia, and kidney problems. It also regulates the body's metabolism and prevents problems in other internal organs. Shirilan water consists of three springs rising from the slope of Saribaba Mountain, located west of Shusha. Its temperature is lower than that of other springs in the region, and it contains a significant amount of total magnesium. This water is mainly used in the treatment of gastric ulcers. Another source of mineral water near the acid, Iron Spring water is characterized by being gaseous. Water with a very high gas content also contains an iron mixture, which gives it an iron taste. It is considered healing for people suffering from skin venereal diseases. The water of the itchy spring, which is rich in various minerals, cures diseases such as itching, iron deficiency, and reduces the amount of salinity in the joints. It is so named because it is used in the treatment of scabies, which is considered a skin disease among people. (A. Ahmadov, 2020)

Kalbajar and Lachin regions, in general, are regions with great ecotourism and medical tourism potential in the Karabakh region. The charming nature of the Kalbajar region, which is part of the Kalbajar-Lachin economic region, makes it an ideal place for winter and health tourism, in addition to traditional tourism, and also allows for its development. According to the flora of the region, it is almost dominated by deciduous forests, beech, oak, and hornbeam, and the fauna is dominated by species such as roe deer, mountain goat, brown bear, eagle, squirrel. Before the occupation by the Armenians, there were two huge sanatoriums in the Istisu settlement of Kalbajar. On average, more than 60,000 people were treated and rested each year. Istisu mineral

water in Kalbajar was used to treat both external skin and other defects, as well as complications and problems in internal organs. The existing relief here and the construction of wings and similar facilities create conditions for the organization of walks.

Kalbajar region is of great importance for agriculture. In addition to natural fodder resources and other conditions, the fact that many rivers with high water resources and potential have their mouths here shows how strategically important the region is. The largest river, which has its source in Kalbajar, is the Tartar River. The Tartar River, with a total length of 200 kilometers, flows into the Kura River, the main tributaries are the Lev, Ayrim, and Tutgu rivers. In 1976, the Sarsang Reservoir was built on the initiative of the great leader Heydar Aliyev. During the occupation, the water of the Tartar River was used to fill the Sugovushan reservoir. (I. Abbasov, 2013)

In the winter, the water from this reservoir is dumped into Azerbaijani villages and communities without taking into consideration the demands of the area, resulting in severe water scarcity in the area during the hot summer season. During the winter, floods inundated settlements, agricultural lands, and communication links. During the summer, the population faces water scarcity and desertification-related land deterioration. This exacerbated the already tough living circumstances of the local population, particularly IDPs and refugees. Sarsang reservoir was crucial to the republic's economy; before the occupation, it was used to irrigate 78,000 hectares of fertile land. The inability to use the Sarsang Reservoir for a long period was causing major agricultural harm. Technical devices were disregarded, and rules were broken.

The Sarsang reservoir was built to provide irrigation water to over 100,000 hectares of arable land in the districts of Tartar, Barda, Agda, Yevlakh, Goranboy, and Agjabadi. The dam has a total capacity of 560 million m³ and a height of 125 meters. Official commissions and working groups are continuing to develop plans and suggestions for the restoration of the Sarsang reservoir, including its full functionality and return to its original purpose.

Water will be supplied to a broad region from the town of Sugovushan. The Khachinchay is a 120-kilometer-long river that travels through the Aghdam, Barda, and Tartar areas before flowing into the Kura. As a left tributary of the Kalbajar area, the Bazarchay drains into the Araz River. The Lachin area, which borders Kalbajar and has a large range of recreational options, includes over 3,000 historical and architectural monuments. Ahmadli and Minkend villages in Lachin are home to the Iligsu therapeutic mineral spring. The region has Narzan cold mineral springs. (<https://president.az/az/articles/view/53313/print>)

The Lachin Reserve, which covers more than 21,000 hectares and has a diverse flora and fauna, was formed in 1961 in the Lachin area. Roe deer, bear, wild boar, mountain goat, partridge, and eagle have made their homes in the reserve, which was created to safeguard animals and birds in the main region. Kyrkhgyzdir Peak, at 2825 meters, is the highest peak in the relief of the middle and high mountainous areas. The reserve's vegetation is separated into Iberian oaks, which can be found up to 1700 meters in the middle mountain woods, and eastern oaks, which can be found up to 2200 meters in the upper mountain forests, and higher - in the subalpine and alpine meadows at 2500 and 2800 meters. Broad-leaved trees such as linden, hornbeam, maple, and others abound in the woodlands.

During the Russian tsarist time, French explorers attempted to collect important red oak wood from the Hajisamli forest in the reserve, but were unable to do so owing to the foundation of the Soviet regime. This wood material, which was previously exclusively found in the Lachin state reserve, is utilized in Azerbaijan to keep precious furniture and rare cognac. (Mammadov, J, (2016)

Restoration of natural and quality ecosystems, biodiversity, and rare and endangered plant species is one of the primary objectives in the steps to be implemented to restore and develop the freed areas. Restoration of the region's unique forest wealth and protected natural complexes, together with the application of new techniques, will pave the way for the region's transition into a green zone. The President of the Republic of

Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, issued an order taking the necessary steps to safeguard, promote, and logistically assist the Republic of Azerbaijan's Basitchay State Nature Reserve. (Russell, A., & Wallace, G. 2004)

In 1974, the Bashitchay State Reserve was formed in the Zangilan district. It covered 100 hectares and was primarily responsible for protecting rare plane trees. There are other trees and plants such as the Caucasus Mountain, mountain almond, and long-leaved oak, in addition to plane trees. The reserve also has animals including the wild cat, white hedgehog, henna partridge, and striped kaftar. The names of species such as the Eastern plane tree, paradoxical iris, trunkless flatbread, Caucasian eyebrow orchid, striped kaftar, and black currant have been listed in the Red Book owing to their extinction among the flora and animals in the reserve. The reserve is located in the Basitchay Reserve in the Zangilan region of Azerbaijan, in the southwest of the country. In the reserve, which has a temperate-warm climate, the average annual temperature is 13 mm and the annual rainfall is 600 mm. The natural regeneration and growth of plane trees thrive under these climatic circumstances. Brown mountain-forest soils evolved on the slopes of river basins and in the reserve's surrounding areas as a result of the spread of alluvial-forest soils over the reserve's territory. The reserve is located in the Basitchay creek in the Zangilan region of Azerbaijan, in the southwest of the country. In the reserve, which has a temperate-warm climate, the average annual temperature is 13 mm and the annual rainfall is 600 mm. The natural regeneration and growth of plane trees thrive under these climatic circumstances. Brown mountain-forest soils evolved on the slopes of river basins and in the reserve's surrounding areas as a result of the spread of alluvial-forest soils over the reserve's territory. More than 40 hectares of the reserve's 85-hectare wooded area had been entirely destroyed, according to the monitoring crew deployed to the freed regions to examine the reserve's present status. (<http://eco.gov.az/index.php?pg=102>)

The Arazboyu State Nature Reserve covers 2,200 hectares and was created in 1993 to conserve and rehabilitate tugai woods. The reserve is 50 kilometers long and 50-100

meters broad, with some sections reaching 200-250 meters, and is located on the banks of the Araz River in the Zangilan area near the Iranian border. Summers are hot and winters are moderate in the sanctuary. The reserve's soil and climatic characteristics, which include a large number of trees with high water demands, provide ideal circumstances for flora growth and development. Brown bears, wolves, wild boars, foxes, jackals, and roe deer were common among the wildlife in the sanctuary before to the occupancy. Partridges, quails, pheasants, and wild ducks have all made their homes in the reserve. The current status of the vegetation and animals in the liberated reserve is being monitored. (E. Bektashi, 1997)

Gubadli State Reserve was formed in 1969 in the districts of Lachin and Gubadli. The reserve's goal is to safeguard the wildlife of these places, particularly roe deer, wild boar, pheasant, and other animals and birds, which span 20,000 hectares in the northern part of Gubadli region and the southern portion of Lachin region. A moderate environment with dry winters dominates the reserve, which encompasses the highest reaches of the lowlands. Red oak and hornbeam trees dominate the landscape. The reserve's vegetation also includes hawthorn, juniper, blackberry, and hips. The area's biological characteristics have provided ideal circumstances for animals and birds to reside comfortably. Roe deer, wild boar, brown bear, pheasant, partridge, and quail are among the reserve's permanent occupants. Monitoring is under underway to determine the current state of affairs in the freed reserve. (<http://www.eco.gov.az/b-yasaqliq.php>)

3.3 Predictions and Strategic Methods about the Prospects of Ecotourism and Medical Tourism in the Karabakh Region

The United Nations World Tourism Organization has recommended states to focus on boosting domestic tourism in 2021 as a first step to revive the industry. However, due to well-known circumstances, they do not have much choice - so far, coronavirus statistics have forced many countries to adhere to quarantine measures and restrict entry for foreigners. Admittedly, along with a sufficient number of problems and gaps in the recreational sphere in Azerbaijan, there has been obvious progress in recent years - the number of tourist routes, destinations and facilities has increased. Most importantly, tourism has become a year-round phenomenon and, with a competent approach, quite a profitable business. (International Trade Organization, 2021)

Undoubtedly, this is a powerful incentive for potential investors to increase investments in development of this sector. Moreover, new large-scale opportunities will gradually open for them - Azerbaijan has set the goal to fully restore the tourism potential of the Karabakh and Eastern Zengezur economic regions in the coming years. Forests, mountains, waterfalls, crystal-clear air, mineral springs, historical monuments - is there any better place to rest than a place where all these boons are concentrated in one territory? All of the regions and villages of the Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur economic regions can boast of it: the unique nature, rich historical and cultural heritage, balneological resources- the tourist potential of these lands is inexhaustible.

Even people from different parts of the country came here for rest and treatment long before the Soviet Union came to power, and famous all-union health resorts and recreation centers were built thereafter. During the 30 years of occupation, the Armenian invaders methodically destroyed these objects. Restoration, rebuilding and creating new, even better and more modern ones is the paramount task for the regeneration of the rich tourism potential of the liberated territories.

In the video shot during the visit of President Ilham Aliyev and First Vice President Mehriban Aliyeva to Kalbajar and Lachin regions (Azerbaijan.az, 2022), it is seen what

a ruins the famous sanatorium built near the unique spring of medicinal water in Istisu settlement has become. But it is one of the first therapeutic resorts in the Caucasus. It was built in 1928 and received All-Union status in 1970.

There are several springs with life-giving water in Lachin, and water temperature in the depth reaches up to 90 degrees. It is a unique water resource in the truest sense of the word - there is no other place in the world with similar water composition. Before the occupation, the mineral water bottling plants were quite successful, and their products were in great demand. Then the occupiers began to barbarously use this spring for their own purposes, producing products under their own brand and, moreover, exporting them to foreign countries at rather high prices. This is a clear violation of international law, an environmental and economic crime, the damage from which the occupiers will have to compensate (Azerbaijan.az, 2022).

Returning to the tourist advantages of Istisu, it is situated in a picturesque natural area, over 2,200 metres above sea level, surrounded by forests with rare trees, mountains and monuments of ancient history. And what a nature reserve can be established here - after all, the area's forests are home to quite rare animals and birds. That is, if medical tourism is generally considered to be one of the boring types of recreation, but other opportunities available here can radically change the attitude to this type, which will make the resort the most attractive and competitive in comparison with its colleagues in the Caucasus. All this makes it possible to turn Kalbajar into one of the most famous tourist centres not only in the region, but in the world. If in Soviet times only Istisu attracted over 50 thousand people per year, then by creating conditions for the introduction of different types of tourism, from therapeutic to extreme, this number may be increased by several times.

Lachin district bordering with Kalbajar is also rich of thermal waters. Lachin has the same charming but somewhat different nature (broad grasslands), rich flora and fauna, thousands of historical and architectural monuments (mounds, castles, etc.). Lachin (as

well as in Kalbajar) has rich and ancient traditions of carpet weaving - one can sell them here and organize master-classes for tourists.

There are all preconditions for all-year-round tourism in Kalbajar and Lachin, and with good road and communal infrastructure, it will be interesting both in summer and winter. All the more so because Azerbaijan already has successful experience of creating winter resorts.

A health resort center also existed in the heart of Azerbaijan - Shusha. The unique climate, the beautiful nature, the mineral springs of Tursu and Shirlan, the waterfalls of Chetir and of course the original architecture, historical monuments and museums have attracted crowds of tourists. There are historical records of people coming here for rest and treatment in ancient times, and resort complexes were built in the last century, as well as in Kalbajar. Unfortunately, although in comparison to other occupied towns and villages, some of the buildings in Shusha have been more or less preserved, the main attractions and historical monuments, museums have been destroyed (ABC.az, 2021). As the experts remind us, famous sanatoriums and rest homes, summer camps for schoolchildren, etc. operated in Shusha and Aghdam. And they generated impressive revenues, because they enjoyed enormous popularity far beyond Azerbaijan. (International Trade Administration, 2021).

Today Shusha is the cultural capital of Azerbaijan, and once the restoration work is completed here the town, the famous Jidir Duzu, will undoubtedly become a venue for major cultural events, festivals and competitions. And this is a priori a powerful incentive to attract tourists. And there is no doubt that those who have seen Shusha once will certainly wish to return here again. Modern hotels, leisure centres and hotel houses should be built in the town and its surroundings - in short, to create conditions for tourists of all budgets.

Following the Second Karabakh War, an important step in the reconstruction of the liberated territories was the economic and tourist potential. The Azerbaijani government immediately began work on the reconstruction of areas in the Karabakh

region, soon after the liberation of the territories. Almost immediately the foundations were laid for a new airport in the Fizuli district and roads in the Fizuli-Shusha direction. Italy and Turkey also joined the government's activities. Representatives of countries from Israel, Hungary, Japan, and others expressed an interest in participating in the restoration of the region. (Waal, T. d., 2013)

The Azerbaijan Tourism Bureau (ATB) highlighted the tourism potential of Karabakh at the World Travel Market London which was held in 2020 in an online format. The topic discussed was development, how to help restore, rebuild and shape the tourism industry. (Azerbaijan.az, 2022).

ATB representatives talked about tourism trends and current plans in Azerbaijan, including the tourism opportunities in the Karabakh region and surrounding areas. A total of 110 online meetings were held at the exhibition with companies from Asia, Europe, North America and the GCC, mainly aimed at rebuilding and developing business connections, networking and brand development.

This magnificent region has an ancient history, unique fauna and flora, historical and cultural monuments, springs, forests and ancient forts. Tourist clusters can be created here:

- 1)Fizuli-Hojavand-Shusha-Lachin
- 2)Fizuli-Jebrail-Zangilan
- 3)Zangilan-Gubadly
- 4)Kelbajar-Lachin
- 5)Barda-Agdam.

For instance, winter and health tourism can be developed in Lachin-Kelbajar and natural and cultural tourism in Gubadly-Zangilan. The region is very rich in various kinds of materials and minerals that are important in construction and industry of Azerbaijan. There are deposits of colour stones in Kelbejar and Jabrail; building stone-Shusha, Khojavand, Lachin, Gubadli, Zangilan, Jabrail; mercury- Kelbejar, Lachin; gold- Agdere, Kelbejar, Zangilan.

Thermal Tourism is a type of medical tourism in which patients can take advantage of geothermal springs for their health as well as relaxation in attractive locations. The presence of many mineral waters in the region will allow the development of this type of tourism. New hospitals and sanatoriums need to be built for rehabilitation, which will attract not only citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan but also foreign tourists.

Consumers prefer the health tourism in Azerbaijan based on the following factors:

- To get better services
- To achieve high medical technology
- To reduce the cost of medical services
- The desire of the elderly and disabled to receive treatment
- The desire to travel and visit cultural sites in addition to treatment
- The quality of services.

The most important advantages of thermal wellness tourism are the following:

- Eliminates the seasonal nature of tourism
- Ensure high occupancy rates in hotels
- Diversify tourism to reach different target markets
- Create opportunities for regions with development potential in terms of tourism
- Creating jobs.

The main recommendations for increasing the number of participants in thermal and health tourism are the following:

- Recreation resort complexes in Karabakh regions should be renovated
- Local tourism centres should be established
- Thermal tourism enterprises should be rebuilt and the quality of services should be improved
- Quality standards should be established for service, safety, and hygiene
- Experience of developed countries in thermal tourism can serve as a basis for successful projects

- Staff training in thermal tourism enterprises is necessary
- Preparing catalogues reflecting health tourism carriers, identification of different therapeutic.

Today, more people than ever are seeking to recycle, reduce the use of plastics, buy food locally and eat sustainably, conserve energy and water and generally incorporate environmentally friendly elements in their daily lives. The Karabakh region has abundant natural resources that must be skillfully exploited to create ecotourism products. It is the eco hotels that are to be relied upon in the liberated areas. Eco-friendly hotels come in all shapes and sizes and varying levels of responsibility, but all features of these hotels have the common goal of minimising carbon emissions and working to have a positive impact on the environment. Here are a few key aspects of what makes a hotel eco-friendly:

- 1) Saving energy brings significant benefits to hotels by helping to control and reduce operating costs, as well as keeping emissions to a minimum.
- 2) Water savings: By installing water recycling and filtration systems, hotels can save big money in the long run while increasing their brand value in the eyes of their guests. Some of the most eco-friendly hotels and hotel eco-resorts are among the most technologically advanced and innovative in the world. Whether you run a rural resort or a secluded island, every hotel has a huge number of opportunities to reduce emissions and become more eco-friendly.

However, eco-hotels should not only be developed in these areas, but throughout the country. To develop ecotourism, state support should be given not only to hotels, but also to tourism companies, including those involved in domestic and inbound tourism. By allocating subsidies to companies engaged in eco-tourism, the revival of this type of tourism can be accelerated. All these proposals will make a great contribution to the economy of Azerbaijan. Thus, tourism could become one of the leading sectors.

The proportion of forestland in the country is 12.6%. Compared to post-Soviet countries, the proportion of forests in Azerbaijan is quite high, which makes the country

attractive to foreign tourists. Forests are very important for all living organisms and are the lungs of our planet. By absorbing carbon dioxide, trees produce oxygen, which is essential for human life. Tree roots strengthen soils, protecting the foundation of the entire ecosystem from erosion by wind and water, as soil erosion can cause life-threatening problems such as landslides and dust storms. We must therefore take care of our forests and do everything to preserve them with the rise of ecotourism in the Karabakh region. (Verdiyev, R., 2012)

The Azerbaijan Tourism Board (ATB) has launched a new and useful website. WhereisKarabakh.com is an online platform created to promote Karabakh. The main purpose of the platform is to show the world where Karabakh is located, as well as to help learn more about the region (Azerbaijan.az, 2022). The user will be able to select any point on the map and see the distance from a certain country to Karabakh, as well as learn about: history, carpet weaving and mugham art, outstanding personalities, monuments, Karabakh horses, etc.

The speed of new projects allows for the rapid development of infrastructure. The direction of capital flows will be determined by the suitability of the region for different economic activities.

Due to the favorable climate and terrain of Karabakh, different types of tourism can be developed, especially ecotourism and medical tourism. The importance of ecotourism and medical tourism in the economy and what needs to be done to develop this sector was revealed. It emerged that the sustainable development of tourism in the region is inextricably linked to its potential, such as climatic conditions, topography, minerals, and the proportion of forest land (Zhou, D., Yanagida, J.F., Chakravorty, U., Leung, P., 1997).

The strategic roadmap of tourism industry of Azerbaijan has a deliberate focus on the development of both ecotourism and medical tourism. In the strategic roadmap, it is stated that the Ministry of Culture and Tourism will collaborate with Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources to review the options available for the further development of the ecotourism in Azerbaijan and utilize its full potential. It is planned

to organize various events to the national parks and to lay a transportation connection to the areas that possess with ecotourism potential. It is stated that by 2025, Azerbaijan will receive even more tourists visiting Azerbaijan with ecotourism and medical tourism purposes. By 2025, Azerbaijan will try to make its religious locations, national parks, and attractions to be globally recognized. (Musayev V., 2017)

In the strategic roadmap of tourism of Azerbaijan, the advantages of health and ecotourism, which will help to develop tourism in the region, are explored. With these branches of tourism, a large number of tourists can be attracted. Large sanatoriums can be opened where people will rest and be treated. And for the people who prefer being in the nature and those who prefer eco-friendly products, then ecotourism will be an ideal option. People will have a chance to be able to rest, however at the same time avoid to harming the environment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the periods when tourism first started to develop, the tourism sector was handled with its economic development and employment-providing benefits. This situation has created negative social, environmental, and cultural effects over time. With the accommodation establishments, infrastructure services and other social facilities built for the visitors, the local people have been displaced and their lifestyles have changed. In addition, with the increase in the number of tourists, natural life was negatively affected and threatened animal life. The sustainability of the tourism sector can only be achieved by preserving and using the historical, natural and cultural values specific to the regional and local areas that are the source of tourism. With the importance of tourism, environmental relations and health awareness of world population, the sustainability discussions brought the concept of ecotourism and medical tourism to the agenda and became popular. As a result, it was determined that:

1. Due to the favorable climate and terrain of Karabakh, different types of tourism can be developed, especially ecotourism and medical tourism. The importance of ecotourism and medical tourism in the economy and what needs to be done to develop this sector was revealed. It emerged that the sustainable development of tourism in the region is inextricably linked to its potential, such as climatic conditions, topography, minerals, and the proportion of forest land.
2. New large-scale opportunities will gradually open for Azerbaijan as it has set the goal to fully restore the tourism potential of the Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur economic regions in the coming years. Forests, mountains, waterfalls, crystal-clear air, mineral springs, historical monuments - is there any better place to rest than a place where all these boons are concentrated in one territory? All of the regions and villages of the Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur economic regions can boast of it: the unique nature, rich historical and cultural heritage, balneological resources- the tourist potential of these lands is inexhaustible.

3. The advantages of health and eco-tourism, which will help to develop tourism in Azerbaijan, were explored. With these types of tourism, a large number of tourists can be attracted. Large sanatoriums can be opened where people will rest and be treated. And for nature lovers and those who prefer eco-friendly products, then ecotourism will be ideal. People will be able to rest, but at the same time not to harm the environment. All tourists will find something to their liking. The speed of new projects will allow for the rapid development of infrastructure. The direction of capital flows will be determined by the suitability of the region for different economic activities.

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List of tables

Figure 1: World Tourism Industry.	24
Figure 2: Tourism Sector and Balance of Payments.....	38
Figure 3: Tourism and Employment.	39
Figure 4: Foreign Direct Investment and Tourism.....	41
Figure 5: Oil-gas and Non-oil gas Sectors Share in GDP.....	42