

**ROLE OF ACCESSIBLE TOURISM FOR DISABLED PEOPLE AS A
NICHE TRAVEL IN UZBEKISTAN**

(Thesis)

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Based on statistics rising of aged and disabled people need specialized care and services. According to UN data 10% of the world's population is handicapped. Currently, more than 50 million individuals in Europe and more than 600 million globally are disabled. Over 500 million individuals suffer from physical, mental, sensory or mental disabilities. World experience demonstrates that travelers with reduced mobility constitute a significant portion of the tourist business. In Europe, nearly 70% of the total number of persons with disabilities are physically and financially unable to travel. Furthermore, 7-8% of international tourists on the global tourism sector have a disability [1]. Disabled individuals like any other healthy person which have desire or motivation to travel. However, tourist products and services are often ill-equipped to suit the demands of this demographic. Recently, the issue of tourist accessibility has been often debated at international conferences for health tourism professionals [2].

In the Republic of Uzbekistan communicating with the people, coordinating activities, examining local problems and finding answers on the basis of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev new "*mahallabay*" and "*fuqarobay*" systems all help to improve the population's well-being. The State Statistics Committee together with other ministries and organizations are actively involved in this process. Representatives of the State Statistics Committee, Tashkent city, and Tashkent regional statistics departments went door to door in the neighborhoods of Yangihayot district of Tashkent city and Bekobod city of Tashkent region receiving information from the poor, orphans, elderly and disabled people to whom providing special types of food products for their families, as well as material and moral

support [3].

According to World Bank study, 845,300 people or 2.3% of the total population will be legally recognized as disabled in Uzbekistan in 2022. This is stated in the material supplied by the bank's local representative office. 13.5% of the overall population aged three and above has a handicap, with 3.5% having a severe condition. It is observed that disability prevalence is highly connected to age, with 54% of those aged 60 and beyond having some sort of impairment. The bulk of disabled people reside in rural regions with 532,000 living in rural areas and 313,300 in urban areas [4]. The greatest rates are seen in the Navoi (3.6 percent), Sirdarya (3.1 percent), and the Republic of Karakalpakistan (2.9 percent). In Uzbekistan, there are 142,300 disabled children under the age of 18 and 396,700 disabled people who have not reached retirement age. The number of handicapped males (475,800) outnumbers that of disabled women (369,500). According to the report, persons with disabilities in Uzbekistan confront several challenges in a variety of industries, including travel services [4]. *The key concerns discovered in this thesis are mostly related to the general accessibility of tourism services such as accommodation, attractions, transportation and restaurants services during travel of disabled people.*

This thesis focuses on the major principles and potential for developing accessible tourism in Uzbekistan for individuals with disabilities. Tourist for individuals with impairments is a relatively young and rapidly growing segment of the tourist industry. The social relevance of tourism for special populations stems from the fact that the relative and absolute number of persons with various sorts of impairments is continually increasing. More individuals are taking advantage of the chance to travel, which implies more guests, longer stays, longer seasons and consistent. income for the tourism business. New job possibilities, higher tax income for the government, and an accessible environment for both inhabitants and tourists benefit society as a whole. *The data from this thesis, along with the results presented in the literature show that persons with disabilities have a different travel experience, anticipation, expectations and reality that are:*

a. Acquiring tourism skills helps persons with disabilities to learn to confront diverse challenges more successfully, avoiding dangers and selecting the services and places that best match their requirements.

b. Influencing people with disabilities' participation in tourism points to the prevalence of structural constraints, which was confirmed in our study, being more emphasized at the level of transportation, the gap in the performance of employees in the tourism sector (insufficient information and knowledge of the reality of disability), the lack of accessibility in accommodation units and public space, and the level of rules and regulations, among others.

c. Negative attitudes on the side of tourism experts appear to have a bigger impact on the travel experience, which often manifests itself in avoiding direct contact with persons with disabilities and instead interacting with the person accompanying them.

Accessible tourism (non-barrier tourism) is defined as any activity that delivers a tourist product, information or individual tourist services while taking into account the accessibility and organization needs of individuals with limited mobility. Along with the term "barrier-free tourism," the definition of "tourism accessible to all" is used, which is defined as a tourist service for all types of customers, regardless of age, physical abilities or the existence of a handicap. Government agencies, tour operators and tour agents, as well as representatives from tourism-related sectors are the primary players in accessible tourism. Due to increasing needs and desire of disable people for travelling or travel services is considering as niche market in the developed and developing countries in the world [5, 6].

It will be critical to recognize the competitive advantages connected with this industry while also comprehending the operational components behind social responsibility practices, which are viewed as pillars of sustainable tourism growth. The need to understand disabled consumers' needs, expectations, and experiences is critical for tourist service providers to be able to tailor their offers to actual and potential demand, promoting socially responsible tourism development, which is

more inclusive and friendly. Throughout this work, it has become clear that successful involvement of individuals with disabilities in tourism activities is a dynamic and interactive process in which a variety of aspects from their individual context, social environment, and tourist context interact [7,8,9,10]. In regards, disability can have a devastating impact on the lives of those affected and their family. However, it is the ubiquitous representations in society, which are still characterized by a lack of mechanisms for participation and fulfillment of their talents, that exacerbate the disadvantage and discriminating situation. Tourism, by definition, is a socializing activity, allowing it to contribute to the demystification of disability and the reality of people with disabilities' lives, as well as the eradication of societal preconceptions that persist despite the progress made in recent decades. As a result, the position given to new technologies and the internet incorporates the principle of transversality in numerous aspects of the tourist business and is not exhausted with tourism stakeholders. It is also crucial for government, which should assure the execution of real public policy as well as the preparation of effective enforcement operations.

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