

ТУРИЗМ TOURISM



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Impact of travel obstacles on the development of accessible tourism in Kazakhstan

Abstract. Tourism can be defined as an economic, social, and cultural event which arise from the relations established when people travel to places other than their homeland for various reasons. Although disabled people have a disability that restricts their daily activities, they need to participate in touristic activities as much as healthy people. This study aims to examine the impact of obstacles encountered by disabled Kazakhs during their travels with the aim of offering pieces of advice for the development of accessible tourism. We used secondary data obtained from the literature review. The study showed that the greatest travel obstacles encountered by disabled people are economic and environmental problems.

Keywords. Obstacle, disabled, accessible tourism, travel obstacles, Kazakhstan.

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Introduction. Although disabled people are a significant part of the population, they currently do not have a serious impact on the tourism market. Even if they should be taken into serious consideration by the tourism sector as a target population, this issue has not been adequately discussed [1].

According to Yau, McKercher, and Packer [2], touristic desires and needs of a disabled person are exactly the same as a healthy person. But, since touristic services are designed primarily for healthy persons, disabled persons encounter many problems while consuming these services.

But invigorating services such as health tourism contributes greatly to the adaptation of disabled people to society [3]. Therefore, disabled people represent a notable alternative for the tourism sector, especially when one considers that they tend to participate in such activities together with their families and friends. But the literature shows that environment, transportation services, and facilities are not compatible with the personal needs and wishes of disabled persons [4; 5; 6] and unqualified personnel [7] discourages disabled persons to consume touristic services.

One of the requirements for a state to be able to create a modern society is to provide equality in all fields including the consumption of various services without any discrimination. The right to rest is one of these. World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines tourism as a health requirement as well as a necessary factor for the wellbeing of humans. Thus, all services such as education, rehabilitation, transportation, tourism, culture, arts, and sports as well as architecture and environment should be designed to include disabled persons. So, we need to consider the psychology of disabled persons to determine their expectations. This way, we can develop policies which will fix “the problems that make disabled persons more disabled in daily life”.

Status of disabled people in social life and perception towards them. Disability effects and covers whole society without discriminating age, language, race, culture, and economic status [8, p. 9]. Disabled people are the greatest minority in the world. The physical as well as the social world they inhabited should

be viewed with this awareness so that they can adapt to society and need less help. This way, we can make them feel that they are a part of society instead of putting another obstacle in front of them. Prevention of social exclusion is the duty of every human being, society as well as state. This exclusion is also considered to be a violation of social state and humanism [9].

“Global Code of Ethics for Tourism” (1990) by UNWTO states that tourism is essential for human well-being and right to rest is a fundamental human right. Moreover, this publication claims that tourism should be accessible to all and the access of disabled persons to touristic services should be promoted [10]. Legal, economic, social and environmental settings should be adjusted to “remove obstacles” to facilitate the access of disabled persons to these services. Thus, disabled persons could participate in the social life more.

If the social participation and rights of disabled persons can be enhanced, they may travel more. Therefore, the tourism market will develop twice more by hosting disabled persons and their escorts [11, p. 10].

Although disabled persons have an equal right just like the healthy persons to participate in touristic activities, their participation in social activities is restricted. This restriction can be the result of either internal or external factors. Internal factors are the personal ones that a disabled person should overcome to be active in touristic activities such as lack of knowledge, health status, sociability, and economic status [12].

Disabled persons, even though they overcome internal factors, must still face with the external obstacles that prevent them from traveling and decrease their satisfaction level. These obstacles are transportation problems, communication problems, accessibility problems of touristic facilities, lack of qualified personnel etc. [12].

Even though more obstacles are removed every day, these efforts are not enough. Identification of travel obstacles that decrease their participation in social activities and the removal of these obstacles effects the travel habits of the disabled persons both directly and indirectly. Disabled persons evaluate their previous experiences while deciding to travel, and this affects their psychology either positively or negatively. Hence, it is important to consider the effects of travel obstacles on their psychology.

When the literature is reviewed, we can identify some common conclusions:

Study of Cizel and Cizel [13] examines the relation between touristic obstacles and the behavioral intention of disabled persons. They found that touristic obstacles do not have a significant effect on their intention to be a tourist, but as the obstacles culminate they develop learned helplessness, and this decreases their intention to be a tourist. Thus, they have an indirect effect.

A study by Guerra [14] examined the touristic activities of disabled persons in Spain and found that 52% of the participants are not satisfied. The greatest problem encountered by the disabled persons in an accommodation facility is the inaccessibility followed by the lack of information for the disabled persons.

A study that examined the accessibility of five-star hotels in Egypt found 89% compatibility. The criteria were wheelchair accessibilities of lobby, restaurants, and elevators. There were also negative answers such as high reception desks (67%), and lack of accessible toilet in the lobby (56%) [15].

Eichhorn et.al., [16] states that the greatest travel obstacle for disabled persons is the lack of knowledge. Therefore, it is important to provide adequate and reliable information to disabled people regarding travel agencies, accommodation facilities, and transportation.

A study which examined the accessibility of accommodation facilities in Australia showed that 93% of the disabled people stayed in special rooms for the disabled and 63% reported that the greatest difficulty they experienced during their travels was the lack of rooms for the disabled [17].

Lee et.al. [18] studied the relationship between the travel intention of the disabled people and travel obstacles. They found that some of the disabled people lose their motivation to travel and completely stop traveling because of the learned helplessness. Disabled people may maintain their desire to travel although they act warier. But as the negative experiences culminate, even determinate ones may lose their self-esteem and suffer from the lack of control and helplessness feelings.

Socioeconomic status of the disabled in Kazakhstan. Accessible tourism is the most important aspect of social tourism. The basic goal of the social tourism is to provide travel opportunities to the disabled, retired, veterans, students, youth, and other citizens with the support of the state, public, foundations, and other institutions [19]. Disabilities are social facts that no society can escape, and every state create social

and economic policies based on their development levels [20]. There are many obstacles every disabled person encounter such as discrimination in the labor market, social isolation, poverty, and physical, environmental, informational, emotional and communicational obstacles [21].

When Kazakhstan Committee of Statistics decided to fulfill its international liabilities arise from the 31st Article of U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), they included a survey to the 2014-2015 National Action Plan for the Rights of Disabled and 2014 Statistical Studies Plan to evaluate the life quality of disabled people.

In May 2014, “Survey on the Life Quality of Disabled People” showed that the majority of the disabled in the country was over 60. Therefore, more than half (56.8%) were married. According to the survey, 61.3% were living in homes, 34.8% were living in apartments, 2% were living in medico-social institutions, 0,9% were living in hostels, 0.3% were living in beach houses, and 0.6% were living in other types of houses. In general, disabled people were dissatisfied with the technical problems (water, electricity, heating, elevators etc.) in their residences. When the economic status of disabled people is examined, one can see that their main sources of income are state aid (67%) and retirement pensions (58.9%). The employment rate among the disabled is 55%. This rate is 45.4% in the rural region, and 85.1% in the urban region. Causes of disability were eye diseases (13.1%), mental and behavioral disorders (8.5%), birth defects and chromosome anomalies (8.1%), and musculoskeletal disorders (7.1%) [22].

When they were asked whether they can use thermal facilities or not, 16.2% stated they visited such facility in the last 5 years and 15.4% stated that they do not show such symptoms. Rest of the participants stated that they didn’t use thermal facilities because of travel permit problems (34.3%), inadequate money for transport (28.2%), lack of companion (7.5%) or other reasons (30%). So, we determined that 24.3% of the disabled were participating in a personal rehabilitation program and 17.4% of the disabled claimed that personal rehabilitation programs are unnecessary. An important part of the participants (45.9%) stated that they don’t have any information about the program. In this context, we can see that paperwork regarding health services are conducted by the companions or civil servants, not the persons with disability.

According to the study results, only 22.6% of disabled persons are active in the labor market. Of this number, 70.7% are employees, 13.7% are farming their private plots, 11.8% are self-employed, 2.3% are employers and the rest are cooperative members or unpaid family workers.

According to the results of a study of Kazakhstan Republic, most of the disabled persons have their own living spaces, but some are living under bad conditions. Few are living in places with favorable conditions such as elevator, ramps, railings, and wide doors. Less than half of the participants were using Personal Rehabilitation Programs (PRP). Therefore, the information level regarding PRP and private social services is lower in rural regions than urban regions. Based on these results, major problems of the disabled people of Kazakhstan are as follows [22]:

- Insufficient retirement pensions and state aids (80.5%),
- Quality and accessibility of health services (35.8%),
- Unemployment (32.1%),
- Lack of housing (22.4%),
- Working places with low accessibility (19.4%),
- Education problems (13.6%),
- Public transportation vehicles with low accessibility (12.5%).

Conclusion. Studies showed that “medical sociological approach” that became popular among the countries during 20th century is not enough alone for the mental health, and ineffective as such. This situation may also trigger factors such as dependency feelings, loss of motivation and irresponsibility of organizing his/her life. That is why, the socio-cultural approach that focuses on the mental rehabilitation of disabled persons, is important to provide satisfaction even to a physically handicapped person. Countries which aim to maximize the economic benefits gained from tourism are expected to turn to accessible tourism as an alternative tourism form. Since disabled people tend to participate in touristic activities together with their escorts or family members, they may be an important factor for a bigger tourism market. In this context, satisfying the needs and demands of disabled people is a critical point.

Physical disabilities don’t necessarily entail social disability or represent an obstacle to social participation. But these people constantly face with problems born from their physical disabilities. Therefore, it may be impossible to talk about the participation of disable people to sportive, touristic,

recreation and other activities, integration to society or enjoying leisure time under the modern situations as the physical environment does not facilitate. To talk about accessible tourism, the destination should be completely accessible. Reaching the hotel, traveling around, and visiting touristic sites should be made possible for the disabled persons. After all touristic products are holistic products.

When the example of developed nations is examined, one can see that positive discrimination is applied to disabled persons in the education and employment fields, and accessible tourism has shown a rapid development. This situation helped disabled individuals with a specific level of income to become more active in social activities like touristic activities, therefore contributed to social peace and development.

It is imperative for Kazakhstan's public and private sectors, and people to act more proactively to render touristic activities accessible as accessible tourism represent a rising market in the global field. It is important for the numbers of environmental accessibility studies and awareness to rise. When it is considered that tourism is a sector where humans serve other humans, one can understand how the accessibility of a facility affects both workers and clients. So, it is necessary to increase the awareness of people with the help of seminars. Accessibility is a human right and it is about respecting humans. Humanitarian developments are not short-term achievements; on the contrary, they are long-term achievements and a legacy for the later generations. So, they must be seen as strategic investments. This subject recently gained attention and become a hot study topic. Greater the body of scientific knowledge produced in this topic, it better both for academic institutions and the private sector.

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22 Итоговый доклад по результатам проведения выборочного обследования «Качество жизни лиц, имеющих инвалидность, с учетом гендерной специфики». – Астана: Министерство национальной экономики Республики Казахстан Комитет по статистике. 2015. – С.124.

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Қазақстандағы қолжетімді туризмді дамытуда саяхат кедергілерінің әсері

Аннотация. Туризм ұғымын адамдардың түрлі себептерге байланысты саяхаттаулары барысында қалыптасқан экономикалық, әлеуметтік және мәдени байланыстарды қамтитын оқиға ретінде қарастыруға болады. Мүмкіндігі шектеулі жандардың өмірлік белсенділігін шектейтін кедергілері бар болғанымен, туристік шараларға қатысуға деген қажеттіліктері дені сау адамдардың қажеттіліктерімен бірдей екендігі мәлім. Бұл мақаланың мақсаты, Қазақстандағы мүмкіндігі шектеулі жандардың рухани жаңару ниетімен туристік іс-шараларға қатысу барысында кездесетін саяхат кедергілерінің әсерін анықтау, сонымен қатар қолжетімді туризмді дамытуға байланысты ұсыныстар енгізу болып табылады. Зерттеу барысында әдеби шолу әдістемесі бойынша қосымша деректермен анализ жасалды. Зерттеу нәтижесі, мүмкіндігі шектеулі жандардың саяхаттауларындағы ең үлкен кедергілер, экономикалық және қоршаған ортаға байланысты проблемалар екендігін көрсетті.

Түйін сөздер. Кедергі, мүмкіндігі шектеулі жан, қолжетімді туризм, саяхат кедергілері, Қазақстан.

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Влияние туристических ограничений на развитие доступного туризма в Казахстане

Аннотация. Туризм можно определить как экономическое, социальное и культурное событие, возникающее в связи с отношениями, установленными когда люди путешествуют по разным причинам. Несмотря на то, что инвалиды имеют ограничения, влияющие на их повседневную деятельность, им необходимо участвовать в туристических мероприятиях так же, как и здоровые люди. Целью данного исследования является изучение влияния ограничений, с которыми сталкиваются инвалиды, проживающие в Казахстане во время их поездок, а также предоставление рекомендаций для развития доступного туризма. В ходе исследования были проанализированы вторичные данные по методике обзора литературы. Исследование показало, что наибольшими препятствиями, с которыми сталкиваются инвалиды, являются экономические и экологические проблемы.

Ключевые слова. Ограничения, люди с ограниченными возможностями, доступный туризм, туристические ограничения, Казахстан.

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