

# Social Tourism in Duzdag, Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic within the Republic of Azerbaijan: Resources, Planning and Development

Ali Jabbarov\*, Zulfugar Zulfugarov

The Faculty of Economy, Nakhchivan University, city of Nakhchivan, Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, Republic of Azerbaijan

**Abstract** Present tourism bears the function of intercultural bridge and along with this it performs its contribution to the humanitarian development of society. To meet the needs and demands of mankind when happened natural disasters especially because of social cataclysm after population increase, to render people not only for their budget but also for being human is the question put as a target in front of this social tourism much more. Extension of social tourism and its administration through the use of natural-treatment resources in Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic as an integral part of the Republic of Azerbaijan, one of the developed countries of the world and other deals related to this have been considered in this article.

**Keywords** Social tourism, Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, Medical tourism, Duzdag speleotherapy treatment, Humanitarian development

## 1. Introduction

Doubtless, everyone has right to travel, since good travelling provides the recreation necessity of people, recently its being a phenomenon isn't surprising. Tourism causing economy growth, inspiring people to demonstrate favourable actions with all its positive aspects have become most active standard of life of billions of people.

Tourism is the luxury of our time and everyone has full right to benefit by this luxury. Regarding this we have full confidence that, maybe not today, but any elementary contribution to tourism in the world, sure will be a very valuable present for the future generation. Gaining health care of travelers along with outlook increase, enrichment of tolerant feelings are said to be the wish of individuals and also governments organizing the travelling of the people with the modest income and inclusively important travelling together with a social tourism promotion is the shortest way to achieve own goals.

### *Tourism and social responsibility*

What is a social tourism? But why to approach to the social tourism through the window of social responsibility? To answer this question is possible via several arguments. Nowadays the mentioned social tourism is the best means

against social exclusion in the world [1]. One of the vital principles of sustainable development of society is not differing people due to their incomes. At the present moment everyone easily witnesses different strikes arisen from various crises in the world by low paid people either openly or hidden. In accordance with this different projects of various purposes focused to discharge the accumulated negative energy in society was easily seen in the fifties when Europe performed the importance of social tourism [2].

The main differentiating feature of this broadly spread tourism in the Western and Eastern Europe is the source of its financing. Through this tourism category state undertakes an obligation in front of its citizens and provides their travelling rights [3]. Today along with commercial travellings social tours possess important segments as well. Nevertheless the date of bias social tours starts from the second half of the XIX century, but later on, especially, after World War II the spread and populism of this tourism could prevail among people and thus for making it "tourism for all" afterwards it was called as social tourism. As a result it became the best model in providing the social travelling necessity of the low paid people (in our sample medical tourism) and turned criterion of life quality [4].

It is advisable to note that even this type of travelling in Soviet time covered some categories of low paid people such as: pensioners, jobless persons, students, agricultural collective farm workers etc. who from time to time were engaged to the tour of social importance. At that time there were tours of treatment, greetings, ecotourism importance which subjected to different ages who had performed good

\* Corresponding author:  
alijabbarov@yahoo.com (Ali Jabbarov)

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results in labour activity or education in parallel.

All these occurred in the time when comfortable commercial tours didn't widely cover the former USSR and even its propaganda wasn't suitable. There was a time that hard working people in the plants, factories, collective farms, schools were sent to Crimea (Artek) of Ukraine which has been annexed by Russia, the regions of Kalbajar and Garabagh currently under occupation of Armenia, either completely unpaid or partially paid to provide their rest-recreation to some extent in 1970-1980 years. We have to confess that modern tourism, especially social tourism, is the product of stability and economic development. So that its development is linked to social and economic development of nations and can only be possible if a man has access to creative rest and holidays and enjoys freedom to travel within the framework of free and leisure time whose profoundly human character is underlined. It's existence and development entirely depends on the existence of a state of lasting peace, to which tourism is required to contribute [5]. Doubtless, the more economy develops, financial opportunities are extending the more social tourism payments will be easier and possible respectively. Sure, for this purpose, there are different sources.

In developed countries there are four types of financial sources of investment in social tourism; grant credit state, the National House of family allowances (NCC) or locally from the House Family Allowance (CAF), or funds from to individuals or loans of financial organizations [6]. But from different firms or funds in developed countries for now to expect such initiatives is very seldom and it causes to seek alternative ways.

Because at any rate people are interested in ensuring their health. Through travellings and for this purpose they are ready to profit by any chance given to them. The physiological, social, economic and environmental impacts of tourism are so powerful that the right to travel and tourism have been incorporated in key international documents including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, the World Tourism Organization's Manila Declaration on World Tourism of 1980, Bill of Rights and Tourist Code of 1985 and the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism of 1999. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has two passages that underpin the right to travel: articles 13 (2) and 24. Article 13 (2) states "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country" [7].

Known that organizing of social tourism is much more compared with the deal of social responsibility of economic factors. No secret that our present time is better known as the culture being shared among people more than ever and in this context sharing of tourism possibilities with the world, especially making people understand that natural recourses of treatment importance concern all mankind throughout the world should be understood as the highest culture. To understand it and to take solid measures in this direction is the example of the greatest and deepest social responsibility.

To take concrete measures after understanding the above touched responsibility belongs to the World Tourism Organization, Global Code of Ethics for Tourism as has been stated in the article 7 of the right to tourism: "social tourism, and in particular associative tourism, which facilitates widespread access to leisure, travel and holidays, should be developed with the support of the public authorities" and also to create suitable atmosphere for family, youth, students, adults and physically disabled people participating in mass tourism. Because, to isolate anyone for economic condition is beyond humanist principles.

## 2. Methodology

Currently among potential tourists there are a large number of segments interested in social tours offered to make use of treatment-recreation resources. It is possible to arrive at this kind of idea without differing countries and continents that the Earth planet is rich with all kinds of natural resources said to be useful for human health. Very likely, the level of their usage impacts to the number of tourist and destination choice definitely. In other word, besides social responsibility understanding, starting from the difficulties created by natural condition and its solution till the simplest management questions, everything should be settled in a complex form, nothing else more.

But if the nature has gifted various resources for human health and there is a stable economic growth in a country, then any issue solution should be approached in an optimist way. On the ground of natural resources in Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (Azerbaijan) the development of social tourism may be overviewed in two stages. First, it is a very interesting fact that this region situated on the Southern slopes of the Lesser Caucasus with a territory 5.5 thousand km<sup>2</sup> possesses a great deal of resources of treatment and healing importance. There are more than 250 mineral water sources majority of which are of treatment importance and are very famous among regional countries. But second, Duzdag Physiotherapy Center is much more attractive for its property of Speleotherapy importance. So that, speleotherapy (in Greek "speleo" means "cave") is a rear method of treatment used in the cave condition [8]. The purpose of this investigation is to learn the medical tourism in the region by using medical features of Duzdag and to study the ways of social tourism extension on the ground of this. Having social tourism experience of Nakhchivan in the past and also medical tourism resources richness in this area, new necessary information was gathered on the basis of new development and marketing prizma. As a result of this every year more than 400 thousand tourists from the other regions of Azerbaijan and foreign countries come to Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. Medical tourism, their principles of sustainability, the possibility of its promotion by state initiative have been learned from different sources. The analysis of experience of the countries was carried out, social load of the first investigations in this field was considered and different data were accumulated for this. Social tourism

isn't only the social responsibility of a state, but also the possible contributions by private sectors were considered through the domestic means of a developing country. Also the factors could impact to the cave treatment positively or negatively was considered, the impression of the tourists taken treatment here were learned and doctors' observations were generalized. SWOT analysis of social tourism organizing and management within local demands frame was carried out.

It was considered vital because furthermore planning of Duzdag strong laterals to develop more than and weak points correction to be restored due to the landmark offers.

The priorities of the investigation were as follows:

- Learning the travelling requirements of people, especially certain group of sensitive people;
- Learning the efficiency of state initiative for social tourism;
- Learning the possibilities of branding of Duzdag as a tourism destination;
- Overview its long-term opportunities in the future.

### ***Duzdag. Speleotherapy***

The word "Duzdag" consists of two components. The first component "Duz" has the meaning of "Salt", but the second component "Dag" means "Rock". The area is situated at 11 km. distance from the city of Nakhchivan with about 100 thousand people to the North-West.



**Figure 1.** Duzdag Physiotherapy Center

There are huge NaCl salt deposits to have been naturally formed million years before. The mentioned salt with some hundred millions tons of capacity has been extracting for more than two thousand years. Considering this, Duzdag is of value to see, to walk and to admire. Nakhchivan being on the historical Silk Way crossroad this salt was extracted to be used in daily life and agricultural as well. According to the historians this very rock salt was carried to thousands of kilometers distance from here by camel caravans [9]. There are various interesting stories among local people connected with salt, its treatment (healing) magics. In its part this rock salt had a great role in forming a town building culture of 5 thousand years ago. All this has been proved and approved by international archeological expedition finds in this area

during excavation and above all the discovered material-cultural samples could justify all hopes around this issue [10].

Starting from the fifties of the XX century the salt began to be produced in a widescale form by industrial way to provide the chemical industry with raw materials and as a result of what such huge caves appeared in the hundred metres in depth where a large number of people could shelter at once. Thereafter spelotherapy invention, namely, the method of asthmatic diseases treatment in salt mines Duzdag became famous for its treatment importance [11].

### ***Salt and recreation***

Already more than 50 years asthmatic diseases have been treating by spelotherapy methods in Duzdag. Generally there are so many facts related to the medical importance of salt. One knows that there are a lot of countries in the world as America, Europe, some countries not far from Azerbaijan as Romany, Poland, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and others where there are places of mine methods of treatment. But despite the former USSR period, the organization of treatment opportunities in Duzdag have completely changed from good to the better [12].



**Figure 2.** Inside of the cave. Rest and recreation



**Figure 3.** The Duzdag hotel

The carried observations and learned the past practice prove that majority of the patients visiting here are either from the coastal countries or from the high humidity climate regions. Sure, there are also people in Azerbaijan living in

coastal regions and high humidity climate areas suffering from asthmatic diseases. Though among them there are people needn't any extra social concession and they easily can make reservation in five star modern hotel near Duzdag cave of the same name, they can pass the night in the rooms considered for VIP clients in the cave, respectively. But not everyone visiting here, especially children have material opportunities.

Therefore all kinds of treatment courses due to the ages (12-18 days) and medical service, to spend the nights in the cave and other expenses are unpaid for the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan. And starting from 2012 this kind of service is subjected to the underaged and middle aged children (about one hundred) from the developing country Georgia regularly and this unpaid medical course is a good example from social tourism management point of view not only for internal tourism but also international tourism

indeed. In the best meaning of a word such a social responsibility example for the region of a developing country maybe submitted as a successful pilot project for the authority of a state.

Thus, despite social conviction of the citizens visiting here or their being state employers or private sector workers the considered treatment is the same for all. We have full confidence that considering the source of income determining the social status of people ensures the efficiency of treatment and also recreation. When meeting the patients in the cave of Duzdag, having talk with them one can easily feel their happiness and satisfaction. It means that there is nothing better than restored health in the world.

One knows that during the tours organized for asthmatic diseases by means of Speleotherapy kinds of questions may be asked:

Let's approach them generally positively and negatively:

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The infrastructure of medical opportunities of Duzdag; Capacity at once 300 personnels, modern repair welfare standards, two times city transfer, communication supervisions by full medical personnels;</li> <li>• Dry and fresh air;</li> <li>• Not vertically but horizontal passage to the underground cave being in the tunnels dug, horizontally on the slope of the mountain. It easiments to move towards the cave; safety increase is the vital factor;</li> <li>• Opportunities of parents accompanying their children to Duzdag;</li> <li>• Special ritual places for Muslim tourists;</li> <li>• Being dry steps around Duzdag but along with this establishing planting zones with artificial irrigation of vast areas;</li> <li>• Having +16 Celsius temperature inside the cave during the whole year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite doctors enlightenment talks with the patients some of them can't lift their cave phobia;</li> <li>• In some cases some disbelieves to salt cave treatment in some patients considering the very serious asthmatic disease impossible without medicine;</li> <li>• Seasonable tourists flee to Duzdag. Besides summer, the places are not full in other seasons of the year;</li> <li>• Severe continental climate of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. Around Duzdag (out of the cave) in summer + 30-40, in winter – 20-30 Celsius. As most of asthmatic patients have adapted to the mild see temperature complain the existing temperature.</li> </ul>

### 3. Findings

The below stated SWOT results were taken in managing such social tourism tours organized on medical importance in Duzdag.

Strengths	What to do in keeping their safety?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic level of growth of the region where is Duzdag situated of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic;</li> <li>• Duzdag is unical for this region;</li> <li>• The region where Duzdag is situated doesn't have anything capable to cause serious antiadvertisement (it is much more important for developing countries);</li> <li>• Rich with endless reserves;</li> <li>• Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (Azerbaijan Republic) where Duzdag is situated borders on two states – Turkey and Iran. It is more suitable for tourists from Europe, Asia and also Russia;</li> <li>• Food, transportation and etc. prices are suitable to pockets (compared with Europe);</li> <li>• There are high roads and air ways to the region;</li> <li>• Alongwith treatment tourists can join sport, festival and holiday measures; they can taste rich national meals of Azerbaijan;</li> <li>• Possible treatment equal combinative tours in the region</li> <li>• Environment is rather clean, local products completely natural and safety, water reserves more guaranteed.</li> </ul>	<p>All natural features should be protected. Any single fragment opposing this should be lifted in time</p> <p>Every square metre of the cave should be used rationally.</p> <p>For this treatment tours should be suitable and enriched to the segments of season and different categories of tourists. Research works for the potential tourists should be carried out Moreover local products and food should be</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eco cleanness of Duzdag and its around, less noise, very less amount of industrial waste. Especially, carbondioxid wastes. (all heating demand of the region is not for coal but stable natural gas)</li> <li>• Full and new roads infrastructure in Duzdag and around it</li> <li>• Conferences dedicated to Duzdag and its history and as well as other opportunities related to it. Heads of states visiting Nakhchivan and being in this cave and using it as an advertisement.</li> <li>• In day times the patients, visiting the city of Nakhchivan who spends their nights in the cave to breathe so fresh air during their leisure time, capable to use the services of cultural institutions, having opportunity to be in close intercourse with local people. (The oriental hospitability);</li> <li>• Flights from Nakhchivan to the capital of Azerbaijan-Baku daily 4-5 times, some weekly flights to Istanbul and Moscow, full communication possibilities thanks to 24 hours visit between Turkey and Iran.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weak Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weakness of Duzdag with its analogies in Europe for lack of advertisement, still less known Duzdag brand over the world.</li> <li>• Tourists coming to Duzdag much more with their self initiatives, lackness of specialized tour operators for this purpose, weak points of reservations.</li> <li>• The ongoing disbelief to the condition in former USSR republics among the world countries and especially in European countries.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not having ready master plans for the medical purpose to make use of Duzdag, not having a sustainable usage strategy (Ministry of Tourism)</li> <li>• Though the personnals in Duzdag can speak Russian but they have difficulties in English.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weakness of personnals self initiatives (in the scientific conferences related to medical employees in medical tourism and speleootherapy, participation in symposiums) minority of medical-scientific investigations reflected treatment quality of Duzdag.</li> <li>• Less contribution by private sector to additional services. State financed usage for social purpose of Duzdag, weakness of private sector in this field. But you see, it is possible the visiting tourists to be served by private sector, much more additional services.</li> <li>• Lackness of guide maps showing the true ways for coming to Duzdag.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the bases of social tourism established in Duzdag to increase tourism image of the region in a short period of time</li> <li>• On the bases of diversification in services and tariffs safeguarding both social principles and also getting necessary minimum incomes.</li> <li>• On the bases of treatment tourism in Duzdag holding conferences dedicated to social tourism problems .</li> <li>• Scientific investigations should be carried out in the direction of cave treatment and its efficiency.</li> <li>• New opportunities in the tourism industry in the region, crafts works, production of the things for present, their sales and employment</li> <li>• To return the fame of Duzdag when connected with salt (thousand years before salt was considered the most expensive product) and to prove its treatment efficiency perfectly, to create Duzdag as the center of friendship among the people of different corner taking treatment here.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Some more about threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking treatments in the same rooms of the cave local visitors with foreigners;</li> </ul>	<p>offered to the tourists</p> <p>Additional services with different assortments to increase.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>What should be done for transforming the weakness into strengths.</b></p> <p>To establish all round advertisement deals.</p> <p>Establishment of access to Duzdag through special system of tour operator and reservation</p> <p>Along with political, economic stability and cultural development in Azerbaijan the better and suitable tourism condition created in Nakhchivan should be casted by prestigious TV channels. Along term plan for sustainable use of Duzdag should be worked out and also untouched tourism reserves in Nakhchivan should be engaged here. For the purpose of medical and professional hospitability it is advisable to hold English trainings, personnals should pass special training courses.</p> <p>Stimulative ways should be found to determine the activity of directions of private sector.</p> <p>Working out tourism routes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ways of lifting the so called threats</b></p> <p>Local visitor people shouldn't be in contact with foreign tourists in the caves.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overloading of Duzdag as a result of uncoordinated tourists demand on certain days (on holidays and non-working days in Azerbaijan);</li> <li>• Non-professional guiding to the people coming to Duzdag to see the region, sometimes their being together with patients;</li> <li>• Expectation to commit arguments by the tourists from different countries with local people;</li> <li>• Pollution of the area with wastes;</li> <li>• Visa problem for some countries</li> </ul>	<p>Special plan should be prepared due to the capacity of Duzdag</p> <p>Extention of works for preparing human resources</p> <p>According to the country choice of tourists (mentally etc.) what to be paid more attention to environmental protection should be supported</p> <p>For the tourists visiting Azerbaijan by visa or without visa special and different offers should be prepared, planning should be carried.</p>
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## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

As known a number of questions appear during managing social tourism on the long standing sustainable principles of the opportunities of Duzdag. When investigated the ways of practical solution of all this we arrive at the following results:

- According to its social responsibility social tourism is more important throughout the world an especially for the developing countries.
- In social tourism packages great attention should be paid to its agitation that financing this filed and solution of sustainability provision of problems.
- Organizing of treatment tourism grounded on natural mineral reserves is said to be one of the successful pilot projects for social tourism.
- Implementation of social tourism in the form of international projects plays a great role in extending intercountries mutual-humanitarian relations.

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