

# ISRG Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (ISRGJMS)



## ISRG PUBLISHERS

Abbreviated Key Title: isrg j. multidiscip. Stud.

ISSN: 2584-0452 (Online)

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjms/>

Volume – I Issue-IV (December) 2023

Frequency: Monthly



## The Role of Tourism in the Development of Afghanistan

Fayaz Gul Mazloom Yar<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Majid Yasouri<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Senior Teaching Assistant at the University of Nangarhar Professor of Geography and Rural Planning at the University of Guilan, Iran

| Received: 11.12.2023 | Accepted: 16.12.2023 | Published: 20.12.2023

\*Corresponding author: Fayaz Gul Mazloom Yar

Senior Teaching Assistant at the University of Nangarhar Professor of Geography and Rural Planning at the University of Guilan, Iran

### Abstract

*Tourism is recognized as a tool for development and has limitless growth potential. The tourism environment encompasses economic, social, and cultural factors, and plays a vital role in the natural environment. Achieving sustainable tourism, which is linked to the management and preservation of natural resources, is of utmost importance. This article examines the role of tourism in sustainable development in Afghanistan, utilizing credible sources.*

*Given the significance of the tourism industry, this research aims to draw attention to the importance of tourism in Afghanistan's development. The primary research question revolves around how we can harness the potential of the tourism industry for Afghanistan's development. For this research, a descriptive-analytical method and literature reviews have been employed, with meticulous collection and analysis of reputable sources such as scholarly articles, books, reports, case studies, and relevant databases. The findings of this research indicate that due to the diverse cultural and environmental attractions in Afghanistan, tourism can play a crucial role in sustainable development. This industry can contribute to economic growth, increased government tax revenue, enhanced international trade and export of tourism services, infrastructure improvement, job creation, environmental preservation, and cultural heritage conservation. It can also improve the economic conditions of women and promote handicraft industries. In conclusion, this research suggests that effective measures are necessary to promote the sustainable growth of tourism in Afghanistan. Precise planning, a deep understanding of natural and cultural resources, environmental preservation, education, and employment generation should all be prioritized. Furthermore, the promotion of tourism requires shared responsibility from the government, local communities, and the tourism industry.*

**Keywords:** *tourism, development, tourism impacts, types of tourism, ecotourism*

## Introduction

The growth and expansion of tourism as a significant phenomenon began in the late twentieth century and has continued rapidly into the new century (Khademi et al., 2014). Today, tourism holds a special place in the economies of countries and plays an influential role in improving economic, social, and cultural structures, particularly in developing countries (Amiri & Mazafari, 2021).

Tourism is now one of the most important and dynamic activities in the world. The number of domestic and international tourists, as well as the revenue generated from tourism, continue to increase globally (Ghorekhlou et al., 2019). However, it should be noted that if tourism development is not accompanied by policies and plans that take into consideration the environment and prioritize sustainability, it may have significant negative impacts on the environment and ultimately diminish the appeal of tourist destinations. In other words, sustainable tourism development requires proper planning and the protection of natural resources (Mirzaei & Tarabian, 2021).

Tourism takes place in a geographical environment that includes natural and socio-cultural elements (A'zami et al., 2015). Both of these environments have an impact on tourism and are influenced by it. The impacts of tourism can be observed in various dimensions, including social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental. Due to the complexity and wide scope of this activity, various negative impacts must be considered (Mirzaei & Tarabian, 2021). In examining the impacts of tourism, there is often an excessive emphasis on the positive effects, while neglecting or overlooking the negative ones. However, many studies indicate that the negative effects of tourism outweigh the positive ones (Ziyaei & Tarabian, 2020). In other words, unsustainable tourism growth can have detrimental effects on the environment and local communities (Mortazaei et al., 2019).

Despite Afghanistan's rich cultural and natural attractions and historical heritage, relevant statistics on income and international tourist arrivals show that Afghanistan has not fully capitalized on this potential. It has a minimal share compared to the global and regional context, yet it carries a negative balance (Taheri & Tabatabai, 2020). Afghanistan, with its rich history, culture, and breathtaking natural landscapes, has suffered from decades of internal conflicts and wars (McCargar, 2015). Afghanistan possesses all the elements that can contribute to its sustainable development, and one of the key factors in this regard is the tourism industry. Tourism is recognized as a powerful catalyst for economic and social development worldwide, and Afghanistan can also leverage its advantages (Mortazaei et al., 2019).

In this paper, we examine the role of tourism in the development of Afghanistan from various dimensions, including economic, social, environmental, and cultural aspects. We hope that this article can serve as a milestone in determining the path to Afghanistan's sustainable development by promoting the growth of the tourism industry and attracting the attention of policymakers.

Tourism plays a vital role in the economic development of nations by offering opportunities for employment generation, foreign exchange earnings, and infrastructure development. This literature review aims to explore the role of tourism in the development of Afghanistan, considering the scholarly perspectives and empirical evidence available in the academic literature.

Afghanistan is a country with a rich cultural heritage, breathtaking landscapes, and historical sites that have the potential to attract tourists from around the world. According to Smith and Brent (2017), the country possesses diverse natural beauty, including the Hindu Kush mountain range, the Wakhan Corridor, and the historical cities of Kabul, Herat, and Balkh. The unique cultural experiences, archaeological sites, and traditional craftsmanship present opportunities for the development of a sustainable tourism industry.

Several studies have highlighted the economic benefits that tourism can bring to Afghanistan. According to Majeed and Amjad (2019), tourism has the potential to contribute to GDP growth, employment creation, and poverty reduction. The influx of tourists fosters the growth of various sectors, such as hospitality, transportation, and handicrafts, leading to increased business opportunities and income generation.

The development of tourism in Afghanistan requires significant investment in infrastructure, including transportation networks, accommodation facilities, and tourist attractions. Mohammadi and Shojaei (2018) emphasize the importance of improving transportation connectivity, enhancing security measures, and preserving cultural heritage sites to effectively attract and accommodate tourists. Infrastructure development not only supports the growth of tourism but also contributes to overall socio-economic development.

Despite its potential, the development of tourism in Afghanistan faces numerous challenges. Security concerns, political instability, and inadequate infrastructure have been identified as major barriers to the growth of tourism (Smith & Brent, 2017). Moreover, the negative perception of Afghanistan in the international media, lack of awareness about its tourism potential, and limited marketing efforts hinder the country's ability to attract tourists.

Sustainable tourism practices are crucial for the long-term development of Afghanistan's tourism industry. Alizada et al. (2020) emphasize the significance of conserving cultural and natural resources, fostering community engagement, and implementing sustainable tourism policies. By adopting sustainable practices, Afghanistan can ensure the preservation of its rich cultural heritage and natural environment while also reaping the economic benefits of tourism.

This literature review highlights the potential benefits and challenges associated with the development of tourism in Afghanistan. While the country possesses unique cultural and natural attractions, various obstacles, such as security concerns and inadequate infrastructure, must be addressed to fully capitalize on its tourism potential. By implementing sustainable tourism practices, investing in infrastructure development, and promoting Afghanistan as a safe and attractive tourist destination, the country can unlock the economic and social benefits associated with tourism.

## Theoretical Framework:

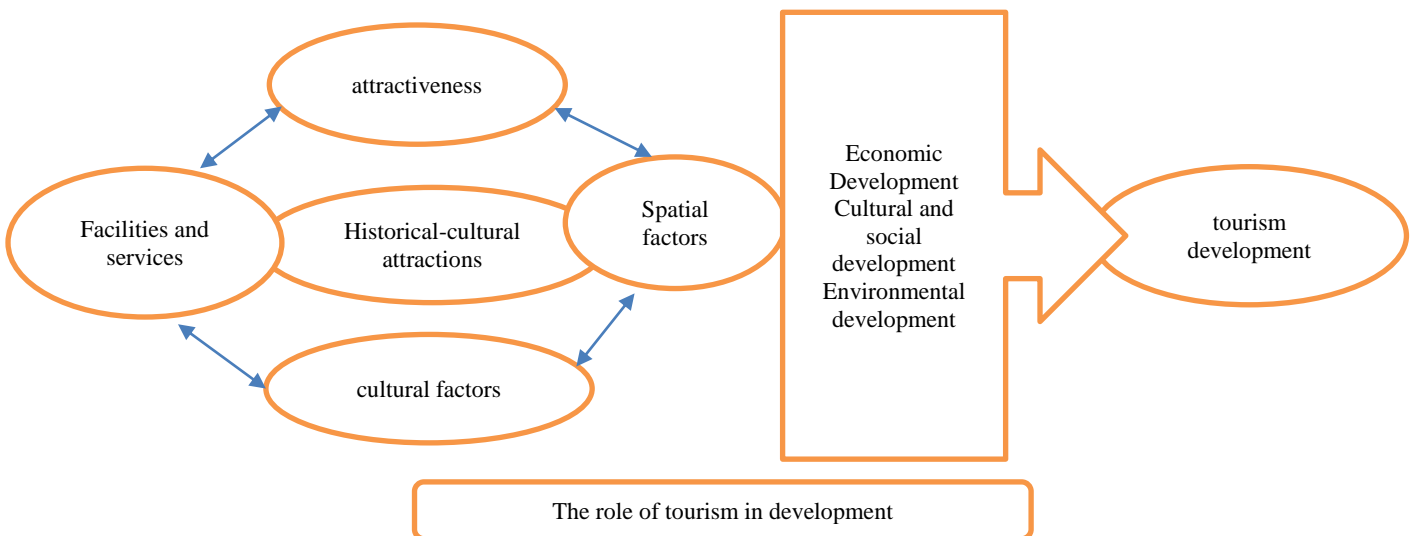
The term "tourism" was first used in an English magazine called "Sporting Magazine" in 1811. At that time, the term referred to traveling for pleasure to enjoy historical sites and natural landscapes (Taheri & Tabatabai, 2020). Since then, multiple meanings and definitions have been proposed by various scholars. Here, we present the United Nations-approved definition of tourism, which is based on the proposal of the International

Transport and Tourism Organization at its conference in Rome: A tourist is an individual who travels for leisure or visits places of interest, for medical treatment, for trade purposes, for sports activities, or pilgrimage to a location other than their place of residence. It is important to note that tourism is defined as a minimum stay of less than 24 hours and more than six months (Moradi, 2016).

The tourism industry witnessed a remarkable transformation following the end of World War II. This was due to factors such as urbanization, reduced working hours, the development of transportation networks, the enhancement of general culture, and the improvement of laws and regulations. Today, tourism has evolved into a prominent phenomenon and has become one of the

The development of tourism is a method of socioeconomic development and improving people's welfare. Developed countries recognize the importance of tourism ahead of others and have implemented extensive plans for its comprehensive growth. Tourism can have both positive and negative effects, including job creation, investment opportunities, improved quality of life, cultural growth, strengthening of local currencies, and infrastructure development. Alongside these mentioned effects, if tourism is not well managed and controlled, it can have numerous negative impacts, including various types of pollution, threats to local culture, the spread of diseases, overcrowding, and consumerism (Taheri & Tabatabai, 2020).

symbols of modern civilization (Bahramzadeh, 2020). Due to the unique characteristics of tourism, this industry has been recognized by scientists and experts as an invisible export and a clean industry. In recent years, tourism has ranked third among the world's major economic sectors, following oil and automobile manufacturing. In today's world, the tourism industry is directly linked to many different sectors of the economy and benefits from them (Taheri & Tabatabai, 2020). Nowadays, the tourism industry is one of the most extensive activities in the cultural, economic, social, and service sectors. It is influenced by government and policy regulations as well as international conditions, which can play a crucial role in its growth, development, or lack thereof (Anchee, 2019).



## Methodology and Materials

To investigate the topic of "The Role of Tourism in Development in Afghanistan," a literature review method was utilized. In this method, credible sources such as scholarly articles, books, reports, case studies, and relevant databases related to the research topic were collected and analyzed. This analysis enables us to leverage previous research and acquire a comprehensive understanding of the desired topic. Additionally, the theoretical foundations related to the role of tourism in development were analyzed, and key important points derived from the research were carefully examined. This research allows us to incorporate and integrate the findings of previous studies and important points into various sections of our article, emphasizing the significance of these valuable resources.

## Attractions in Afghanistan:

Afghanistan, despite being directly affected by war, boasts numerous natural and historical attractions. Travelers visiting Afghanistan may not have high expectations for recreational purposes due to its significance in tourism and the need to fulfill their leisure needs, but the reality is quite different. Afghanistan is a country with a highly pleasant climate compared to its

neighboring and friendly country, Iran. The people of this country share significant cultural similarities with the Iranian people. In the past, Afghanistan was a popular destination for foreign tourists, and notable travelers like Marco Polo have explored this country. However, the conflicts of the past few decades have severely impacted the vital tourism industry, and it no longer enjoys the same level of prosperity as before (Mortazaei et al., 2019).

## Tourist Attractions in Afghanistan:

The Minaret of Jam is one of Afghanistan's remarkable tourist attractions, located in the mountainous region of Ghor Province. This minaret, built in the 12th century AD, stands at a height of 65 meters. In 2012, the World Heritage Preservation Center of UNESCO requested the inclusion of {text} in the list of world cultural heritage sites. This structure is considered the second-tallest brick minaret in the world, after the Qutb Minar in Delhi, India (McGregor, 2015).

Kajaki Dam: Undoubtedly, Kajaki Dam is one of Afghanistan's notable tourist destinations. The enigmatic structure, also known as

the Kajaki Dam, is situated on the Helmand River, approximately 161 kilometers northwest of the city of Kandahar.

**Band-e Amir, Afghanistan:** Band-e Amir refers to a series of six natural lakes located in the highlands of the Hindu Kush in the Bamyán Province. These lakes are separated from each other by natural dams and are fed by springs. This region is also Afghanistan's first national park (Haqiqat et al., 2023).

**Shah Du Shamshira, Afghanistan:** Shah Du Shamshira is a historical figure from the legend of Leith bin Qais bin Abbas, one of the Arab military commanders against Kabulstan (Jowshghani, 2022). It is said that he was as fierce as a human could be, killing Kabul's soldiers with two swords after the destruction of Kabul's wall by a catapult. After breaking through the tenth wall, this warrior enters the battlefield wielding two swords until he is eventually slain and laid to rest on the spot. After the Muslims fully conquered the region, they constructed a mosque adjacent to his tomb and called it Shah Du Shamshira. The mosque has been destroyed several times (Jowshghani, 2022).

**Ghazi Stadium in Afghanistan** is considered one of the country's most sacred sites. It is dedicated to Khwaja Abdullah Ansari, an esteemed poet and mystic from the 11th century. Hundreds of people from various parts of Afghanistan visit it daily.

The Herat Citadel is a historical structure in the city of Herat that has remained since the time of Alexander the Great.

**Babur's Gardens, Afghanistan:** Babur's recreational and historical garden was built in 1528 in Kabul by the Mughal Emperor Babur.

The Sultani Museum was established in 2004 by Ahmad Shah Sultani, a gold merchant who was in London during the civil wars. The museum houses a collection of ancient Afghan artifacts.

**European Cemetery:** This cemetery was built in 1879 by the British army to bury the deceased from the Second Anglo-Afghan War. There are approximately 150 graves in this cemetery, most of which belonged to members of the international community in Kabul before the war (Omari & Ayubi, 2023).

Kabul Zoo is one of the most popular recreational places in Kabul. This zoo features animals such as lions and tigers, making it interesting for animal enthusiasts (McGregor, 2015).

**Darul Aman Palace, Afghanistan:** The Darul Aman Palace is one of Afghanistan's historical buildings. This structure was built in 1925 during the reign of Amanullah Khan in the 14th District of Kabul, which was previously known as Afsharatapa. During its construction, there were good political relations between the governments of Afghanistan and Germany. Twenty-two German engineers were involved in urban development and construction work, including the construction of Darul Aman in 1925 (Seyyed Zia, 2021).

**Chihilsitooon Palace, Afghanistan:** Chihilsitooon Palace, located in Kabul, was considered one of the most magnificent palaces in Kabul before its destruction. This palace has four facades and is known by various names. In 1210 Hijri Shamsi (equivalent to 1796 AD), a structure known as the "World View Palace" was situated atop the Hindu Kush hill. Then the western part of the same hill was called "Koh Chihilsitooon" (Omari & Ayubi, 2023).

Marjan Hill, also known as Nadir Khan Hill, is a prominent location situated in Kabul, adjacent to the Presidential Palace. It is also known as Nadir Khan Hill and Martyrs' Hill, as it is the final

resting place of King Mohammad Nadir Shah, the former king of Afghanistan, and some of the members of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan who lost their lives. It is worth noting that during the reign of Amir Amanullah Khan, Afghan delegations sent some precious Afghan stones, including the "Naranjana" stone, to India (Mehrgon et al., 2022).

The National Archives of Afghanistan, which houses over 15,000 documents dating back to the late 19th century, was established by Abdur Rahman Khan for his son. This archive contains significant documents, including some original and highly valuable copies (McGregor, 2015).

**Castle in Dahaneh, Bamyán:** Dahaneh is a collection of ancient ruins in Afghanistan that were obliterated by Genghis Khan's army in 1222 AD.

**The Jam Mosque and Mausoleum:** The Jam Mosque in Herat was originally constructed by the Ghurids and underwent subsequent renovations by various rulers, such as the Timurids, Safavids, Mongols, and Uzbeks, each contributing to the architectural features of the building.

**Khaja Shirza's Shrine** is a holy site located in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Situated near the Kandahar Mosque and facing the Governor's Office building, it is one of Afghanistan's tourist attractions (Seyyed Zia, 2021).

**Chihil Qadam, Qandahar:** Chihil Qadam is a small historical tower located on a hill in the old city of Qandahar. This historical landmark on the landscape is one of Afghanistan's tourist attractions.

The Baba Wali Shrine, located along the Arghandab River, is a sacred site in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Gola Agha Sherzai, a former governor and military commander, spent millions of dollars to build this shrine in honor of a revered tribal leader (Omari & Ayubi, 2023).

The Eidgah Mosque, one of the largest mosques in Afghanistan, is located near Kandahar University. It was built with funding from Mullah Omar and has become a popular tourist destination (Seyyed Zia, 2021).

The Shrine of Hazrat Ali (RA) is a popular tourist attraction in Afghanistan. It is located in Mazar-i-Sharif and is characterized by its twin blue domes. People from all over the country come to pay their respects to him at the Mazar-i-Sharif shrine (Jowshghani, 2022).

**Bamiyan Buddha Site:** The Buddha statues in Bamiyan have long been towering symbols of Buddhism, showcasing the grandeur of the Bamiyan Valley in Afghanistan. The larger Buddha, Vairocana, stood at a height of 53 meters, while the smaller one, Shakyamuni, stood at a height of 35 meters. Unfortunately, most of these statues have been destroyed.

The City of Dahaneh is located at the entrance of the Bamiyan Valley, above the cliffs, and along the Bamiyan River in Afghanistan. It is a historic site. This area was constructed by the Ghurids and dates back to the 6th century. It is the place where the grandson of Chingiz Khan was killed, resulting in the devastation of this valley due to his anger (McGregor, 2015).

**Qala-e-Qazi:** Just a 20-minute walk from Bamiyan, you'll come across the remains of the last Ghurid stronghold in Bamiyan. Qala-

e-Qazi is the most famous defensive castle in Bamiyan and is one of Afghanistan's top tourist attractions.

**Ajdarha Lake:** Located five kilometers west of Bamiyan, Ajdarha Lake, also known as the Dragon Lake, is said to be the site where remnants of a monstrous creature that once terrorized the region can be found, according to local legends (Seyyed Zia, 2021).

The Nine-Domed Mosque, also known as the Haj Piyada Mosque, is one of Afghanistan's popular tourist attractions located in Balkh. Originally, it was a Buddhist temple that later transformed into a mosque with the arrival of Islam. This historical mosque is currently in poor condition, with its domes collapsed and its columns broken.

**Bala Hissar, Balkh:** Bala Hissar in Balkh is another tourist attraction in northeastern Balkh. It is said to have been built by Alexander the Great in the 3rd century BC, and it was once magnificent. However, this fortress has now turned into a mound of dirt.

## The tourism industry in Afghanistan

In today's world, with modern management practices, tourism plays a significant role in the economic development of countries by serving as a source of income and job creation. Tourism development leads to economic growth, increased financial resources, and the promotion of human interaction. Furthermore, the expenditure of additional income by individuals during their travels and global tourism activities has various impacts (Mehrgon et al., 2022). However, this situation can pose challenges and incur costs for cities and countries. To generate more revenue in the tourism industry, scientific management, and proper planning are essential, and diverse attractions should be utilized. Additionally, it is important to emphasize the preservation of cultural and natural resources, as well as catering to the needs of tourists. In summary, the development of the tourism industry requires active management and rational long-term planning (Mortazaei et al., 2019).

The status of the tourism industry in Afghanistan has a tumultuous history marked by numerous ups and downs. In the past decades, the country, with its abundant cultural, historical, and natural attractions, has managed to attract tourists. Travel companies emerged in the 1930s and 1940s, offering accommodation, transportation, and guided tours to tourist attractions. A period known as the "Golden Age of Tourism" occurred from the 1950s to the 1970s, accompanied by political stability and an increase in tourism infrastructure in the country. During this period, there were luxurious hotels, restaurants, and tourist companies that primarily catered to Westerners. Archaeological and skiing tours were also highly popular during this era (Mortazaei, 2019).

Moreover, Afghanistan was renowned as a stop on the famous Hippie Trail. The Hippie Trail started in Europe, passed through Iran, and Afghanistan, and then continued to India and Thailand. Hippies were a group of Western youths with distinct behaviors and beliefs who traveled extensively to Afghanistan during the 1960s and 1970s. However, this route came to a halt after the coup on September 7, 1978, in Afghanistan (Haqiqat et al., 2023). The importance of the tourism industry in Afghanistan should also be emphasized. Tourism is globally recognized as a significant source of income and economic development. According to global statistics, the tourism industry generated over \$1 trillion in revenue in 2021. This industry is considered a direct and indirect source of

income for countries and has the potential to create a significant number of jobs in Afghanistan (Omari & Ayubi, 2023).

Afghanistan's neighboring countries continue to show a keen interest in the development of the tourism industry. Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and other countries are attempting to attract tourists by leveraging their natural and cultural assets. These countries have successfully positioned themselves as international tourist destinations through substantial investments and extensive advertising. Afghanistan boasts a plethora of historical, religious, and natural attractions that can attract tourists. This includes historical regions such as Nangarhar, Bamiyan, Herat, and Ghor; religious attractions like Mazar-i-Sharif and Balkh; and diverse natural landscapes, ranging from mountains to plains.

However, the tourism industry in Afghanistan faces various challenges. Establishing security and social order, managing natural and historical resources effectively, and developing advertising and tourism infrastructure are some of the key issues that need to be addressed for Afghanistan to be recognized as a popular tourist destination.

## Research Findings

### The Role of Tourism in Development in Afghanistan

**Tourism as an Economic Growth Driver:** Tourism, being one of the world's largest industries, has the potential to significantly boost Afghanistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and generate increased tax revenue for the government. Additionally, the foreign exchange earnings generated from tourism can be invested in various sectors, thereby further enhancing economic growth (Rakhshani, 2019).

**Enhancing International Trade:** The tourism industry can boost international trade in Afghanistan and increase the country's foreign exchange income. Increasing exports of tourism services to other countries can enhance Afghanistan's standing in the global market (Rezvani, 2018).

**Attracting Foreign Investments:** Investing in the tourism industry can provide an opportunity to attract foreign investments to Afghanistan. This industry ranks second globally in terms of foreign investment growth rates and has the potential to contribute to the development of tourism-related infrastructure and services (Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture, 2021).

**Infrastructure Improvement:** Tourism development can enhance infrastructure, such as airports, roads, water supply systems, energy, healthcare services, and security, in Afghanistan. These improvements can also benefit the local community (Shahbanyan, 2021).

**Supporting Low-Income and Developing Countries:** Tourism can provide essential foreign exchange resources for low-income and developing countries, thereby aiding their economic and social development. The tourism industry can be recognized as a primary source of foreign exchange income (Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture, 2021).

**Job Creation:** The tourism industry has the potential to create millions of meaningful and impactful jobs in Afghanistan, benefiting youth, ethnic minorities, women, and marginalized groups. These jobs can contribute to reducing poverty and improving economic conditions in various regions of the country (Ashrafzadeh et al., 2021).

**Facilitating Widespread Economic Growth:** Tourism, as an industry with an extensive supply chain, can promote overall economic growth. It leverages various economic sectors, including transportation, accommodation, food, agriculture, energy, water, tourism attractions, culture, arts, and small businesses (Asgharzadeh et al., 2021).

**Strengthening Rural Communities:** Rural tourism development can promote economic diversity in villages, create jobs for various segments of society, and contribute to the preservation of historical buildings and cultural heritage in rural areas (Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture, 2021).

**Enhancing Urban Areas:** The tourism industry can stimulate competitiveness in cities and encourage individuals to invest in the development of urban areas. These actions can guarantee infrastructure improvement and improve citizens' quality of life (Zarrabi & Esmaili Parikhani, 2021).

**Leveraging Information Technology:** Information technology can enhance Afghanistan's tourism industry. Through online systems and websites, various facilities and experiences can be offered to tourists, thereby increasing revenue (Rezvani, 2018).

**Empowering Women Economically:** The tourism industry is one in which women can actively participate. This participation can lead to increased income and economic empowerment for women in Afghanistan (Zardan & Mansoor Bahmani, 2015).

**Supporting Handicrafts:** With the development of tourism, craftsmen, and artists can earn more income by selling their products to tourists. This initiative can contribute to the development of handicrafts and strengthen the local economy (Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture, 2021).

**Environmental Conservation:** Preserving the environment in the tourism industry can help safeguard Afghanistan's natural resources and attractions. These efforts can contribute to the sustainable development of the country (Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture, 2021).

**Cultural Promotion and Exchange:** Tourists gain awareness of the culture and history of different nations. This can facilitate cultural exchange and enhance mutual understanding among nations (Rezvani, 2018).

## Discussion and Conclusion

To achieve sustainable development goals, tourism planning must be adequately focused. To achieve this, it is necessary to replace small-scale tourism with a larger, more integrated, and resource-dependent form of tourism, shifting policies from focusing on quantity to focusing on quality (Gunn et al., 2012). To achieve sustainable tourism, the initial step involves identifying the natural attractions and potential, as well as the barriers and constraints to tourism development. Without awareness and understanding of the potential and actual capabilities in each region, effective planning and prediction will not be possible. Recognizing the economic, natural, and human potentials of each region enables researchers and planners to offer improved and more practical solutions for regional tourism development, taking into account the current situation and the region's capacity. This approach can generate income opportunities, improve the socio-economic well-being of the region, and ultimately promote sustainable development (Khademi et al., 2014).

Tourism plays a crucial role in the development of Afghanistan. This industry can contribute to economic growth and increase government tax revenue. Furthermore, increasing international trade and promoting the export of tourism services can enhance Afghanistan's competitiveness in the global market. Tourism development can also aid in improving infrastructure, creating jobs, and preserving environmental and cultural heritage. This industry can improve the economic conditions of women and promote handicrafts. Additionally, cultural exchange and mutual understanding between nations can be fostered through tourism, leading to a greater awareness of environmental issues and sustainable development. Ultimately, this industry can stimulate competitiveness in Afghan cities and contribute to urban development.

Given the importance of tourism in Afghanistan's development, it is crucial to take effective measures to promote this industry. Precise planning, knowledge of natural and cultural resources, environmental conservation, improvement in education, and generation of employment should all be priorities. Moreover, promoting tourism is a shared responsibility among the government, local communities, and the tourism industry. Afghanistan, with its abundant natural and historical sites, can contribute to sustainable development and enhance the socio-economic well-being of its people by efficiently utilizing these resources. By collaborating with all relevant institutions and promoting sustainable tourism development, the country can transform into an attractive tourist destination regionally and globally. This will not only improve people's quality of life but also preserve their natural and cultural resources.

## Solutions and Recommendations

1. Afghanistan possesses stunning natural landscapes, a rich history, and a vibrant culture, making it an ideal destination for tourists. Development plans and projects for preserving and promoting these attractions should be encouraged.
2. Establishing Tourism Infrastructure: Constructing and improving airports, roads, hotels, and essential tourist facilities is crucial to facilitating easy travel to Afghanistan for tourists and ensuring a positive experience.
3. Train a Skilled Workforce: Encourage specialized educational programs for individuals aspiring to work in the tourism industry to enhance the quality of tourism services.
4. Promote Domestic Tourism: Encourage Afghan citizens to travel within the country and enhance domestic leisure activities to contribute to the economic growth of various regions.
5. Develop Religious Tourism: Afghanistan boasts significant religious sites for Muslims. Developing religious tourism can promote Islamic culture and history in the country.
6. Preserve the Environment: Tourism development should be carried out with an emphasis on environmental conservation to protect Afghanistan's beautiful landscapes.
7. Ensuring Security and Stability: Establishing security and stability in the country is vital for attracting tourists. Programs to reduce insecurity and terrorism should be implemented.

8. Marketing and Promotion: Increase advertising and identify the most effective channels and marketing strategies to attract tourists on a national and international level.
9. Adhering to international standards in the tourism industry can instill greater confidence in tourists.
10. Promote Cultural Exchange: Encourage cultural exchange between tourists and the host community to foster mutual understanding and contribute to peace and non-oil revenue generation in the country.

## References

1. Alizada, M., Ghaderi, Z., & Keshavarz, M. (2020). Sustainable tourism development in Afghanistan: An overview. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 43, 1-10.
2. Amiri, M., & Mazafari, H. (2021) Rural tourism and sustainable development National Conference on Rural Sustainable Development, 2.
3. Anjehi, A. H. (2019). Exploring Tourism Development Strategies in Malaysia, Turkey, and Tunisia and Providing Appropriate Solutions for Iran
4. Ashrafzadeh, M. R., Betondi, Z., Karimi, H., & Sarooshnia, R. (2021). Investigating the Importance of the Restricted Hunting Area of Shadab Castle in Khuzestan Province from the Perspective of Stakeholders *Environmental Journal*, Number 59, 63–76.
5. A'zami, M., Hashemi Amin, N., & Sarooshmehr, H. (2015). Developing a Sustainable Rural Tourism Strategy Using the SWOT Technique (Case Study: The Village of Noura in Sanandaj County) *Geographical Journal of Tourism Space*, 5(17), 83–106.
6. Bahramzadeh, H. A. (2020) Sustainable Development. *Tadbir Magazine*, Number 134, 35–42.
7. Ghorakhlou, M., Ramazan-zadeh Lasbooyi, M., & Gholin Sharif Dini, J. (2019). Environmental Impacts of Tourism on the Coastlines of Ramsar City
8. Gunn, A. C., & Turgut, V. (2012). *Tourism Planning: Basics, Concepts, and Cases* (4th ed.) Routledge.
9. Haghighat, Khorsandian, Abdul Khaleq, Arabi, & Hamed (2023) An investigation of the causal relationship between economic growth and tourism development in Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries *Strategic and Macro Policies*, 1(2), 71–108.
10. Joshaghani, Hasanvand, Mohammad Kazem, Aref, & Mohammad (2022). A comparative study of decorative patterns in mosques in Kabul, Afghanistan, and Sultan Ahmed, Turkey *Bagh-e Nazar*, 18 (105), 5–18.
11. Khademi, A. H., Tavakoli, M., & Farhadi Khah, H. (2014). Analyzing Factors Influencing the Expansion of Tourism with a Sustainable Development Approach: A Case Study of Clardasht City Using the SWOT Model *The Sixth National Conference on Urban Planning and Management with an Emphasis on Islamic City Components*, 23–24
12. Majeed, M. T., & Amjad, M. (2019). Tourism and economic development: Evidence from Afghanistan. *Tourism Economics*, 25(5), 734-754.
13. McGregor, C. M. (2015) Description of a journey to the provinces of Khurasan and Northwestern Afghanistan
14. Mehragan Nader, Ghaffari Fard Mohammad, and Kazemi Morteza (2022). The role of economic sanctions in Iran-Afghanistan trade
15. Mirzaei, R., & Torabian, P. (2021). *Tourism: Impacts, Planning, and Management* (Translation, written by Mason, Peter) Terme Publications.
16. Mohammadi, M., & Shojaei, P. (2018). Tourism development in Afghanistan: Challenges and prospects. *Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing*, 4(1), 32-38.
17. Moradavi & Mousapour Negari, M. (2019). Tourism: The triangle of security, solidarity, and development in Sistan and Baluchestan provinces *Iranian Studies Journal*, 17(34), 257–284.
18. Moradi, M. (2016). *Tourism Management: Principles, Foundations, and Practical Concepts* Qods Razavi Publications
19. Mortazaei, S., Mojtahedzadeh, P., & Ezzati, E. (2019). Tourism Diplomacy and Tourism Boom in the Makran Region: A Case Study of Iran's Relations with Eastern Neighbors *Geography (Regional Planning)*, 9(3), 561–582.
20. Omri Ansari Ali and Ayoubi Mohammad (2023) The role of environmental information in the legal system of Afghanistan: A study of journalists' perspectives
21. Rakhshani, H., & Zarabi, A. (2019). Challenges and Opportunities for Ecotourism Development in Iran *Scientific-Research Journal of Geographic Space*, Number 28, 41–55.
22. Razavani, M. R. (2018). *Rural Tourism Development with a Sustainable Tourism Approach* University of Tehran Publications
23. Seyyed Zia Hussein (2021) Islamic architecture in Afghanistan: Islamic architecture and stylistic analysis of Afghan Architecture *Journal of Urban and Engineering Research*, 2(1), 118–145.
24. Shahabian, P. (2021). Examining the Role and Effects of Urban Tourism in Urban Sustainable Development, with an Emphasis on Residents' Perceptions *Arman-e-Shahrsazi Magazine*, 4(7), 121–132.
25. Smith, V. L., & Brent, M. (2017). Tourism in Afghanistan: Challenges and opportunities. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 20(6), 614-629.
26. Taheri, A., & Tabatabaei, H. (2020). The Role of Tourism in Sustainable Development: Opportunities, Challenges, and Its Impact on National Security in the Islamic Republic of Iran *Journal of Defense Preparedness and Technology*, 3(1), 83–102.
27. Zarabi, A., & Islami Parikhani, S. (2021). Environmental Aspects of Tourism Development (Case Study: Mashkinshahr County) *Research in Human Geography*, Number 75, 37–52
28. Zardan, M., & Mansour Bahmani, M. (2015). Rural Tourism and the Principles of Sustainable Tourism Development *The 15th National Conference on Civil and Architectural Engineering with an Emphasis on Sustainable Development*
29. Ziaei, M., & Abbasi, D. (2018) Challenges and Approaches to Sustainable Tourism Development: From Theory to Practice *Journal of Tourism Planning and Development*, 24, 8–37.

30. Ziaei, M., & Torabian, P. (2020). Assessing the Acceptable Level of Negative Social Impacts of Tourists on Local Communities in Iran: A Case Study of Rural Settlements in the Parishaan Wetland Area *Geography Journal*, Number 27, 205-225