

# GENDER SITUATION IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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**Abstract.** *The article focuses on the growing increase in women's tourism on a global scale and the disclosure of the causes of this phenomenon, as one of the most relevant and significant topics of modern society. This work is an attempt to assess the dynamics of changes in the participation of women in international tourism, which is becoming more diverse and covers various destinations. Recently, considerable attention has been paid to the development of international women's tourism, solving gender problems in the field of employment in this industry, attracting women to leadership, and increasing the role of women in solving urgent problems in the tourism industry. Today we can note the increase in the number of women in such types of tourism, which were previously considered exclusively male. The article deals with the issues of gender equality and the participation of women in the development of tourism, as well as the problems and challenges they face.*

**Keywords:** *gender position, women's tourism, women in tourism, Uzbekistan, gender equality, Middle East, tourism, employment.*

## **Introduction. Statement of the problem.**

An important feature of the current stage of development of international tourism and changes in its organizational forms is the availability of travel for women. Women's tourism is becoming a popular global trend. If in 1996 women accounted for thirty percent of all participants in active tours, then in 2016 this number exceeded fifty [10]. According to 2021 data, approximately 2/3 of the tourists were women [26]. Developed European countries are recognized as the best region for international cultural and educational tourism and beach holidays. Since 2005, Europe has been the most popular destination for international tourism. If the number of international tourists who arrived in Europe in 2005 amounted to 355.9 million, then in 2019 it was 721.55 million people [15]. The degree of development of international tourism, including women's tourism, is primarily influenced by numerous economic and social factors, among which the country's economic development, an increase in the national income and material well-being of the population, the level of development of the material and technical base and tourism infrastructure, increasing the length of free time, raising the standard of living and the level of education, culture, aesthetic needs of the population. To a large extent, the development of international tourism, including women's tourism, is facilitated by the improvement of the hotel industry, travel agencies, the creation of affordable vehicles, an increase in the level of transport services, and the creation of comfortable conditions for air transportation of a large number of travelers. The growth of international tourist trips, the mobility of the population is also affected by the increase in the number of innovations in all types of vehicles and their developed network, the Internet, accessible infrastructure and ease of use, security. A significant impact on the scale, pace and direction of tourism development has the opportunity for tourists to independently choose tickets, hotels, modes of transport, transport accessibility of natural tourist sites.

### **Analysis and results of the study.**

The gender situation in the field of international tourism in the 21st century is one of the most relevant and significant topics of modern society. The second edition of the World Report on Women in Tourism (2019) highlights that more and more women are challenging gender stereotypes in the sector. If previously men mostly occupied key positions in this industry, then with the gradual change in social stereotypes, the gender position in the field of international tourism is undergoing significant changes. For example, in Morocco, for the first time, women were issued licenses as tour guides. An airline in the UK has doubled the number of female pilots they employ, and the Uganda Hotel Owners Association is now led by its first female CEO, Susan Muhwezi[1]. According to the International Society of Women Pilots in Easyjet, 15% of their pilots are women, against 5% of women pilots in the world [23]. Gender equality in international tourism not only contributes to the development of the industry, but also leads to greater innovation and efficiency in work.

UNWTO Secretary General Zurab Pololikashvili noted that tourism is leading the fight to empower women around the world. In the private and public sectors, women are harnessing the potential of tourism to become financially independent and start their own businesses [1].

Current trends show that more and more women are striving to realize themselves and take a leading position in international tourism. Thanks to the active support of state and non-state organizations, as well as various initiatives, they get more opportunities for self-realization and professional growth. Raising awareness, creating equal opportunities, changing existing stereotypes and supporting women are all important steps towards achieving gender equality in this industry.

According to various studies of the travel industry, there is a growing trend of independent travel among women. Individual holidays for women became the most popular more than ten years ago. Since 2010, the number of women traveling alone has been 78% [21]. According to the World Tourism Organization, the number of individual female travelers increased from 59 million to 138 million between 2014 and 2017 [12]. Valerie Boned, general secretary of the Entreprises du Voyage travel trade union, said: "Today there is a fashion for women-only travel. "There are already many platforms for living at home, but none of them are just for women. We offer an alternative choice... for anyone who believes in the need for a safer environment for women." "The truth is that travel is always more dangerous for women. They face problems such as sexual harassment and threats to their personal safety much more often than men... We want to encourage more women to travel alone. The fact that you are a woman should not prevent you from traveling to new countries." [12]

This is largely facilitated by the development of technology and the emergence of useful travel applications that allow you to book trips, hotels, apartments and cottages for a period convenient for them, navigate independently in an unfamiliar place and find the best sights. For example, the guest network, which exists in the form of an online service Couchsurfing (CouchSurfing), unites more than 14 million people in 200,000 settlements. Members of the network provide each other with assistance and accommodation during travel and organize joint trips. The La Voyageuse website offers women the opportunity to "find trusted hosts hosting guests nearby" and says it's "only for women who travel." To date, there are 1250 members offering accommodation, and 400 travelers, and new people are registered every day [12].

Taking into account numerous factors, Yahoo based on 5 international sources: GPI - a global peace index that representatively assesses the situation. Peace and security index for women, compiled by the Georgetown and Oslo institutions at the end of 2020. Data from American Gallup polls. Analysis by UNWTO - an intergovernmental organization for tourism. Reviews of travelers on the forums of leading travel companies compiled a rating of countries' safety for women's tourism. According to the published list, the safest countries in Europe for female tourists are: Spain, Norway, Ireland, Austria, Switzerland [26].

In 2018, experts from the travel portal Hostelworld presented a ranking of ten countries that are ideal for single travelers: 1. Cuba, 2. Nicaragua, 3. South Africa, 4. Bulgaria, 5. Guatemala, 6. Sri Lanka, 7. Macedonia, 8. Portugal, 9. Tanzania, 10. Romania [29]. A study by Norwegian Cruise Line showed that older women choose to visit new countries alone. According to an internal study by travel network Virtuoso, the largest increase in individual travel in 2022 was among women aged 65 and over. In 2019, they accounted for only 4% of individual travel, but already in 2022 they accounted for 18% of travelers who visit other countries alone [25].

Despite the growing trend of solo travel, women still face security issues when traveling abroad alone. In the Women, Peace, and Security Index for 2019/2020, compiled by the Oslo and Georgetown Research Institutes, among the countries the safest for women travelers, the first 3 places were taken by: Norway, Switzerland, Denmark. According to the Georgetown University Women's Peace and Security Index (WPS), 85% of women feel safe in Slovenia. In Rwanda, women also feel safe when they travel alone. The list of safe countries for women also includes Japan and Norway [25]. Various travel industry studies predict that the number of single women traveling will increase. A study by British Airways on the subject in the UK, US, France, India, Germany, Italy, Brazil and China aged 18 to 64 found that more than 50 percent of women take self-guided holidays. 75% of women are planning an individual trip in the next few years [19]. According to a World Travel report, the number of travel services for women has increased markedly in recent years, which has increased the need for the development of women's hotel complexes. The first 12-story The Martha Washington Hotel with 416 rooms exclusively for women was opened on March 2, 1903 in New York. Demand was so high that within a few days all the rooms were booked and over 200 people were in line in case someone canceled the reservation [33]. In 1927, a new women-only hotel, the Barbizon Hotel for Women, was built in New York City. In subsequent years, separate floors "only for women" were allocated in hotels, many of which are successfully functioning to this day. With the increase in the flow of female tourists in some countries of the world, hotels or special floors exclusively for women Woman Friendly with increased room security have appeared [18a]. So, in the Indian hotel "ITC Maurya Sheraton" the women's floor is called "Eva". In Zurich, the "Lady's First Hotel" was opened, in the construction of which famous Swiss women designers and constructors took part. There are "women only" hotels in Germany and Italy and in many countries [12].

Due to the growth in the number of Muslim women traveling in the Middle East, according to a report by World Travel, the number of travel services for women has increased markedly in recent years. It is in these countries that women's tourism takes the first place. There was a need for the development of women's hotel complexes and the allocation of separate women's floors in hotels. In March 2008, in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, the inauguration of the country's first hotel "Lyauzan", designed exclusively for women, took place. She is not subject to the rules in force in the kingdom, according to which a woman (local resident or tourist), not accompanied

by a guardian, who may be a husband, father, or one of the male relatives, does not have the right to stay in a hotel or book a room on her own in her. The hotel was built on the initiative of a number of Saudi business women and is designed to make life and travel around the country easier for Saudi business women. The head of the Supreme Committee for Tourism of Saudi Arabia, Prince Sultan bin Salman, who took part in the opening ceremony of the hotel, expressed the hope that similar hotels will soon appear in other cities of the country, which will undoubtedly contribute to the development of business activity among Saudi women [20] and expressed the desire that as many women as possible invest in the construction of such hotels [5]. In 2008, Dubai's Jumeriah Emirates Towers was the first to convert one floor to women-only, which caters exclusively to female staff and only women are allowed to book a room on it [3].

With the increasing influence of modern integration processes on the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, global trends in the development of the societies of the region, there is an increase in the general level of education among women, a decrease in the birth rate, an increase in the average life expectancy of women and girls, as well as positive changes in national legislation [8]. According to Mastercard's Vice President of Market Products Management Aisha Islam: "Muslim women travelers are ready to see the world. This young and motivated part of the population is ready to attract travel service providers who welcome them and curate the experience, uphold their values, and tailor their products and services. to this growing group." 63 million Muslim women travelers spent more than \$80 billion on their travels in 2018. According to research by Mastercard and CrescentRating, 28% of Muslim women traveled alone, and two-thirds of these women were aged 40 or younger. Leisure (90%), followed by religious travel (21%) and business travel (11%) 71% of women travel with their families and therefore prefer family destinations[28].

Uzbekistan is becoming one of these destinations for Muslim women tourists. According to the report Muslim Women in Travel 2019, published as part of the Halal in Travel Asia summit in Singapore, Uzbekistan has become one of the most attractive countries for Muslim tourists, entered the top ten member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in terms of security and religious tolerance . Muslim Women in Travel 2019 is the world's first survey on the travel of Muslim women, which included 3,300 Muslim women from Southeast Asia [31]. Qatar, Oman, Brunei, Turkey, UAE, Kuwait and the Maldives lead the list. Uzbekistan occupies the eighth place in this list. This is followed by Indonesia and Malaysia [13].

According to the company specializing in the field of halal tourism CrescentRating, in partnership with MasterCard, in 2018 Uzbekistan ranked 32nd in the ranking, and in 2019 - 22nd, 2021 16th in the global travel index in the Muslim world (GMTI). The ranking includes 48 Islamic countries and 92 non-Muslim destinations. The first 3 places in the GMTI list have been occupied by Malaysia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia for several years in a row [21].

During the period 2010-2017, the export of tourism services of the republic doubled and amounted to \$546.9 million in 2017, and in 2018 - \$1,041 million [32]. According to the Agency on Statistics, in 2022, 5.2 million foreign citizens visited Uzbekistan for tourism purposes, of which 2.6 million (50.6%) were women, 2.5 million (49.4%) were men [2 ], and in January-May 2023, 2,589,200 foreign citizens visited Uzbekistan for tourism purposes for 1,207,400 people, or 1.9 times more than with the corresponding period of 2022[27]. During the same period, 1.6 million Uzbeks went abroad for tourism purposes. The most visited countries were Kyrgyzstan - 650,700 people, Tajikistan - 422,000 people and Kazakhstan -255,700 people, Russia - 65.1

thousand, UAE -59 thousand, Turkey - 52.7 thousand. Among other destinations are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait , Egypt and Azerbaijan [4].

According to the World Tourism Organization, Uzbekistan among the 20 fastest developing countries in the tourism sector came in fourth place, and in the Global Muslim Travel Index it rose from 32nd to 22nd place, entering the top 10 countries with high level of attractiveness, safety and tolerance [30].

Currently, the gender situation in the field of international tourism is undergoing significant changes. Previously, mostly men occupied key positions and leadership in this industry, but with a gradual change in social stereotypes and gender equality, the position of women begins to become increasingly important.

A study by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) shows that the tourism industry worldwide is one of the most favorable areas for women. According to a Eurostat report published at the beginning of 2016, employment in tourism in the EU countries in the field of travel agency / tour operator services, in the field of accommodation and in the air transport segment, almost 60% of employees are women. Most women in tourism are in Latvia (72%), Lithuania (68%), Poland and Slovakia (67%), and Estonia (66%). Least of all - in Turkey (29%), Luxembourg (32%) and Malta (41%) [6]. According to 2019 data, 54% of those working in the tourism sector are women. In other sectors, their average share is 39 percent. And although the average salary of women around the world lags behind men by 16.8 percent, in the tourism industry this gap is less - 14.7 percent. The number of women in the post of Minister of Tourism is also higher: 23 percent, and in other areas, women ministers make up 20.7 percent [11].

Women still face a number of barriers and challenges that hinder their full participation in international tourism. Unequal distribution of jobs, unequal access to education and professional opportunities, as well as lack of social support, lack of career opportunities, and problems in reconciling work and family life are serious problems faced by women. In contrast, gender equality involves taking into account the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men, creating conditions for the full realization of their potential, personal status independent of gender and equal assessment of the importance of gender social roles by society.

According to Empowering Women in Tourism in the Middle East, a companion to the World Report on Women in Tourism (Second Edition), produced in 2020, the share of women in tourism in the Middle East is only 8% compared to 16% in the economy of the region as a whole. At the same time, the proportion of women in senior government positions is very high: 21% of ministerial representatives of tourism in the region are women (compared to a global figure of 23%). In order to stimulate further work on gender equality, a number of political level initiatives have been adopted: the Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, the Egyptian Tourism Reform Program and the Gender Balance Council of the United Arab Emirates [24].

These issues are also relevant for Uzbekistan, where great importance is attached to the implementation of comprehensive measures for the development of tourism, the creation of favorable conditions in this direction. The concept for the development of the tourism sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2019-2025 provides for an increase in 2025 in the share of tourism in the gross domestic product of Uzbekistan to 5% from 2.3% in 2017, and the number of foreign tourists to more than 9 million, including including from far abroad - up to 2 million. The volume of exports of tourism services should grow from \$950 million to \$2.2 billion, the number of



accommodation facilities - from 850 to 3000, the number of tour operators - to double from 860 to almost 1700 [16]. Among the important tasks in this direction is the study of world experience in ensuring gender equality in the field of tourism and attracting women to this industry. So, on September 28, 2020, there was a tribute to the launch of the intergovernmental research project in the field of tourism “Tourism contributes to poverty reduction; employment and development of women in Uzbekistan” with the support of the Chongqing Training Center for International Cooperation (CTCIC) in cooperation with the Committee of the Alliance of Cities on the Maritime and Continental Silk Road “Smart City” and “New Industry” (MCSR-SNC) (China) and the State Committee of the Republic Uzbekistan for the development of tourism. The project provides for educational and educational seminars and courses that, using China's experience in the fight against poverty, will attract rural women not only as tourism workers, but also as entrepreneurs [14].

A March 2020 study by Phocuswright, a travel research company and a subsidiary of TravelPulse of the Northstar Travel Group, found that 70 percent of companies in the travel industry have a majority of male leadership roles. Since 85 percent of the consumers in the industry are women, there is a need for women to make up more of those in key leadership positions. In early 2021, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) launched the industry's first women's initiative to promote women and gender equality in all aspects of the industry. travel and tourism, but only a small part of them hold key leadership positions [18].

### **Conclusions.**

Tourism has become a powerful tool for eradicating poverty in many countries and has become the economic backbone of many least developed countries, enabling them to develop and create jobs. This was vividly demonstrated by the economic impact on tourism and retail trade caused by the coronavirus pandemic. According to the UNWTO, the sharp drop in international travel demand between January and June 2020 resulted in the loss of 440 million international arrivals and about \$460 billion in tourism export earnings. This is about five times more than the loss of international tourism recorded in 2009 during the global economic and financial crisis. In Europe in the first half of 2020, the number of tourists decreased by 66%, in the USA by 55%, in Africa and the Middle East by 57% each, in the Asia-Pacific region by 72 percent [17]. This dramatic drop in customer numbers has put millions of jobs and businesses at risk. World Economic Forum (WEF) Managing Director Saadia Zahidi notes that tourism and retail, where many women work, have been hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the quarantine, while schools were closed, many women took on additional household responsibilities. “The pandemic has had a huge impact (on gender equality) and, in fact, has reversed significant progress made in the past” [9]. The tourism sector, with successful development, can become one of the key elements that allow creating conditions for ensuring the employment of the female part of the population, increasing the level of satisfaction of their social and spiritual needs, and creating more favorable conditions for promoting gender equality.

Based on key findings and recommendations from the second edition of the World Report on Women in Tourism, the Action Plan proposes specific actions to reduce gender pay inequality in the tourism sector, address sexual harassment of female tourism workers, increase opportunities for women to access digital technologies, including digital platforms dedicated to tourism. to the market with their tourism products and services, overcoming gender stereotypes in secondary positions in the tourism sector [7]. This industry is essential for increasing the number of jobs for

women, the number of women in leadership positions, closing the wage gap and preparing women for the jobs of the future.

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