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**DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM IN THE CHECHEN**  
**REPUBLIC**

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**Abstract**

The paper refers to the development of cultural tourism in the Chechen Republic. The development of cultural tourism in the Chechen Republic includes a set of various marketing events that imply the formation of a positive attitude towards the region – territorial branding. The objective of tourism branding is to create a unique image among potential customers that determines its place in the tourism market. The modern stage of tourism development may become the most important branch of the economy of the Chechen Republic characterized by the practical implementation of tasks to improve organizational forms of management in accordance with legal, economic, climatic, social, cultural and historical characteristics of the republic. Ethnoturistic activity is a direction of cultural and cognitive tourism, which is currently relevant for many countries. Ethnographic tourism is a type of cognitive tourism in order to visit ethnographic objects for the knowledge of culture, architecture, life and traditions of the people, ethnos that is living now or had ever lived in this territory. Ethnographic tourism is based on the interest of tourists in folk traditions, rituals and culture. In the modern unified world people strive for self-identification, study their ethnic roots in order to feel their individuality, deep history, and their own cultural traditions. Knowledge of the cultures of other ethnic groups constitutes a multifaceted picture of peoples unique in their individuality. Ethnotourism promotes close ties between peoples, cultural exchange and the inclusion of their culture in the world cultural heritage.

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*Keywords:* Cultural tourism, archaeological sites, ethnotourism, family tours, tower complexes, cultural heritage



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## **1. Introduction**

Tourism in Russia is identified as one of the priority areas of economic development. The government of the Chechen Republic pays great attention to the development of the tourism industry, which has a positive impact on the economic infrastructure. Taking into account the geopolitical situation and high resource tourism potential of the Chechen Republic, the government considers tourism as the priority sector of the economy. The Ministry of National Policy, External Relations, Press and Information of the Chechen Republic approved a cooperation agreement in the process of creating a positive opinion of the population about the Republic and the North Caucasus with the PosetiKavkaz (Visit Caucasus) Foundation, affiliated with the North Caucasus Development Corporation.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The problem of developing cultural tourism in Chechnya is the inclusion of various cultural and historical objects in the system of tourist products of the Chechen Republic; it depends on the criterion of their attractiveness for tourists and is determined by the number of visits to the region. The development of the tourism brand in the Chechen Republic will determine the main economic priorities for long-term development of the region, develop the image most suitable for the Chechen Republic, as well as identify a promising market niche for further development of new projects and identify additional resources, reserves and opportunities for the implementation of existing projects. The determining conditions for the development of ethno-tourist activities in the Chechen Republic are the availability of tourist resources (objects of nature, history, culture), developed infrastructure (roads, hotels, food, excursion services, etc.).

## **3. Research Questions**

The object of this study is cultural tourism in the Chechen Republic.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the paper is to analyze the prospects for the development of cultural tourism in the Chechen Republic.

## **5. Research Methods**

To solve the problems of the study, a set of methods was used: historical-genetic, historical-typological, architectural-stylistic and comparative-historical analysis. The historical and genetic method helped us to get closer to recreating the real history of architectural monuments in Chechnya. The historical and typological method was used to identify specific signs of the medieval architecture of the Chechens characterizing their qualitative certainty.

## 6. Findings

Today tourism is a massive socio-economic phenomenon. To a certain extent, any type of tourism is cultural since throughout the trip a tourist is influenced by an unusual socio-cultural environment. Accordingly, this concerns the cultural aspect of the impact of tourism – “the influence that tourism has on the material and spiritual spheres of human activity and, above all, on its system of values, knowledge and social behavior” (Bereznitskaya, 1999, p. 53). The international scale of tourism contributes to the expansion of political, economic, scientific and cultural ties between states and peoples, allows people expanding their knowledge of the history and culture of their country, getting acquainted with the sights, culture, traditions of other peoples. Due to its cultural and historical heritage, as well as its geographical location, the Chechen Republic has great tourist potential for inbound and domestic tourism. It should also be noted that with a huge tourist potential, the republic so far occupies a very modest place in the inbound tourism market.

The problems of the development of the tourist complex in the Chechen Republic were reflected in the works of Tamaev (2015), Gairbekov (2012) and others.

Theoretically, the study by Pearce (1995), Braimer (1995), Poon (1996) are particularly interesting.

The forecasting and strategic study of tourism in Chechnya, taking into account national characteristics, is in the process of formation. Further study of this issue is expected from the point of view of economic and historical-ethnographic aspects.

The key element of the brand of the Chechen Republic is unique medieval architecture. Researchers began to deal with the issues of the value of architectural monuments almost simultaneously with the advent of the restoration theory. Both foreign (A. Riegl, C. Brandy, V. Frodl) and domestic researchers (E.V. Mikhailovsky, D.S. Likhachev, A.V. Ikonnikov, O.I. Prutsyn, E.N. Selezneva, A.S. Schenkov, etc.) were engaged into this (Vlasov, 2009).

Currently, only some systemic studies are known regarding the value approach to architectural heritage, but they also do not provide an objective idea of what the value of historical buildings is and what it consists of. It is believed that the term “architecture” is acceptable to such art, “which allows and uses the requirements and methods of construction, imposes the properties and qualities of being something beautiful and worthy of veneration, although not necessary, on the things it creates” (Ruskin, 2007, p. 34). The artistic and aesthetic characteristics of architectural monuments are reflected in a number of documents: the Venice Charter of 1964, the UNESCO criteria system, the Federal Law on the Objects of Cultural Heritage of the Peoples of the Russian Federation and many others.

The demonstration of cultural traditions of peoples who live in this territory and the antiquities of their region helps tourists understand the continuity of culture, the community of historical destinies of countries and peoples. Knowledge of the cultures of other ethnic groups constitutes a multifaceted picture of peoples that are unique in their individuality. Forgotten traditional crafts are revived, their production is created, language, customs, rites are preserved and popularized. Thus, ethnographic tourism preserves, multiplies and conveys the historical and cultural heritage of its people to future generations.

The main condition is the presence of ethnographic objects, which form part of the socio-cultural resources that are used to produce tourist services and satisfy the need for excursion tourism. The

reconstruction of the everyday life of medieval settlers, military and sports competitions, folklore expeditions are very popular among tourists. The development of such cultural facilities is an attractive segment of the travel industry for serious financial investments.

The medieval architecture of Chechnya represents a peculiar phenomenon of world culture – little-known and little-studied. Typologically, architectural monuments are divided into pagan sanctuaries, Christian temples, ancestral crypts and towers – military, residential and dual-use towers.

The material culture of the Chechens is characterized, among other factors, by settlements and dwellings. The sources indicate that in the mountainous regions of Chechnya, an original Chechen culture, primarily folk architecture, has developed. Tower complexes – architectural monuments of ancient and medieval Chechnya, located high in the mountains, served as a fortress protecting the highlanders from enemy conquerors. These circumstances could not but affect the layout of settlement and the appearance of residential buildings.

According to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 176 of February 20, 1995, the Argun Museum-Reserve is included into the list of objects of historical and cultural heritage of all-Russian significance. It was formed in order to preserve unique historical and architectural monuments, as well as rare species of flora and fauna that are in danger of extinction. On the territory of the Argun Museum-Reserve there are about 600 monuments of history, culture, archeology, architecture and nature, of which more than 170 objects belong to the monuments of federal significance. Here there are almost all types of monuments of different eras of this region. Unique objects of material culture are well preserved – arming and residential towers and castle complexes, cave grottoes, parking lots, burial vaults, villages, soil burial grounds, underground and above-ground tribal crypts. According to scientists, the chronological range of immovable monuments of history and culture on the territory of the museum-reserve covers the period from the II millennium BC to the XIX century inclusive. Before the start of hostilities, scientific expeditions, archaeological excavations were carried out on the territory of the Argun Museum-Reserve, and a horse-drawn tourist route was functioning. Today, the museum-reserve is working on the scientific certification of cultural monuments, compilation of maps – diagrams, drawings and photo illustrations. At the same time, conferences, photo exhibitions are held there, documentaries are shot in order to popularize and preserve the cultural heritage.

The preservation of medieval monuments of Chechen architecture is fearsome. Residents have not lived in mountain villages for a long time. Rains and flood waters wash out the solution from the masonry of the walls. The towers are collapsing. Many arming towers are used by shepherds as cattle tins. Cattle breaks were made in the tower walls, which also contributes to the collapse of monuments. There is a good road in the Argun Gorge – the longest in the North Caucasus, so the gorge is accessible to tourists.

Most of the architectural monuments fall on the recently restored Galanchozh region. The famous City of the Dead – Choi Pede in the society of Melchyst – is located in this area. Each of the 14 settlements of this society has cultural heritage, arming and residential towers, crypts, grotto burials, etc. In the Terloevsky Gorge there is the Nikaroy tower complex, which consists of an arming tower and a number of five-story half-military towers. They are without a roof, interfloor overlapping, but the walls are 10 meters high and more have been preserved. The complex has a mosque of the period of adoption of Islam by the Chechens, below the slope is a pagan sanctuary. One of the features of the area is that in

cemeteries near Muslim burials there are earlier ones that belong to Christian and pagan times. There are dozens of waterfalls with cascades on the mountain rivers of Chechnya. On the tributaries of Sharo-Argun and Chanti-Argun, for example, there are 45-, 70-, and 100-meter waterfalls, and each is wonderful in its own way. The Head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Akhmadovich Kadyrov pays great attention to the restoration of architectural monuments and set the task of restoring all the surviving architectural objects located in the mountainous regions of Chechnya. According to Article 34 of the Federal Law No. 73-FZ “On Objects of Cultural Heritage (Historical and Cultural Monuments) of the Peoples of the Russian Federation” of 25.06.2002, measures are being taken to develop and approve projects for the protection of cultural heritage sites located on the territory of the republic. A legal framework for the protection of cultural heritage has been developed; inclusion of objects into the Unified State Register of Objects of Cultural Heritage of the Peoples of the Russian Federation; certification of cultural heritage objects is carried out; monitoring of cultural heritage sites; repair and restoration work is carried out at cultural heritage sites.

In the fall of 2020, the renewed settlement of Hoi was opened. Restoration work in the settlement was carried out at the initiative of the Head of the Republic R.A. Kadyrov at the expense of the Regional Public Fund named after Akhmat-Khadzhi Kadyrov.

Currently, 432 historical and cultural monuments have been put on state registration in the Chechen Republic. These are monuments included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, of which 134 objects of federal significance; 298 objects of republican (regional) significance. According to the main typological groupings, there are 25 archaeological monuments (of federal significance) as part of immovable monuments; 130 historical monuments; 44 architectural monuments; 19 monuments of monumental architecture. 20 historical monuments, 27 architectural monuments, 11 monuments of monumental architecture were irretrievably lost as a result of two Chechen campaigns of 1994–1996 and 1999–2000.

On November 9, 2010, the government of the Chechen Republic issued the decree “On the approval of the Regulation and Program for Monitoring the Modern State and Use of the Objects of Cultural Heritage (Historical and Cultural Monuments) in the Chechen Republic (2011–2014)”. Archaeological museum complexes will be able to attract more tourists if they are part of an extensive tourist route, which includes familiarization with architectural and nature monuments.

Ethnotourism on the basis of medieval settlements in the form of tower complexes will serve to create additional jobs, revive folk crafts, and raise interest in the folk customs and traditions of the Chechen people. One form of ethnoturistic activity is the manufacture and sale of a variety of souvenir products related to archaeology – these are booklets and card sets, exact copies (the so-called “replicas”) of ancient objects made in the form of real prototypes. This will undoubtedly solve the problem of selling finds from predatory excavations, since at a significantly lower price their owners will receive virtually the same objects. The sale of such products does not violate the current legislation, which will allow them to be moved, including outside the country.

The use of architectural monuments in ethnoturistic activities is possible as a means of restoring the spiritual and physical forces of a person, i.e. a recreational resource. Recreational resources are natural and anthropogenic systems, bodies and phenomena of nature, artifacts with comfortable properties and

consumer value for recreational activities and may be used to organize recreation and recovery of a certain contingent of people at a fixed time using existing technology and available material capabilities (Artamonova, 1999).

The development of the recreational business is possible on the basis of the excellent landscape base of the mountain Chechnya harmoniously combined with the historical and architectural situation. The restoration of the tourist center near the high mountain lake Kezenoy Am, the construction of the Veduchi resort is part of a project to create a tourist cluster in the North Caucasus, which will include several more European-level ski resorts. The development and implementation of these plans requires synergy between the efforts of authorities, state enterprises, business community, public organizations, public self-government territorial bodies, the population and others.

## 7. Conclusion

Having analyzed the problems and prospects for the development of cultural tourism in the Chechen Republic, we came to the following conclusions: the government of the Chechen Republic pays great attention to the development of the tourism industry, which has a positive impact on economic infrastructure. Taking into account the geopolitical situation and high resource tourism potential of the Chechen Republic, the government considers tourism as the priority sector of the economy. The intensity of tourism development represents a specific socio-economic “phenomenon” of the 21st century. Due to its globality, tourism changes stereotypes of the world perception, forms new economic relations in the market of goods and services. The focus on visiting tourists should be combined with work with local residents, primarily with school and student community. The tourism industry, focused on the use of monuments of ancient history and culture, requires a comprehensive approach. The most optimal means of using and preserving the objects of historical and cultural heritage is the museumification of monuments, which implies the transformation of historical, cultural or natural objects into the objects of museum exhibition in order to maximize the preservation and identification of their historical, cultural, scientific, and artistic value. A positive reputation and a favorable image require not only advertising and information events, but involve deep territorial reforms and changes, modification of internal business processes in the management of regions, areas of socio-economic development of the territory, forming an image of a place in the minds of consumers of the territorial product.

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