

ASSESSMENT OF TOURIST RESOURCES IN THE MOUNTAINOUS SHIRVAN ECONOMIC REGION (USING SHAMAKHI AND ISMAYILLI DISTRICTS AS EXAMPLES)

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Abstract

In modern conditions, tourism occupies a special place among development trends due to its socio-economic efficiency. For most countries, tourism serves as a major source of government revenue and has become one of the most promising sectors of the national economy. Since tourism has a significant impact on sectors such as transportation, construction, communications, trade, agriculture, and the production of consumer goods, the study of tourist resources is of particular importance. The article examines the natural tourist resources of the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts, as well as the Shahdag National Park, Ismayilli State Nature Reserve, Lahij State Historical and Cultural Reserve, Basgal State Historical and Cultural Reserve, and Shamakhi Safari Park. The possibilities of their use in tourism, including sports tourism, have been analyzed. As historical and cultural tourist resources, architectural and archaeological monuments of global and national significance were studied, including the Demirchi Archaeological Museum, the Mirza Alakbar Sabir House Museum, the Seyid Azim Shirvani Historical and Local Lore Museum, the Ismayilli Historical and Local Lore Museum, and the Grape and Wine Festival. As a result of the study, well-grounded conclusions were made regarding the development of hunting, ecological, cultural-historic, and health tourism, as well as sports tourism, in the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts. The results obtained from the archival materials of the State Statistical Committee and the Institute of Geography can be used in the socio-economic development programs of the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts.

1. Introduction

Tourism is regarded as a leading sector of the economy, a phenomenon that develops more dynamically in terms of economic indicators, contributes to the creation of new jobs, operates in connection with other sectors, and improves the standard of living of the population. The development of the tourism industry is influenced by natural and historical-cultural resources. Since the integration of natural and historical-cultural resources into the tourism sector determines the development of the industry and provides a foundation for its intensive growth.

Natural conditions affect the attractiveness of territorial and recreational resources, historical and cultural monuments contribute to the formation of educational and cultural interests, and, in turn, all of this plays a supportive role in the organization of a comfortable tourism infrastructure. The specialization of tourism is influenced

by specific components of natural conditions and various socio-economic factors [24]. Natural resources are primarily evaluated based on their recreational attractiveness, while historical and cultural resources are assessed according to events (historical periods and cultural processes) and their complexity. These resources are closely connected to the life of society and are expressed in the form of material and spiritual values [13].

As an object of research on the tourist resources of the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts, which are part of the Mountainous Shirvan Economic Region and determine the sustainable development of tourism. The area of the Shamakhi district is 1.67 thousand km², with a population of 106.5 thousand people; the area of the Ismayilli district is 2.07 thousand km², with a population of 87.5 thousand people. Thus, these districts occupy 27% and 34% of the territory of the Mountainous Shirvan Economic Region, respectively, while

their populations account for 33% and 27.1% of the region's total population [18].

The study of the tourist resources of the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts, which have a considerable area, as well as the examination of natural, historical-cultural, and socio-economic factors, will contribute to identifying the directions for the development of various types of tourism and their significance.

2. Materials and Methods

As part of the study, theoretical provisions of domestic and foreign specialists, scientific works published on the topic of tourist resources, the list of architectural and archaeological monuments of global and national significance approved by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on August 2, 2001, data from the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, archival materials from the G.A. Aliyev Institute of Geography, as well as other sources, were used. During research a historical-systemic approach, comparative analysis, mathematical statistics, grouping, optimization, and other methods were used.

3. Analysis and Discussion

3.1. Natural Tourist Resources. As an economic sector, tourism is oriented toward the use of natural conditions and resources. Natural conditions determine the feasibility of tourism activities, while natural resources influence the development of specific types of tourism. Natural conditions and resources are studied comprehensively in terms of their impact on tourism.

Regions with mountainous terrain have certain advantages compared to other areas. Mountainous terrain, in addition to its external appeal, is characterized by significant recreational resources due to clean mountain air, high ultraviolet radiation, and mineral water springs [8]. In mountainous areas with rich recreational potential, various types of mountain tourism can be developed. Among such areas with high tourism potential in our republic are the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts.

From the perspective of nature tourism, the territories of the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts are similar, however, there are certain differences between them. Thus, the terrain of the Shamakhi district, located in the southeastern part of the Greater Caucasus, is predominantly mountainous. The district's terrain is represented by the southern slope of the Main Caucasus Range, as well as the Nialdag and Lengebiz ridges, whose maximum elevation reaches 2,500 meters. The terrain of the Ismayilli district is predominantly moun-

tainous, with elevations ranging from 200 meters in the Shirvan lowland to 3,629 meters at the peak of Babadag [16].

The climate of the studied area differs between the high-mountain zone and the lowland and foothill parts. In the high-mountain zone, the average January temperature is -6°C , while the average July temperature is -15°C . In the lowland and foothill areas, these values are 10°C and 25°C , respectively. The district's hydrographic network is formed by the Girdiman, Goychay, Akhakh, Eirichay, and Sulut rivers, which belong to the Kura River basin. The district's hydrographic network is formed by the Girdiman, Goychay, Akhakh, Eirichay, and Sulut rivers, which belong to the Kura River basin [15]. Mountain forests with a rich variety of species, subalpine and alpine meadows in the high-mountain zone, as well as diverse species of animals and birds, form the natural tourism potential of the area.

The potential natural tourism resources of the study area include the mineral springs of Qaleybugurt, Zergeran, Chaghan, Chukhuryurd, etc.; the waterfalls of Galachyk, Istisu, Burovdal, Mydrusa, etc.; the reservoirs of Zogalavay, Hajigedirli, Shamakhi, Chukhuryurd, etc.; and the mud volcanoes of Qushchu, Melikchobanly, Gizmeydan, Demirchi, etc.

In recent years, the significance of the hydrographic network as a natural factor in tourism development has increased significantly. The reservoirs and mineral springs that are part of the hydrographic network create favorable conditions for tourists in the studied areas to engage in water-based recreation, wellness activities, and sports. For example, in the Girdimanchay river basin, there is a small fishery lake; near Babadag, there are three natural lakes; and in the areas of the villages of Kyurdmashy and Ashygbayramly, there are artificial lakes, which also provide opportunities for recreational fishing.

The natural tourism resources of the studied area include the Shahdag National Park, the Ismayilli State Nature Reserve, the Lahij State Historical and Cultural Reserve, the Basgal State Historical and Cultural Reserve, and the Shamakhi Safari Park. These natural tourism sites determine the main directions for the development of ecotourism as a type of tourism in the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts.

The Ismayilli State Nature Reserve was established in 1969 and covers an area of 23,437.85 hectares. The main purpose of establishing the State Nature Reserve was to protect the fauna inhabiting its territory and to increase their popula-

tion. The flora of the area is primarily composed of oak and elm forests, as well as alpine and sub-alpine meadows, while the fauna includes various mammals and birds [3].

The Lahij State Historical and Cultural Reserve was established in 1980. The reserve is located on the southern slope of the Greater Caucasus, on the left bank of the Girdimanchay River, on the slopes of the Govdag (2,437 m) and Nialdag (2,322 m) mountain ridges, and it protects 103 historical and cultural monuments. The Lyulo River divides the settlement into two parts. The larger southern part is called Lahij, while the smaller northern part is called Aragit [5]. Lahij is also a historical and architectural reserve, included in the international tourist route “The Great Silk Road”. At present, Lahij is one of the historical and architectural monuments protected by the state, and the external appearance of the village has been preserved in its original form. The reserve attracts tourists with its traditional crafts, unique customs, and attractive natural landscapes. It should be noted that in 2015, “Lahij Copper-smithing Art” was included in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO.

Basgal was declared a state historical and cultural reserve in 1989 and was included in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO in 2014 [4], on October 3, 2018, it was once again declared a state historical and cultural reserve [7]. The reserve is located on the southern slope of the Greater Caucasus, at the foot of the Nialdag Ridge. The reserve contains ancient fortress walls, the Bazaar Square, the Basgal Bathhouse, the Sheikh Muhammad Mosque, the kyuryabend (sewage system), and other examples of historical and cultural heritage, which are among the factors attracting tourists to this area [2]. The diverse examples of ceramics, ironworks, dyes, and stone artifacts found during archaeological excavations in the village of Basgal, especially those related to the weaving craft, testify to the wide creative imagination of Basgal artisans [11].

The safari park, established in the mountainous-forested area of the village of Pirgulu in the Shamakhi district, occupies a total area of 1,200 hectares (830 hectares of which are fenced according to international standards) and has been operating since 2017. The purpose of creating the park, which is home to animals such as red deer, spotted deer, Altai deer, alpacas, llamas, European bison, wild boars, and other species brought from Hungary, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Slovakia, and Poland, is to protect and increase the popula-

tion of these fauna species. For visiting the park, which serves as a natural refuge for animals, internal tours have been organized, creating favorable and extensive opportunities for the development of ecotourism, including safari tourism.

Shahdag National Park was established in 2006 and covers an area of 130,508.1 hectares. Alongside the districts of Guba, Gusar, Gabala, and Oghuz, Shahdag National Park is also located in the Ismayilli (44,596.9 ha) and Shamakhi (5,854 ha) districts. The park includes mountain forests, alpine meadows, and rocky areas. Both plant and animal species are protected in the national park, including flora and fauna listed in the Red Book [12]. Shahdag National Park, the largest national park in Azerbaijan by area, stands out for its natural resources and ecotourism routes.

3.2. Historical and Cultural Tourism Resources. When choosing a destination for travel, not only the natural features of the region but also its historical and cultural tourism resources are important. In some cases, specific cultural sites and unique historical and cultural monuments serve as the main factor influencing tourists' choice of a particular area [1].

The historical and cultural tourism resources of the studied area include the settlement patterns of the population living in the mountainous regions, as well as the forms of organization of tourism infrastructure in these areas. Of the 483 settlements located at altitudes of 1,000-1,500 meters above sea level in Azerbaijan, 5.0% are in the Ismayilli district and 4.3% in the Shamakhi district. Of the 443 settlements located at altitudes of 1,500-2,000 meters, 3.6% are in the Ismayilli district. In the studied areas, there are no settlements located above 2,000 meters above sea level (Table 1).

Mountainous areas attract tourists not only with their natural tourism appeal but also with the people living in mountain villages, who preserve their national and ethnic traditions (lifestyle, food, clothing, art forms, rituals, and celebrations). Their culture is considered highly appealing to tourists, and from the perspective of tourism development, using this potential is advisable. Thus, the studied area is home to small ethnic groups such as the Lezgins (in the Ismayilli district), the Tats (mainly in the settlement of Madrasa and the village of Melhem in the Shamakhi district, as well as in the settlement of Lahij in the Ismayilli district), and also people who practice a form of spiritual Christianity – the Molokans (in the village of Ivanovka in the Ismayilli district). Among

them, the village of Lahij has long been known for its sewage system, architectural examples, traditional crafts, and the production of military equipment. The inhabitants of the village of Lahij refer to their language as Tat and believe that among the dialects of the Tat language, the Lahij dialect is the most proper. The Molokans, who settled in the village of Ivanovka, have their own way of life and customs. The village of Ivanovka is regarded as an open-air ethnographic museum and is called ‘a preserved part of Russian ethnic culture in Azerbaijan.

In the studied area, the historical and cultural tourism resources include the Demirchi Archaeological Museum, the Mirza Alakbar Sabir House-Museum, the Seyid Azim Shirvani Historical and

Local Lore Museum, and the Ismayilli Historical and Local Lore Museum (Fig. 1).

Museums are part of the infrastructure of historical and cultural tourism. The Demirchi Archaeological Museum was opened on August 26, 2018. The museum houses samples of cultural heritage discovered during archaeological excavations in the village of Demirchi, as well as in the Shamakhi district [1]. These samples, covering various historical periods, attract the attention of tourists visiting the area and provide them with an opportunity to get better acquainted with the region. The museum mainly exhibits stone sarcophagi dating back to the Albanian period, as well as clay and porcelain artifacts.

Table 1

Number of settlements located at altitudes of 1,000-2,000 meters above sea level in the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts

Districts	Elevation of settlements above sea level and their number		
	Above 1,000 m	From 1,500 to 2,000 m	Above 2,000 m
Shamakhi	21	-	-
Ismayilli	24	16	-
for the country as a whole	483	443	29

Source: The table is compiled based on archival materials of the Institute of Geography

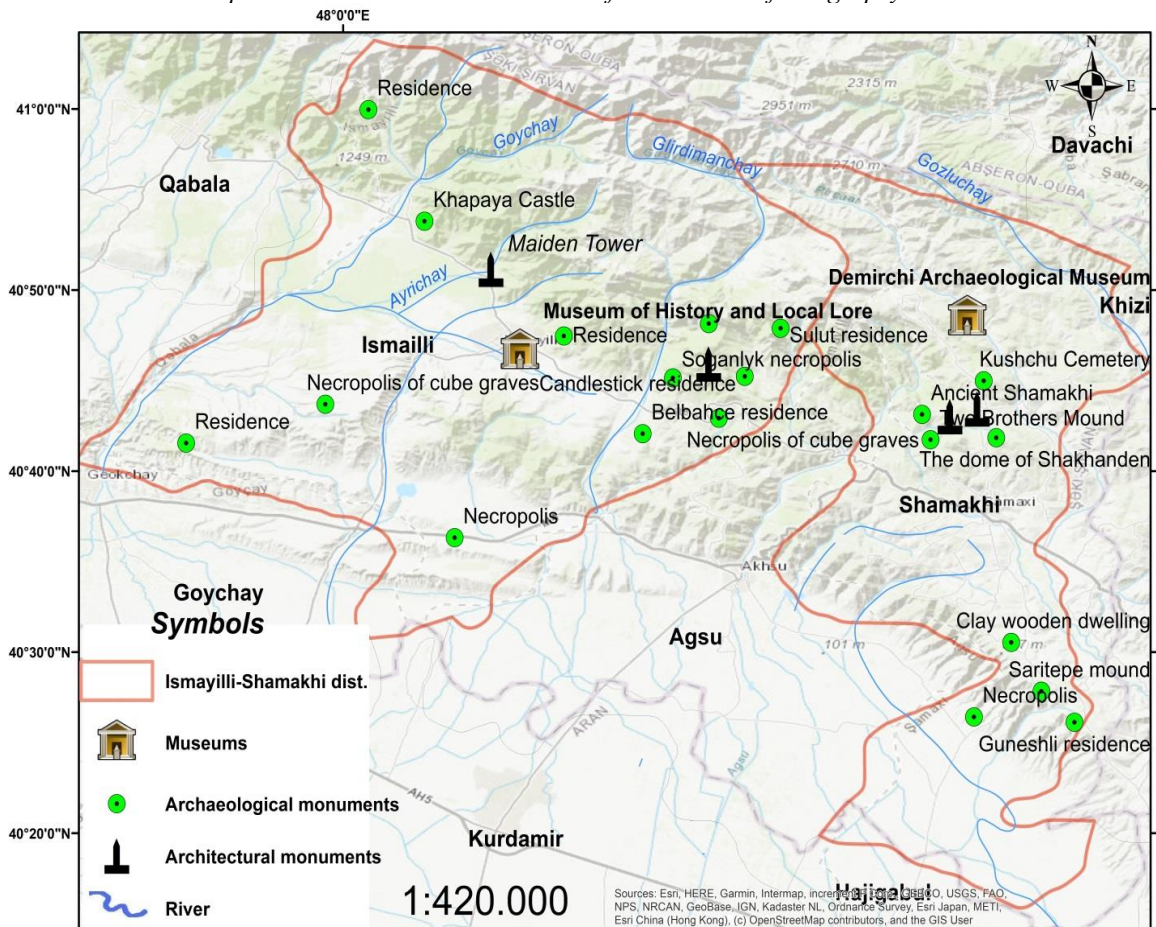


Figure 1. Historical and cultural tourism resources of Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts

The Mirza Alakbar Sabir House-Museum was established in 1962. In the museum, in connection with the 100th anniversary of the poet's birth, exhibits related to his childhood and school years, as well as his travels, are displayed; household items, gifts donated to the museum, and works dedicated to the study of the poet's creativity are also featured [19]. Tourists who are interested in folk art and folklore visit the museum, learn about the life and work of the poet, and seek to broaden their horizons. Such educational tourism routes help

deepens knowledge both about the region's history and about its poet.

The Seyid Azim Shirvani Museum of History and Local Lore was founded in 1945 and features more than 9,700 exhibits. In its early years, this history and local lore museum was called the Shamakhi Regional Studies Museum. The museum exhibited artifacts discovered during archaeological excavations carried out in the Shamakhi district between 1950 and 2010.

Table 2
Historical and Cultural Monuments of Global and National Significance in the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts

Names of the districts	Monuments of Global Significance		Monuments of National Significance	
	Architectural Monuments	Archaeological Monuments	Architectural Monuments	Archaeological Monuments
Shamakhi		the ancient city of Shamakhi	Juma Mosque (Shamakhi City) Gulustan Fortress (Shamakhi City) Gyumbaz Shakhendan (Shamakhi City) Astrophysical Observatory (Pirgulu Village)	- Khinisli Cemetery (Khinisli Village) - Ancient Settlement (Charkhan Village) - Necropolis of Stone Tombs (Daggoylar Village) - Settlement with Clay and Wooden Structures (Cholgeylar Village) - Saritepe Kurgan (Chayli Village) - Two Brothers Kurgan (Chukhuryurd Village) - Gushchu Cemetery (Gushchu Village) - Guneshli Settlement (Dagbagirli Village)
Ismayilli	Lahij State Historical and Cultural Reserve (Lahij Village)		Maiden Tower (Khanagah Village)	- Necropolis (Kalagah Village) - Ancient Settlement (Mollaisakly Village) - Old Cemetery (Zernava Village) - Old Cemetery (Hajihatamly Village) - Shamdlan Settlement (Zyargaran Village) - Necropolis of Stone Tombs (Shabiyan Village) - Belbahcha Settlement (Gurdyuvan Village) - Ancient Settlement (Talystan Village) - Soganlig Necropolis (Tirdjan Village) - Ancient Settlement (Galajik Village) - Necropolis (Pirabilgasim Village) - Necropolis of Stone Tombs (Ashigbayramli Village) - Khapaya Fortress (Topchu Village) - Khankandi Settlement (Basgal Village) - Necropolis (Gubakhilili Village) - Gyandov Necropolis (Gyandov Village) - Sulut Settlement (Sulut Village)

Source: List of Architectural and Archaeological Monuments of Global and National Significance, approved by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on August 2, 2001

The museum's local history hall presents extensive information about the region's rich flora and fauna, as well as its mud volcanoes [19]. Eco-tourism enthusiasts often visit the museum to deepen their knowledge of the region's nature, its geological and geomorphological structure, as well as its landscapes.

The Ismayilli History and Local Lore Museum was founded in 1981. The museum exhibits archaeological findings dating back to the 3rd-1st centuries BC, clothing and household items from the 17th-20th centuries, samples of folk crafts, and agricultural and weaving products [3]. History and local lore museums, regarded as a form of educational tourism, not only contribute to the development of a cultural and cognitive worldview, but also combine historical, religious, ethnic, archaeological, and other areas.

In the list of architectural and archaeological monuments of national and international importance, approved by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on August 2, 2001, archaeological monuments of national significance predominantly prevail in the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts. Among the monuments of global significance, one archaeological monument has been registered in the Shamakhi district, and one architectural monument in the Ismayilli district (Table 2).

Festivals can also be considered among historical and cultural tourism resources. For example, on November 25-26, 2023, the 2nd 'Grape and Wine Festival' was held in Meysari village, Shamakhi district. The festival promoted local grape and wine production, enhanced the export potential of wine products, and popularized the historical aspects of viticulture and winemaking, as well as the work being carried out in this field. As part of the festival, which serves as a historical and cultural tourism resource, a wine and food exhibition was organized, a zone for souvenir sales was designated, entertainment activities were held, a playground for children was set up, and picnic areas were created. The main goal of the festival was to showcase various locally produced wines, conduct wine tastings, and hold presentations providing information about winemaking traditions.

The historical and cultural monuments of global and national significance registered in the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts, the Grape and Wine Festival, as well as the operating museums, create favorable conditions for the development of historical and cultural, educational, archaeological, and event tourism in the studied area.

3.3. Socio-Economic Tourism Resources.

One of the forms of organizing socio-economic tourism resources is tourism infrastructure. Tourism infrastructure encompasses transport connections, accommodation, and catering facilities. These elements, as a distinct part of urban planning, ensure the provision of appropriate services to tourists and facilitate the implementation of specialized tourism programs [14].

Transportation connections, as a primary component of tourism service infrastructure, have an impact on the socio-economic development of particular areas of the country. International experience shows that, thanks to the application of scientific and technological advancements in the transport sector, the distance between destinations loses its former importance. Therefore, the rapid and intensive organization of passenger and freight transport is a prerequisite for the development of tourism [17].

The following roads pass through the studied territory: mainly from the Ismayilli district – state roads Mughanly-Ismayilli (23 km), Garamaryam-Ismayilli-Sheki (44 km), and the access road to the village of Lahij (19 km); and from the Shamakhi district – segments of the Baku-Gazakh highway from the 110th to the 144th km (34 km) [22].

In the Mountainous Shirvan economic region, the total length of public roads is 1,329 km, of which 37.7% are located in the Ismayilli district and 25.3% in the Shamakhi district. Among these roads, 80.2% in the Ismayilli district and 50.6% in the Shamakhi district belong to Category IV. In the Ismayilli district, roads of Categories I and II are absent, while in the Shamakhi district, Category I roads constitute 22.7%, and Category II roads 37.7% of the roads of the respective category within the region (Table 3).

The Demirchi-Lahij road is of great importance for ensuring shorter and more efficient transport links between the tourist attractions of the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts. Although the road connecting the village of Demirchi in the Shamakhi district with the settlement of Lahij in the Ismayilli district has existed for a long time, it was reconstructed as part of the state program for the development of the socio-economic potential of the regions. The 22-kilometer road strengthens the tourism potential of both districts. An amount of 16.7 million manats was allocated for the reconstruction of the road linking one settlement in the Shamakhi district with four settlements in the Ismayilli district.

Table 3

Length of public roads in the studied districts in 2024, km

Districts	Sum	Including by road categories				
		I	II	III	IV	V
Shamakhi	336	15	23	86	170	42
Ismayilli	501	-	-	70	402	29
Mountainous Shirvan	1329	66	61	240	859	103

Source: Transport in Azerbaijan. Statistical Collection of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Baku, 2025. 85 p.

Table 4

Hotel statistics in the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts (2024)

Economic Indicators	Names of Administrative-Territorial Units		
	Shamakhi	Ismayilli	Mountainous Shirvan
Number of Hotels, units	24	22	49
Bed Capacity, places	1021	1312	2414
Number of Rooms, units	396	556	997
Overnight Stays (person-nights)	50456	20908	72113
Number of Guests, persons	49064	14776	64393
Revenue (thousand manats)	7119,6	5342,6	12493,8
Expenditures (thousand manats)	4828,4	5161,7	10011,2
Number of Employees, persons	307	331	642

Source: Tourism in Azerbaijan. State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Statistical Collection. Baku, 2025. 105 p.

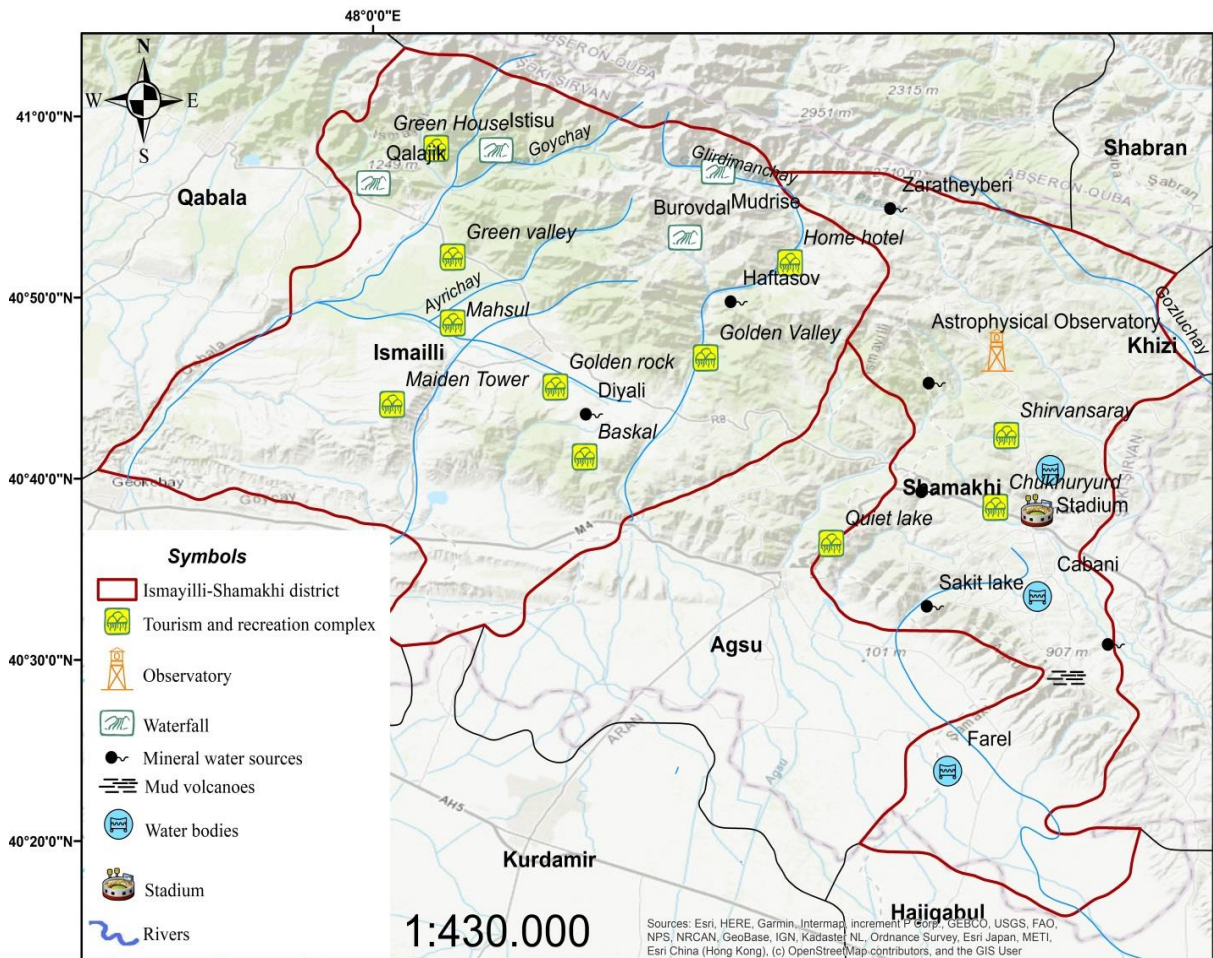


Figure 2. Socio-economic tourism resources of Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts

The Demirchi-Lahij road is classified as Category IV, featuring two lanes, a carriageway width of 6 meters, and a roadbed width of 8-10 meters. The road was equipped with culverts of different diameters. The Demirchi-Lahij highway was officially opened on August 26, 2018.

As a socio-economic tourism resource, accommodation facilities not only provide temporary lodging services but also offer additional services. According to the recommendations of the World Tourism Organization, accommodation facilities include business entities of any form of ownership engaged in activities aimed at providing tourists with temporary lodging services [23]. While the Ismayilli district accounts for 54.3% of total bed capacity, 55.8% of rooms, and 51.6% of both expenses and employed staff, the Shamakhi district concentrates 70% of overnight stays, 76.2% of accommodated people, and 57% of income (Table 4). The Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts account for 93.9% of the total number of hotels in the economic region, which amounts to 49 establishments [21].

Tourism and recreation complexes in the Shamakhi district include the Shirvansaray Recreation Complex (Nagarakhana settlement), the Farel Recreation Center (Chukhuryurd village), Shirvan Hotel and SPA (Shamakhi city), the Sakit Gol Recreation Center (Sagiyan village), and the five-star Shamakhi Palace Platinum by Rixos (Sharadil village). Tourism and recreation complexes in the Ismayilli district include the Green House Recreation Center (Istisu village), the Giz Galasi Recreation Center (Ivanovka village), the Gizil Gaya Recreation Center (Diyally village), the Makhsul Recreation Center (Ismayilli city), the Gizil Dere Recreation Center (Garagaya village), Evim Hotel (Lahij settlement), Su Meyilli Hotel and SPA (Talistan village), and the Yashil Vadi Recreation Center (Khanagyakh village). However, the number of tourism and recreation facilities and their activities can be considered unsatisfactory (Fig. 2).

3.4. Resources of sports tourism. Sports tourism has a mechanism of influence on both the economic and social life of any region, acting as an important factor in the effective organization of people's leisure activities. Some specialists conclude that sports tourism is becoming an integral part of travel. Regardless of whether people travel for work or for pleasure, they prefer to combine their trips with recreational activities, that is, with sports [9]. Passive participants in sports tourism include spectators, while active participants are those who take part in competitions or directly

engage in this type of tourism [10]. In a broad sense, sports tourism is divided into directions such as participating in sports events for leisure, attending sports competitions, visiting sports attractions (stadiums, arenas, etc.), and choosing active recreation.

Sports tourism includes participating in sports events and visiting them in various countries and regions. Thus, it can be said that sports tourism may be regarded as travel with a specific purpose [6]. There are great potential opportunities for the development of sports tourism in the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts. These opportunities include nature trips (hiking, trekking, mountaineering, etc.), sports events (competitions in various sports), the organization of recreational sports activities (winter sports, water sports, etc.), and more.

In the "Strategic Road Map for the development of the specialized tourism industry in the Republic of Azerbaijan" approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on December 6, 2016, one of the strategic objectives is the development of regional types of tourism for both local and foreign tourists. To achieve this strategic objective, five priorities have been outlined, one of which is the creation of tourist routes. Since the creation of routes includes the promotion of new tourist routes, the development of daily and weekly car and walking routes covering all historical and cultural attractions in both districts is considered a future prospect [20]. In this regard, we have assessed the potential opportunities for organizing walks (hiking, trekking) in the Shamakhi and Ismayilli districts, conducting various sports events, developing winter and hunting tourism, and we also propose the organization of certain routes. For example, the village of Pırgulu, located in the southeastern part of the Greater Caucasus and distinguished by its picturesque natural landscapes, has potential for the development of winter tourism. Thanks to its geographical location and accessible tourist infrastructure, Pırgulu has the potential to develop a type of sports tourism – skiing during the winter season. Hunting can be developed in areas such as the Pırgulu Forest, Khyrda Forest, Ulu-Dyuzu, Byulovdash, and Shahbeyli, which are distinguished by their natural and landscape appeal. In addition, there are extensive potential opportunities for developing horseback riding along the Pırbeyli-Arpabulak and Pırbeyli-Khaltan routes; mountaineering in the Govdag, Jaryldzha, and Kirva mountains; hiking and trekking routes such as Chukhuryurd-Nagarakhana-Avakhyll-Demirchi,

Demirchi-Sefali-Zarat Kheiberi, Yeni Kyzmeydan-Pirbeyli-Khaltan, Basgal-Khankendi-Sulut, and Lahij-Ahan-Taglabian; as well as cycling tours along Ismayilli-Talystan-Teze kend-Basgal and Ismayilli-Talystan-Teze kend-Lahij.

In the development of sports tourism in the studied area, activities related to football competitions play an important role. The stadium in the city of Shamakhi was commissioned on November 1, 2021, and has a capacity of 2,200 spectators. The Shamakhi Football Club, established in 1997 (formerly the 'Keshle' team), has been hosting its home matches at this arena since 2022. The stadium in the city of Shamakhi received a UEFA Category 2 certificate, which allows it to host matches of the first, second, and third qualifying rounds of UEFA club competitions. Within the stadium complex, facilities for other sports have been built, including two mini-pitches with artificial surfaces the city stadium can contribute to the development of sports tourism in our country. The games held here will help attract a large number of local and foreign sports fans to the region.

4. Conclusion. Since the territory of the studied districts is surrounded by mountain forests, it can be said that there is a favorable resource base here for the development of health and wellness tourism. The diversity of flora and fauna is one of the factors contributing to the development of hunting tourism in the studied area. In the Shamakhi district, the reservoirs of Zogalavay, Gajgedirli, Shamakhi, and Chukhuryurd, and in the Ismayilli district, the natural lakes in the Girdimanchay river basin and near Mount Babadag, as well as the artificial lakes of Kyurdmashy and Ashygbayramly, provide tourists with opportunities for water sports.

The development of ecotourism in the studied districts is positively influenced by Shahdag National Park, the Ismayilli State Nature Reserve, and the Shamakhi Safari Park. In addition, in the Shamakhi district, the mud volcanoes of Gushchu, Malikchobanly, Gizmeydan, and Demirchi, and in the Ismayilli district, the waterfalls of Galadjik, Istisu, Burovdal, and Mudruse contribute to the development of ecotourism.

The state historical and cultural reserves of Lahij and Basgal play an extremely important role in preserving national and spiritual values. The reserves are gems of historical heritage and represent extremely important tourist sites in terms of learning about and preserving cultural heritage. This type of tourism can be described as a journey through time. We can also call this type of tourism a journey back in time. Despite the attention

paid to the reserves within the framework of state policy, their use cannot be considered very satisfactory. Although the potential of historical and cultural tourism resources is great, their use as a tourist product and the marketing strategy are at a rather low level.

Against the background of the development of sports tourism and the measures being taken to promote it, the work does not fully reveal the potential opportunities. At present, the stadium operating in the city of Shamakhi, albeit partially, contributes to the development of sports tourism in the region. Although hosting sports games here is expected to attract a large number of local and foreign sports fans to the region, the current situation is somewhat different. Moreover, the potential of sports tourism related to winter sports, mountaineering in mountainous areas, cycling tourism, hiking and horseback riding, and other similar activities is not being fully utilized.

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DAĞLIQ ŞIRVAN İQTİSADI RAYONUNDA TURİZM EHTİYATLARININ QIYMƏTLƏNDİRİLMƏSİ (ŞAMAXI VƏ İSMAYILLI RAYONLARI TİMSALINDA)

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Xülasə. Müasir şəraitdə turizm, sosial-iqtisadi səmərəliliyinə görə inkişaf tendensiyaları arasında xüsusi yer tutur. Əksər ölkələr üçün turizm dövlət gəlirlərinin əsas mənbəyi kimi çıxış edərək, milli iqtisadiyyatın daha perspektivli sahələrindən birinə çevrilmişdir. Turizm nəqliyyat, tikinti, rabitə, ticarət, kənd təsərrüfatı və istehlak mallarının istehsalı kimi sahələrə böyük təsir göstərdiyindən, turizm ehtiyatlarının öyrənilməsi xüsusi əhəmiyyət kəsb edir. Məqalədə Şamaxı və İsmayıllı rayonlarının təbii turizm ehtiyatları, eləcə də Şahdağ milli parkı, İsmayıllı dövlət təbiət yasaqlığı, Lahıc dövlət tarix-mədəniyyət qoruğu, Basqal dövlət tarix-mədəniyyət qoruğu və Şamaxı safari parkı araşdırılmış, onların idman turizmi də daxil olmaqla turizmdə istifadə imkanları təhlil edilmişdir. Tarixi və mədəni turizm ehtiyatları kimi dünya və ölkə əhəmiyyətli memarlıq və arxeoloji abidələr, o cümlədən Dəmirçi Arxeologiya muzeyi, Mirzə Ələkbər Sabirin ev-muzeyi, Seyid Əzim Şirvani adına Tarix-Diyarşünaslıq və İsmayıllı Tarix-Diyarşünaslıq muzeyləri, Üzüm və Şərab festivalı öyrənilmiş, onların müxtəlif turizm növlərinin inkişafına təsiri araşdırılmışdır. Aparılan tədqiqat nəticəsində Şamaxı və İsmayıllı rayonlarında ovçuluq, ekoloji, mədəni-tarixi və müalicə-sağlamlıq, eləcə də idman turizminin inkişafı ilə bağlı əsaslandırılmış nəticələr verilmişdir. Dövlət Statistika Komitəsi və Coğrafiya İnstitutunun Fond materialları əsasında əldə olunan nəticələr Şamaxı və İsmayıllı rayonlarının sosial-iqtisadi inkişaf proqramlarında istifadə edilə bilər.

Açar sözlər: turizm, təbii-turizm ehtiyatları, tarixi-mədəni turizm ehtiyatları, mədəni-irs, idman turizmi.