

THE RESOURCES OF ENDOGENOUS TOURISM OF THE BAIKAL REGION

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Abstract

This article provides an overview of the ethno-recreational resources and preliminary analysis of the potential for development of endogenous tourism in the Baikal region. The study is based on the up-to-date understanding of the traditional culture and way of life of indigenous people living in the region. An integrated approach is used for the detection and identification of ethno-recreational complexes, which are the objects and phenomena related to the traditions and culture of the peoples around Lake Baikal (Russians, Buryats, Evenks, Tofalars, Soyots).

Keywords: Baikal region, endogenous tourism, recreational resources, ethno-recreational complexes.

JEL Classification: L83, Q01, Q56, Q57, Q58

1. Introduction

Baikal region comprises three Federal subjects of Russia – Irkutsk Region, the Republic of Buryatia and the Trans-Baikal Territory. He claims to be among the well-known and highly important tourist destinations in Russia and abroad. The increased interest to the region is determined by the rapid evolution of the global tourism system and avalanche involving in it, both natural and cultural values.

As it is considered to be, the main regional factor of the tourist attraction is its natural wealth. In spite of this, the historical and cultural palette of indigenous people living in the land of the great lake provides high ethno-tourism potential.

In the context of the generally recognized ideas related to sustainable development, the involvement of indigenous population into tourism entirely corresponds to the global trends. Currently, the problems of maintenance of ethno-cultural and biological diversity rank together in their relevancy, and tourism is treated as one of the mechanisms of their implementation. Moreover, in order to attract tourists, now it is not enough just to show natural and cultural sights. It is necessary to create special itineraries with the purpose not to have a look at the museum objects of material culture, but to contact with everyday life and craft of people, even if it is represented in a specially prepared ornamental form.

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2. Methodological and theoretical basis

Indigenous tourism refers to tourism activities in which indigenous people are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction [Butler, R., Hinch, T., 2007].

Ethno-recreational resources of the territory are considered as a special group of resources, which include local communities of people together with the natural-landscape environment of their life activity, their inherent national culture, and traditional forms of farm and home management and everyday life, including such integral components as national holidays and ceremonies, traditional types of dwellings, languages, cuisine, folk crafts, and age-old folk art, which in the aggregate represent an unique ethno-recreational complexes.

Concepts and the business programs aimed at the endogenous tourism development have to be based on complex studies of ethno-recreational resources. Such studies traditionally begin with the inventory, description and mapping of objects and phenomena that are of interest to attract tourists. Such mission is in the sphere of responsibility of geographers and ethnographers.

For primary qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the regional ethno-recreation potential uses government statistics, including some of the demographic and social indicators. Thus, areas of distribution of ethno-cultural communities, areas of recreational development, and zones of interaction of traditional and tourist-recreational socio-cultural complexes are identified. Thus the general characteristics and description of the spatial structure of regional ethno-recreational complexes that generate tourist resources and determine their diversity is given. Visual representation of the obtained information is done by mapping.

3. Opportunities for the development of endogenous tourism in the Baikal region

Due to the geographical, historical, and political-and-economic events the Baikal region is a recreational system that is characterized by a wide range of ethnographic and cultural resources. According to *L.R. Pavlinskaya (1999)*, the geographical location in the center of the Asian continent has determined that the Baikal region has been a kind of an ethno-cultural crossroad for thousands of years. The course of the ethnic history in the second millennium was defined by the rise and development of the Mongolian and Russian ethnic groups, who created two great powers which replaced one another, and the composition of which included lands adjacent to Lake Baikal. In addition, a variety of natural and climatic conditions contributed to the formation of several economic-cultural types: semi-nomadic and nomadic cattle breeders, taiga hunters-reindeer-breeders, and taiga hunters on foot. In the 17th century, by the time Russians appeared there, the Baikal region was inhabited by Mongolian-, Tungus-, and Turkic-speaking peoples.

Currently, the ethno-recreational complex of the Baikal region are represented by two dominant cultures, namely Russian and Buryat, by local communities of indigenous small-numbered peoples – Evenks, Soyots, Tofalars, communities of carriers of the traditional Russian culture, recognized by UNESCO as the nonmaterial

cultural heritage of humanity, as well as by representatives of the multinational post-Soviet area. It is also accepted to distinguish Russian old-timers as a peculiar component of the Russian culture in Siberia.

The resources complexes, knitted with the Indigenous small-numbered peoples have a particular interest for ethnographic and cultural tourism. RF subjects of the Baikal region are allocated as regions of residence of such indigenous peoples, as Soyots, Tofalars and Evenks [List of areas..., 2010; List of places ..., 2009; Uniform list ..., 2008] (fig. 1). Their share in the total number of the population, in comparison with such regions as the Nenets or Chukchi Autonomous areas of Russia, is insignificant: in the Republic of Buryatia and in Trans-Baikal Territory it makes about 2% (21 and 25 thousand people respectively), and in the Irkutsk region – only 0,5% (less than 13 thousand). Thus change of total number of the indigenous population in the region has a negative trend. For example, from 2003 to 2009, the largest decrease was noted in the Irkutsk region - 6.7%, in Buryatia it was 5.4%, in the Trans-Baikal region – 2.1% [Ethnic composition ..., 2004; Indigenous small-numbered peoples ..., 2005; National composition of the population ..., 2011].

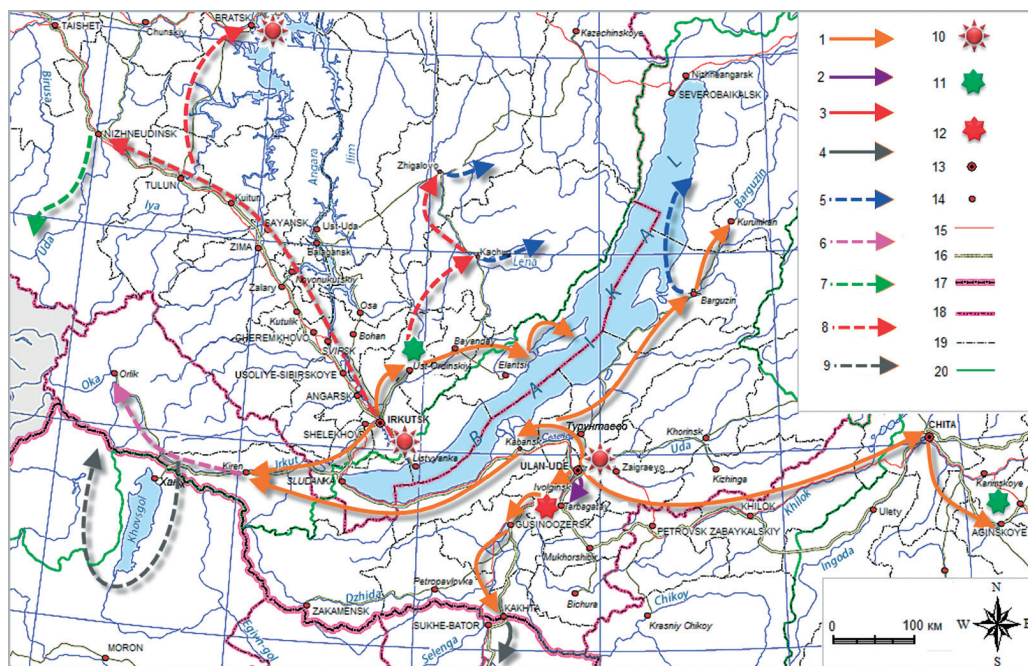


Figure 1: The tourist routes in to ethno-recreational complexes. The actual: 1 – Buryat, 2 – Russian old believers, 3 – Russian old-timers, 4 – Mongolian; the perspective: 5 – Evenki, 6 – Soyot, 7 – Tofalar, 8 – Russian old-timers, 9 – Mongolian. Objects of endogenous tourism: 10 – Architectural-Ethnographical Museums under Open Sky, 11 – centers of the Buryat culture, 12 – object of a non-material cultural heritage of UNESCO (center of old believers culture). Settlements: 13 – administrative centers of the Federal subjects of Russia, 14 – other. Transport: 15 – railways, 16 – roads. Borders: 17 – State, 18 – Federal subjects of Russia, 19 – Districts. 12 – basin of the Lake Baikal.

The life range of Evenks is quite extensive. They are the third largest in the all-Russian list of the indigenous people – about 35.5 thousand people. While, the Soyots and Tofalars local communities are continuing to maintain only narrow areas of life. They are living in the hard to reach parts of the Irkutsk region and the Republic of Buryatia, confined to the Eastern Sayan mountain range. Culture and customs of these very small-number peoples (Soyots – 2.700, Tofalars – 0.700 people), even in the form in which they now reside, are the most an important and valuable element of ethnographic diversity of the region [Number of Indigenous small-numbered Peoples ..., 2002].

The following table provides some main characteristics for the above mentioned ethno-recreational complexes – languages and folk crafts, traditional forms of economy and natural management, landscapes and dwellings, and other features, which play an important role in the formation of a peculiar image of the resource prepared for the holistic perception by consumers of tourism services. Some of them have already become the objects of endogenous tourism. They are widely used by managers for excursion trips and attract a wide range of visitors from the Russian regions and abroad in the days of folk festivals and events. But for the majority of these, tourist development is the prospect of the immediate future (fig. 2).



Figure 2. Resource complexes, knitted with the Indigenous small-numbered peoples.

Districts of the Federal subjects of Russia: 1 – Irkutsk region, 2 – Republik of Buryatia, 3 – Transbaikal Territory; 4 – Districts with accommodation of indigenous small-numbered people. Settlements: 5 – Administrative and historical-cultural centers; Settlements with accommodation of indigenous small-numbered people: 6 – Evenk, 7 – Soyot, 8 – Tofalar; 9 – UNESCO object of nonmaterial cultural heritage – Semeyskiye cultural center (Old Believers of Transbaikalia). 10 – Places of traditional accommodation and traditional environmental management of indigenous people. Number of indigenous small-numbered people, leaving in the Federal subjects of Russia (total): 11 – Evenk, 12 – Soyot, 13 – Tofalar. Transport: 14 – railways, 15 – roads.

Table 1

Components of the ethno-recreational complexes	Ethno-recreational complexes				
	Buryat	Evenk	Tofalar	Soyot	Russian
					Russian old-timers The descendants of immigrants from European Russia (pathfinders, animal farmers and peasants), often children of mixed marriages with representatives of indigenous ethnic groups. Self-ethnonym – old-timers, Lena old-timers, chaldony.
Representatives	Buryats. Self-ethnonym — buryaad	Evenks. Self-ethnonym – evenk, tongus, orochen (from “oron” – “deer”, and “ile” — “human”)	Tofalars or tofy. Self-ethnonym – tofa, tokha	Soyots. Self-ethnonym — soyt. Descendants of the Sayan Samoyeds	Russian immigrants, keeping alive the religious, cultural and every-day traditions, which were common in Russia before the church reform of the 17 th century. Self-ethnonym – Old Believers, Old Ritualist, Semeyskiye.
Territories of residence	Republic of Buryatia, Irkutsk region and Ust-Orda districts; Republic of Buryat Autonomous Territory and Agin-Territory and Agin-Territory Autonomous Okrug	Irkutsk region – Bodaibinsky, Kazachinsko-Lensky, Katangsky, Kachugsky, Kirensky, Mamsko-Khuy, and Ust-Kutsky districts; Republic of Buryatia – Barguzinsky, Bauntovsky, Evenkiysky, Kurumkansky, and North-Baikal districts; Transbaikalian Territory – Kalaratsky, Tunguro-Olekminsky, and Tungokochensky districts	Irkutsk region – Nizhneudinsky district	Republic of Buryatia – Okinsky district	Mainly northern districts of Irkutsk region (Kachugsky, Zhigalovsky, Kirensky and others), as well as some districts of the Republic of Buryatia and Transbaikalian Territory
Language	Buryat (Mongolian group)	Evenki (Tungus-Manchurian group)	Tofalar (Turkic group)	Buryat (the Soyot language of the Finno-Ugric group was lost as a result of assimilation)	Russian (Slavic group)
Religion	Shamanism, Tengriism, Buddhism, Orthodox Christianity	Shamanism, Orthodox Christianity	Shamanism, Tengriism, Orthodox Christianity	Animism, Shamanism, Buddhism (Lamaism).	Old Orthodox Christianity Orthodox Christianity

Components of the ethno-recreational complexes	Ethno-recreational complexes				
	Buryat	Evenk	Tofalar	Soyot	Russian
				Russian Old Believers	Russian old-timers
Cuisine, staple foodstuffs	meat (mutton, beef) and milk dishes, green tea with milk	game meat, venison, fish, taiga food plants	venison, wild fowl, vegetables	venison, grunting-ox meat, horse meat and wild fowl	vegetables, bread and pastry, honey, dairy products, meat (pork, beef, poultry)
Elements of the traditional costume	Long wrap coat – "deel", cone-shaped headwear with a band, waistcoat (udzhe), jewellery of silver and ornamental stones	woolen trousers-natazniki (kherki), gaiters (aramus, gurumi), caftan of reindeer skin, mukluks, reindeer ski climbers	traditional costume is very similar to the Buryat	traditional costume is very similar to the Buryat and Mongolian ones	They adhere to the traditions of the Russian 17th century clothing: pinafore dress (sarafan), babushka, Russian national shirt (kosovorotka) of natural bright fabrics, jewellery of amber
Folk crafts, types of nonmaterial art	handmade jewellery of horsehair, silver, ornamental stones, characteristic dance "Yekhor"	artistic bone and wood carving, metal working, beadwork, applique work of fur and fabric, birchbark stamping, imitative and circle dances, reindeer races	artistic bone and wood carving	wood carving, handcrafted items and handmade jewellery of fur and beads	wood carving, carved utensils, embroidery, self-made clothes, drawing lyrical chant
Feeding landscapes	steppes, forest-steppes	taiga, tundra forest belt	mountain-forest, taiga belt	mountain taiga of the Eastern Sayan region	river valleys, piedmont plains, Baikal
Traditional forms of economy	mainly cattle breeding (distant-pasture and seminomad), partially - agriculture	hunting, fishing, reindeer breeding	hunting and nomadic reindeer breeding	reindeer and yak breeding and hunting. From Buryats they partially adopted cattle breeding	agriculture, hunting, fishing, taiga harvesting, domestic cattle breeding
Traditional dwelling	six-sided wooden nomads tent, Mongolian felt tent	cone-shaped hut of poles (raw-hide tent), covered with reindeer skins in winter, and with birch bark or larch bark in summer.	wooden huts (izba), adopted from the Russian population	cone-shaped hut (uurs) similar to dwellings of northern reindeere herders	Russian wooden hut, decorated with colored drawings, together with outbuildings forming the estate

The contact of tourists with the Russian and Buryat culture takes place immediately on arrival in the major administrative centers of the region – Irkutsk, Ulan-Ude and Chita, where one can see not only objects of Siberian wooden architecture and urban architecture of the 18th-19th centuries, but also traditional portable dwellings of steppe nomads.

The calendar of events and folk festivals allow local and foreign guests of the region to see the Russian Maslenitsa festival, Buryats' Erdyn games, shamanistic rituals and many others. In order to present a diverse culture that has developed over the years of the Soviet Union, festivals of national cuisines are held in Buryatia, involving dozens of national and cultural associations of the Republic.

The Old Believers of Buryatia (settl. Tarbagatai) have a successful experience of ethnic tours, including a live chat with native culture carriers. In the settlements of Ust-Orda (Irkutsk Oblast), settlement of Aginskoye (Transbaikal Territory), as well as on Olkhon Island tourists get acquainted with the folk culture and everyday life of the Buryats.

To get an idea about life and traditional culture of the Evenks, Tofalars or Soyots is possible only visiting the exhibition of the architectural-ethnographic museums in Ulan-Ude, Irkutsk and Bratsk. The development of excursion programs, which include visits to camps of these peoples is possible in the foreseeable future, but is associated with solving a number of complex issues. On the one hand, representatives of indigenous communities are still not sufficiently familiar with the international practice of reception and service of tourists, on the other, to provide the access of transport to the places of their residence is not a tractable problem in the foreseeable future.

One of the options for its solution may be to use international experience in the creation of "ethnic villages", i.e. a kind of ornamental reserves that are intended to show the brightest and most interesting aspects of life and living conditions of local indigenous communities. Such objects are reasonable to locate at a some distance from existing places of residence of the indigenous population in the area of transport accessibility from tourist centers, and to link them functionally to the existing network of specially protected natural areas. The possibility to create such settlements can be considered first of all in the Okinsky, Tunkinsky and Barguzinsky districts of the Republic of Buryatia, as well as in the Nizhneudinsky and Kachugsky districts of Irkutsk Region.

An important direction for the endogenous tourism development is the cross-border routes connecting the Baikal region of Russia with the adjacent territories of neighboring Mongolia. This will not only attract additional numbers of tourists, who seeks to visit both two destinations and two great lakes (Baikal and Khovsgol) in one tour, but will also promote the mutual complement of an existing rich ethno-tourism potential each country has.

Conclusion

Baikal region, as a tourist destination, is attracting not only by the beauty of the lake, but also the opportunity to dive into unique cultural space. Use of a wide range of ethno-recreational resources allows open many new ethnographic objects, to recreate and reconstruct lost, to make them available to tourists. In spite of this, it's necessary to take into account the serious contradictions connected with social and environmental impact of modern endogenous tourism technologies, its positive and negative effects. However global character of this phenomenon specifies that gradual involvement of endogenous small-numbered peoples of the Baikal region in tourist industry is quite objective process, and a question of the one who and as will define its direction depends on consolidation of moral and patriotic efforts from the power, business, the scientific and civil community of the region.

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