

On some prerequisites for sustainable development of the Republic of Buryatia

I Chimitova^{1*}, Y Serebryakova¹ and R Munkueva¹

¹ Filippov Buryat State Agricultural Academy, 8 Pushkina str., Ulan-Ude 670034 Russia

E-mail: rindaol@mail.ru

Abstract. When discussing the issues of sustainable development of cross-border regions, it is necessary to take into account the socio-psychological background, including the quality of the national character of the main contacting ethnic groups. The article discusses some of the character traits of the titular people of the Republic of Buryatia, who could contribute to the creation of a sustainable development territory in the republic. Particular, the paper focuses on a developed ecological culture and a complex of cognitive qualities. Interethnic harmony, as an attribute of sustainable development, was formed and maintained in the region due to the qualities of the characters of the people in contact, including peacefulness, openness, hospitality, and other features of the Buryat character.

Keywords: sustainable development, character, Buryat character, inter-ethnic relations

1. Introduction

When discussing the problems of sustainable development of cross-border regions, one cannot overlook the most typical character traits of the peoples living there. The main features of the Buryat character, which probably could have contributed to the creation of sustainable development territories. For instance, the regions of their residence include a high level of ecological culture, as well as a complex of a number of cognitive qualities [13-15].

The Republic of Buryatia is among the regions of Russia in which inter-ethnic relations are distinguished by the stability and mutual understanding of peoples. During Soviet times, it was possible to hear from the indigenous people of Buryatia of different nationalities, "We all became friends here," and this expresses the essence of interethnic interaction in the republic. This is a consequence of the trend in the past. Relationships of this kind have become a tradition. To some extent, some features of the Buryat character contribute to inter-ethnic harmony, which would be discussed below, manifested in external communications.

2. Materials and Methods

The research methodology is based on the use of an integrated, systemic, sociohistorical, and cultural studies approach. Using dialectical, comparative historical methods, analysis of sources, our explanations are based on theoretical generalizations and scientific evidence. The sources included the works of scientists of different specialties, the results of sociological research, as well as journalism.

3. Results

First of all, the concept of national character is actively used in modern social and humanitarian sciences. Most scientists understand the national character as a totality of historically established sustainable behaviors and typical features inherent in the representative of the nation. There are no unique traits inherent exclusively to any one nation. The similarity of climatic and socio-historical factors of development determines the closeness of their characters.

Let us consider some of the features of the Buryat character. Most often, works on ethnography consider such a feature as carefulness, leading to an even respectful attitude to nature, dating back to its deification that goes back to the centuries, which was later perceived and transformed by Shamanism and Buddhism. Thus, D. Banzarov wrote about the veneration of celestial bodies and the earth, its parts, as well as the spirits who own them, that the source and symbol of cleanliness for distant ancestors was fire, which they showed great respect and tried to keep it clean [1, p 36-44].

The ecological culture of the Buriats includes a number of prohibitions spoiling the environment, violate silence and order, as well as the practice of rational use of natural resources. These norms were strengthened with the acceptance of Buddhism by its principle of compassion for all living beings, as well as the deepening awareness of the moral responsibility of a person not only for his actions, but also for everything living in the world around him.

Although the ecological component of the Buryat character was partially weakened during the Soviet period, it was already restored at the beginning of this century. This is evidenced by the results of a survey of the rural population of the Baikal region about its relationship to nature.

In 1994, the majority of both Buryats and Russians from the several expressions proposed in the questionnaire chose the following: "a man is a transformer of nature, his mission is to use it to his advantage." After 10 years, the respondents of both nationalities preferred another option "the nature and men are one, they cannot be opposed," and the previous thesis about a human as a transformer of the nature in 2004 was not chosen by any of the Buryats. [2, p. 127-128].

Progress in the field of sustainable development of the Republic of Buryatia could be promoted by such properties of the Buryat nature as an ability to various crafts, breadth, and depth of cognitive interests and susceptibility to everything new, which, would be called a complex of cognitive qualities.

About the rapid development by the Buryats of new types of economic activities, crafts, everyday skills, their sharpness, intelligence, ingenuity, love of knowledge, science, education, and active perception of the achievements of other nations were written many great research papers by N. A. Bestuzhev, M. K. Kuchelbecker, O. M. Kovalevsky, A. Sternberg, C. Zhamtsarano, and others.

N. A. Bestuzhev, assessing the mental ability of the Buryats, states that "they are on a par with all the best tribes of the human race" [3, p. 132]. A. Sternberg noted the susceptibility of the Buryats to European culture, their great desire to learn, great mental abilities, massively showing a love for enlightenment. "In the most remote places of the steppe one can meet Buryats who have not studied in any school, faithful to the customs of the people and their faith, and nevertheless, self-educated who have joined the European enlightenment [4, p. 605-606].

Observations and generalizations available in the literature make it possible to judge the continuity of the cognitive qualities of past and present generations of the titular nation of Buryatia Researchers Yu. B. Randalov and P. A. Chukreev, on the basis of their sociological research, draw the following conclusions. "The distribution of answers ... shows a pronounced desire to learn among ... respondents of indigenous nationality. Thus, the number of Buryats who feel the need to continue their education in order to obtain a new profession is 56.2% when the Russians are 45.7%, with 49% of such respondents in the sample as a whole" [5, pp. 88-89].

G. T. Bashkuev designates the cognitive qualities of modern generations of Buryats as "their ability to quickly learn and sometimes excel teachers," demonstrating this with technical skills. In particular, he argues that "The officers of the Zabaykalsky military district ... preferred to efficient Buryat soldiers, especially in parts where there are a lot of equipment. The captains of submarines of the Pacific Fleet, studying the lists of recruits, in the column "nationality" habitually searched and searched for the Buryats, from generation to generation" [6, p. 80].

An integral part of sustainable development is the inter-ethnic harmony. The concept of “consent” is used to characterize such qualities of communication as the positive nature of the existing attitudes, their mutual recognition of differences and willingness to accept them, openness to dialogue and interaction, equality of rights, justice, mutual respect, trust, coincidence of basic norms and values, goals and joint activities, etc.

The concept of “inter-ethnic harmony” reflects the state of relations between the peoples of the Russian Federation who have been interacting for a very long time, who have developed rich experience of successful cooperation in various fields of activity, whose cultures have been mutually enriched, whose relations, because of their long duration, strength, and reliability, have long been friendly, fraternal. In addition, in the regions for which such relations are typical, the inter-ethnic marriages are often found, many people among ancestors and close relatives have people of other nationalities.

The formation and strengthening of inter-ethnic harmony in the territory of the Republic of Buryatia is associated with such qualities of a Buryat character as goodness, cordiality, hospitality, inseparable from peace, openness, generosity, benevolence, etc. Visiting a guest, including a stranger, in the traditional culture of Buryat was no less joyful event than the onset of the new “economic” year, wedding and other holiday [7, p. 179]. Such researchers as M. I. Dobrynina, V. V. Zateev, V. L. Kurguzov, I. I. Osinsky, K. Humphrey, and many other note hospitality, openness, hospitality and generosity of the Buryat as features of their national character. Many authors testify about the openness of the Buryats to other peoples, their kindness, complacency, tolerance, friendliness, and peacefulness. G. T. Bashkuev writes, “Many times I heard how the Buryats spoke in the presence of children and for their edification that “Russian are good people, we must live well with the Russian” [6, p. 80]. Also, there is a lot of evidence that the Buryats entered into kinship with representatives of other nations, in particular, they willingly adopted orphans [8, p. 56-57], [9].

4. Discussion

In the literature of the Soviet period, an emphasis was placed on the qualitative distinction between the traditional and the new character of the Buryats. V. V. Zateev noted “patriotism and internationalism, cooperation and mutual assistance, collectivism, a sense of equality, respect and friendship with other nations”, among the new features [10, p. 29].

We believe that these features are peculiar not only to the Soviet, but also to the traditional Buryat character; they are inherited from the generations that lived in the pre-revolutionary Buryatia, and are inherent in many modern representatives of this ethnos.

The national isolation and isolation in the past were opposed to the new Soviet features of the Buryat character [11, p 182]. Of course, among the Buryats there were such personalities that characterized these features, but as the region became populated and the inter-ethnic relations expanded, insularity and isolation became a thing of the past. It is not by chance that in pre-revolutionary sources, there is a lot of information about peacefulness and good-neighborhood of the Buryats in relation to other ethnic groups.

Later, some scientists, on the contrary, began to ascribe individual character traits to the Soviet period, which were formed in those years. Thus, according to T. M. Mikhailov, the Buryat “in Soviet times developed a collectivist psychology, a psychology of personal lack of initiative and respect for rank” [12, c. 22].

We believe that the collectivism and communality belong to the attributes of the traditional Buryat character, they are similar in the walk of life before the revolution of 1917, and to a certain extent they still exist as a form of mutual assistance and unity. Collectivism is not synonymous with lack of initiative, and especially respect for rank. If collectivism can be demanded in the future, then lack of initiative and respect for rank are characteristic of certain types of people representing the ethnic group, but it is hardly possible to attribute them to qualities with which the future of the region would be associated.

5. Conclusion

As prerequisites for the sustainable development of the Republic of Buryatia, one can consider the traditions of interethnic harmony prevailing in this region, which are caused, in particular, by some features of the Buryat national character: a high level of ecological culture, a complex of cognitive qualities, as well as peacefulness, openness, hospitality, generosity, goodwill etc. An important role in establishing the inter-ethnic harmony was played by the desire for justice, patience, generosity, sociability, and other qualities of the Russian character.

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