

The role of tourism in sustainable rural development

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Abstract. The article discusses the formation of sustainable development of rural municipalities and the region as a whole, as a result of the self-development of rural territories due to the diversification of the economy and in general of labor caused by the development of tourism. Models of rural tourism development in different socio-economic and natural conditions of the Altai Krai were presented.

Keywords: tourism, rural tourism, tourism development, tourist product

1. Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, in the Russian Federation, there has been a change in the paradigm of rural development, due to the transition from state paternalism [1] to rural self-development based on internal resources and equal partnership of the population, business, and state. Rural tourism has become an important area of self-development in rural areas, due to the diversification of the rural economy and rural labor in general.

2. Materials and Methods

The materials for the study included statistical databases, materials of specialized reports of a number of international conferences, cartographic materials.

The following research methods were used: expeditionary, statistical, cartographic, modeling, analytical.

3. Results

Since the beginning of the 2000s, there has been a marked increase in tourist activity in the Altai Territory. According to the territorial institution of the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation [5], the volume of paid tourist services rendered to the population, taking into account the informal economy in the region, increased from 15.5 mln. rub. in 2000 to 1014 mln. rub. in 2013 (Fig. 1). However, due to the economic crisis of 2014-2015, there was a recession in this area. In 2014, tourist services were rendered by 15% less compared to the previous year and despite the recovery in growth in the future, the volume of tourist services rendered did not reach 2013 values. The share of tourist, sanatorium, and recreational and hotel services rose to 5% in the share of the all paid services to the population.

Accelerating the development of the tourism industry is carried out by expanding the types of tourism and creating new tourist products in the places where tourists are most concentrated. This leads to an excessive concentration of tourists in limited territories, the emergence of social and environmental problems, the erosion of a positive recreational image of the region in the eyes of consumers. The

redistribution of tourist flow is a way out of the situation in some municipalities of the region, and a preventive measure to prevent its occurrence again. To redistribute the tourist flow, it is necessary to replace the existing model of tourism development with a model of its sustainable development. The success of applying this new model can be achieved by focusing on the development of a universal type of tourism, capable to solve the identified problems. On the other, such a model should support the development of other existing types of tourism in the framework of integration projects.

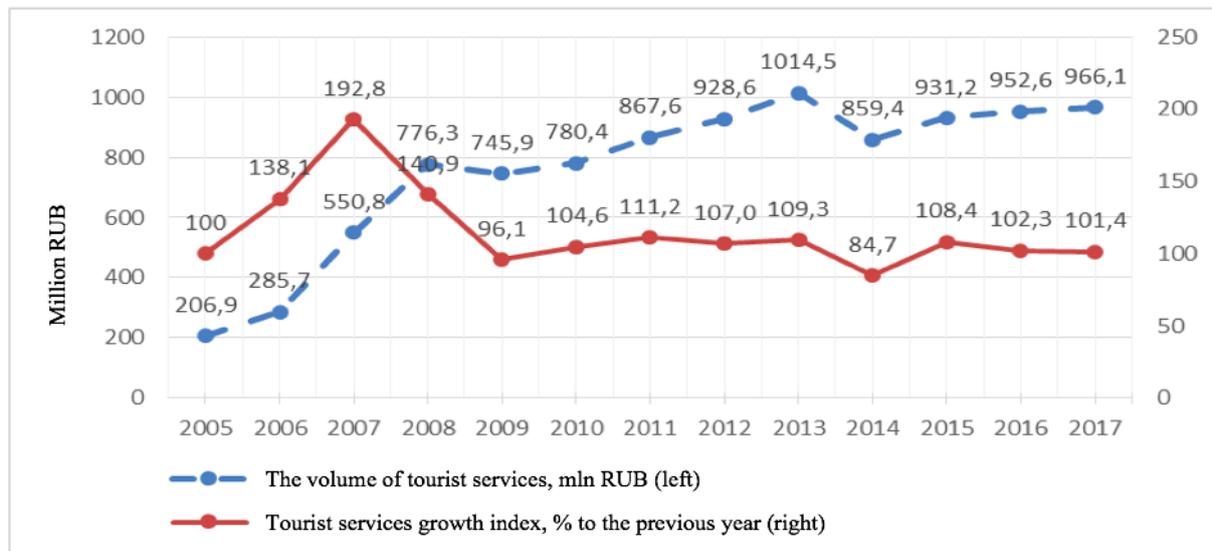


Figure 1. Dynamics of the volume of tourist services to the population, taking into account the volume of the informal economy.

For the traditionally agricultural Altai Krai, only rural tourism can become the main model of sustainable development. This is a special type of tourism associated with the stay of tourists in rural areas for the purpose of rest. This is a set of various services from living in a rural house, organizing sightseeing tours, handicraft workshops to directly participating in holidays and the daily life of the local rural population [2].

Rural tourism is a young direction of tourism development for Russia as a whole, and the Altai Krai in particular, while it can be noted that the image of the Russian rural tourism is only taking shape.

The Altai Krai has a number of competitive advantages for the development of rural tourism [3]. Among the universal conditions for the development of rural tourism in the Altai Krai are the following:

1. Favorable natural conditions of the south of Siberia and the presence of a developed system of specially protected natural territories. Analysis of tourist and recreational opportunities of peasant (farmer) farms suggests a wide range of environmental, educational, and other tourist services that can be offered to tourists.
2. Socio-economic features. The Altai Krai has a high proportion of the rural population (44.6%), a developed network of settlements and administrative territorial centers, and an extensive network of auto-roads. The Altai Krai is the largest agrarian region in the eastern part of Russia, occupies a leading position in the country in the production of cheese, butter, milk, cereals and flour. Multisectoral agriculture allows one to organize a variety of tourist services.
3. Historical and cultural conditions of the territory in which one can trace the stages of the development of Siberia. The Altai village keeps Russian, Ukrainian, German, Kazakh, and other national traditions, contributes to the preservation of the main features of national cultures. A significant addition is the presence of the Cossack component of the Altai villages that were part of the Kolyvan-Voskresensk defensive line.

4. Among the decisive institutional conditions for the development of rural tourism should be the presence of federal and regional programs for developing the Altai village and the agro-industrial complex of the region.

Currently, in more than 20 municipal districts of the Altai Territory, the guest houses (“green” houses in the established terminology) provide services in rural tourism. The number of rural “green” houses increased from 120 houses in 2007 to 289 houses in 2017. Since 2014, the State programs “Development of tourism in the Altai Territory” for the period up to 2020 regulates the government support for rural tourism. In 2018, the amount of funding amounted to more than 2.1 mln. rub.

The overwhelming majority of these guest houses are concentrated in the lower reaches of the Katun River, in the area of the Aya and Katun villages in the Altai region of the Altai district. This is due to significant, fairly stable flows of tourists. The small size of the land plots under the estates and the high cost of land, which they are trying to use as efficiently as possible, do not allow tourists to get acquainted with the full range of rural life and rural houses mostly function as a place of temporary residence.

In the areas that are still little exploited by tourists, a different type of rural guest house has emerged. These estates often have large sizes. Also, there are many farm animals in the rural farmstead, a large vegetable garden, and beautiful surroundings. Growing environmentally friendly products, organizing tourist programs and constantly improving them, such estates quickly find regular customers and have a good income.

According to the results of the expeditionary research, two main directions of the rural tourism were identified, the development of which is most promising in the Altai Krai – natural-ecological and historical-informative.

The ecological direction is justified by the processes of developing the environmental awareness among the inhabitants of the country and the demand for ecologically meaningful tours by the incoming tourists. In places with the highest concentration of rural guest houses, it is necessary to create an ecological path of various contents, carrying out environmental activities, etc. This will expand the services of rural homes and increase the flow of tourists.

The historical and educational direction in rural tourism is still being formed. This direction assumes the study of the place of certain rural settlements in the history of the region and the country, peculiarities of the surrounding cultural landscapes, events that took place both in the memory of residents and in the distant past, the history of families and individuals. In short, this is about creating the “fabric” of a geo-cultural space of the whole region [4], which will unite the scattered efforts in the organization of rural tourism.

4. Discussion

At the municipal level, the most important for developing the field of rural tourism are three socio-economic factors, such as the state of rural settlement systems, the size and structure of personal subsidiary farming, as well as the willingness of the population to receive recreants. According to their ratio, various models of rural tourism development can be proposed. For the Altai Krai, in our opinion, a total of 3 models of rural tourism development are relevant.

The first of these is used in the most prosperous socio-economic areas of the country (part of the Altai district that falls to the Katun River and Lake Aya, including the special economic zone “Biryuzovaya Katun”), where the development of tourism is based on the rural hotel industry is promising. Due to the high tourist flow, it is necessary to ensure compliance with the standards of throughput capacity, one of the basic concepts of sustainable development. For this, it is necessary to supplement the existing diverse tourist product with environmental programs, since even now a number of natural objects in this area are close to degradation. Stimulating the development of rural tourism will redistribute the tourist flow and thereby significantly reduce the human impact on the environment. The same model is promising for the municipalities of the Kulundinsky Plain (Slavgorod, Burlinsky, Zavyalovsky, and other districts), the recreational possibilities of which are closely related to the therapeutic resources of the region’s saline lakes. During summer seasons, they experience a serious

recreational load at the expense of amateur tourists from the regions of the Siberian Federal District and the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The second model is focused on areas with the best-preserved natural landscapes (foothill and mountainous districts of the region), which is suitable for the development of tourism in combination with historical, educational, and environmental principles. Krasnoshchekovsky, Kurinsky and Zmeinogorsky districts are the “heart” of the Altai mining district with its huge historical heritage. In the mountainous part of the Altai Krai, the “tungsten shield” of the USSR was created during the Second World War. The presence of a developed system of the specially protected areas allows tourists to submit interesting ecological programs.

The third model is most suitable for the densely developed territories in the zone of direct influence of cities (especially large and largest). Pervomaisky, Pavlovsky, Biysky, Rubtsovsky districts of the Altai Krai can be assigned to such areas in which tourism development is possible on the basis of medium-sized tourism facilities in rural areas, as well as on the basis of agro-industrial enterprises.

Currently, rural tourist clusters are being formed in the Altai Territory. Certain peculiarities of such a cluster is the need to ensure technological links between the guest houses and the economic sectors involved, both in the production and in the sale of the tourist product. This will allow more widely and fully utilize the potential of the territory. The proposed models are already reflected in the specialization of tourist and recreational clusters of the region.

5. Conclusion

The experience of rural tourism development in the Altai Krai shows that the agrarian regions largely have certain signs of sustainability. On the one hand, rural tourism contributes to increasing the viability of tourist destinations through providing employment, increasing production, and improving people’s living standards in general. On the other hand, due to the low density of tourist flows provided by a large number of guest houses, the ecological balance of natural systems is not disturbed, biodiversity is preserved, and the waste generation and pollution of the environment are minimized. Ethnographic features of the area organically fit into rural tourism, due to which local communities, customs, and culture are preserved and actively developed, and the historical heritage of local history museums that is actively involved in the tourist product.

The proposed models are of strategic importance for the Altai Krai as an agrarian region, as it contributes to the solution of major socio-economic problems and allows for the sustainable development of rural areas.

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