

DEVELOPMENT OF A MECHANISM FOR INVOLVING THE RURAL POPULATION IN TOURISM ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

The article proposes a mechanism for involving rural population in tourist activities, based on which a system that determines the procedure for involving the rural population in tourist activities is proposed. The involvement of the population in tourism activities allows us to form and develop the necessary personnel potential of rural tourism. It also partially solves the problems of employment and the quality of life of the rural population, as well as the development of non-agricultural activities in rural areas. Experience shows that measures related to increasing the activity of enterprises in the field of rural tourism, improving the image of tourist professions, stimulating employment in the field of rural tourism in the region are effective in this direction.

Key Words: *rural areas, rural population, rural tourism, sustainable development, human resource*

JEL classification: *Q01, Z32*

Introduction

Rural tourism is a significant sector of the global tourism industry. Its share varies from 12% to 30% of the global tourist flow. Over the past 10-15 years, the growth of the rural tourism segment has become much higher than the growth of European tourism in General. The average annual rate of development of rural tourism (not including excursion activities) was 10-15% and European tourism in General-only 4-5%. Up to 20% of placements are concentrated in the rural tourism segment. Tourist spending

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in this sector is about 2,500 billion. The effect on the rural economy exceeds 4,500 billion rubles (Trukhachev, 2017).

According to experts, in Russia, the share of rural tourism in the tourism industry does not exceed two percent. Experts estimate the volume of this sector at 4,000 objects. The vast majority of tourism objects are concentrated in urban areas (about 196 thousand), but the demand of Russian residents is much higher for rural recreation, and this demand is satisfied by no more than 15% (Ivolga & Shakhramanian, 2019b).

According to forecasts of rural tourism development, the number of urban residents who prefer to relax in the village is growing steadily. At this rate, their share of all domestic tourism in Russia can catch up with the European level (15-20%) (ACGRF, 2018).

Every year the tourist becomes more sophisticated, requires something new and unusual. This and much more was a prerequisite for increasing the development of rural tourism. The subjects of the tourism industry market forced to look for new opportunities to diversify the tourist product, to ensure its uniqueness and originality (Navolokina & Ryazantsev, 2019).

The prospects for rural tourism development in Russia recognized at the Federal level. In addition, many scientists and practitioners emphasize the importance of the rural segment not only as an agricultural activity (Trukhachev, 2016b).

A number of serious problems in rural areas will be solved because of the diversification of the rural economy (Shakhramanian & Ivolga, 2018):

- mass "flight" of young people due to the lack of jobs;
- reduced employment of the entire population;
- low incomes;
- the lack of prestige of living in villages and others.

One of the promising areas of diversification of the rural economy is tourism. Indeed, rural tourism is not an expensive pleasure, so low costs and investments can help solve a whole range of social and economic problems faced by villages (Elfimova & Radishauskas, 2017). Most of the specialized enterprises and households are faced with seasonal unemployment every year. The development of non-agricultural activities on their basis helps to reduce the seasonality factor and risks, which in turn will lead to an increase in income. Tourism is the most effective way to

solve all the above problems, as evidenced by both domestic and foreign experience (Pavlov & Rassadin, 2015).

Despite the fact that rural tourism has been named a priority, there is no policy at the Federal level to support its development. The lack of a consistent policy at the Federal and regional levels reduces the effectiveness of developing measures aimed at stimulating and developing rural tourism, which, as practice shows, is taken only at the regional level. Individual instruments and mechanisms of state policy operate separately and are not coordinated. As a result, the potential of rural areas is not used, although it could solve a whole range of problems, and the demand for rural tourism remains unsatisfied (Lisova et al., 2017).

It should be noted that the development of rural tourism can be promoted not only by certain programs, but also by a motivated rural population. One of the main problems of villages is the problem of labor resources, namely their preservation, retention and attraction. In order to solve this problem, it is necessary to develop a set of measures aimed at involving rural residents in the tourism industry. In our opinion, it is the villagers who know all the details of their territory, its advantages and heritage like no other. With a clear work with the population, with the setting of motivation, you can achieve a high return on them, which will help the development of rural tourism (Trukhachev, 2016a).

Thus, the paper tackles an urgent problem, which has an important socio-economic and economic significance, as the preservation and involvement of labor resources in rural areas.

The scientific and practical significance of the study lies in the fact that its main conclusions and recommendations for the involvement of rural population in tourism activities can be used in the preparation of regional and municipal programs to support and develop rural tourism. Also, these recommendations can be used to achieve the goals specified in the Strategy for sustainable development of rural areas of the Russian Federation for the period until 2030.

Methods of the research

Theoretic and methodological background is modern economics, academic papers of national and foreign scholars in the matter of building labour potential of rural territories.

Results

Employment issues in rural areas are now an important problem for the development of the Russian agricultural sector. The level of employment of the population is the main indicator of the state of the economy, the basis for the welfare of the population and a condition for social stability. Russia is one of the few countries in transition where market reforms in the agricultural sector have led to a sharp drop in production, a decline in the living standards of the population and a sharp increase in unemployment. Therefore, scholarly interest in this topic is justified (Vlasov, 2013).

Over many years of agrarian reforms and ineffective agricultural policy, the skills and quality of the labor force in the agricultural sector of the economy have deteriorated sharply. This means that the upswing in the agricultural sector is not finding an adequate supply of labor. Rural youth, as a potential labor force, are not too eager to live in villages with an undeveloped social infrastructure and work in low-paid agricultural sectors (Shakhramanian, 2016).

The able-bodied and energetic population of Russian villages is constantly moving to cities, which leads to the "desertification" of many rural territories, the loss of traditional national institutions such as rural lifestyle, rural culture, village traditions, etc. The lack of skilled labor in rural areas may become one of the main negative factors in the development of the agricultural sector of the economy in the near future (Trukhachev et al., 2018).

The most effective and proven way to combat rural unemployment and poverty in other countries with economies in transition is to constantly reduce the number of people employed in agricultural production and maximize the number of jobs in addition to the agricultural sector. As foreign experience shows, the problems of employment of the rural population have been solved because of the state policy aimed at creating non-agrarian sources of income, as well as conditions for the formation of an effective supply of labor in agriculture. So far, these issues in our country are often resolved spontaneously, by creating a compensatory mechanism for the personal subsidiary economy of the population. The regions are gradually accumulating positive experience of a program-oriented, differentiated approach to supporting employment and income of rural residents through the development of effective cooperation between

small-scale commodity production and large-scale production (Ivolga et al., 2016).

Most experts agree that the management of social infrastructure and labor resources in rural areas should be aimed at creating effective migration, preserving and attracting young people to rural areas, and generally improving the quality of life of the rural population. The current stage of development of agriculture and socio-economic processes in rural areas, strategic prospects and technology development are accompanied by a significant variety of activities, as well as a corresponding diversification of employment (Ivolga & Shakhramanian 2019a).

The problem of sustainable socio-economic development of rural areas is one of the key factors that considers the human resource through the prism of preserving, retaining and attracting the population, especially young people to rural areas. Among these areas of diversification is rural tourism, which is one of the main sources of additional rural employment in the non-agricultural sector.

Foreign experience in the practice and methodology of rural tourism development shows that working with the population is a powerful aspect of rural tourism development. In order to ensure the involvement of the rural population in tourism activities, farm owners must be convinced of the prospects for the development of this activity, only then will they be able to create a tourist product with confidence, moving away from their usual agricultural activities (Trukhachev, 2015).

Rural tourism is an alternative source of employment for the rural population. It may be of interest to both young people and adults. Thus, involving the population in tourist activities increases the efficiency of using the labor potential in rural areas, and creates additional sources of income for the rural population. The analysis of scientific papers and sources of legal regulation has shown that methods of working with the population, ways of involving the rural population in the tourism industry are practically not described.

Rural tourism, as a multi-faceted and complex phenomenon, often requires highly qualified personnel with competencies in the field of service, animation, design of a tourist product and its marketing.

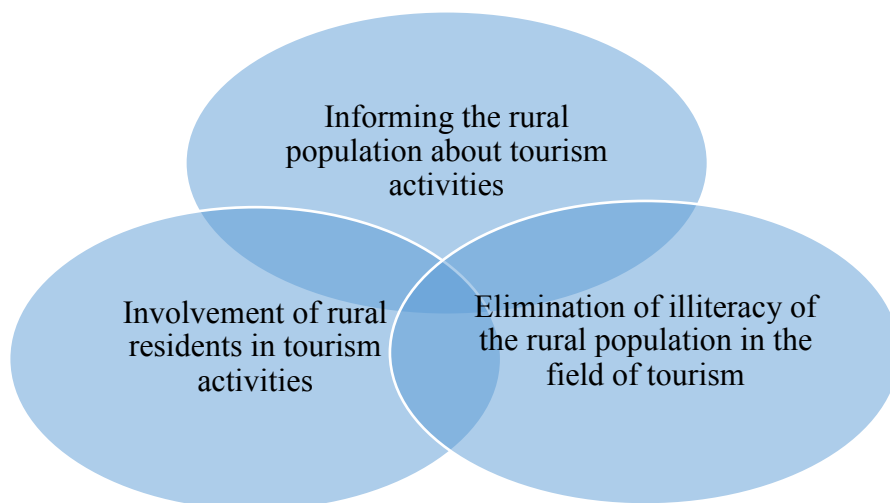
Therefore, from our point of view, the mechanism for attracting rural population to tourism activities should include three components, shown in figure 1. The goals and objectives of this mechanism should correspond to the strategic goals and objectives of the development of tourism and agriculture, regional policy, the education system, and socio-economic development.

In this regard, it is advisable to take into account the provisions formulated in the following directions:

- guidelines concerning the development of the structure of secondary, higher and additional education systems in terms of disciplinary differentiation;
- strengthening career guidance for young people, especially in rural localities;
- target indicators and directions of development of specialized areas of secondary and higher education for strategic industries and clusters in the region;
- formation and development of a system of retraining and advanced training of personnel for the tourism sector in terms of developing the labor potential of the rural tourism system;
- coordination and interaction between participants of the educational process: General and secondary vocational education, higher education and specialized scientific institutes of tourism and agriculture;
- activation of the business environment of rural tourism in the region, including holding various conferences and seminars, integration of rural tourism development issues into relevant professional events;
- formation of mechanisms to stimulate entrepreneurship and support the development of small businesses.

When developing a mechanism for involving rural population in tourism activities, it is necessary to distinguish three subsystems, shown in figure 1, whose symbiosis contributes to obtaining a sustainable tool for attracting the population.

Figure 1: *Structure of the system for educating, informing and involving the rural population in tourism activities*



Source: *Picture compiled by the author*

It is necessary to form a positive attitude of the rural population to tourism in general, to convey to them an understanding of the significance and hidden potential of rural tourism, to show the prospects for the development of tourist activities on their territory. Raising the awareness of the rural population about tourism activities strives to achieve these particular goals.

Activities aimed at disseminating and explaining information about the development and support of rural tourism will contribute to their achievement. It is necessary to focus on the media and other channels of information dissemination that are important in rural areas. We believe that first of all, we need to inform the population through them. The events imply the placement of materials on the effectiveness of rural tourism development (for example, the regions where rural tourism is gaining popularity), about the growth of the main indicators of the development of this industry. It is necessary to convey to the population the idea that there is a huge potential for creating tourist activities in rural areas. Thus, conducting these events will increase the level of awareness of rural residents with regard to events in the field of tourism, as well as prospects for the development of rural tourism.

It is necessary to form a positive attitude towards guests in rural areas, for this purpose the population must be aware of the norms and traditions of

hospitality. In this case, public awareness can be provided through lectures or open classes. It is quite possible to invite specialists from large cities who will tell the rural population about the subtleties of hospitality and teach how to apply its rules when providing service.

In order to "educate" an informed generation in the field of rural tourism, it is necessary to start this procedure with young representatives of the rural population, namely, with school children. Career guidance work will be a worthy continuation of the procedure for informing the rural population about tourist activities. Of course, when talking about career guidance, we can't but mention the importance of forming a Patriotic attitude among teenagers to their village, which should also be emphasized. Teenagers, as well as other rural residents, can be involved in volunteer activities, where one of the goals will be to conduct events related to awareness.

Promoting the formation of volunteer movements and their involvement in the implementation of projects that contribute to the development of rural tourism in the region is particularly important for socio-economic projects. Such work will help to remove the social tension that logically accompanies the increase in the number of entries to rural areas. In addition, this event will help to develop the human resources potential of rural tourism, and will be able to help enterprises of the rural tourism industry in solving problems of attracting labor resources on a temporary basis.

To help create an authentic rural tourist product, it is necessary to attract historians and local historians who have very important and useful information about the village, which is often unknown to residents. This data will allow local residents to develop interesting routes, entertainment programs, and a new product.

Thus, we see that informing rural residents about tourism activities contributes to the development of the human potential of rural tourism.

The aim of educating the rural population of the region is to develop knowledge about the cultural and historical heritage of the rural area of the region, its natural potential, as well as the development of a system of continuing education in the field of rural tourism. Activities related to increasing the availability of rural tourism education in the region at all levels will help to achieve this goal.

The educational programs should include disciplines focused on the formation of knowledge about the tourist and recreational potential of rural areas in the region. It is also necessary to conduct field events in local history museums, cultural centers of local regions. This interesting form will allow young people to form knowledge about the richness of their area. Moreover, we believe that it is at the stage of primary education that young people interested in the development of tourism are identified. In the future, successful representatives should be provided support when entering the system of specialized tourist education.

The mass outflow of young people and young families from villages is also because children have nowhere to study. Experience shows that some villages of the Russian regions have schools with an educational program only from grades 1 to 4. After primary school, rural students have to travel to larger cities where they can continue their education. Moreover, there are no higher educational institutions in the villages. As for secondary vocational education institutions, there are very few of them in the villages.

In this regard, we say that it is necessary to support school education, specialized education, training and retraining of personnel for organizations of the tourism industry. Thus, the tourism infrastructure will be developed in the village, and the resources (labor and information resources) of tourist enterprises will increase.

The modern educational process needs to be significantly supplemented with certain issues related to the development and support of rural tourism. Note that the modern system of higher and secondary education does not provide targeted training for rural tourism specialists, and this may not be appropriate. However, we cannot agree that the need for training in this direction can become the basis for the development of a network of regional resource centers for additional education in the field of tourism in rural areas.

In addition to introducing new disciplines into the educational program, it is necessary to conduct field events aimed at solving issues of entering the tourist industry market, organizing tourist activities in rural areas, and so on.

It is very important for the heads of tourism regulatory bodies at the municipal level, as well as for business entities in rural tourism, to be legally well informed. Tourist activities are constantly developing, and this

directly affects changes in the legislative sphere. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct consulting activities on changes in legal acts.

Educational work in rural tourism covers different forms and levels, which indicates that the importance of the relationship between the participants of the educational process is significantly increasing. As already mentioned, the educational system in the field of tourism requires innovations and significant additions. Improvement of educational programs is possible by organizing regular meetings of representatives of educational institutions in the field of tourism and representatives of leading enterprises in the field of rural tourism.

Most people are afraid to start doing business in the village, as they ask serious questions that they do not have answers to. To educate the population of rural areas, it is necessary to create an information and consulting center that will first of all be able to answer the main questions related to:

- formation of rural tourism product and optimization of business models of its development;
- marketing support of tourist products (including branding), sales organization, positioning and promotion;
- using innovative technologies in rural tourism;
- preparation of applications and materials for grants, subsidies, and other forms of support for Federal / regional / local tourism administrations, participation in competitions, and so on.

The involvement of the population in tourism activities makes it possible to form and develop the necessary human resources for rural tourism. In part, it solves the problems of employment and quality of life of the rural population, as well as contributes to the development of non-agricultural activities in rural areas. In this direction, effective measures are aimed at activating the enterprises of the rural tourism industry, improving the image of tourist professions, and stimulating employment in the field of rural tourism in the region.

You can encourage rural tourism industry enterprises and rural entrepreneurs to be active by holding various competitions, the result of which will be the assignment of the "Best ..." status. It all depends on the imagination, it can be, just to name a few options, a competition for the best enterprise of the rural tourism sector, the best rural tourist route, the best souvenir, and so on.

To motivate the emergence of new ideas, a new authentic product, it is worth organizing competitions for the best projects to create them.

An important role in attracting rural residents to tourist activities is the organization and holding of thematic events, concerts dedicated to calendar holidays, organization of competitions and other events of event-based rural tourism.

The assessment of activities aimed at educating, informing and involving the rural population in tourism activities can be expressed in the following indicators:

- increase in the number of people employed in rural tourism;
- number of new projects in the field of rural tourism;
- number of rural residents who have received training/retraining in rural tourism development;
- the number of events for various purposes (business, educational, propaganda) aimed at involving the population in the rural tourism industry;
- increase in the number of people employed in related industries in rural areas.

Based on the above, a system should be developed that determines the procedure for attracting rural population to tourist activities.

1. Informing the rural population about tourism activities.
 - 1.1. Publication in the media of materials on the effectiveness of tourism development in the region, the experience of rural tourism development.
 - 1.2. Informing the public about events, industry news, and hospitality values.
 - 1.3. Career guidance work with students to obtain professions in the field of tourism, the conclusion of targeted contracts.
 - 1.4. Development of measures to form a Patriotic attitude towards the region and rural areas in the young generation.
 - 1.5. Assistance in the formation of volunteer movements and their involvement in the implementation of projects aimed at the development of rural tourism in the region.
2. Education of the rural population in the field of tourism.
 - 2.1. Education of young people (development and support of tourist and local history activities of schoolchildren and students;

- promotion of youth entrepreneurship and involvement of young people in business activities in the field of rural tourism).
- 2.2. Organization of on-site training events for specialists in the field of entrepreneurship and rural tourism (on entering the tourist market, organization of hotel types of tourism, safety of tourist activities in rural areas).
 - 2.3. Ensuring coordination between participants in the educational process in the field of rural tourism (meetings of representatives of educational institutions, employers and authorities in the field of tourism).
 - 2.4. Support of specialized professional education, training and retraining systems for tourism enterprises, integration of rural tourism development issues into the educational process.
3. Involvement of rural population in tourism activities.
 - 3.1. Organization of annual competitions between organizations and individual entrepreneurs for the best enterprise in the field of rural tourism, "the best eco-route", "the best rural tourist product", "the best guesthouse", "the best peasant farm".
 - 3.2. Organization and holding of holidays, contests, events and competitions in rural areas dedicated to memorable dates.
 - 3.3. Holding a competition for projects for the development of rural routes/products.
 - 3.4. Guaranteeing organizational and informational support for projects in rural tourism.

In addition to the proposed mechanism, we also offer municipal tools to ensure the sustainability of rural tourism.

The strategy for creating jobs is to create services around rural tourism that require the creation of local businesses to operate them, which will then open up to a wider market. In this way, rural tourism will become the driving force of these enterprises, which in some cases will lose all connection with it. All this done through a process that we move to detailing and creating some tools by the municipality.

The implementation of the local development plan requires the municipality to create certain tools that make this possible:

a) establishment of a local development Agency: this is a key tool for coordinating training and job creation efforts. The Agency should be responsible for the training process and have the following responsibilities:

- identify unused resources and, in particular, uninhabited homes that can be converted into rural cottages.
- development of projects for obtaining food subsidies.
- a scholarship for employment with graduates of shop schools and other specialists of the commune in conditions of unemployment.
- technical assistance in developing local enterprise development projects.
- assistance to local businesses in obtaining subsidies.

b) the creation of a tourism product in which local agents act as actors requires the parallel creation of promotion and marketing mechanisms for this product. Indeed, it is useless to persuade home owners to make an effort to restore them in order to get additional rents, unless at the same time funds are offered to attract tourists who will use it.

To cope with this situation, you need to create a municipal enterprise with several functions:

- development of a comprehensive rural tourism product that includes the offer of quality housing and a programme of additional activities adapted to the needs of this tourism sector and the rural nature of the local culture.
- take into account the heritage resources that have been allocated by the local development Agency in order to integrate them into the tourism product.
- conducting events to promote and market this tourist product.
- restore buildings that are to be converted into rural housing, as well as furniture, by hiring employees from the local development Agency's labor exchange.
- strictly control the quality of all product elements.
- customize new products by combining various elements that can be converted into travel resources.

c) establishment of a municipal Fund for subsidizing the costs of receiving subsidies.

d) establishment of a business incubator.

e) tax incentives: municipalities need to provide some tax incentives for small businesses.

All of these elements that contribute to the creation of jobs in rural areas through rural tourism, carried out in the framework of this activity, which takes into account some basic principles. Specifically participation of local population in this process, in which the owners, cultural and environmental associations, artisans, farmers, local entrepreneurs have the right to vote, respect historical and environmental heritage, preservation of local traditions and culture, restoring traditional professions. We are convinced that rural tourism can be a suitable way to create jobs, diversify the rural economy, and that the commune is an ideal place to promote it.

Conclusion

The use of this mechanism will solve an important socio-economic problem of the village – the problem of human resources, namely, the preservation, retention and involvement of the population.

The involvement of the population in tourism activities allows us to form and develop the necessary personnel potential of rural tourism, as well as partially solve the problems of increasing employment and quality of life of the rural population, the development of non-agricultural activities in rural areas.

Experience shows that measures related to increasing the activity of enterprises in the rural tourism industry, improving the image of tourist professions, and stimulating employment in the field of rural tourism in the region are effective in this direction.

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