

# ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT OF TOURIST POTENTIAL FOR INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES

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## Abstract

In modern context, Russian tourism in general and ethnic – cultural tourism, in particular, are not sufficiently developed to match the extensive potential of the Russian regions. Nowadays successful regional policy in the field of tourism is rather an exception than a rule. The aim of this work is uniting municipal entities of Siberian republics into clusters with a certain potential for developing the particular type of ethnic – tourism. The authors suggest using cluster analysis in defining perspective territories for more efficient use of republics potential in ethnic-tourism. Authors prove that despite rich cultural heritage of Siberian poly-ethnic regions its use in the development of tourism is hindered by several reasons, some of which are subjective and can be alleviated by altering regional tourism development strategies. For a better use of republics' potential in the field of ethnic-tourism authors suggest using cluster analysis in defining perspective territories. Municipal regions of Siberian republics are united into clusters for which possible directions for tourism development are defined. Territories – growth points for cultural, educational, event, ecological, agricultural and aboriginal tourism types. Recommendations on implementing ethnic-tourism potential in Siberian regions are given.

**Keywords:** indigenous regions, ethnic – tourism, territory development, economic potential

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## Introduction

Almost every Russian region has unique objects of historical, architectural, cultural and natural heritage. In many regions among society and authorities, there is an understanding of the fact that with effective use of cultural heritage objects tourism can become the driving force behind social and economic growth facilitating the economic, social and spiritual development of the regions and the country in general. At the same time, intra – country tourism as well as ethnic-cultural tourism are not developed sufficiently to match the rich potential of the Russian regions. Nowadays successful regional policy in the field of tourism is rather an exception than a rule.

Cultural and educational tourism takes about 20% of the Russian tourism market and is developed mainly in North – Western and Central Federal Areas. According to the Federal Agency

on tourism, the leading positions in terms of cultural and educational tourism are Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Belgorod region, Vladimir region, Voronezh region, Ivanovo region, Ryazan region, Smolensk and Yaroslavl regions.

Siberian regions, particularly Altay republic, Burayatiya, Tuva and Khakassia with variety of cultural heritage objects lag behind the leading regions in terms of tourist numbers despite the fact that almost everywhere in these regions there are opportunities for developing ethnic – tourism on the basis of getting acknowledged with historical and cultural heritage, national art, traditions and folklore of the aboriginal population, unique ethnic cuisine and other cultural manifestations of the ethnos representing peculiarity of local tourism resources.

Despite a large number of cultural heritage objects, Siberian regions, particular republics of Altay, Buryatia, Tuva and Khakassia, lag behind regions – leaders in terms of tourist numbers. The reasons for this lag in cultural and educational tourism development in the regions of Siberia are as follows:

1. *The absence of quality hotel infrastructure.* Despite the growing number of hotels lately, the availability of hotel infrastructure in Siberia is lower than in Russia in general. Besides that, travel agents mark the low level of service even in certified hotels, to say nothing of others.

2. *Insufficient supply of quality travel products.* Majority of Russian regions offer practically no quality travel products meeting modern requirements including entertainment infrastructure. The peculiar feature of Siberian regions is a dispersed pattern of cultural heritage objects placement.

3. *Transport accessibility.* Many Siberian regions face the problem of transport accessibility of tourist centers. A huge share of transportation costs in an overall tour price makes the product uncompetitive at the national market in comparison with traveling abroad. Insufficient use of transportation and accommodation discounts system make national travel agents look at foreign markets.

4. *Unformed image.* Tourism development strategy of the Russian Federation for up to 2020 marks negative stereotypes concerning the image of Russia formed by certain parts of foreign Mass Media. At the same time, insufficient state non – profit advertising of the country's travel opportunities both outside and inside the country hinders activities aimed at target formation of a positive image of Russia as a country, favorable for tourism. Low level of budget financing for positioning travel industry limits promotion of travel opportunities in Russia and its regions at the international market.

5. *Lack of qualified staff.* There is a significant deficit of qualified staff capable of offering quality service for tourists. There is a particularly acute lack of managers and marketers specializing in event tourism. Organization of event tourism, particularly ethnic – tourism,

requires the absolutely different type of professionals as events require clearly formulated the concept, well – planned program and producing.

6. *The problem of developing smaller businesses.* Specifics of the tourism industry is such that majority of activities is conducted by smaller enterprises. Smaller business in some Siberian regions is at the very first stage of development which has a negative influence on many spheres including tourism.

7. *The absence of strategy and concept of development of cultural events and tourism.* As a result, there is no management and culture of events. An event can be touristic one if its information support starts six months or a year before the opening. The budget for advertising and marketing should equal the budget for the organization of the event.

It is possible that one of the reasons behind the insufficient development of tourism in Siberian republics is the type of regional authorities and entrepreneurs desire to cover all possible types of tourism and attract all possible target audiences. An absence of priorities in tourism development leads to: a) spending investments on projects not expected to bring profit in the nearest future; b) vague image of the region for potential tourists; c) offering uncompetitive tourist product.

The aim of this work is to unite municipal entities of Siberian republics into clusters according to a certain potential of particular ethnic - tourism type. As a result, municipal entities within one cluster can use similar regional and municipal policy instruments and analogous tourism marketing strategies.

Classification of the territories according to ethnic – tourism development potential allows for: a) focusing efforts and resources on the most perspective territories from the point of view of tourism development; b) identify type of tourism, and target audience and therefore formulate marketing strategy for developing and promoting tourist product; c) improve efficacy of managerial decisions in choosing and supporting priority investment projects and applied regional instruments in the field of tourism development.

## **1. Available research**

A whole range of modern economic theories focuses on a significant relation shift involving a transition from the economics of goods and manufacturing to the economics of symbols, emotions, and impressions (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Modern “vacation civilization” in J. Dumazedier’s opinion, developed in 1960-70., suggests the anticipatory development of culture sphere where a huge market potential is concentrated (Dumazedier, 1999). As the speed of society changes grows the role of culture grows too: it moves from periphery to the center of social interests and public

attention. Therefore, a sustainable interest towards cultural heritage is formed alongside with demand for cultural services, providing the influx of financial resources for territory development.

Innovation experience in different regions of the world proves the efficacy of using social and cultural resources for the systematic territory development. Examples of such practices include technologies of cultural tourism, different festivals and “cultural and industrial” projects. Research on sociocultural design by S.E. Zuev should be mentioned in this respect (Zuev, 2003).

In a globalizing world identity of peculiarity have a high value which explains closer attention to ethnic culture during the recent period. According to A.V. Kostina and T.M. Goudima renaissance of ethnic cultures is an opposition to overall standards, a productive attempt to retain their individuality (Kostina&Goudima, 2007). Commercial interest to ethnic cultures initiates reconstruction of ethnic traditions, folklore, everyday life, crafts, festivals, etc., stimulates the creation of different ethnic – parks, national villages, special programs for ethnic – cultural tourism (Amanzholova, 2008).

Lately, Russian scientists are interested in utilizing historical and cultural potential in the field of tourism. Aspects related to studying historical and cultural tourism are covered in the works by E.D. Fomina (Fomina, 2016). Among research centers and institutions analyzing relevant tourism areas one can single out the following: Russian Research and Academic Institute for Natural and Cultural Heritage conducts research in preserving and actualizing natural and cultural heritage, cultural landscape and broadening geographical scope of tourism (Poutrik, 2008; Vedenin, 2008;); Saint Petersburg State Economics University looks into the role of tourism in regional development, tourism economics, new technologies in tourism (Bogolubov&Bogolubova&Kryga, 2012). Aspects related to studying ethnic – cultural tourism are covered in the works by A. Barlukova (Barlukova, 2010) and Maruyama, N., Woosnam, K. M. (Maruyama& Woosnam, 2015), etc.

Works of the following authors present examples of the scientific approach to the development of ethnic tourism: Valcuende at all (Valcuende, 2012) focus on tourism and indigenous peoples in the Amazon region for understanding the role of indigenous people in ethnic tourism. C. Travesi (Travesi, 2017) identifies the need for more analysis of the political uses of cultural knowledge as a tourist attraction, reporting on an ethnographic study of the politics of knowledge unfolded by an Aboriginal group of Western Australia in the context of their tour guiding activities. F. Islam, J. Carlsen (Islam&Carlsen, 2015) and Mendoza-Ramos A., Prideaux, B. (Mendoza-Ramos& Prideaux, 2017) give attention to the relationship between indigenous communities, tourism development and poverty alleviation in the context of developing nations

## **2. Research Procedures**

Typology of municipal entities is made by means of cluster analysis methods.

As research objects the authors chose municipal areas in Buryatia, Tuva, Khakassia and Altay (56 municipal entities), which is determined by specific characteristics of the research (cultural heritage objects in Siberian republics are mostly situated in the regions rather than concentrated in the cities).

During conducting territory typology, we believed that main tourist resource of poly-ethnic regions of Siberia consists of material and immaterial cultural heritage. Statistical data exists only for material heritage objects therefore immaterial heritage potential can be evaluated on the basis of the share of title ethnos in the overall population (that is the share of potential immaterial heritage holders). The basis of the material cultural heritage of Siberia is formed by archeological objects, therefore, they are subdivided into a separate group.

Besides many other things during the research we found that many natural objects of the areas under analysis have historical, cultural and religious significance for aboriginal people and it is due to preserved legends, myths and rituals that they are attractive for tourists. Therefore historical, cultural and natural monuments are united into one group.

Another important factor in developing different kinds of tourism is the level of social and economic development of the territory. Historically it happened so that Southern and South-Eastern Siberia have been economically used in disperse or pioneering way. The level of economic development of the territory defines opportunities for tourism development and type. For example, weakly developed territories with low population density and no industry can be of interest in terms of developing aboriginal and ecological tourism. At the same time, these territories pose certain limitations for target groups of tourists requiring the high level of infrastructure quality. Therefore, the researchers took into account average per capita indicators for agriculture and industry.

## **3. Results of the research**

In order to form clusters, authors formulated the following variables: population density (Var1); share of title ethnos in the overall population (Var2); density of archeological heritage objects per 1000 sq.km. (Var3); density of historical, natural and cultural monuments per 1000 sq. km. (Var4); share of agricultural products per capita (Var5); share of industrial products per capita (Var6).

As all cluster algorithms need the evaluation of distances between clusters or objects, one must set the measurements scale when calculating distances. As different measurements use

different types of scales, they must be standardized so that each variable has average 0 or standard 1 deviation.

At the first stage authors identified if municipal entities from natural clusters that can be analyzed. Based on the visual presentation of results it was suggested that 56 municipal regions of Khakassia, Buryatia, Altay and Tuva republics form 7 natural clusters uniting 51 municipal entities. This suggestion was tested by dividing initial data by means of average K method into 7 clusters. With the help of dispersing analysis, a high importance of differences between clusters was defined.

Typology formulation has allowed for defining territories – growth points, which are the most perspective ones for developing particular types of tourism and their promotion among the target audience.

Content characteristic of identified clusters is given in Table 1.

**Tab. 1: Cluster content and characteristics in terms of ethnic-tourism potential and type in Siberian republics**

Cluster	Quantity	Average meanings for standardized variables					
		Var1 (population density)	Var2 (share of title ethnoses in overall population number)	Var3 (density of archeological heritage objects)	Var4 (density of historical, cultural and national monuments)	Var5 (amount of agricultural product per capita)	Var6 (amount of manufactures goods per capita)
1	3	1,1727	-0,8656	-0,2819	3,0501	-0,1340	0,8480
2	2	0,9087	-1,1091	-0,6028	-0,2371	1,2417	4,1280
3	12	-0,4084	1,2146	-0,1698	-0,4069	-0,9094	-0,3495
4	15	-0,3255	0,3453	-0,3923	-0,2824	0,7983	-0,3835
5	11	-0,2861	-1,0112	-0,5273	-0,2577	-0,5444	0,1351
6	2	3,2087	-0,5143	2,4439	-0,1078	-0,2768	-0,4401
7	6	0,1961	-0,4648	1,8143	0,5820	0,6031	-0,2433

Source: own elaboration

*Cluster 1* unites regions with the highest density of historical, cultural and natural monuments. Regions in this cluster are well – populated and developed. Population density is relatively high, the share of the aboriginal population is low, average or above average development of industry and agriculture. High level of concentration of cultural and historical monuments allows for developing cultural and educational tourism, and concentration of natural objects is high enough for ecological tourism. Relatively developed infrastructure provides grounds for event tourism. Potential of ethnic-tourism development is high. Tourism can become specialization area. The cluster includes Kabansky, Mukhorshibirsky and Selenginsky regions of Buryatia.

*Cluster 2* includes 2 regions with the highest level of economic development. These are well-populated and developed territories with relatively dense population, low share of the aboriginal population, developed industry and agriculture. The density of material cultural heritage objects

is less than average. The potential for ethnic-tourism development in these regions is low. Cluster includes Tarbagatay region of Buryatia and Beisky region of Khakassia.

*Cluster 3* consists of 12 regions with the high share of aboriginal population. Regions are low populated; the level of industry and agriculture development is extremely low. Low industrial development of the region and high share of the aboriginal population creates opportunities for preserving the live culture of autochthones and traditional style of life, therefore ethnic specialization of agriculture (mainly pasture cattle breeding), traditional land use is also developed. There is virtually no necessary infrastructure for tourism development. The only possible type of tourism is aboriginal. Overall potential development for aboriginal tourism is low. The cluster includes Ulagansky region of Buryatia, Bay – Tayginsky, Zoun – Khemchinsky, Kyzylksky, Mongun – Tayginsky, Ovursky, Tere – Kholsky, Tes – Khemsky, Todginsky, Chaa – kholsky, Chedi – Kholsky, Ulug – Khemskikozhounyn regions of Tuva.

*Cluster 4* – fifteen regions with a relatively high share of title ethnoses in the overall population and relatively developed agriculture. These regions have extensive agriculture, low population density, and practically no industry. A specific feature of economic specialization is pasture cattle breeding. The density of material cultural heritage objects is low. Tourism infrastructure is not developed. It is possible to develop aboriginal and agricultural tourism. The cluster includes Eravninsky, Zakamensky, Kizhinginsky, Kurumkansky, Tunkinsky, Khorinsky, Bichoursky regions of Buryatia; Ust – Kansky region of Altay, Kaa – Khemsky, Piy – Khemsky, Baroun – Khemchiksky, Sut – Kholsky, YTandinsky, Erzinskykozhouny regions of Tuva, Bogradsky region of Khakassia.

*Cluster 5* unites geographically dispersed developed regions with low population density, low or below average share of the aboriginal population, low or below the average density of cultural heritage objects. Level of agricultural development is low or average, the industry is average or above average. Comparatively low level of material and immaterial components of ethnic cultural potential limits opportunities for ethnic – tourism. There are certain perspectives for developing ecological and extreme tourism. The cluster includes Barguzinsky, Bauntivsky, Evenkiisky, Zaigraevsky, Pribaykalskuy, Severo - Baikalsky regions of Buryatia; Tourochaksky, Choisky, Ust – Koksinsky regions of Altay; Tashtypsky, Ust – Abakansky, Ordzhonikidzevsky regions of Khakassia.

*Cluster 6* consists of two regions with the highest density of population and archeological monuments. These are developed and inhabited territories with dense population, low share of the aboriginal population, the very high density of archeological monuments and the average density of historical, cultural and national monuments, agriculture and industry are not developed. High concentration of material objects and relatively developed infrastructure allow for developing the

event, excursion, cultural and educational tourism. The cluster includes Ivolginsky and Kyakhtinsky regions of Buryatia.

*Cluster 7* includes regions with high or above average density of archeological monuments and high or average density of architectural and historical monuments. Such regions are characterized with dispersing development of territories, relatively developed agriculture and low development of the industry. High level of ethnic-cultural potential with relatively low share of title ethnoses. Ethnic culture is preserved, popularized and partly westernized. Regions have an opportunity for developing mostly cultural, educational and event tourism. Cluster units: Gidinsky region of Buryatia; Ongudaisky, Kosh – Sagachsky and Shebalinsky regions of Altay, Askizsky and Shirinsky regions of Khakassia.

Therefore during cluster analysis authors found out that: regions from 1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> clusters have high potential for cultural, educational and event tourism; regions from 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> clusters have high potential for ecological tourism; regions from 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> - for agricultural tourism; regions from 3<sup>d</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> – for aboriginal tourism.

Territories with high potential for tourism based on material heritage with ethnographic elements (clusters 1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup>) have been defined. In order to develop tourism in these territories it is suggested to:

- create a monitoring system for using and preserving historical objects of academic and cultural value;
- involving a larger number of archeological monuments into tourism sphere, introducing museum atmosphere at historical places most popular among tourists, creating hotel infrastructures at open – air museums;
- using modern art, ethnic – futurism, interpretation of heritage and history of a place (revision of history, identification of lost and forgotten fragments and their re-introduction into cultural life).

Territories with high potential of immaterial cultural heritage (clusters 3,4). The following measures facilitate tourism development in these regions:

- conducting educational activities with local population aimed at establishing a positive attitude towards tourists and opportunities for developing entrepreneurial activities in profile and close areas;
- training cultural sphere managers, national culture staff, managers in the field of humanities, qualified guides and cultural tourism managers;
- reconstruction of crafts, a creation of events aimed at developing and advertising crafts and craftsmanship (conducting exhibitions of ethnic crafts, organizing festivals, competitions, and presentations);

- facilitating the development of live traditional ethnic culture, broadening social functions of aboriginal languages (using it in the field of education, administration, culture, and mass communication).

## Conclusions

Historical and cultural heritage of ethnic groups is an evident (and in some regions unfortunately the only one) competitiveness factor that can be used for creating successful business at the tourism market. Cultural heritage has a set of aspects influencing social and economic development of the territory, including:

1. *Cultural aspects.* It is hard to overestimate the role of heritage in defining national peculiarity of the country in general and its territories. Familiarization with historical and cultural heritage leads not only to growing level of historical knowledge, but also raises tolerance which is extremely important in our multinational and poly – confessional society. For several social groups, particularly children, understanding historical and cultural significance of their native land and being proud of its publicity in the world is particularly important.

2. *Social aspects.* Using cultural heritage in the field of tourism solves the problem of employment of local population providing workplaces and familiarizing with international culture values in different ways, including face to face communication. External effects of using cultural heritage also include improved engineering and social infrastructure of settlements and territories and consequently higher quality of life of the population.

3. *Economic aspects.* Heritage is a considerable part of national wealth which has real monetary value and its resource potential is comparable with other resources of the country. For many countries the use of cultural heritage turned into considerable sources of income and national economy growth.

4. *Image aspects.* Nowadays cultural heritage is an essential part of strategy of forming positive image of the region. Positive image helps in finding business partners, attracting investments, popularize the territory in other regions and abroad.

Authors prove that despite rich cultural heritage of Siberian poly-ethnic regions its use in the development of tourism is hindered by several reasons, some of which are subjective and can be alleviated by altering regional tourism development strategies.

For a better use of republics' potential in the field of ethnic-tourism authors suggest using cluster analysis in defining perspective territories. Municipal regions of Siberian republics are united into clusters for which possible directions for tourism development are defined. Territories – growth points for cultural, educational, event, ecological, agricultural and aboriginal tourism types. Recommendations on implementing ethno-tourism potential in Siberian regions are given.

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