Mutual influence of tourism and transport on the territory of "Sayan crossroads"

M.V. Kuklina¹, N.E. Krasnoshtanova², and A.E. Demidov¹

1 Irkutsk National Research Technical University, Irkutsk, Russia
2 Institute of Geography SORAN them. V.B. Sochavy, Irkutsk, Russia

Abstract. In our study, we focused our attention on identifying general patterns and specific regional features of the development of tourism, transport infrastructure and the interests of indigenous peoples on the territory of the Sayan Crossroads. Regional and federal authorities consider it necessary to develop tourism in the areas under consideration in order to improve the quality of life of the local population. A sharp increase in the number of tourists, as well as the transport development of the territory without taking into account the opinion of the local population, can lead to serious contradictions and conflicts, contribute to the degradation and destruction of traditional cultural landscapes. Thus, in the system "local population - transport - tourism" there are complex multi-aspect and multi-vector connections and mutual influences. These connections have both common fundamental patterns and their own regional and local features. All of them must be understood and taken into account when planning the sustainable development of the territory. Field work was carried out in the Okinsky district of Buryatia, Todzhinsky kozhuun of Tyva, in the Khankhsomon of Khubsugul aimag of Mongolia in 2021-2022.

Keywords: Okinsky district, Todzhunsky kozhuun, Todzha, Oka, Sayan crossroads, tourism, transport infrastructure

1 Introduction

Introduction

In this work, the task was set to identify the details of the interaction and mutual influence of tourism and the state of the road transport infrastructure, the solution of which was carried out using a complex of sociological and statistical methods.

The territory of our study is the Sayan Crossroads. The identification of this mountainous area in the south of Eastern Siberia is based on the economic and cultural community of Tuvans - Todzhans living in the Republic of Tuva, Soyots in the Republic of Buryatia, Tofalars in the Irkutsk region and Tsaatans (spirit) in Mongolia [1]. In this work, we have not yet considered the territory of Tofalaria, since this area has not yet been covered by field studies.

The study made it possible to determine the key, both explicit and hidden, interrelations of the processes of socio-economic development of indigenous peoples in underdeveloped territories, with the simultaneous development of tourism and transport, and also to propose.

* Corresponding author: kuklina-kmv@yandex.ru

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2 Methods

The research methods used include in-depth and group interviews with local residents, participant observations, expert interviews, analysis of statistical data, municipal reports, and archival materials. Field studies were carried out in August 2020, October 2021 in the Okinsky district of Buryatia, August 2021 and July 2022 in the Todzhinsky kozhuun of Tyva, April 2022 in the Khankh somon of the Khubsugul aimag of Mongolia. Respondents were recruited using the snowball method and former social networks. The duration of the interview ranged from twenty-five to ninety minutes. The total number of interviews was 52. The respondents were representatives of the administration, education, medicine, culture, tourism, entrepreneurs, minibus drivers and local residents, among whom were people from 18 to 80 years old.

In particular, we analyzed interviews in which respondents discussed issues related to the transport accessibility of the territory, the development of tourism, the activities of mining companies, etc.

3 Research results and discussion

The characteristics of the study areas are shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Area, thousand sq. km.</th>
<th>Administrative center</th>
<th>Distance from regional center</th>
<th>Population, persons</th>
<th>Ethnic composition</th>
<th>Territory features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Todzhinsky kozhuun</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>Toora-Khem village</td>
<td>230 km to Kyzyl</td>
<td>6649</td>
<td>Todzhans - 44.7%, Tuvans - 33.6%, Russians - 19.8%</td>
<td>Territory of traditional nature management - SPNA State Reserve &quot;AZAS&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okinsky district</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>Orlik village</td>
<td>700 km to Ulan-Ude</td>
<td>5452</td>
<td>Soyot - 59.9%, Buryats - 33.3%, others - 6.8%</td>
<td>Territory of traditional nature management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somon Khankh</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Turt village</td>
<td>280 km to Moray</td>
<td>2287</td>
<td>Buryats, Tsaatans, Darhats, Uriankhians, etc.</td>
<td>Khubsugul National Park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the study areas, local residents continue to develop traditional activities. The traditional type of nature management of the Todzhans is mountain forest reindeer husbandry with an auxiliary role of hunting and fishing. This area contains the southernmost reindeer breeding area in the world. Isolation from large settlement centers ensured a high degree of preservation of unique traditional cultural landscapes [2].

The list of places of traditional residence and traditional economic activities of indigenous peoples from the Republic of Tyva includes rural settlements (sumons) Azassky, Iysky, Systyg-Khemsky, Chazylarsky Todzhinsky kozhuun [3]. The isolation and cultural specificity of the republic also made it possible to preserve the traditional nature management [4]. The number of deer here is better preserved than in the Okinsky district, and by 2015 it reached 3166 heads [5].
Animal husbandry among the Okina Soyots and Buryats was one of the main types of economic activity that provided them with a livelihood. At present, traditional land use and practices are being reduced and transformed due to the use of tractors and other machinery, as well as a lack of desire among the younger generation to look after livestock.

In Khankh somon, the local population is engaged in cattle breeding (sheep, goats, cattle, horses, yaks) and gathering. Hunting in this area is prohibited because most of the territory belongs to the reserve.

4 Transport infrastructure and tourism development

Transport infrastructure and tourism development began relatively recently, which is associated with an increase in the number of mining enterprises. The main road leading to Todzhinsky kozhuun was completed only by 2009. In Soviet times, small aircraft functioned here. The most difficult time was in the 90s, when small aircraft practically did not work, and there was practically no road; travel time to the regional center of Kyzyl could take 2–3 weeks. “Before the construction of the bridge, we were considered the most remote and hard-to-reach area... Now we even have a road, they said in the 90s, in the early 2000s, the road to Kyzyl took 2–3 weeks” [female, 26 years old, v. Toora-Khem, July 2022].

In 2020, construction began on a bridge across the Biy-Khem (Great Yenisei). The bridge was launched in May 2022. Before the construction of the bridge, a ferry was used to get to the district center of kozhuun, dependence on which made transportation much more expensive. The authors in their field studies just saw the changes associated with the launch of the bridge, as it was in 2021 and as it was in 2022: a large number of new buildings, new stores, new cafes, an increase in the flow of road transport, emergence of new cellular operators.

At the moment, the improvement of the roadway is being carried out by the mining company Lunsin LLC. Another mining company LLC GOLEVSKAYA MINING COMPANY in 2020 began the development of the Ak-Sugsky porphyry copper deposit in the Todzhinsky district. Undertook obligations for the construction of a 220 kV transmission line and the Turan-Yrban highway. Local residents are waiting for the construction of this road to go for food and household goods "For Sayany".

Automobile traffic in the Okinsky district was opened in 1993. The distance to Ulan-Ude, the capital of the Republic of Buryatia, is more than 700 km, of which the main time is to overcome 160 kilometers of dirt road from Orlik to Mond, the village of Tunkinsky district.

Somon Khankh and its administrative center Turt is located 1020 km from the capital Ulaanbaatar and 280 km from the aimag center Muren. Transport communication with the aimag center is carried out along a dirt road. Travel time takes from 10 hours or more, in the summer during the rainy period this journey can take several days. By winter road you can get to such settlements as Tsagaannur, Targan.

You can get to Khankha from the south, from Ulaanbaatar and from the north, from the Russian-Mongolian border. The road from the south from Khatgala (south of Lake Khubsugul) to Khankha along the A1101 highway is 149 km and runs east of Lake Khubsugul. The road is unpaved, very difficult, with the passage of three passes - Khalzan, Nuuryn and Angisagyn. Passing it can take up to several days, depending on the time of year and weather conditions. Passable only for off-road vehicles (UAZs, GAZ-66 trucks).
“There is no public transport. The private owner is recruiting everyone. There is a somon group on Facebook and they are recruiting. 50 thousand tugriks per person. From Muren to Ulaanbaatar 80 thousand tugriks. If there are no relatives, they leave here at night to be in Muren in the morning.”

In the summer, cars can be transported on the lake on ships of the Sukhe-Bator sea type, hovercraft and boats of the Yaroslavets type occasionally sail, the water distance is 124 km (about 8 hours by boat). However, all ships run irregularly, by prior arrangement. In the cold season of the year, the winter period is covered by winter roads. The lake freezes annually at the end of November, the ice has a thickness of up to 1.4 m, an automobile winter road is laid on the ice. The opening of the lake takes place in May.

It is much easier to get from the north along a good paved road from the Russian-Mongolian border. From the border to the village of Turt 21 km along a dirt road. In Soviet times, there were very close ties with the USSR. Goods, products, fuel were imported through the Mondy-Khankh point, water transport functioned. “Until October, there was a water movement of goods. In Soviet times, goods, clothes, household goods were brought from Russia by car to Khankha, from Khankha by water to Khatgala 8-10 hours. There were 3 barges. Gasoline and diesel fuel were from the USSR. During socialism, this sum was the richest... There was a veterinary pass here: from the western aimags, several hundred and thousands were then driven across the border to Russia”

“Until the 1990s, ambulances came from Tunka. If something was urgent, then helicopters would fly in”

At the end of 2021, Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed an agreement to give the Mondy and Khankh border crossings the status of “international” and there is hope that roads will begin to be built in the foreseeable future. But at the same time, local residents fear the appearance of a large number of “strangers” in connection with the launch of an international checkpoint: “I would like to immediately develop tourism in the right way. I am afraid that if an international checkpoint is opened, there will be many strangers” “If there is an international crossing, it will be difficult, because we are already used to being friends with Russians, there will be many others ... There are no people here who do not like tourists, because tourists are the basis of life here”.

Tourism has been developing in the last 10 years... From the side of Mongolia, the ascent is easier and climbers come in May-June... Ek-Modene Naadan is held together with Tunka, Oka. Previously, they didn’t pay much attention, now the representative offices of the aimag center are developing event tourism.”
representative, April 2022, Turt]. During the pandemic and closed borders, tourists did not come, there were only rare domestic tourists. The prospects for the development of tourism in the Okinsky district are very high: the territory has many unique sites that are attractive to tourists, which is undoubtedly a big plus. However, despite the numerous sights of the Okinsky district (natural monuments, mineral and healing springs, etc.), tourism activities in the territory are not sufficiently developed.

In 2020, the government of Buryatia developed a roadmap for the development of tourism, where among the selected tourist areas and other things, the Baikal (RF) - Khubsugul (Mongolia) corridor was presented (Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Buryatia). Since this route also passes through the Okinskiy district, there may be new opportunities for tourism development in the study area.

Landscape diversity, natural conditions, as well as the rich ethno-cultural heritage of the Todzha kozhuun attract tourists here. According to the tourist passport of Todzhinsky kozhuun 2020 [10], the most promising types of tourism in the region, taking into account the trends in tourist demand in the Russian market, are: medical and recreational; eventful (Festival of reindeer herders of Todzha kozhuun, National holiday “NAADYM”, International Day of Indigenous Minorities of Siberia and the Far East, Republican competition with Todzha sketches “Tozhuayannary”); cultural and educational; recreational tourism (lakes Azas, Dorug-Khol, Olbuk).

In general, local residents note a significant increase in the number of tourists associated with the construction of the bridge and, in general, with the improvement of the transport accessibility of the kozhuun. In all the areas under consideration, a number of different opinions of local residents regarding the topics of tourism development were revealed:

- The locals express the greatest dissatisfaction with the damage caused by tourists to nature.
- It is often pointed out that tourists leave garbage behind, cut trees for fires, paint on the rocks.
- In most cases, people distinguish between mass tourism, which is associated with the development of infrastructure and the transformation of the environment, and active hiking tourism, which usually does not cause concern.

It should also be noted that local residents are beginning to see the positive aspects of tourism development in the form of an additional source of income from the rental of horses, transport services, the sale of souvenirs, and the provision of accommodation services. In some cases, members of the indigenous population are included in the tourism industry, fully linking the well-being of their families with it. But so far there are only isolated cases of using culture as a resource for the provision of tourism services.

In all the studied areas, traditional nature management (or rather traditional animal husbandry) is actively represented, which is the main preservation of the cultural identity of the population of these areas, attracting tourists to this region along with unique natural landscapes. Traditional nature management depends on the state of the natural environment, is in close relationship with it. Therefore, the emergence of new roads and an increase in the flow of tourists can lead to a number of conflicts.

5 Conclusion

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It is important that, imbued with the problem, firstly, the accompanying issues include the relations between the tourists themselves and the employees of the tourism sector that support its functioning in the territories under consideration, incl. and local residents involved in serving tourists. Of course, the interests of the parties here, as a rule, coincide and are focused on increasing the number of tourists and the volume of services provided using an efficient transport network, which includes both modern roads and the convenience of delivering visitors (route and information). Only lovers of extreme tourism can fall out of this interest.

The second circle of actors related to the problem is the local population as a whole, and as a rule, representing the indigenous ethnic group, which has its own cultural traditions and is engaged in traditional land use, which is an attractive factor for potential tourists. In this circle, while recognizing in part the need and advantages of having a well-functioning transport infrastructure, a significant part of the population expresses a negative attitude towards the easy accessibility of the territory for third parties who violate the rules and regime for the use of natural resources and compete with the local population both economically and culturally.

It is characteristic that all the actors on the territory of the Sayan Crossroads show a desire to combine benefits, incl. and from the presence of the tourism industry, and from the convenience of movement, both within the territories and trips outside them, while maintaining integrity and originality.

6 Acknowledgments

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