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Event tourism in Russian region: opportunity for small-scale business growth

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Abstract

Contemporary international economy and politics development requires extension of the service market. Among the segments of the market mentioned above tourism services are of the highest priority. Great cultural and tourism potential of Russia and its regions give an opportunity for sizeable economic growth. A significant role in the intensification of regional development is allocated to small- and medium-sized business. Event tourism popularity allow to consider it as a way of tourism attraction centers forming, especially for the regions that have appropriate cultural potential and experience.

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1. Introduction

Russian economy is a developing one. Nature resource orientation of the Russian economy makes it dependable and fragile. The last determines the course of the country and its focus on innovations and services extension. Development of tourism in general and event tourism in particular can be regarded as one of the priority fields of the Russian economy that requires surveys of its different sides.

Tourism in the Russian regions actively supported small businesses. Small-scale businesses play an exceptional, critical part in contemporary economic and social life of Russia. It involves small-sized enterprises and the ones that do not need significant upfront investment and are capable of resolving the problems of economy restructuring,

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consumer's market grouping and saturation in resource – limited settings (Uskov et al., 2011, 34). The small business functioning also promotes the formation of favorable social and economic environment in Russian regions and it is directly affect the progress occurring in economy and the measures regional authorities take to support it (Thomas et al., 2008, 118).

2. Theoretical Foundation / Review of the Literature

The roles and impacts of planned events within tourism have been well researched in developed countries. The term 'event(s) tourism' was not widely used prior to 1987 when The New Zealand Tourist and Publicity Department (1987) reported: "Event tourism is an important and rapidly growing segment of international tourism" (Getz, 2007, 405). Events studies has long existing within such disciplines as geography, anthropology, history and political science and only in 2000 the term "event studies" was introduced.

Nowadays tourism and event management can be considered as a fast growing professional field attracting further more researchers (Davidson, 2011). Arose from a professional practice, event tourism has its own academically credible theoretical base formed on the matching between "event management" and "event studies". Presented research is based on the materials of the book of Bowdin and others (2006) and articles of highly recognized authors such as Getz (2007), Jago (2012) and appeals to the surveys of the global event market and the Russian one. It is noteworthy, that in Russia, surveys of event tourism are not presented on the official levels, researches that are considered in the research are made by private marketing agencies and do not give answers on a range of questions concerning event industry and event tourism both (Russian event-market, 2013).

3. Methodology

To identify the level of the global event market and event tourism the combination of descriptive and analytical methods was chosen as well as for the Russian market overview. Quantitative, qualitative, deductive and inductive approaches are used in the research to compare the level of development of event tourism of foreign countries and the Russian Federation and to observe the weaknesses of the Russian event-tourism. Based on the approaches mentioned above, predictive method was used to formulate possible ways of development of event tourism in the country.

4. Event tourism to realize region's potential

4.1. Cultural capital and cultural potential of Tomsk region

Tomsk region is a full-fledged subject of the Russian Federation; it can be considered as one of the centers of cultural life and tourism in Western Siberia. Tomsk region in general and Tomsk, its administrative center, that was founded in 1604, possesses unique cultural potential that can be effectively used in various spheres, i.e., in science, education, tourism, recreational activity, interregional and international contacts. The distinctive feature of cultural landscape of the region is nearly 300 unique natural heritage sites and about a thousand multifaceted historical and cultural heritage sites. Due to its wooden architecture sights and to ensembles of wooden architecture that form its leading tourist brand, the city of Tomsk is included on the list of historic settlements of Russia approved by Order No. 418/339 dated 29.07.2010 "About the Approval of List of Historic Settlements" issued by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Regional Development of the Russian Federation (Russian Newspaper, 2010). The authentic culture of indigenous peoples of Tomsk Region, such as of Siberian Tatars, Selkups, Khantys, Evenkis, Chulymys as well as of immigrants, such as Byelorussians, Estonians, Polacks is of special interest promoting ethnographic and invent-tourism based on national cultures and holidays.

The available significant cultural potential is regarded by the government authorities and local government bodies of Tomsk Region to be one of the basic resources promoting social and economic development of the region (Official bulletin of State Duma of Tomsk Region, 1999).

Cultural sphere is defined as an important element of the system of recreation and hospitality with the cultural industry developing on the basis of cooperation with various service delivery organizations, such as tourist

companies, hotels, restaurants, etc., as well as with small and medium-scale business. This approach envisages inevitable capitalization of the cultural space as well as realization of a complex of accidental and organized processes capable to turn the available forms of culture into cultural capital. In this case the cultural capital is understood to be the cultural sphere performing as a complex of resources used for solving specific social, economic and other problems of regional development (Shirko et al., 2013, 26).

The principal objectives of regional development are accomplished by realizing a complex of governmental programs targeted to the provision of innovational and social orientation of regional development of the Russian Federation. One of the key objectives is the Strategy of Social and Economic Development of Tomsk Region until 2020 which determines strategic goals and targets of development of Tomsk Region and their basic trends in the long-term strategic direction. In the sphere of tourism the Region has adopted Governmental Program “Development of Domestic and Inbound Tourism within Tomsk Region in 2013–2017 period” whose basic target is to establish and develop tourist recreation zones with high level of services that will provide an intensive enlargement of domestic and inbound tourist flow and multiplicatively affect the related economic sectors. Totally six basic zones regarded as promising centers of outrunning economic growth have been selected, i.e., “Recreation Zone of Tomsk Agglomeration”; “Tomsk Golden Ring” (the city of Tomsk, Tomsk Region); “Parabelsky Region”; “Pyshkino-Troitsky Cluster” (Asinovskiy, Pervomaiskiy Regions); “North” (Tomsk – Melnikovo – Parabel); “South” (Tomsk – Kozhevnikovo – Bazoy) (Consolidated Laws of Tomsk Region, 2012).

Implementation of the set goals and objectives must facilitate overcoming the factors that constrain the growth of tourist industry such as: poorly developed infrastructure supporting tourist sites, unsatisfactory condition of many natural, historical and cultural heritage sites being sightseeing attractions and that have been neglected and haven't been rendered due attention by local governmental bodies and agencies of local self-government; immature image of Tomsk Region as of the tourist-attraction area and insufficient promotion of the regional tourist products at the domestic and international tourist markets.

In view of the above, a significant role in the intensification of regional development is allocated to small- and medium-sized businesses that enjoy governmental support in the sphere of tourism and event-tourism. The support involves primarily: state regulatory legal acts targeted at small entrepreneurship and tourism support; taxation policy, governmental infrastructure of small businesses support that covers both non-commercial and commercial organizations whose activity is initiated, encouraged and supported by the state (Collection of Laws of Tomsk Region, 2005, 108).

Thus, in Tomsk region the cultural sphere development is considered to be one of the most significant elements of developing small- and medium-sized entrepreneurship with the goal of turning it into the cultural capital with a significant impact on the economic processes in the social environment. Such forecasts are based on certain reasons. According to the theory of D. Throsby, Professor of Economy at Macquarie University (Sydney, Australia) the cultural capital accumulated in material cultural values can have a considerable impact on the economic growth and the economic stability and investments. At the same time the material and non-material cultural assets may be regarded also both as a final consumption subject and an intermediate product in the process of production of other values influencing the large-scale economic processes and indices (Throsby, 2001, 147).

4.2. Event tourism as one of the possibilities for the Tomsk region development

Orientation of the region economy to services development and tourism extension requires not only infrastructure support. Technological expansion and worldwide increase of educational and cultural level of the population lead to the great demand in event services and event tourism. In fact, the development of event-market is the indicator of a country's development. It is only when a person has enough time free from satisfying their vital needs, that they can follow their interests in an effort to meet social and self-actualization needs.

Tourism is an instrument of satisfaction of the needs named before. When tourism and events join together it seems to be more attractive for the people. Events are an important motivator of tourism. Nevertheless in Russia event industry is not so developed as it needed to support tourism on the level of European countries or the USA (Chibir, 2012, 63). It is a challenge for the Russian economy to find the ways of event tourism development in each particular region.

It is noteworthy that Russia, in general, and Tomsk region, as a part of it, has its own experience and style in

holding events which determines its unique features. Great history, variety of cultures, impressing historical and cultural legacy, sport and arts level of development are a real source for growing of event tourism of the country. But there are the following barriers as unformed infrastructure, difficulties with promotion, language barriers and vast geographical distance of a range of territories of the country resulted in high transportation charges. To bridge the gap between the developed countries and Russia in event tourism the measures by the government and business representatives should be taken. These measures should be concentrated not only on the liquidation of the barriers mentioned above but as well on the standards of services.

Territorial particularities and cultural potential also should be considered. Types of special events held in the region should be defined out of both demand and supply sides. In spite of the fact that Tomsk region has its own unique special events such as “Tomsk Festival”, “Jazz picnic”, “Legends of the North Festival”, “Chehov’s Fridays”, the geography of event tourism of the region should be expanded. Also the support of the special events held should be guaranteed. The experience collected provides an opportunity for further development of the region and involves a growing number of small-scale business subjects (provider companies, catering services, event management services and technical support).

5. Conclusions and Implications

Within the research it was founded that event tourism is a challengeable but strategically important segment for the Russian economy. Event tourism can be considered as a developing field different from the same segments of economies of developed countries. This segment of the Russian economy has a great potential for growth due to great history, variety of cultures, impressing historical and cultural legacy, sport and arts level of development of the country. But in spite of the strength of the Russian event tourism there are some weaknesses that slow down the growth of the economic segment. Among them can be identified unformed infrastructure, difficulties with promotion, language barriers and vast geographical distance of a range of territories of the country.

The study shows what barriers should be broken and what potential should be used to achieve the desirable goal for Russia – to become recognized on the global tourism market. Developing of event tourism segment can provide more opportunities for Russian tourism but it also requires concentration of the Government on the cute problems of the field.

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