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IMPACT OF OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT ON EVERYDAY LIFE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

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Abstract

Currently, prospects for preserving and developing culture of small indigenous peoples of the North (SIPN) are largely determined by oil and gas exploration activities in their territories. As a result, the traditional habitat of indigenous peoples, including the landscape and the system of behavioral representations, skills that are an integral part of the cultural identity of these peoples, are changing. Interaction of indigenous peoples with oil companies generates new behavioral mechanisms, causes changes in their everyday life. It is necessary to preserve the original habitat and traditional way of life of the indigenous minorities of the North in the face of overcoming environmental, socio-cultural, economic threats to the sustainable development of their territories. Effective mechanisms aimed at preserving everyday practices which form a basis for ethnocultural diversity reduced under the influence of globalization factors are top priorities. The article presents results of the study on everyday ethnocultural adaptation of the indigenous peoples of Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug – Ugra (Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug). The survey identified problems of the indigenous population and helped assess the level of frustration caused by economic changes. The authors conclude that ethnocultural adaptation of the indigenous population is slow. Families living near oil and gas deposits are more legally and socially protected than families living in the areas which are remote from the deposits. To reduce the frustration level, effective measures to support the indigenous peoples of the North engaged in traditional nature management have to be implemented.

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1. Introduction

Analysis of the current status of the indigenous peoples is a relevant. Intensification of their economic, political and cultural activities is inseparable from legislative regulation of the legal status of the small indigenous peoples of the North (SIPN).

Effective mechanisms aimed at preserving everyday practices which form a basis for ethnocultural diversity reduced under the influence of globalization factors are top priorities. The 8th congress of the Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East held in 2017 emphasized that civil identity and unity of the Russian nation, ethnocultural diversity and national interests are main focuses of the ethnic policy of Russia (Perepechkina, 2018).

2. Problem Statement

The problem of preserving the indigenous peoples of the North has existed since the industrial development of the territory. Researchers focus on interaction between indigenous peoples and oil and gas companies (Novikova, 2013; Tkachev, 2015). Oil and gas companies influence the whole system of relations with the SIPN.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, various federal and regional regulatory acts on the Northern territories of traditional nature management have been adopted. However, the problem of interaction of the indigenous people and industrial companies is still acute due to the lack of clear parameters regulating activities of the companies. Associations of the indigenous peoples ask to adopt laws that will protect their rights to traditional environmental management and fair compensation for their lands used by oil companies. The field studies show that industrial development improves living standards of the indigenous peoples. However, it may have a negative effect on their lives (IEA RAS, 2012).

According to Abdulatipov, Mikhailov, and Chichanovsky (1997), since 1926, the Russian Federation has adopted more than 300 legislative acts on the problems of the indigenous peoples of the North. Since 1991, more than 30 legislative acts and 100 executive orders have been adopted.

Intensive development of legislation on the indigenous peoples of the North began in the late 1980s. The reform of federal relations in the late 1980s and early 1990s was a new stage (Arakchaa & Zayfutdim, 1999). In 1992, the “Regulatory Act on the status of native lands in Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug” was adopted. According to this act, the small indigenous population uses certain territories for traditional economic activities. The natural system of territories (forests, rivers, river banks, lakes, marshes, meadows, pastures, etc.) was recognized as patrimonial lands.

The legal basis for concluding agreements between subsoil users and indigenous peoples was the Constitution of the Russian Federation (Art. 9, 69, 72), Presidential Decree “On Urgent Measures to Protect Residences and Economic Activities of Small Nations of the North” and other legislative acts.

In the 2000s, measures aimed at regulating the status of indigenous communities based on local peculiarities were implemented in Ugra. The community is a link of the federal economic system and a form of social self-determination, a voluntary association of citizens. In the early 2000s, 519 land communities (they numbered 1,029 indigenous people) and 33 national communities (they numbered 600 people) were created. An important document for solving territorial issues was the “Law of Khanty-

Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug – Ugra on the Regional Territories of Traditional Nature Management of Indigenous Peoples of the North in Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug – Ugra”.

On the one hand, intensive industrialization of the region affects everyday economic practices of the indigenous population; on the other hand, constant direct or indirect interaction with industrial companies intensifies adaptation processes that manifest themselves as a desire to preserve ethno-cultural characteristics in the conditions of globalization.

3. Research Questions

Various indigenous groups are currently experiencing the influence of oil development. The fifty-year history of this process shows differences in the status and development of these groups of indigenous peoples.

Everyday life as a fundamental sphere of social reality was perceived and evaluated differently in different historical periods; its essential characteristics underwent significant changes. Everyday problems are studied by foreign and Russian historians, cultural scientists and philosophers (Kozlova, 1992; Khudenko, 1993; Shulga, 1993; Gorelova, 1993; Ionin, 2000; Naumenko & Naumenko, 2018). For researchers, the phenomenon of everyday life is of interest as it represents the environment into which adaptation processes are immersed. Daily activities of people, including interethnic interaction, play a major role. On the other hand, ethnocultural adaptation is a significant aspect of everyday life that forms ethnicity.

Ethnocultural adaptation is a long, complex process that affects many aspects. Adaptation changes human behavior and mentality. We assume that mental responses to interethnic contacts determine behavioral ones. The degree of adaptation can be determined by studying behavioral responses to oil and gas development, by assessing the level of frustration of the indigenous population (Tkachev, Fedulov, Moldanova, & Tkacheva, 2018).

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify readiness for ethnocultural adaptation of the indigenous people of KMAO-Ugra to the oil and gas development of the territory.

5. Research Methods

The research methods used for the study are as follows: observation, conversation, ethnopsychological survey.

6. Findings

The study was based on the results of ethnological expeditions of 1993 and 2018. When comparing situations during the pioneering development with the modern one, the high level of socio-economic and legal protection of families interacting with oil companies was recorded (Surgutneftegaz LLC).

The purpose of the ethnological expeditions was to collect information about everyday practices of the indigenous people at the camps to develop recommendations for oil and gas exploration of the territory.

Families of Khanty of Surgut district of Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug – Yugra were main reference groups. By the first field observations (1993), they used a natural mechanism for the transfer of skills and cultural traditions.

In 1993, the expedition to the territory of tribal lands in Surgut district was carried out. During the expedition to the upper river Tromyegan, the territory of the Tyanov field, where industrial development of oil was planned, a large concentration of the indigenous population in a limited area was recorded.

In 1993, there were five families in this area. The distances between the camps became small, which made it impossible to change pasture for deer. All respondents complained about the lack of moss, burs (the burs were burned out as a result of oil and gas activities), fish. Reindeer had to be kept in one area, which was of poor quality.

Industrial facilities were located near camps. For example, A.I. Tevlin complained that he lived near the danger zone (2 km from the Turynka-Nizhniy Sortym highway). Therefore, he had to live in a tarpaulin in winter and summer. The Pokachyovs also lived in plagues because they thought they industrialists could drive them out. All the respondents were against the industrial development of their lands. Industrial development deteriorated the quality of their lands. The water intake below Russkinskoye had a negative effect on water quality.

Respondents reported that before the industrial development, they killed up to 40 wood grouses. The situation changed dramatically. Even the ducks did not fly and did not nest. Due to depletion of hunting lands, the Khanty had to travel to the neighboring territories. As a result, interpersonal conflicts arose.

It was necessary to protect camps, deer grazing, berry fields from alien population, to prohibit hunting and fishing near their native lands, etc.

Survey data showed that daily activities of people were violated, and the indigenous population showed a high level of frustration.

On the basis of these studies, it was recommended to minimize the damage to nature and to indigenous peoples caused by oil and gas development. In particular, it was intended to restrict oil and gas development in particularly significant areas (sacred sites and burials, pine forests and moorhen, cedar forests, cranberry marshes, places of reproduction of animals, birds, fish, migratory birds).

The second ethnological expedition to Surgut district was carried out in the summer of 2018. The participants traced the changes occurring over 25 years, identified socio-economic and environmental problems.

On the territory of traditional nature management, there are oil deposits. The heads of families conclude economic agreements with oil companies which pay compensation fees or purchase vehicles (snowmobile, engine and motorboat) and gasoline for the native population.

The lands have become legally protected. Now it is difficult for an outsider to get to the camp: checkpoints are located at the entrance to the territory of traditional nature management. The owners of the land enclose their deer with fences. Therefore, the deer cannot leave their pastures. Reindeer breeders are provided with feed. Today, young people who grew up at the camp receive education paid according to the agreement with oil companies. They work at a nearby oil deposit on a rotational basis and spend part of their time at the camp with deer. These people are financially protected, have only snowmobiles, cars. For

example, I.I. Sopochnin's daughter and son work for the oil company. According to his calculations, there are 5 Lukoil fields and 3 Gazprom fields on its lands.

The situation is different for those Khanty who live far from the fields or do not have children who work for oil companies. The living standards are low, compensation fees do not cover expenses. Thus, oil and gas development carried out without proper legal protection of the rights of indigenous people, leads to partial or full acculturation of these indigenous groups.

Survey data identified anxiety of the indigenous population regarding environmental problems in the areas of industrial development. For example, oil and gas equipment causes damage to the upper layer of the earth. A big trouble is forest fires caused by actions of alien people.

7. Conclusion

Thus, intensive oil and gas development of the territory and inconsistency with the federal laws on indigenous peoples caused serious damage to the traditional habitat of the indigenous peoples of Ugra. Social and environmental issues, development of traditional sectors of the economy require solutions.

Ethnocultural adaptation of the indigenous population to changing conditions of traditional environmental management is a slow process. The survey data shows that the indigenous people living near the oil and gas deposits show a low level of frustration and are trying to adapt to changing conditions while preserving traditional economic practices.

Development of contractual relations between indigenous peoples and government authorities and non-governmental institutions and organizations (companies engaged in subsoil management of the territories inhabited by indigenous peoples of the North) is a way out. They change the socio-economic status of the indigenous population and their traditional economic activities.

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