

Conference Paper

Potential of Rural Cultural Leisure in Belarus

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Abstract

The solution to the problem of preserving the identity of the cultural traditions of the Belarus village is to actualize the socio-cultural potential of rural regions, to reveal the uniqueness of the resources of each territory and their cultural specialization, to find forms of involvement of the population in the processes of socio-cultural development of territories.

Keywords: cultural traditions, socio-cultural potential of rural regions, cultural leisure, cultural space of the village.

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1. Introduction

In the conditions of strengthening of urban influences in the socio-cultural space, the important task of preserving the identity of the cultural traditions of the Belarusian village is quite relevant. This concerns legends, customs, attributes of the setup, art of folk musicians, dancers, local craftsmen and artisans. Humanization, improvement and cultivation of the immediate environment, ensuring full personal development, positive socialization and enculturation of children, adolescents and youth are becoming important for the rural cultural environment. All the above aspects increase the role of social and cultural activities of cultural agencies, their importance in the organization of cultural leisure, and aesthetic development of the population. There is a need to look for optimal forms and models of institutions of the club type, both multifunctional and specialized, to improve their legal, economic, material and technical basis. Especially important is the focus of cultural agencies on the preservation and development of folk traditions, the creation of schools of applied folk arts as an important and full-fledged component of the socio-cultural systems.

2. Methods

Among the methods used in the research, it is possible to distinguish the methods of analysis and synthesis, allowing the description of the specificity and capacity of rural cultural leisure in modern Belarus. The method of comparative analysis helps

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in identification of the traditional and innovative forms of the organization of leisure activities in rural areas.

3. Main Forms of Social and Cultural Activities in the Rural Areas of Belarus

The cultural agencies of rural settlements have limited opportunities for leisure activities due to the modest budget, so there is a need to concentrate and coordinate their technological and infrastructure resources. The management efforts are aimed at integrating the activities of rural cultural agencies, increasing the attraction of extra-budgetary funds for the initiation of cultural projects on terms of partnership.

The modern models of organizational and structural reform of the club are houses (centres) of crafts, folklore, folk art, cultural and sports centres, centres of culture and recreation, houses of social and cultural services, cultural and educational centres, etc. Clubs and similar structures of the club type can operate independently, which has historically taken shape [3] in the framework of governmental, cooperative, public organizations, enterprises, and institutions.

The role of the regional cultural events, which are the “beacons” of cultural leisure not only on the territory but also abroad, is increasing. The experience of joint festivals, “branded” in the country and having an international response is interesting [2].

One of these festivals is traditionally held in the Gomel region and its name “The Call of Polesie” conventionally integrates the historical and cultural area – the Belarusian Polesie. It should be mentioned that Polesie geographically stretches for four countries: Belarus (almost 20% of the country), Ukraine (about 19%), Russia (a small part of the Bryansk region), and Poland (part of the Lublin province).

In 2018, the international ethno-cultural festival “The Call of Polesie” was held for the fifth time in the agro-town of Lyaskovichichi of the Petrikov district. This small village (about 700 inhabitants) is located in the area of the National Park “Pripyatsky”, known as the centre of a unique natural complex in the vast floodplain of the Pripyat River. Holding an ethno-cultural festival in the protected area of primeval oak forests, meadows and the kingdom of birds (the Park has an international status as a key ornithological territory) creates a unique natural flavor of the ongoing artistic event [2].

The festival “The Call of Polesie” was attended by more than 1.7 thousand artists and about 20 thousand spectators. The program included creative teams, craftsmen and artisans from the Polesie districts of Gomel and Brest regions. Almost 3 kilometers were occupied by the farmsteads of the Belarusian villages with unusual names, old history

and traditions. For example, Khlyaby, Dvarets, Babranyaty, Maltzy, and Serp [3] offered a tasting of traditional dishes cooked according to old recipes, held master classes on making authentic arts and crafts. There was a great deal of what the Polesie is rich in: blacksmithing and pottery, woodcarving and basket weaving, fabrication of props and puppets for batleyka, weaving and “green pharmacy” (“people’s leki z prirodni aptec”).

On the open stages the folk ensembles with original local compositions performed in public, and for the first time at the festival the portable batleyka theatres demonstrated their puppet shows. The batleyka art is known since the XVI century, and its modern revival on public holidays is giving hope.

The visitors showed great interest and actively participated in the master class “Tanchym pa dauneishamy” (the old genre dances) [1]. Also, of great interest were the folk games and amusements of the show “Syarod wesci karagod” (round dance).

At the opening ceremony, the title of “Honorary Poleszuk” was traditionally awarded to the natives of Polesie, who made a great contribution to the socio-economic development of the region and to the preservation and promotion of ethnic and cultural traditions. The diplomas were awarded to Peter Ostapchuk, the head of the national ensemble “Vytynanka” of the Stolín’s recreation centre, and Roman Petrushenko, the athlete-kayaker, Olympic champion and multiple world champion. The festival ended with the finale of the contest “The Polesien beauty-2018”, and its winner - Julia Gerashenko from the city of Petrikovo – was announced towards evening.

The festival was held as a social, cultural and artistic event. It gave an opportunity for creative self-expression to all the participants and once again became a school of excellence in the organization and support of folk arts. As a cultural event, the festival was widely broadcast in the national press and on TV, its materials are posted on the Internet, which means that meaningful artistic information became available to a large audience.

For the organizers, the festival became a school of management of social and cultural project, which promoted effective experience in the preparation of the territory, attracting partners to the event, as well as its skillful directing and staging.

The cultural meaning of the festival is its importance as a cultural resource that represents and consolidates the regional community. It is the culture that distinguishes the region from others, making it unique, inimitable and distinctive. The sociologist T. V. Kuzmenko proposes the concept of effective development of rural areas, based on the features of the rural community in the aggregate of its cultural and social characteristics, on the disclosure of the socio-cultural potential of the region. It is necessary to form

and promote the brand of the region, which will help “to fully convert the existing socio-cultural potential into cultural, social and economic capital” [2].

4. Conclusions

The solution to the problem of actualization of the socio-cultural potential of rural regions is seen in the disclosure of the uniqueness of the resources of each territory and their cultural specialization, in the search for forms of inclusion of the population in the processes of socio-cultural development of the territories. Manifestations of such experience are available in each region of the country. While developing the cultural specificity of the territory (cultural heritage and traditions) and forming its image on this basis, it is possible to encourage the local community and attract visitors, tourists and investors.

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