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Ethnodemographic processes among the Sami of modern Norway



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Abstract. On the basis of statistics and comparative analysis the article shows ethnodemographic processes among the Sami of Norway in 2000–2013, including the dynamic of population, natural increase, factors and reasons which caused them in this period. The short analysis of references has been made. Stable economic situation is improving the conditions of Sami. At the modern stage,

special conditions for keeping the Sami's ethnic identity are arranged, the basis of which is the language development.

Keywords: *indigenous people, Norway, Sami, ethnodemographic processes*

Indigenous peoples as a social phenomenon and a scientific problem are in focus of the world and Russian public for a long time, due to the concern of the world community about the gradual disappearance from the face of the earth of the unique culture of ethnic groups, loss of language, culture and traditional forms of life. Particularly acute this problem is in the northern regions of the world, namely in the Arctic and in the Barents Euro-Arctic region, where their concentration is most significant. At the beginning of the XXI century the total number of indigenous people living in the Arctic, reached about 400 thousand people, which worked out 8.5% of the population of the Arctic region [1, Sokolova F.H., p. 58].

Since the beginning of industrial development of the Arctic the problem of preserving the traditional way of life of indigenous peoples has especially actualized, as intensification of the processes in the region can cause manmade disasters, ecological disbalance in nature, which is fraught with negative consequences for indigenous peoples whose lives and culture is entirely dependent on the environment. At present, the problem of indigenous peoples of the North is a significant social problem that concerns the entire global and regional public.

In the Russian and international legal practice, unfortunately, there is no single definition of ethnic minorities, who in these days have preserved traditional lifestyle, culture and customs. According to the ILO Convention "About Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries" № 169 from 1989, following peoples referred to indigenous: "peoples, having tribal way of life in independent countries, whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other

groups of the national community and whose status is regulated completely or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special legislation.”¹.

Also, in the Russian legal practice, ethnic groups living in the territories of traditional settlement of their ancestors, keeping traditional way of life, livelihoods and crafts, are classified as indigenous peoples. The difference between the Russian interpretation of the definition is that the above designated ethnic groups in Russia are those nations whose population does not exceed 50 000 people, thereby emphasizing the importance to preserve the culture of the ethnic groups living in conditions of a real threat of extinction².

The main issues of the state national policy of the Russian Federation, which require special attention of the state and municipal authorities, are: a) the preservation and development of cultures and languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation, strengthening of their spiritual community; b) ensuring the rights of indigenous peoples and national minorities³.

The subject matter of indigenous peoples is not neglected by the attention of the world and the Russian scientific community. Currently, there are many works in the literature devoted to traditional beliefs, customs, language and degree of preservation of the Sami culture in Norway. It should be noted that the spectrum of research is extremely wide. Comprehensive characterization of the Sami ethnic group as a whole was given by T.V. Lukyanchenko already in 1999 [2, pp. 110-120]. M.S. Kuropjatnik in her doctoral dissertation "The indigenous peoples in the process of socio-cultural change" (2006) studied Sami as the ethno-linguistic, socio-cultural and transnational community, the problems of social transformation, the dilemma of the Sami identity, globalization processes and the construction of the Sami nation [3]. In social sciences, the indigenous peoples are regarded as one of the situations of minority, and socio-cultural and political perspectives of their development are discussed in the context of minority rights. Studies of the process of integration of the indigenous peoples into the national societies (for example, the Sami), made by Kh. Eidheym, T. Eriksen and other representatives of the Norwegian school of social anthropology, largely

¹ Konventsia o korennykh narodakh i narodakh, vedushchikh plemennoi obraz zhizni v nezavisimyykh stranakh (№169 ot 27 iyunia 1989 goda). URL: http://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/conventions/iol169.shtml (Accessed: 16 February 2015).

² Federal'nyi zakon ot 30 apr. 1999 g. №82-FZ «O garantiakh prav korennykh malochislennykh narodov Rossiiskoi Federatsii» (s izmeneniami i dopolneniami): «Korennye malochislennye narody Rossiiskoi Federatsii (dalee — malochislennye narody) — narody, prozhivaiushchie na territoriiakh traditsionnogo rasseleniia svoikh predkov, sokhraniaiushchie traditsionnye obraz zhizni, khoziaistvovanie i promysly, naschityvaiushchie v Rossiiskoi Federatsii menee 50 tysiach chelovek i osoznaiushchie sebia samostoiatel'nymi etnicheskimi obshchnostiami». URL: <http://constitution.garant.ru/act/right/180406/> (Accessed: 13 October 2016).

³ Strategia gosudarstvennoi natsional'noi politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii na period do 2025 goda (utv. Ukazom Prezidenta RF ot 19 dek.2012 g. № 1666). Total in Russia there are representatives of 193 nationalities (2010), using 277 languages and dialects, 89 languages are used in public educational system, 30 of them — as languages of instruction, 59 - as objects of study. URL: <http://base.garant.ru/70284810/> (Accessed: 13 October 2016). — Editor's note of the journal "Arctic and North".

contributed to the change of general theoretical paradigm in the social sciences of the nation [3, Khuropyatnik M.S.].

One of the aspects of concern for scientists is the issue of the current state of the culture and identity of the Sami in Norway. K. Olsen in his doctoral dissertation (2008), in his book «Identities, ethnicities and borderzones» (2010) considered the question of identity of indigenous peoples of the Norwegian Finnmark region at the turn of XX-XXI centuries. [4]. Trond Tuan is one of the few Norwegian researchers who in his work «Culture as property? Some Saami dilemmas» characterizes the notion of identity and conduct a study of the cultural heritage of Norway's indigenous people in everyday life [5, pp. 87-108]. In the foreign literature the problem of the transformation of the Sami culture during the era of globalization is shown quite clearly, the themes related to the preservation of the traditional way of life in the modern world are examined. K. Henriksen, considering the problems as a whole which the indigenous peoples in the Far North face with, in terms of industrial development of the northern territories, estimated the current state of the Sami culture [6, pp. 97-112]. Lehtola Veli-Pekka [7] analyzed in detail the ethnic community of the Sami and their culture and ethnic identity issues in conditions of the acceleration of modernization and globalization processes. Despite the multiplicity of scientific research devoted to this topic, ethnodemographical processes among the Sami in modern Norway, with total number of 55,574 people, are weekly represented in the scientific literature, and the present study makes it actual⁴.

Without claiming to analyze the problem in full, this article reveals the peculiarities of ethnodemographical processes among the Sami of the modern Norway in the XXI century, at the base of wide involvement and analysis of statistical sources.

Ethnodemographic processes among the Sami in modern Norway in 2000-2013.

The Sami - the indigenous people, originally inhabited the territory of the Far North until the appearing of modern state borders. In written sources the Sami were first mentioned as fenni in the work "Germany" of the historian Tacitus (98 AD). Later they were found in historiography as skrithiphinoi (Procopius of Caesarea, VI century), Screrefeae (Jordan, VI century), Scritovinni, scritobini (Paul Deacon, VIII century). According to archeological data, the settlement of the Sami occurred from the territories in Northern Norway, starting from the IV millennium BC. The number of group of these peoples ranging from 50 to 60 thousand (2012), all over the globe, now the majority of them live in Norway [8, Kochkurkina S.].

⁴ Statistisk sentralbyrå Norway. URL: <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/samisk> (Accessed: 16 December 2015).

The number of the Sami living in Norway in 2000 was 59 972 people. However, in recent years the trend of their population decline has appeared. By 2015, their number decreased by 7.3% and amounted to 55 574 people⁵.

Among the main factors of the mentioned dynamics, it is possible to pick out, firstly, the Sami migrating into other countries, mostly, in Sweden and Finland, where the conditions for reindeer herding are more favorable. So, in 2000 the total number of expatriate was 2591 persons, in 2012 — 2562 people. Researchers estimate that migrate mostly between the age of 20 to 44 years old, whose age is considered as active and reproductive, therefore, they could contribute to increase the number of ethnic groups in their initial country. *Secondly*, the decline in fertility among the Sami population: in 2000 - 749 persons, in 2013 — 444 people⁶, increase in number of abortions among the Sami women of 15-44 years of age. *Thirdly*, only in the national park of the Sami — Sampi — there are the benefits for this ethnic group, and in other regions, unfortunately, they are not available in case of residence change. The decline in fertility is stipulated by the improvement of social conditions and the system of medical care of Norway for the indigenous peoples. At the same time there is a small reduction in the mortality dynamics: in 2000 - 680 persons, in 2013 - 639 people. The main reasons of mortality according to statistics are age, serious illnesses (cancer, pneumonia) with fatalities and accidents. In general, the average life duration among the Sami is slightly lower compared to the representatives of the titular nation. The average life time of the Norwegian men is 79 years, women — 83 years old, whereas among the Saami men — 77.1 years, women — 82.4 years⁷.

The Sami of Norway are inevitably drawn into the processes of urbanization, but the vast majority of them continue to live in rural areas. The specific proportion of the Sami among the Norwegian urban population was 7% in 2013, among the rural population 14.7%⁸. The overwhelming majority of the Sami live in the northern provinces of Norway: Troms, Finnmark and Nordland. In 2013 474,563 people lived there or 85.4% of all the Sami of the country.

The traditional economic activities of the Sámi in Norway are reindeer-herding, gathering and fishing. At the beginning of the XXI century there was a decline in the number of the Sami people employed in agriculture and forestry, fishing fishery. So, for the period of 2008-2012 the

⁵ Statistisk sentralbyrå Norway. URL: <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/samisk/hvert-2-aar/2014-02-06?fane=tabell&sort=nummer&tabell=160186> (Accessed: 22 October 2015).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Samisk Statistikk 2016. URL: http://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/_attachment/254599?_ts=152a1b77d58 (Accessed: 25 February 2016).

⁸ Statistisk sentralbyrå Norway. URL: <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/samisk/hvert-2-aar/2014-02-06?fane=tabell&sort=nummer&tabell=160188> (Accessed: 29 December 2015).

proportion of people employed in these industries fell down from 18.7% to 16.5%. Nowadays 9156 the Sami are employed in agriculture, forestry and fisherie⁹. At the same time, there is increase of number of the Sami dealing with reindeer herding: in 2007 25% of the Norwegian Sami (14,261 people), and in 2012 already 33.4% of the Sami or 18,593 people¹⁰.

Evidence of growth of ethnic consciousness of the Sami is the increase in the number of native speakers. The Sami language is recognized as the official one in Norway. The Constitution of Norway is amended by the obligation of the state to ensure the Sami the opportunities for the development of the national language, culture and customs (1988). At the present stage, Norway is one of the few countries where the predominant part of the indigenous ethnic group speaks their own language.

According to data for 2012 published in the official statistical handbook, 41,723 people (75%) of the Sami speak their own language¹¹. For comparison, in 2006 only 21 133 people or 36.7% of the total Norwegian Sami population spoke their native language¹².

The Sami language is one of the official languages in the area of Sampi, respectively, all children can learn it fully at schools. There are colleges where teaching takes place in the Sami language. Since 1973 Northern Sami Institute has been operating in Kautokeino (Sami Instituhitta). Professional chairs on the Sami language are opened in the Universities of Oslo and Tromsø. The Sami higher education, among other professions, prepares school teachers.

In general, the state policy of Norway to preserve and revive the traditional Sami culture can be considered a success. Norway, unlike Sweden and Finland, ratified in 1990 the Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries of the International Labour organization dated June 27, 1989, № 169¹³. Public preferences for persons employed in traditional spheres of life, wide range of activities aimed at the revival of the language and culture, begin to bear fruit. There is a turn from Norwegianization policy (assimilation of indigenous ethnic groups in the culture of the titular nation). There is a policy aimed at creating of the conditions for the preservation and revival

⁹ Persons in employment aged 15-74 years, by gender and industry. Statistisk sentralbyrå Norway. URL: <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/samisk/hvert-2-aar/2014-02-06?fane=tabell&sort=nummer&tabell=160188> (Accessed: 22 October 2015).

¹⁰ Reindeer husbandry in Norway. URL: <https://www.ssb.no/statistikkbanken/SelectVarVal/saveselections.asp> (Accessed: 12 December 2015).

¹¹ Samisk Språkundersøkelse. URL: <http://www.sametinget.no/content/download/1936/18493/version/1/file/Samisk+spr%C3%A5kunders%C3%B8kelse+2012.pdf> (Accessed: 22 October 2015).

¹² Sami Statistics 2008. Official Statistics of Norway. 56 p.

¹³ Конвенция о коренных народах и народах, ведущих племенной образ жизни в независимых странах [Конвенция 169]. URL: http://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/conventions/iol169.shtml (Accessed: 05 October 2016).

of the Sami traditional culture.¹⁴ There is the increasing involvement of indigenous ethnic groups in the solution of problems of their own ethnic identity and rights. To protect the political interests of the Saami since 1989, the Sami representative assembly Sameting (Sametinget, Lapp. Samediggi) has been elected. The established party of Sami is recognized as national level party (1999).

Conclusion

The Sami are the indigenous people living in the territory of 4 countries: Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The most numerous group of Sami live in Norway. The active work on protection of rights of ethnic minorities in Norway, which began in the middle of the XX century, is bearing fruit. The legislation of the country secures special rights for the Sami to use the land and rivers in places of their traditional residence, the work on the preservation and promotion of the Sami language is carried out, the growth of ethnic identity and the process of social and political self-organization is noted among the ethnic minorities of the country. According to some researchers, the Sami in Norway flourish.

However, the analysis of the ethno-demographic processes among the Sami allows us to conclude that there are unresolved issues. On the one hand, positive actions are applied in relation to indigenous peoples in order to avoid discrimination, and on the other - the concept of equality is articulated as a basis for rejection of such measures.

The peculiar alternation of these approaches shows the complexity and contradictions in the relationships between equality, non-discrimination and minority rights [3, Kuropjatnik M.S]. Today the Norwegian society is conditionally divided into the Sami, those favorable to them, and those who do not want to recognize their special status.

Despite the government efforts, there is a tendency of reduction of the total number of the Sami. During the period of 2000-2013 the fertility among them reduced almost in 40%. The attempts to reduce the mortality rate among ethnic minorities also have not been quite successful.

Close contact and cross-cultural interactions among the Sami with representatives of the titular nation inevitably have the effect of assimilation. A significant part of the Sami youth does not see any prospects for their growth and self-realization on the basis of the traditional occupations of their ancestors. Preferential conditions for the Sami are created only in Sampo National Park (province of Finnmark) that also limits the opportunities for young people having a higher level of life aspirations.

¹⁴ Istoriia saami i norvezhskaia politika v ikh otnoshenii. URL: <http://norse.ru/pub/92.html> (Accessed: 22 October 2015).

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