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INCLUSIVE TOURISM IN RUSSIA: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CURRENT STATE

Abstract. *In the modern world, attention to the problems and interests of people with disabilities has become an important part of the social and economic policies of various states. In everyday life, people with disabilities face numerous barriers related to access to infrastructure, services, and products. All these obstacles prevent them from being active members of society. Inclusive tourism should be considered one of the promising areas for improving the quality of life, social and psychological adaptation and rehabilitation, providing full-fledged recreation for disabled people and people with disabilities. The relevance of the research topic is confirmed by the analysis of the latest statistical data on the number of disabled people in the world and the Russian Federation. The concept of "inclusive tourism" is not an unambiguous question, which is proved by the presence of many definitions and a number of synonymous terms that are given in the article. The author identifies various categories of the low-mobility population and people with disabilities who need barrier-free tourism services and an accessible environment. The most important factor in the development of any direction in tourism is the level and content of its regulatory and legal regulation. In this regard, the article examines the international legal aspects of liability, as well as the Russian legislative framework for the observance of the rights of persons with disabilities and regulatory documents defining the specifics of the provision of services to these categories of consumers. The analysis of publication activity on the topic of inclusive tourism is given, which allows us to conclude about the degree of interest in it in the scientific community as a reflection of attention to this problem from the authorities and society. The analysis of the current situation of the development of inclusive tourism in the Russian Federation highlights positive results, examples of successful practices and business ideas. The main problems and obstacles in this process are formulated: the lack of information, infrastructure and financial accessibility.*

Keywords: *inclusion, inclusive tourism, barrier-free tourism, accessible environment, people with disabilities, disabled people, people with limited mobility, international and Russian regulatory framework, Russian scientific publications, criteria for assessing the state of inclusive tourism, organization of inclusive tours, problems in the development of inclusive tourism in Russia*



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ИНКЛЮЗИВНЫЙ ТУРИЗМ В РОССИИ: ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА СОВРЕМЕННОГО СОСТОЯНИЯ

В современном мире внимание к проблемам и интересам людей с ограниченными возможностями здоровья (ОВЗ) стало важной частью социальной и экономической политики различных государств. В повседневной жизни люди с ОВЗ сталкиваются с многочисленными барьерами, касающимися доступа к инфраструктуре, услугам, продуктам. Все эти преграды мешают им быть активными членами общества. Одним из перспективных направлений повышения качества жизни, социальной и психологической адаптации и реабилитации, обеспечения полноценного отдыха инвалидов и лиц с ОВЗ следует считать инклюзивный туризм. Актуальность темы исследования подтверждается анализом новейших статистических данных о количестве инвалидов в мире и РФ. Понятие «инклюзивного туризма» - вопрос не однозначный, что доказывается наличием многих определений и целого ряда синонимичных терминов, которые приводятся в статье. Автор выделяет различные категории маломобильного населения и людей с ОВЗ, которые нуждаются в услугах безбарьерного туризма и доступной среде. Важнейшим фактором развития любого направления в туризме является уровень и содержание его нормативно-правового регулирования. В связи с этим в статье рассматриваются международные юридические аспекты ответственности, а также российская законодательная база по соблюдению прав лиц с инвалидностью и нормативные документы, определяющие особенности оказания услуг этим категориям потребителей. Приводится анализ публикационной активности по теме инклюзивного туризма, который позволяет сделать вывод о степени интереса к ней в научной среде как отражение внимания к этой проблеме со стороны власти и общества. В анализе современной ситуации развития инклюзивного туризма в РФ выделены положительные результаты, примеры успешных практик и бизнес-идей. Сформулированы основные проблемы и препятствия в этом процессе: отсутствие информационной, инфраструктурной и финансовой доступности.

Ключевые слова: *инклюзия, инклюзивный туризм, безбарьерный туризм, доступная среда, люди с ограниченными возможностями здоровья, инвалиды, маломобильное население, международная и российская нормативно-правовая основа, российские научные публикации, критерии оценки состояния инклюзивного туризма, организация инклюзивных туров, проблемы в развитии инклюзивного туризма в России*



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1 Introduction

At the present time one of the developing areas in the field of tourism activity can be called the organization of travel for low-mobility groups of the population. There are a number of synonymous concepts associated with this segment of the tourist market: tourism for everyone, barrier-free tourism, affordable tourism, social tourism, adaptive tourism etc.

The purpose of this article is to consider the prerequisites and the current situation in the development of inclusive tourism in Russia.

The relevance of the topic is determined by a number of reasons. Firstly, the state of development of inclusive tourism in the Russian Federation, which can be assessed as a stage of formation. Disability as a social phenomenon in Russia is gradually moving from the category of a problem that it was not customary to talk about to the area of the most important state tasks. One of them is the creation of an accessible environment, and there are the first steps in the implementation of the state program of the Russian Federation "Accessible Environment" that require attention and analysis.¹

In the coming decades, the problem of a barrier-free environment will still sound as acute. Disability is widespread all over the world. It is generally recognized that 15 percent of the world's population, or 1 billion people, live with a disability. It is estimated that by 2050, the number of people with disabilities worldwide will increase to 1.2 billion. This growth will be associated with an aging population, an increase in chronic health problems and non-communicable diseases, an increase in life expectancy, a decrease in child mortality and better tools for identifying and measuring disability [6]. These facts are a global trend.

As for Russia, as of August 1, 2022, the total number of disabled people was 10,474,835, the

percentage of disability was 8.96%².

If we conduct a structural analysis based on age, then 38% of the total number are people from 18 to 50 years old (children under 18 are not taken into account)². This is a young active part of the population. However, due to the insufficient development of infrastructure and the provision of conditions for a full life, they lose many opportunities for recreation and self-development. It is not necessary to discount the older group of disabled people, among whom there are many active people today who are striving to realize a variety of leisure activities, who have both the desire and financial opportunities to immerse themselves in the world of travel.

In the Russian Federation, the number of disabled children is steadily growing, by about 15-25 thousand people per year. All this indicates the actualization of the development of inclusive tourism in Russia as a socially significant phenomenon.

2 Inclusive tourism: concept, regulatory framework

The concept of "inclusive tourism" is not unambiguous and well-established in the professional sphere and science. Let us give as an example a few of its definitions (Table 2.).

Considering different interpretations of the concept of "inclusive tourism", it can be noted that the authors give virtually the same definitions, focusing on the features of organizing an accessible environment for people with disabilities, disabilities.

Many interpretations of tourism for people with disabilities and disabilities are explained, among other things, by the fact that inclusive tourism means the absence of restrictions in the use of tourist services [3].

Based on the analysis of existing definitions [8, 9, 14], we propose the following definition of this term: inclusive tourism is a type of tourism

¹ Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation dated March 29, 2019 No. 363 "On approval of the State Program of the Russian Federation "Accessible Environment". Moscow // Garant : information and legal portal. URL: <https://base.garant.ru/72216666/> (accessed: 30.07.2022)

² Federal State Information System "Federal Register of Disabled Persons": official website. URL: <https://sfri.ru/analitika/chislennost/chislennost/chislennost-po-vozrastu> (accessed 21.07.2022).

based on the principle of an accessible environment in the selection of infrastructure facilities and tourist display and includes services for a wide range of consumers, including people with disabilities.

Table 2 – The concept of "inclusive tourism"

Definition	Author
Inclusive tourism is the process of tourism development, which implies the accessibility of tourism for everyone, in terms of adapting the infrastructure of tourist centers and tourist display facilities to the various needs of all people, including the disabled, the elderly, their guardians and family members, people with disabilities, families with young children.	Mezhova L.A. [9]
Inclusive tourism – accessibility of tourism for everyone, including people with disabilities	Kholodina Yu.E. [14]
Inclusive tourism is a type of tourist activities that includes the availability of outdoor activities not only for ordinary people, but also for those whose physical abilities are limited by congenital or acquired ailments.	Stroeva A.D. [13]
Inclusive tourism is a concept in which people of all ages and abilities feel welcome as clients and guests.	Asmaryan A.A. [1]

Some important events and regulatory documents have played a role in the emergence and evolution of such a phenomenon as inclusive tourism. Thus, since 1958, measures have been taken at the international level in the field of the realization of the rights of people with disabilities. The first meeting of experts of the World Health Organization (WHO) on medical rehabilitation was held, where issues of accessibility of social infrastructure facilities, transport for the disabled and their integration into public life were discussed³.

A significant result of rethinking the social

role of this group of people was the consolidation of their rights in a number of important international documents:

- "Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" of December 9, 1975;
- "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" of December 13, 2006;
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of November 20, 1989;

As for Russian legislation, the first documents related to this area were adopted in the 90s of the last century:

- Federal Law "On Social Protection of Disabled Persons in the Russian Federation" (dated November 24, 1995 No. 181-FZ);
- Federal Law "On Social Services for Elderly and Disabled Citizens" (dated August 2, 1995 No. 122-FZ): expired on December 28, 2013;
- Federal Law "Technical Regulations on the Safety of Buildings and Structures" dated December 30, 2009 No. 384-FZ.

An important point was the development of various regulatory documents:

- SP (Code of Rules) 140.13330 "Urban environment. Design rules for low-mobility groups of the population";
- National standard of Russia GOST R 53998–2010 "Tourist services. Tourism services for people with disabilities. General requirements". By Order of Rosstandart No. 230-st dated March 26, 2014, this GOST was canceled from January 1, 2016 in connection with the adoption and introduction of the interstate standard GOST 32613-2014 "Tourist services. Tourism services for people with disabilities. General requirements".

Recently, the Government of the Russian Federation has been paying special attention to the problems of disabled people. New bills are being adopted: Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation "On approval of the State program of the Russian Federation "Accessible Environment" for 2011–2015" dated April 15, 2014 No. 297, in 2019 the program "Accessible Environment" was extended until 2025.

³ World Health Organization (WHO): Official Website. URL: <https://www.who.int/ru> (Accessed on: 07.08.2022).

3 Inclusive tourism in Russian scientific publications

The adoption of a number of important regulatory documents concerning the rights and peculiarities of inclusion of people with disabilities in society, the peculiarities of state regulation of inclusive tourism, accumulated foreign experience, issues of implementation of Russian inclusive practices and projects in tourism, problems and prospects of this direction, and finally, awareness of its exceptional importance – all this is reflected in Russian scientific publications. It can be assumed that the degree of scientific illumination of the problem is an indicator of its state.

The search query "inclusive tourism" in the scientific electronic library eLibrary (filter: by publication date, in ascending order) yielded the following results: 395 articles. The earliest publications date back to 2011, the latest – 2022 (Fig.1).

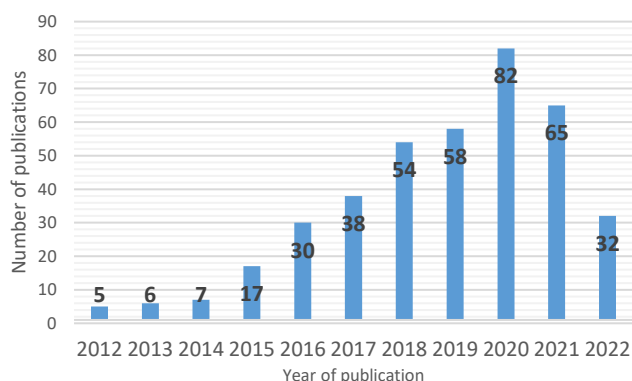


Fig. 1 – The number of publications about inclusive tourism in eLibrary

As we can see, the Russian scientific community has a little more than 10 years of experience in studying this field. The peak of scientific interest is in 2020. It can be assumed that this is due to the need to analyze and discuss the first concrete results in the implementation of the state program of the Russian Federation "Accessible Environment", Russian experience in the design and organization of inclusive tourism programs. 2021 showed a decrease in the number of articles. Apparently, the pandemic of a new coronavirus infection played a negative role, which slowed down the development of tourism,

including inclusive tourism, and, accordingly, affected the movement of scientific thought. In 2022, there are 32 publications so far, but the year has not yet been completed.

The analysis of the literature allows us to talk about several aspects in the study of inclusive tourism. Thus, the issues of methodological and methodological approaches to substantiating inclusive tourism are reflected in the works of Borisenko-Klepach N.M., Drozdova A.V.; the safety of inclusive tours is investigated by Bogatyreva A.V., Konstantinov Yu.S., Maslov A.G.; the legal foundations of inclusive tourism are considered by Borisenko-Klepach N.M., Mezhova L.A., Kononova E.I., Samursky K.D., problems and prospects in the Russian Federation - Seselkin A.I., Kazakova S.P., Mezhova L.A., experience in implementing inclusive tourism programs in the regions of the Russian Federation – Demkina E.V., Kononova E.I., Petrova A.S.).

4 Inclusive tourism in Russia: status and problems

Often in the content of publications one can find an assessment of the development of inclusive tourism in Russia and abroad, which includes the following criteria:

- formation of an accessible environment for the disabled and people with limited mobility;
- state regulation, participation of authorities at all levels in solving the problems of inclusive tourism;
- availability of operators creating and promoting an inclusive tourism product;
- creation of an information environment;
- training of professional personnel with knowledge and skills of working with various categories of people with disabilities.

In fact, the necessary conditions to meet the needs of disabled people in a high-quality tourist product are not limited to this list. Only the most general and essential parameters of the full-fledged development of inclusive tourism are highlighted here.

Each of these criteria is an actual topic for independent research. Limited by the scope of the article, we will try to identify and comment

on individual parameters in Russian realities.

The niche of travel organization for people with disabilities in our country is practically free. Unfortunately, we can state the fact that the organization of inclusive tours is mainly carried out by enthusiasts.

For example, the creators of the Globe4all project, which offers routes for people with disabilities⁴. With the beginning of the pandemic, Globe4all's business focused on foreign trips switched to domestic tourism, entrepreneurs joined the accelerator of the Moscow Innovation Cluster and the Moscow Travel Hub program "Factory of Tourist Products and Services". Today, the selection of Globe4all tours is divided into four categories:

- for people with a lesion of the musculo-skeletal system;
- for non-hearing tourists;
- for blind tourists;
- inclusion.

Of the 4,293 tour operators registered in the Unified Federal Register, today we can safely name only two companies engaged in organizing recreation for the disabled. How can this situation be explained? First of all, it is widely believed that people with disabilities are a minority in a market that requires significant investments with low returns and profitability [2].

Operators, as a rule, want to get tangible evidence of the benefits that this market can bring before committing to provide such a product [7, 12].

The most famous in Russia is the company "Liberty", specializing in recreation for people with disabilities (St. Petersburg). It was founded in 2004 by guides Natalia Gasparyan and Maria Bondar, also enthusiasts of their business. The company is engaged in providing tourist services exclusively to wheelchair users, as well as adapting various city attractions for such people⁵.

Another example of the role of personal initiative and its successful results is the activity of

Svetlana Nigmatullina, director of the Center for the Development of Social and Educational Projects "Aura" (ANO). She is the first certified tour guide with a disability in Russia, the author of the project "Dream Trips". In December 2020, a profile Committee was established in the National Union of Hospitality Industry Organizations (OSIG), which is engaged in the development of affordable tourism for people with disabilities in Russia. It is important that the Committee was headed by Svetlana Nigmatullina, whose invaluable personal experience in organizing travel for people with disabilities certainly allows us to consider the possibilities of inclusive tourism from a different perspective – from the point of view of a tourist with special needs.

At the end of March 2022, for the project "Rest without Borders" for people with disabilities, the tour operator ANEX TOUR was awarded the Government Prize in the field of tourism. The essence of the project is to provide discounts on tours for people with disabilities in some areas.⁶ In addition, ANEX Tour in the second season of the All-Russian competition "Masters of Hospitality" of the presidential platform "Russia is a country of opportunities", became a co-founder of the category "Affordable travel for special tourists".

As for large tour operators in general, among the problems of inclusive tourism, they single out the problem of insurance – not all companies are ready to insure travelers with serious chronic diseases, and a tour without insurance cannot be sold. As a result, one of the main problems is the lack of appropriate standards [4].

The company Mosgortur, Russia's largest children's tour operator engaged in the development of children's inclusive programs. The company's website presents inclusive excursions for children and adults in Moscow museums.

It is worth noting that museums were among the first objects of the tourism industry, which became a platform for providing inclusive tourist services. Mosgortur excursions, for

⁴ Globe4all project: Official Website. URL: <https://globe4all.net/> (Accessed on: 07.23.2022).

⁵ Travel company "Liberty": Official Website. URL: http://libertytour.ru/about/about_rus.htm (Accessed on: 07.28.2022).

⁶ Tour operator "ANEX Tour". The program "Rest without borders". URL: <https://obg.travel/> (Accessed on: 05.08.2022).

example, offer visits to 11 museums in Moscow. The list of their services includes ramps, elevators, parking spaces for the disabled, typhoon comments and tactile materials, guided tours in Russian sign language, subtitles, a touch bag, a touch security card etc.⁷

The open data portal of the Moscow Government presents 213 hotel facilities of the city adapted for persons with disabilities⁸. However, after checking this information for compliance with the official websites of enterprises, it was revealed that most of the accommodation facilities are not adapted for this category of citizens. The question arises: which of these resources carries reliable and comprehensive information?

The importance of information accessibility of inclusive tourism facilities is obvious. The right of disabled people and people with disabilities to rest should be provided with information about the opportunities to use this right.

In this regard, it is possible to cite as a positive experience the website "Accessible Petersburg", which reflects infrastructure facilities adapted for people with disabilities – hotels and hotels, museums, theaters, temples and cathedrals, gardens and parks⁹. In this online catalog of available facilities there is also information about individual tours of St. Petersburg and the suburbs for wheelchair users.

The most difficult thing is to find affordable catering establishments for people with disabilities. It is here that disabled people encounter many problems. Many cafes and restaurants that position themselves with an accessible environment for people with disabilities, in fact, are not. This, as we have seen, also applies to accommodation companies. But there are still several catering facilities in Russia that provide services to people with disabilities. I would like to voice this positive example:

1. Cafe "Vremya Peremen" (Republic of Dagestan, Makhachkala): an area of 200 m², a

spacious hall with wheelchair access, a low bar counter, adapted bathrooms, a special hall for children with special needs.

2. Cafe "Nezabudka" (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Saratov): designed for people with Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia.

3. Cafe "Ogrtsy" (St. Petersburg): employees of the institution are people with different developmental characteristics.

4. Cafe "Zhu-Zhu" (Moscow): employees of the institution are people with autism and Down syndrome.

These enterprises not only provide services to people with special needs, but also realize an important point in their activities: participation and own representation of people with disabilities in the creation and organization of inclusive recreation.

From the above, it can be concluded that in the Russian Federation, the creation of a barrier-free environment is gradually being carried out only in certain large cities.

The most developed directions of the spread of inclusive tourism in the Russian Federation are currently Moscow, St. Petersburg and Sochi.

Certain conclusions can be drawn from the data of Comprehensive monitoring of the living conditions of the population according to Rosstat (Fig. 2).

It is worth paying attention to the reasons that the respondents indicated. More than half of the respondents explained the reason for their non-participation in tourist programs by the state of health, that is, as we understand it, by the very fact of disability. This argument seems to be an eloquent fact proving the need for systematic, comprehensive work on the inclusion of disabled people in the social and cultural environment through inclusive tourism, its huge adaptive capabilities.

Another indicator that makes you think is financial. 18% of respondents cannot afford

⁷ Mosgortur: Official Website. URL: <https://mosgortur.ru/inklusive-ekskursiya> (Accessed on: 08.21.2022).

⁸ Open data portal of the Moscow Government: Official Website. Moscow. Updated during the day. URL: <https://data.mos.ru/opendata/61221> (Accessed on: 05.21.2022).

⁹ Accessible Petersburg: Official Website. St. Petersburg. URL: <https://sforin.ru/dostupnyi-peterburg> (Accessed on: 05.20.2022).

tourist trips. Indeed, inclusive tourist and excursion programs are an expensive tourist product. Its high price is explained by a number of factors: the complexity of design, huge material and technological costs in the organization, the need for technical support and, of course, the underdevelopment of the market. It is not possible to solve this problem without the participation of the state and social entrepreneurship. That is why inclusive tourism is often considered as a type of social tourism.

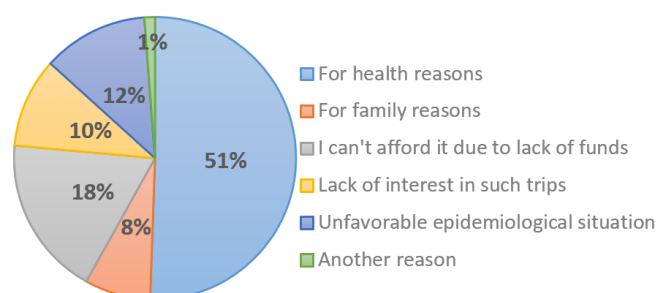


Fig. 2 – Participation of disabled persons aged 15 years and more in tourist or sightseeing trips in 2020¹⁰

Conclusion

Disability is a social phenomenon that no society can avoid, and the priority task of each State should be the formation of social and economic policies taking into account the interests of disabled people.

Inclusive tourism in our country has not yet received sufficient attention, while the first document on this problem was adopted in 1991 by the UNWTO General Assembly and was called "Creating opportunities for tourism for people with disabilities in the nineties". It calls on Member States to create an infrastructure at their tourist sites

that meets the conditions of an accessible environment [5].

The State program "Accessible Environment" was adopted with the aim of creating legal, economic and institutional conditions conducive to the integration of persons with disabilities into society and improving their standard of living. But, unfortunately, we observe that to date it has not been fully implemented. And this is the main barrier to the development of inclusive tourism.

The development of inclusive tourism in Russia is hindered by a whole range of problems identified at various levels. It is worth mentioning only the most basic obstacles:

- lack of accessible tourist infrastructure for the disabled;
- an acute shortage of companies engaged in the development and organization of inclusive tours and routes;
- financial unavailability of inclusive tourist services for people with disabilities;
- lack of information security.

However, there are also positive aspects: issues of social adaptation of disabled people have become the object of close attention from the state and public organizations (for example, the All-Russian Society of Disabled People), grant support of social funds is increasing. The topic of inclusive tourism, regional experience in the implementation of inclusive tourism practices and projects is actively discussed and analyzed in the scientific community. All this creates prerequisites for solving problems related to the issues of inclusion in tourism activities and the "accessibility" of affordable tourism.

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¹⁰ Federal State Statistics Service: Official Website. URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/tab7-4.htm> (Accessed on: 30.07.2022).

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