

SOCIAL STATUS AND STANDARD OF LIVING OF THE RURAL POPULATION AS PREREQUISITES TO CHANGE THE SOCIAL PARADIGM OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TERRITORIES IN RUSSIA

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Abstract

The purpose of the study In preparing the article, data from the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, materials collected as a result of a survey of residents of rural areas, scientific works of Russian and foreign scientists were used. The study was based on the works of T. Kuhn and the theory of structural functionalism of T. Parsons and R. Merton. To determine the social status and standard of living of the population of rural areas, a questionnaire survey was conducted, during which the following were determined: the level of education, pension and social security, the amount of income from labor activity, wages of residents, as well as infrastructure provision of villages. The results of such a study showed that the current socio-economic situation in the countryside is characterized by a high level of unemployment, poverty, and negative trends in the social sphere.

Key words: social status, standard of living, rural population, social paradigm, Russia

INTRODUCTION

The modern development of the agro-industrial complex of Russia began with the adoption in 2006 of the priority national project "Development of the agro-industrial complex", where, as part of the support of rural areas, it was envisaged to provide affordable housing for young specialists in rural areas. In continuation of this document, the State Program for the Development of Agriculture was adopted, in which a separate subprogram was developed to support rural areas. However, as the current state and level of socio-economic development of rural areas in Russia shows, support programs for 15 years have not yielded tangible results – there is a decrease in the quality of life, an increase in unemployment, a demographic crisis, and an increase in social stratification between urban and rural populations [7]. The continuation of the current trend will lead to a loss of food security and the impossibility of import substitution of basic food products. Changing the social paradigm of sustainable

development of rural areas of the region will change the socio-economic situation, which will reduce social tension, increase the attractiveness of rural life, change migration flows and become a catalyst for the development of agriculture in the region.

The concept of paradigm was introduced into the philosophy of science by G. Bergmann [2] to define methodological standards (he considered the paradigm "general criteria and patterns of methodological research"), but T. S. Kuhn revealed the concept most deeply in his works [12].

A number of domestic and foreign scientists were engaged in research and substantiation of scientific paradigms in relation to rural territories: A.I. Kostyaev [10], Z.I. Kalugina, O.P. Fadeeva [9], S.G. Bylina [4], F. Ellis, S. Biggs [5], D. Byerlee, A. Janvry, E. Sadoulet [3], M. Ambrosio-Albalá, J. Bastiaensen [1], E. Guinjoan, A. Badia, A. F. Tulla [8], J. D. Ploeg [18], Kudriashova et al., 2021 [11], Novikov et al., 2021 [14] etc.

The experience of developing issues of sustainable development of rural areas has

been accumulated by I.G. Ushachev, L.V. Bondarenko [19], A.V. Petrikov [17], A.I. Kostyaev [10].

The need to change the existing paradigm of rural development to improve the quality of life of the population, as well as the high scientific and practical importance of developing a social paradigm for rural development, served as the basis for the study. In this context, the purpose of the paper is to assess the social status and standard of living of the rural population in order to determine the prerequisites for changing the social paradigm of the development of rural areas in Russia.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

As part of our research, we will rely on the theory of the disciplinary matrix of T. Kuhn and the theory of structural functionalism proposed by T. Parsons [16], developed and refined by R. Merton [13].

The concept of a scientific paradigm was first formulated by Thomas Kuhn [12]. The transformation of paradigms, in his opinion, occurs in the process of scientific revolutions, and the sequential transition from one paradigm to another through revolution is a common model of the development of science. Despite the fact that the author believes that paradigms change in the process of scientific revolutions, which proceed from the solution of anomalies arising in old paradigms, due to the evolution of science in particular and human society as a whole, he also points out that every even the most minimal scientific achievement has an impact on the existing scientific paradigm, thereby modifying it. Can a modified paradigm be considered a new paradigm? Kuhn does not give a clear answer to this question. Under the influence of criticism on his work, he supplemented and reformulated the definitions of the paradigm. Later, to separate the concepts of the paradigm and the scientific community, he introduces the concept of "disciplinary matrix", structuring the paradigm into 4 components "symbolic generalizations", "metaphysical paradigms", "values" and "exemplars".

T. Parsons studied social phenomena as a system, the main property of which he considered the restoration of equilibrium after a destructive impact. The actions of a socially correctly motivated person are aimed at maintaining the social system in balance. However, Parsons believes that the system cannot be in a state of complete equilibrium, because it is constantly affected by destructive factors. He uses not only the concept of "system", but also the concept of "structure" – a certain scheme of stable elements of an integral system extracted from it. The author uses the concept of structure in the analysis of social objects, calling it structural and functional analysis, suggesting a set of functional problems for its implementation: adaptation, goal-attainment, reproduction of structure, stress relief and system integration.

R. Merton studied middle-level theories – the directions of development of sociology between theoretical and empirical research. He believed that sociology would be delayed in the development of universal sociological systems, and its advancement depended on the development of middle-level theories. Merton refutes the three main postulates of functional analysis, putting forward his paradigm showing the essence of his concepts, procedures and challenges, the main purpose of which is to define a preliminary codified guideline for functional analysis, it should also lead to the postulates underlying functional analysis and make the sociologist realize political and ideological conclusions.

To evaluate the social situation and the living standard of the rural population, it was chosen a sample of the residents from Saratov region, Russian Federation.

The field survey was conducted in 5 districts using a sample of respondents with a different social status and age.

A questionnaire was set up consisting of 4 parts: education and social status; pension and social security; income from work and wages; infrastructure support.

The answer have been processed and expressed in percentage for each studied criterion, illustrated in Tables and graphics, and correspondingly interpreted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The socio-economic situation of the Russian Federation is currently characterized by a decrease in real incomes of the population, a decline in production, an increase in unemployment, negative demographic trends, and an increase in poverty. All social indicators are aggravated by the epidemiological situation of COVID-19. The main socio-economic indicators of Russia are practically not increasing or decreasing in dynamics (Table 1), the average monthly salary in 2020 was 589.6 euros, the pension was 180.8 euros, the growth of these indicators in dynamics is lower than the real value of inflation in the country.

Table 1. The main socio-economic indicators of the Russian Federation

	2020	2020/2019 %
Industrial production index, %	100.0	97.9
Agricultural products, billion euros	74.3	101.3
including:		
crop production	41.5	100.7
livestock production	32.8	101.9
Investments in fixed assets, billion euros	231.0	98.6
Retail trade turnover, billion euros	389.0	96.8
Catering turnover, billion euros	16.6	77.4
The volume of paid services to the population, billion euros.	103.4	85.2
Average monthly nominal accrued salary of one employee, euro	589.6	107.3
The real salary of one employee, %		103.8
Average monthly pensions, euro	180.8	105.6
Consumer Price Index, %		104.9
The number of officially registered unemployed, thousand people	2,773.1	99.7
The number of permanent population, million people	146.2	99.6
The coefficient of natural attrition per 1,000 people of the population	-4.8	218.2

Source: Compiled according to [6].

The socioeconomic characteristics of the sample of respondents questioned in the 5 districts of Saratov region are as presented below.

The average age of the respondents was 42 years (the study was conducted in the group from 18 to 83 years). Of the respondents, 33%

indicated the status of their main activity as "Employed"; "Working pensioner" - 18%; "Non-working pensioner" - 22%; "Student/student" - 19%. One person worked at his own company and seven were engaged in household chores.

As for education, the largest share among the respondents is occupied by people with secondary vocational education – 32%, most of them are employed or working pensioners aged 54 to 68 years. Secondary (full) general education was noted in the questionnaire by 28% of respondents, all of them are students. 24% of respondents indicated higher education, mostly people under 35 years of age, all of them are employed. 10% of respondents have basic general education, 6% have incomplete higher education.

According to the study, 20% of respondents cannot afford to regularly relax outside the home (sports, theater, cinema, etc.) and have lunch with friends/relatives at least once a month; 30% do not have the opportunity to spend a certain amount of money weekly without coordinating with anyone (Figure 1).



Fig. 1. Respondents' answers to the question "Do you have the opportunity to afford?"

Source: Compiled based on the results of the survey.

Of all the respondents, 42% received a pension. The average old-age pension indicated by the respondents was 136.15

euros, which is lower than the regional average of 165.81 euros. Below the subsistence minimum, 7% of pensioners received pension provision, in accordance with this, they received an additional payment up to the amount of 110.06 euros.

During the analyzed period, 55% of respondents had a paid job, of which 7.3% the employer did not provide uninterrupted work experience, the break in the length of service averaged 2.5 months. According to the questionnaire processing data (Table 2), it can be concluded that the average salary of the respondents ranges from 180-265 euros, which is much lower than the official regional average of 385.19 euros.

Table 2. Respondents' estimate of the approximate amount of monthly earnings

Approximate amount, Euro	Respondents, %
Less than 140	12.7
140-170	14.5
170-230	5.5
230-290	14.5
290-350	5.5
350-400	3.5
400 and more	3.6

Source: Compiled based on the results of the survey.

Only 18% of respondents have the opportunity to receive additional income. Employees have the opportunity to receive an additional approximately 60-170 euros per month, pensioners - 60-110 euros per month, students up to 60 euros.

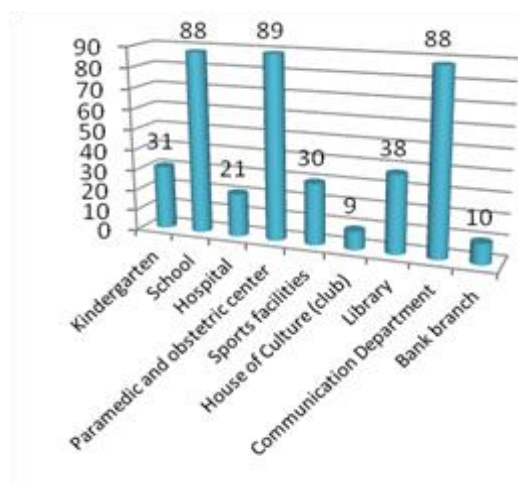


Fig. 2. Structure of respondents' responses about the availability of infrastructure facilities in their places of residence, %

Source: Compiled based on the results of the survey.

The structure of respondents' responses about the availability of infrastructure facilities in their places of residence is shown in Figure 2.

All interviewed residents of rural areas were asked to choose the objects of improvement of their place of residence from the proposed list. Based on the answers, it can be concluded that the entire population of the region is provided with gas, a little more than 30% have water supply and sewerage. 7% of respondents have an unsatisfactory assessment of their living conditions, 18% of respondents are completely satisfied with their living conditions; 48% - want to improve the existing housing; 10% - expand the housing area; 20% - purchase their own housing.

Sustainable development of rural areas is the most important goal of modern state agrarian policy, different points of view on the problem under study indicate the need for deeper scientific study and concretization of practical measures for its implementation. The current socio-economic situation in rural areas is characterized by high unemployment, poverty, negative trends in the social sphere: the deterioration of the demographic situation, the destruction of social infrastructure, the processes of outflow and decline in the quality of labor. The change in the qualitative characteristics of the life of the rural population negatively affects the reproduction of labor resources as the basis for sustainable socio-economic development of rural areas. The development of a social paradigm for the sustainable development of rural areas in the region is one of the necessary strategic goals of agricultural, demographic and social policy, the achievement of which will ensure food security, competitiveness of the national economy and improvement of the quality of life of the population. To achieve it, based on the theory of the disciplinary matrix T. Kuhn the prerequisites for the formation of a social paradigm of sustainable rural development have been developed:

1. The emergence of new goals and values. The emergence of the term "sustainable development" within the framework of the UN activities, meaning economic and social changes that allow the modern generation of people to meet their needs without prejudice

to the future generation. This approach has caused the need to revise concepts and principles, focusing on the social component and a harmonious attitude to the environment.

2. Dissonance of social processes in rural areas. The social stratification between rural and urban populations, social tension due to high levels of poverty and unemployment prove that the current direction of development and support of rural residents does not allow achieving the necessary quality of life to solve these problems. Thus, there was a need to change the paradigm of rural development.
3. Formulation of a hypothesis for the development of a social paradigm for the sustainable development of rural areas in the region.
4. Development of the matrix of the social paradigm of sustainable development of rural areas of the region, including 4 components (Figure 3): methods; theories; symbolic designations; values.

Methods	Theories
Symbolic designations	Values

Fig. 3. Matrix of the social paradigm of sustainable development of rural areas of the region
 Source: Compiled by the author.

The study of the theoretical and methodological foundations of the subject under study, as well as the development of prerequisites for the formation of a social paradigm for the sustainable development of rural areas, made it possible to clarify the content of this concept, namely, "a set of theories, methods, symbolic designations and values of society, the correlated action of which involves the transformation of rural development processes for the coordinated functioning of social, economic and natural aspects of the population's activities".

CONCLUSIONS

The study of the social situation and standard of living of the rural population of Russia reflect the objective need to develop prerequisites for a paradigm shift in the development of rural areas of the country.

The study revealed that the old-age pension indicated by the respondents, as well as the average wage level is lower than the national average, that is, employers pay lower wages to rural residents. Also, rural residents are not fully provided with social infrastructure facilities, in many localities there are no bank branches and sports facilities, in some there are schools, kindergartens and communication offices. Water supply and sewerage are inaccessible to most villagers, and only 10% of respondents have hot water and central heating in the house. The gap in the standard of living of rural and urban populations entails an outflow of rural residents to cities, as well as high social tension.

The theoretical aspects of the development of the social paradigm of rural development were studied and the prerequisites for its formation were substantiated: the emergence of new goals and values; the dissonance of social processes in rural areas; the formulation of a hypothesis for its development and the development of a matrix of the social paradigm of sustainable development of rural areas of the region, including 4 components (methods, theories, symbolic designations and values). The content of the concept of "social paradigm of sustainable development of rural areas" is clarified – it is a set of theories, methods, symbolic designations and values of society, the correlated action of which involves the transformation of rural development processes for the coordinated functioning of social, economic and natural aspects of the population.

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