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**NATIONAL PROJECT “DEMOGRAPHY” AS AN INSTRUMENT  
OF HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN RUSSIA**

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**Abstract**

Today the issue of improving national demographic situation in Russian Federation is under special governmental control. Solving this acute problem has acquired the status of national goal aimed at saving the number of population, improving health and quality of life. In order to reach this goal one of the most expensive and large-scale national projects “Demography” has been developed. The goal of the article is to analyze the content of the national project “Demography” and its structural elements (federal projects), assessing the efficiency of the implemented measures in the context of their positive influence on the indices reflecting social and demographic state in Russia. Within the research there have been analyzed open data from state resources and systems, state statistics official publications on the basis of which the data about actual state of some demographic regions have been represented as well as there has been carried out comparative analysis of the dynamics of reaching indices of social and economic development of Russian Federation set specifically to monitor the indices of national projects (programs) as well as federal projects within them. In the frames of the research the peculiar attention was paid to the Russian Federation subjects with critically low rates of the analyzed indices.

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## **1. Introduction**

Understanding of the priority of the human resources development, the necessity of maintaining high-quality level of welfare of citizens can guarantee success in building healthy modern society in all aspects. Moreover, economic progress can be stimulated by industrial and intellectual human qualities. Any investments in this direction will be beneficial as human capital can definitely be considered as a production factor of economic development of the territory (Duplyakina & Miroshnichenko, 2018).

However, the sphere of demography is many-faceted and that is why requires applying complex approach in fulfilling tasks set in this sphere taking into account the time lag since the effects cannot be observed at once, consequently for receiving the result “tomorrow” you should start undertaking actions “today”.

Today in Russia the government is aware of the scale and importance of this issue as well as the correlation between social development of the state and its social and demographic indices.

Thus, in 2018 the President of Russia set national goals of development up to 2024 (hereinafter referred to as NG) including for instance providing sustainable natural growth of population in Russia, sustainable growth of citizens’ real incomes, decreasing poverty level to ensure a break-through science and technology as well as social and economic development of the country, increase in the number of population, improving standard and quality of life (Mitrofanova et al., 2020).

In order to reach the set goals there have been developed and approved various national projects (hereinafter referred to as NP) which can be conventionally divided into three groups: “human capital”, “comfortable environment” and “economic priorities”. The group “human capital” includes: “Demography”, “Healthcare”, “Education”, “Culture”.

Crisis events of 2020 caused by the pandemic of new corona virus disease and as one of the consequences of economic slowdown led to negative economic outcomes that necessitated the correction of previously shaped plans. NG did not appear to be an exclusion and in June 2020 they were reformulated and extended up to 2030 at the previously set priority – preserving population, improving citizens’ health and quality of life (Mitrofanova & Yurchenko, 2021).

Taking into account the scale of NP “Demography” (realized in all regions of the country with financing in 2019-2024 exceeding by nearly 40% the spending on the rest NP of the group “human capital” according to the data of the integral website of the budgetary system of RF <http://budget.gov.ru>) and the diversity of measures carried out within its frames (involves issues of financial support to families with children, employment promotion, the elderly support, stimulating citizens to have healthy life style, creating conditions for physical training and sport), the necessity of analyzing the efficiency of the measures carried out within it is obvious.

## **2. Problem Statement**

In order to estimate how measures carried out within NP “Demography” can influence social and demographic situation in the country it is necessary to assess this sphere: to find out the current state, to analyze related indices, their absolute and relative figures in dynamics of fluctuations. Besides it is

necessary to estimate tendencies in this sphere, to make a list of factors that influence or can greatly change indices.

However deep or detailed examination of this issue is not so easy at the moment because the life cycle of the NP “Demography” is not over. In conformity with the passport of the NP “Demography” placed on the official website of the Ministry of Labour of Russia <https://mintrud.gov.ru>, the project completion date is determined as 31.12.2024; and the project will be financed up to 2024 and including. As for the amendments to the project related to indices of the NP “Demography” introduced in July 2020 they contain values of indices anticipated by 2030 represented for reference. However current operation analysis including analysis of structural elements of the NP, volumes of financing, anticipated results and already reached values of indices will enable to give preliminary assessment of the efficiency of the implemented measures.

### **3. Research Questions**

The following issues have been examined during the research:

- How can main social and demographic indices of the Russian Federation be characterized at present and what are the tendencies of their changing?
- What are the general characteristics and parameters of NP “Demography” (structure, financial provision, indices, results, measures)?
- What is the role of the RF subjects in realization of NP “Demography” and in reaching set goals?
- What results in changing social and demographic state have been achieved for the period of the NP “Demography” realization”?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the research is to estimate the influence of the NP “Demography” realization on changes in indices of social and demographic state in Russia as well as the relevance of the developed measures and targeted indices.

### **5. Research Methods**

For carrying out the research the data of the Federal Service of State Statistics (2021) located on the official website: <https://rosstat.gov.ru>, information of the Ministry of Labour and Social Defense of the Russian Federation (2021) located on the official website: <https://mintrud.gov.ru>, data from the Integral website of the budgetary system of the Russian Federation “Digital budget” (2021) located on the official website: <http://budget.gov.ru>, as well as from Integral cross-agency information and statistics system (ICISS) (2021) located on the official website: <https://www.fedstat.ru>, supervised by Rosstat and Mincomsvyaz of Russia.

### **5.1. Estimation of the main social and demographic indices of the Russian Federation including retrospective analysis**

A lot of works have been devoted to studying social and demographic state in Russia. Thus Aganbegyan (2020) presented detailed analysis of demographic situation in Russia at the turn of the XXIst century and its development up to the present, highlighting existing negative demographic trend. S. Gosteva paid attention to deteriorating quality structure of the population of Russia caused by incidence rate, worsening health state and aging of population (Gosteva, 2020).

Industriev (2021) listed as restrictions that can lead to the failure to reach goals and fulfill tasks including NP “Demography” such circumstances as increasing death rate, crisis of the institution of the family and marriage, tendency to the decrease in the birth rate, sedentary lifestyle.

According to the authors of the paper the stipulated circumstances should be estimated not only as restricting but as well as inducement to realize the NP “Demography”. The above-mentioned problems should help to develop the complex of measures aimed at their minimization or elimination.

Concerning the main social and demographic indices and the dynamics of their changes according to the data of the statistical editions (Demographic annual report of Russia, 2019; Regions of Russia. Social and economic indices, 2020) it should be noted that the highest population level for the 60 years in Russia were marked in 1995–1998 when this index fluctuated within 147.8–148.5 million people. Recently, i.e. beginning with 2015 this index doesn’t exceed 147 million people and tend to decrease gradually. Moreover, in conformity with population forecast where the base period is considered to be the beginning of 2018 even according to the average scenario the number of population by 2036 will decrease up to 144 million people, according to the low scenario – up to 138.1 million people.

The population is steadily getting older. Thus for the last 30 years the average age of the population is gradually increasing year by year. In 1990 the average age was 34.9 years old, in 2019 it was already 40 years old. On the one hand it can tell us about increasing longevity, improving quality of life, healthcare system.

Beginning with 2015 the birth rate has been decreasing. The indices of natural growth (per 1000 of population) after “demographic pitfall” in the period from 1995 to 2008 tend to show positive dynamics for several years. However, since 2017 the birth rate started to decrease. The mothers are also “getting older”. Thus, for the last decade there can be observed a sustainable tendency to decreasing number of females having babies at the age of 15-34. At the same time there is an increase in this index in the age group of 35–50 and over. The average female age having baby this year beginning with 1996 is increasing: in 1996 – 25 years old, in 2018 – 28.7 years old.

One of the most illustrative indices is the aggregate birth rate. If in make-or-break 2015 its value made up 1.777, then in 2018– 1.579, there can be observed decrease of average annual number of the employed in Russia.

### **5.2. Review of the NP “Demography”**

The NP “Demography” is the most expensive project among the projects devoted to human capital and its financial provision for the period 2019-2024 makes up 4637,8 billion rubles, i.e. 18.3% of the total

volume provided for realization of all 14 ongoing NP (programs). At that most of the funding (96.4%) is provided mainly by federal budget. Thus, federal budget for 2021 allows for 745.5 billion rubles as budgetary provisions for the NP “Demography” (Federal act dated from 08.12.2020 № 385-FZ, 2020).

According to the passport of NP “Demography” its realization must contribute to reaching NG “saving population, citizens’ health and welfare” as well as foster achieving the following target indices: providing sustainable growth of the population of Russia, increase in the share of citizens systematically doing some physical activities and sports up to 70% (by 2030).

The NP “Demography” includes 5 federal projects (hereinafter referred to as FP) providing its realization:

- Financial support of the families at childbirth;
- Employment promotion;
- Developing and realization of the program of system support and improving quality of life of the elderly citizens (“The elderly generation”);
- Creating the system of motivation of citizens to have healthy life style including healthy nutrition, quitting bad habits (“Promotion of public health”);
- Providing conditions for all groups of population for doing physical activities and sport including raising the level of sport facilities provision as well as training sport reserve (“Sport is the norm of life”).

As you can see from the Table 1 the financing is distributed unequally among FPs that is caused by the goals they are going to reach.

**Table 1.** NP “Demography” financing broken down by FP

Name of FP	Expenditures in 2019-2024	
	billion rubles	Share in total expenditures, %
Financial support of families with the newborns	4224	91.1%
Employment promotion	188.6	4.1%
Older generation	66.4	1.4%
Strengthening public health	3.6	0.1%
Sport is the norm of life	155.2	3.3%
Total (NP “Demography”)	4637.8	100%

The main goal of FP “Financial support of the families at childbirth” is creating conditions stimulating increase in childbirth mainly by means of financial support. For instance, within FP the maternity capital, payout after a birth, soft mortgage loans.

The measures within FP “Employment promotion” is quite diverse. They include: arranging training for citizens looking for a job as well as for persons at risk of being dismissed (fired); measures aimed at raising effectiveness of employment service including those providing its modernization, developing practice of using information and analytical system “All-Russia of vacancies “Job in”.

The measures within the FP “Employment promotion” should be considered separately as they are aimed at providing affordable preschool education for children up to the age of three. It will enable women

to return back to work more quickly or will stimulate them to have the next baby. The measure is realized by means of buying or constructing buildings for preschool educational institutions.

The Federal project “The elderly generation” is devoted to creating favorable conditions for the aged citizens aimed at increasing the longevity. It implies creating such environment which will encourage active longevity high quality healthy life of this particular category of citizens.

It is necessary to mention that this FP is based on the synergy of social and healthcare services that can be observed in such measures as creating the system of long-term care of the aged citizens and disabled including services provided by residential agencies of social service of the “new type” creating conditions similar to the household ones. Besides this FP implies creating regional senior centers and sections as well as holding precautionary examinations and regular medical checkups for citizens over the working age.

Realization of FP “Strengthening public health” is aimed at attracting the majority of citizens to having healthy life style including healthy and balanced nutrition and quitting bad habits. The project implies the necessity of preventive measures in this sphere including public awareness campaign of health centers that will require to modernize old centers or creating new ones.

The FP “Sport is the norm of life” is aimed at creating conditions for doing physical activities and sports including development sport infrastructure and facilities of sport objects. The main goal of realization of this FP is to increase the number of citizens doing physical activities and sport systematically.

These FPs are aimed at realization of indices decomposed of NP “Demography”. Moreover due to the large scale of the sphere of influence some indices and outcomes of the NP “Demography” and FPs that it comprises are distributed among the RF subjects with set values for every subject.

The rate of reaching forecast values, success of the work carried out in the regions will determine the probability of positive dynamics in the main indices of social and demographic state of Russia over the next years.

## **6. Findings**

In order to find out to what extent the governmental activity in the sphere under consideration is effective or to be aware of the indifference of the social and demographic indices to the executed measures it is reasonably to review the reports of project realization that will enable to analyse the extent of reaching the targeted values of the indices especially at the level of the RF subjects. This assessment in its turn can reveal the areas of concern understood both as territories of concern (regions with low level of plan fulfillment as well as those with critical fluctuations) that imply the problem escalation and require participation of the federal center, and as problem segments of social and demographic sphere (birth rate, dearth rate, rate of employment, quality of life and etc.).

Unfortunately, at present these reports are allocated in closed part of the national projects management subsystem of state integral information system of managing public finances “Digital budget” with no public access. At that in order to monitor the rate of reaching indices of national projects (programs) and federal projects included in them, the indices of social and economic development of the Russian Federation necessary for monitoring were introduced in the Federal plan of statistical works.

Thus, the NP “Demography” contain the following indices that are included in official statistical information formed by Rosstat and Minzdrav of Russia:

- Anticipated healthy longevity (Rosstat);
- Death rate of population over working age (women at the age of 55 and over, men at the age of 60 and over) (Rosstat);
- Total birth rate (Rosstat);
- Share of citizens having healthy lifestyle (Rosstat);
- Number of people turned to healthcare organizations related to healthy lifestyle (Minzdrav of Russia);
- Number of people who are recommended individual plans on healthy lifestyle (health passport) in healthcare centers (Minzdrav of Russia);
- Share of people systematically doing physical activities and sports (Rosstat).

In addition, there are 27 statistical indices in FPs included in NP “Demography including 5 indices for FPs “Financial support of the families at childbirth”, “Employment promotion” and “Sport is the norm of life” as well as 6 indices for FPs “The elderly generation” and “Strengthening public health”.

Further there are results of the analysis of the above-listed indices set in regard to the NP “Demography”. All the data related to actually reached values of the indices are taken from the Integral cross-agency information and statistics system (ICISS, 2021) where they are allocated.

Concerning the statistical index “Anticipated healthy longevity” it is necessary to say that its calculation methodology is based on the Sallivan’s method which implies that anticipated longevity is corrected by the person’s state of health. The stipulated index enables to give qualitative characteristic in estimation of public health level and it was included in the system of monitoring public health of the European Union by the World Health Organization. The used method is quite reliable and approved however taking into consideration the specifics of calculations some researchers express their opinion that it is impossible to use it ‘in case of pandemic, military actions, catastrophes and other circumstances leading to sharp increase in sickness and death rate” (Kozlova & Sekitski-Pavlenko, 2019).

Concerning the immediate results (for 2019–2020 presented by the RF subjects and federal districts) it should be remarked that in Russia in general in 2020 compared to 2019 the index decreased by 2.3% (from the age of 60.3 to 58.9). Similarly, the decrease is observed in all federal districts (from -1.4% in the North-Caucasian Federal District – to -3.1% in the North-West Federal District). It should be noted separately that this index decreased by 24.6% in the Chukotka Autonomous District where its absolute value in 2020 made up 37 years of anticipated health longevity. And if the above-mentioned negative tendencies can be connected with hard epidemiologic situation that took place in 2020 both in the world and in the country but the last example tells with higher probability about more systemic causes and problems that definitely require examination.

It is necessary to observe the regions with the largest “gain”: Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous District – Ugra (Tyumen Region) (+7%), Belgorod Region (+6.6%). Concerning the highest absolute values, it is necessary to say that the obtained result in the leading subjects was quite anticipated: the Republic of Dagestan (68.2 years), the Republic of Tatarstan (66.9 years), the Chechen Republic (66.4 years).

Concerning the index “The death rate of the population over the working age” the information is presented only for 2018–2019 due to the terms of its provision (annually by the 21st of August). In the

stipulated period the trends are quite optimistic: in Russia in general the death rate of the category of citizens under consideration decreased by 2.7%; by federal districts negative value appears only in the Far East Federal District, at that the death rate increased by 26 persons a year.

In the authors' opinion the obtained positive dynamics is due to the national projects realization of which started just in 2019, including the NP "Demography". In any case the obtained result tells us about changes in the quality of life of population over the working age.

For information marginal indices by subjects should also be mentioned: increase in the index by 3.9% and 3.8% in the Khabarovsk District and the Amur Region respectively; decrease in death rate by 27.9% and 15.7% in the Chukotka and the Nenets Autonomous Districts respectively. Probably this index will have even worse value for 2020 taking into consideration the pandemic all over the world. There is nothing but hope that lockdown for the elderly generation introduced in this hard period helped perhaps partially to mitigate risks and dangers for life and health of this category of citizens.

The index "Total birth rate" for the last year almost has not changed (in Russia in general for 2020 – 1.51, for 2019 – 1.5). However general tendency gives rise to concern: beginning with 2015 when the index made up 1.78, there was an annual decrease in its value. Consequently, in spite of the variety of the supporting measures they failed to provide anticipated effect as it is. But monitoring should be continued taking into consideration that index doesn't go lower the reached level; perhaps 2020 will become the turning point for obtaining sustainable positive dynamics.

The most significant growth was observed (in 2020 compared to 2019) in the Republic of Tyva (+0.25 points), it is the RF subject that reached the highest index for 2020 (2.97).

The analysis of the values of the index "the share of citizens having healthy lifestyle" for 2019–2020 showed rather controversial results. On the one hand there was observed a significant decrease in the value for example in Russia in general by 24.2% (from 12% in 2019 up to 9.1% in 2020, i.e. by 2.9 percentage points). There can be observed decrease by all federal districts (from -36.2% in the Volga Federal District – to -1.3% in the North-Caucasus Federal District).

In some regions situations is in our opinion is critical. For example, the index in the Magadan Region "dropped" by 98.6% (from 14.4 to 0.2), in the Republic of Buryatia– by 83% (from 17.6 to 3), in the Chuvash Republic – by 80.6% (from 24.7 to 4.8).

The result of the index is in general constituent with the planned value (according to the passport of the NP "Demography" the planned values for 2019 is stipulated as 12%, for 2020 – 9%), however the fact of existing negative tendency especially the tempos of its increase give rise to concern. Since other social and demographic indices for instance longevity including active longevity directly depend on citizens' attachment to having healthy lifestyle.

On the other hand, several subjects can not only maintain the level reached in 2019 but even improved the indices. For instance, in 2020 in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania the value of the index went up 6 times and reached 23.4%, we can also mention the Sakhalin Region (+85%) and the Tambov Region (+21%).

To the authors' point of view, it is reasonable to study advanced practices, to carry out their detailed analysis aimed at its further multiplying on the territories of other regions. The results of the index "number of people turned to healthcare organizations related to healthy lifestyle" can be estimated as positive. Thus

in 2019 there were 7.7 times more people who turned to the relevant organizations for consultations in comparison with 2018. The particularly high values of indices were reached in the Tambov and Tula Regions as well as the Crimea Republic. The results related to the index “Number of people who are recommended individual plans on healthy lifestyle (health passport)” are optimistic as well: in 2019 compared to 2018 this index increased by 14.3% in the country in general.

Thus, in case of possible difficulties that can occur in solving the issue of switching to healthy lifestyle the citizens think it over and turn to specialized healthcare organizations for professional consultations.

It is necessary to mention that at the moment of analysis there were no values of the indices for 2020 due to the terms of their provision (annually by the 1st of May). Concerning the index “share of citizens doing physical activities and sport systematically” in ICISS there is only value for 2019 which makes up 43% that meets the target from the passport of NP “Demography”.

## **7. Conclusion**

Thus, the issues of regulating demography, providing increase in population, stimulating birth rate growth, decrease in death rate, increase, supporting families with children and the elderly, creating conditions of improving citizens’ quality of life are integral attributes of any civilized state. Taking care of citizens is probably the most high-priority challenge of the state.

In contemporary Russia there can be observed problems connected with a number of indices characterizing social and demographic state of the country. At the governmental level different measures aimed at changing the current situation have been developed and are being realized. One of the most priority and financed now and for the foreseeable future direction is NP “Demography which implies a wide range of measures realization of which will lead to certain outcomes and help to reach the set indices. Such complex approach in its turn must lead to system changes and getting long-term social effect.

Considering the structure of NP “Demography” and diversity of directions that its FPs include we can say that there are all necessary prerequisites. At that the issue of constant operational monitoring of NP “Demography” realization is very acute including control over realization of the shaped plans and reaching the target values. The results of the monitoring can be used for developing recommendations on corrective actions in case of necessity. However, taking into consideration restrictions of the access to the reports on realization of national and federal projects it appears to be a rather difficult task. Within this framework it seems to be necessary to provide open access to the information related to project realization including regional segment to the general public.

Besides the carried out research revealed indices in some RF subjects that critically fell behind the level of their execution that perhaps shows the necessity of federal center participation. It is very important to study the regional practice with high level of reaching national projects indices.

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