

GCPMED 2020

Global Challenges and Prospects of the Modern Economic Development

ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF LIFE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

G. N. Alexandrova (a)*, A. V. Gagarinskii (b), G. P. Gagarinskaia (c)
*Corresponding author

(a) Samara State University of Economics, Soviet Army Str., 141, Samara, Russia, Alexandrova.gn@rambler.ru

(b) Samara State Technical University, Molodogvardeyskaia Str., 244, Samara, Russia, eyo080505@mail.ru

(c) Samara State Technical University, Molodogvardeyskaia Str., 244, Samara, Russia, eyo080505@mail.ru

Abstract

The article analyzes the reasons why people of working age and mainly young people migrate to large cities. The article examines the lifestyle of the population in small settlements, describes the most significant problems that concern citizens and systematizes the results. The authors analyze the social and living conditions of the population, the availability of medical care, educational opportunities and existing options for self-education, sports and cultural development. The authors study the everyday life of residents, the opportunity to get a qualified service for repairing their homes, delivering large-sized goods, transport links between settlements, and the work of social services to assist elderly citizens and disabled people. The article investigates the important problem of people's relationship with local officials. The article analyzes the number of complaints about the poor performance of duties by responsible persons. The authors also analyze how actively citizens themselves participate in the life of their district. Choosing research methods, the authors proceed from the fact that the problem of studying the quality of life of the population needs to be approached comprehensively. The authors use the methods of statistical analysis, neo-linguistic programming, questionnaires, conversations and discussions with residents. One of the effective methods to stimulate discussion of acute problems was the use of social networks. The authors offer recommendations on additional measures that can be essential to make rural life attractive to citizens.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Demography, living conditions, migration, residents, youth



1. Introduction

In today's difficult situation when our society like the whole world suddenly faced several serious problems, namely the decline of the economy, a sharp increase in unemployment, inflation, drop in population incomes, a pandemic, lockdown, it became necessary to take a fresh look at some processes related to maintaining and developing the quality of life of the population (Raerinne, 2020). People try to improve their living conditions, some of them think that higher education can help them maintain more comfortable life, improve the life quality, give access to welfare and happiness (Lall, 2021a). People believe that they can do without hard labor and manual work and hope that somebody will do all exhausting jobs for them. However, recent research shows that mass migration of rural population to big cities resulted in much waste, air pollution, land contamination and deterioration of ecology (Malamidis, 2021a). Densely populated areas can cause infected diseases, pandemics and nervous disorders (Lall, 2021b).

Over the past decades, the population in Russia struggled with material and domestic difficulties. It was necessary to solve the housing issues, provide families with food, pay for the education of children and treatment of age members of the family. The gradual improvement in the level of welfare highlighted other aspects of people's lives, no less important than well-appointed housing and well-organized mode of life. Priority trends can be described as security, a stable situation in the country, confidence in the future, a sense of government and local officials concern for people's welfare. New challenges posed by the changing economic situation in the world and the threat to human health and life due to the pandemic have shifted priorities and revealed the importance of an understandable and productive dialogue between society and the State (Malamidis 2021b). Many families and individual citizens faced immensely serious problems that could not be solved without the help of government officials. Unfortunately, in the Russian Federation not all citizens are in equal conditions in terms of excess to social services. The living conditions of residents of large cities and residents of small settlements are significantly different.

2. Problem Statement

The problem of youth outflow from rural areas is neither new nor studied. It arose quite a long time ago and at first did not seem so serious, since the number of people living in villages was much greater than in cities, and there were not enough workers at industrial enterprises (Dekel-Chen, 2020). Over time, the situation has changed and now there is already a shortage of workers in the agricultural sector. The state policy in relation to the countryside gradually changed, and since the end of the nineties the Government has been taking constant measures to support the agricultural sector. However, the number of able-bodied population in rural areas has been declining. For example, in Samara region, according to the Federal State Statistics Service for Samara Region, able-bodied population decreased by 1,264,000 people from 2012 to 2019 (Samarastat, 2020).

This is happening despite the fact that in 2008 Russia launched a national project "Development of the agro-industrial complex", which included the development of infrastructure, construction of schools, kindergartens, offices of general medical help in rural areas. Much attention is paid to the development of physical health of people and their cultural development. Local officials allocate funds for providing sports facilities, opening fitness clubs, swimming pools, for the development of Village Halls and libraries. In

addition, they give funds to support small and medium-size businesses in rural areas, to stimulate individual entrepreneurship, and increase jobs. In the same 2008, clean running water was supplied to many villages of the Samara region instead of wells. In the Samara region, there is a gas supply in almost all settlements. It can be seen that living conditions are noticeably improving. In reports on municipal websites presented indicators demonstrate the successful development of the village. The question is, why young people leave their places of birth, what the reasons are? What should be changed or improved in rural areas so that young people want to stay and work in their native villages? This is currently a serious problem that needs to be identified and investigated. In this study, the authors will analyze in detail all the factors associated with the social and living conditions of people in three settlements of the Krasnoarmeisky District of the Samara Region, and also develop new approaches to studying this issue.

3. Research Questions

Research questions of the study will include analysis of the social conditions in these three settlements, the number of sports facilities in each settlement, their availability for the population in terms of cost, the number of visitors who can train there at one and the same time. It is important to analyze the availability of the necessary sports facilities and equipment of Village Halls, offices of medical aid, to study the available opportunities for education and self-education, namely: the availability and quality of the Internet, the price, the plan of cultural and entertainment events in the Village Halls, how relevant they are for meeting people's expectations. Another important factor, which, in our opinion, is pivotal in the study of the quality of life it is how comfortable a person feels in the place of residence. Therefore, we consider it necessary to analyze how often residents in small towns interact with representatives of the executive and legislative authorities, the degree of accessibility of officials, how quickly and effectively the problems of citizens are resolved. The authors believe it is necessary to identify the number of recurring complaints about poor performance or failure of responsible persons to fulfill their duties. Analyze the cases, if any, of ignoring citizens' appeals by representatives of the executive or legislative authorities. We consider it necessary to find out how actively the citizens themselves participate in the social life of their village. It is necessary to study the demographic composition of the population and analyze which age groups most often leave for large cities.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify and describe the reasons why able-bodied people to large cities. The study is aimed at studying the lifestyle of the population in small settlements in order to find out the most essential problems of concern to citizens and systematize the results. Choosing research methods, the authors proceeded from the fact that the problem of studying the quality of life of the population should be approached in a comprehensive manner. Therefore, an eclectic approach to the selection and development of the methodology for this study was developed. The authors developed recommendations on additional measures that need to be taken to make life in rural areas more attractive for citizens. In addition, the study is aimed at developing relevant and effective measures to attract the urban population

of working age to the countryside, namely: specialists in the field of education, health care and agriculture, which are lacking in the countryside.

It should be noted that the study assumed not only the presence or absence of social, cultural and entertainment living conditions and not only the degree of effectiveness of relations between citizens with representatives of the executive and legislative authorities, but also the presence of feedback. And this includes the intensity of communication and the variety of ways the authorities communicate with citizens. Since life in small settlements is more transparent and everyone knows each other caring for people or ignoring people's needs is felt stronger. This factor was also given great attention in the study.

5. Research Methods

The research methodology is based on an integrated approach to the study of this problem. While considering research methodology, the authors proceeded from the set task and objectives of the study, therefore, the following methods were used: statistical analysis, the method of neuro-linguistic programming, questionnaires using a pre-compiled questionnaire, conversations with residents in the form of a round table, discussions organized in houses of culture, monitoring of social networks. The use of social networks provided additional opportunities for a more objective study of people's moods and aspirations. One of the techniques for conducting social networks survey, which proved to be very effective in this study, we consider stimulating discussion of sensitive issues in the social networks that provoke people to speak out. Often, when communicating online, people are more frank, they have no fear as they can have making public statements or speeches. They try to express what really bothers them, what they would like to improve or change. A new technique that we used in this study comprises the placement of small articles describing specific cases of fair or, conversely, unfair solutions of problems undertaken by officials, noble or, on the contrary, ignoble actions of local residents. The articles were published on social networks with the possibility of anonymous commentary, since we needed to induce the discussions of significant topics and acute issues, involving as many people as possible. In order to establish the cognitive style of presenting one's opinion and the mentality of the recipients, we did not limit people in speech behavior.

6. Findings

The main purpose of the study was to find out the reasons why young people move to other places. The authors carried out the research in three settlements with a total population of 1115 people. In addition to various types of surveys and conversations with local residents, we checked the content and number of complaints received from the population to the district administration for the period from 2018 to 2019. Local residents drew our attention to the fact that until 2017 all complaints were posted on the official website of the municipal district. But, for no reason this practice stopped, although all residents liked it. The results of the study showed that in all three settlements, there are Village Halls in which libraries, hobby groups, and amateur groups operate. Although, there are no interesting events. Here we can state the deterioration of the situation in comparison with the Soviet times. At those times, local governments allocated funds and university professors delivered lecturers and professional actors organized concerts and performances. Despite the presence of the Internet and televisions, polls have shown that people in villages

are lacking of face to face communication. All three villages have outdoor sports grounds, where people can train and play sports only in good weather. It can be stated that there are no opportunities for sports. In two villages there are offices of medical aid, but there are no pharmacies, the necessary medicines must be ordered in advance or people have to go to the regional center for buying them, which is quite problematic because there is no public transport. In small villages buses run once a week, early in the morning, and its timetable is scheduled in accordance with the work of the market in the district center. It complicates the commuting because 70% of elderly people live in these settlements and not everyone owns cars. In general, it worsens the life in the countryside. If one of the residents needs to go to the regional center he has to call a taxi and this is expensive in comparison with the average salaries in the village. The average salary in a village is 20,000 rubles and a one-way ticket, including a taxi, costs 650 rubles. That is, residents of provincial cities could not attend theatre performances, concerts, art exhibitions, especially if these are tours of famous artists from other cities or other countries. They have limited access to high-tech medical care because of remoteness and bureaucratic procedures. Although the situation has been improving over the years - once a month a large van with medical equipment comes to the villages, in which narrowly specialized doctors examine the residents. High-tech equipment is available only in large medical centers of the regional city. In winter, transport links are worse, but, according to the survey, snowbladers have cleaned the roads regularly. Lighting has appeared in these villages, which is also an additional convenience.

The main recipients in our study were young people from 14 to 32 years old, although other age groups were also interviewed. The authors chose the age group from 14 to 32 years old due to the fact, that they are potential migrants. The number of respondents from this age group was 240 people, 87,5% (that is 210 people) plan to leave their native villages. Among those who wanted to leave: 10% just wanted to change their place of residence without a clear goal and motives; 40% - wanted to get a higher education, work in a large company and have more comfortable living conditions; 13% - believed that in a big city their children would have more chances to get a good education, that there would be better conditions for the development of children from an early age; 34% - wanted to make good money; 3% - dreamed of a luxurious life and planned to leave for Moscow or St. Petersburg.

Unfortunately, we couldn't interview those people who had already left and had no connection with the locals. However, few of them (15 people) participated in the interviews since they still had relatives and friends in these villages. Using social media and encouraging people to open comments and discussions has made it possible to analyze hidden problems that people are not willing to discuss. The analysis of these comments revealed that 78% of people living in rural areas are dissatisfied with the work of local officials. 62% of citizens believe that officials spend budget money not on the primary needs of people. For example, instead of repairing roads, they are laying sidewalks with expensive tiles, arranging flower beds, planting trees instead of repairing and warming the facades of apartment buildings. At the same time, 69% of respondents do not believe that they should plant trees and flowers in a common area near their homes.

There were many complaints about the lack of real help to the elderly from social workers. To be fair, this problem is relevant not only for rural areas. 71% of respondents indicated a lack of services for maintaining and repairing private houses. Some complaints were about the unfriendly policy of large gas and electricity supply companies. In winter consumers with low debt were cut off the gas and electricity. It

is a common practice. 48% of the respondents believe that this is done with the consent of officials, since no one seriously responds to these complaints. In large cities people, who have much debt, usually get warnings and only after that, according to court decision, they can be cut off gas, electricity or water. 89% of the respondents believe that it is useless to complain about the work of officials, the police and the prosecutor's office. Some of the answers from the officials are just replies beside the point.

The authors also analyzed part of the complaints that residents wrote to the site of the governor. Oddly enough, some of the complaints were about improvements that had already been made. For example, many small villages were supplied with piped water, but residents complained that water is often not available because of constant water pipe bursting. Also, some of the complaints related to the poor quality of electricity supply. Because of power surges, the equipment became unusable. Some interviewees complained about the lack of public transport.

7. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the authors drew the following conclusions. 1. Over the past eight years, from 2012 to 2019, much has been done to improve the living conditions of the population in rural areas, but this is not enough, since the results of the study shows that the number of young people leaving local villages has not decreased over the years. 2. Residents of investigated settlements have not participated in the improvement of the village, their opinions have not been taken into account when important decisions regarding reconstruction and improvement have been taken. It is necessary to organize a relationship of local officials with the population in such a way that people feel involved in the life of their native village. It is essential to take serious steps to improve the village, so that people see the results of their work every day. 3. There is a need to change the approach to dealing with people complaints. People do not understand why they should correspond with local officials for years, when in fact they live with the head of the settlement in neighboring houses. The head of the district needs to meet with residents more often in order to resolve issues quickly and effectively. In small settlements, it is no need to force people to make an appointment in advance, in a week or more, when it is convenient for the head of administration and not for people. 4. It is required to organize the work of all services in such a way that people do not have to travel to Samara, 100 kilometers, in order to repair a water heater, meat grinder or refrigerator, as well as, for example, collect purchased furniture. This problem cannot be neglected any more. 5. It is crucial to develop and support small and medium-sized businesses, create jobs. Most of the complaints of the population are about lack of jobs. 6. It is compulsory to repair the roads, design the landscape of the territory. People no longer want to live in a wretched environment.

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