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QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE POPULATION AS AN INDICATOR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TERRITORIES

The purpose of this study is theoretical justification of socio-economic foundations of sustainable livelihoods in rural areas and development of practical recommendations for evaluating and improving quality of life in rural areas. The subject of this study is a system of socio-economic relations that defines processes and patterns of sustainable livelihoods in rural areas. Methodological basis is a systematic approach and method of dialectical cognition, which examine processes of development of rural territories in relationship and complementarity. The results described in this paper are: the degree of differentiation of rural population under qualitative levels of well-being was studied; the authors' system of indicators of regional socio-economic development on a basis of detailed hierarchical structure was presented; priority areas for improving standards and quality of life of the rural population were identified. A scope of results was developed and science-based recommendations and suggestions for sustainable development of rural territories based on authors' methodology for evaluating quality life in rural areas may be subject to legislative and executive authorities in development socio-economic projects and programmes aimed at enhancing rural employment and income were made. The conclusions are: sustainable development of rural territories involves not only increase of efficiency of rural economy, but, above all, increasing and improving the quality of life of the rural population; on a system of complementarities, the evaluation of sustainability of livelihood strategies should take into account the economic, environmental, social and institutional factors.

Keywords: quality of life, rural population, sustainable development, rural areas.

Among many challenges that the Russian society is facing, one of the most important is sustainable development of rural territories to ensure that socio-economic development and effective functioning of the rural economy goes hand in hand with improving the standard and quality of life of the rural people. The primary objective of sustainable development can be thought as preserving integrity of the territory and improving quality of life in harmony with the nature.

The countryside of our country possesses unique natural, demographic, economic, historical and cultural potential that, when used effectively can ensure sustainable development, high standards and quality of life of the population. Despite powerful potential, Russian village is currently undergoing a systemic crisis in worsening demographic situation in countryside, lower standard of living and a high level of unemployment in rural areas, reducing quality life in rural areas, destruction of the existing system of rural resettlement evolutionarily. Comprehensive monitoring of current status of development on rural territories shows the depth of listed problems [1].

Analysis of the quality of life of rural population showed that the total number of rural poor third is extremely poor, i.e. resources they have are below

minimum subsistence level at several times. The percentage of very poor in the countryside in the analyzed period was almost twice as high as in urban areas (table 1).

Differentiation of incomes of rural and urban population in Russia and in the regions of Central Federal District, that confirm picture

Even fewer resources are available to poor and extremely poor village families. Our study identified specific features of poverty in rural area — from a total amount of about 40% employed poor people [5]. This is largely due to the fact that the average amount of wages and social benefits in agriculture is lower than in all other sectors of the economy, and in recent years it is below minimum subsistence level (Figure 2).

Absolutely behind average is the monthly wage of workers in agricultural organizations, indicating a real difference in new buying opportunities, during 2010 grew by 6.4% compared to year 2000 to 17.6% — wages in agriculture and production function. In 2010, the average size was only one and a half time of the amount of subsistence level. On average, by economic activities this excess accounted for 4 times. [4]

Topical issue in agriculture remains late payment of wages to workers, while wage arrears in

Table 1

Social economic differentiation of population by income and wages

	Urban households						Rural households					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Poor households, %	63,9	62,4	61,7	60,4	58,2	57,6	36,1	37,6	38,3	39,6	38,7	39,4
Extremely poor households, %	50,1	49,6	48,3	46,8	45,3	44,5	49,9	50,4	51,7	53,2	54,1	55,3
Poor, %	63,0	61,4	60,8	59,6	58,4	57,6	37,0	38,6	39,2	40,4	41,5	42,6
Extremely poor, %	49,4	48,8	46,9	45,1	44,3	43,8	50,6	51,2	53,1	54,9	55,8	56,6
Average per capita disposable resources: to low-income households, rubles per month	1773,7	2079,0	2473,3	2905,3	3216,5	3305,4	1455,3	1735,9	2035,9	2417,3	2516,8	2608,6
for extremely poor households rubles per month	948,1	1109,2	1334,3	1544,9	1652,3	1708,5	866,9	1029,2	1201,2	1392,1	1482,3	1509,4
Scarcity available resources: per household, roubles a month	874,3	3059,4	3478,3	3734,6	3861,5	3948,4	1044,8	3615,1	4109,0	4449,8	4523,5	4651,2
per household member, rubles per month	257,3	900,4	1025,3	1098,6	1138,5	1256,4	296,2	1027,7	1167,9	1267,4	1345,7	1462,2
Disposable resources, %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
From those, gross income including:	96,2	94,6	92,3	99,1	88,8	92,2	96,3	96,0	93,6	98,7	92,8	93,0
money income	91,6	91,4	89,5	93,9	84,7	87,6	79,0	80,9	80,8	80,0	82,6	83,2
value in kind incomes	4,6	3,2	2,8	5,2	4,1	4,6	16,9	15,1	13,1	18,8	10,2	9,8
amount of attracted funds and expenditures, savings	3,8	5,4	7,7	0,9	11,2	7,8	3,7	4,0	6,1	1,3	7,2	7,0
Final consumption expenditures, %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
of which												
expenses for meals	40,5	36,9	34,8	51,0	35,1	39,3	63,8	54,3	47,7	59,8	47,4	47,7
expenses for non-food products	35,6	37,3	37,3	20,0	41,7	35,2	30,9	32,9	35,0	23,1	35,3	33,7
expenses for alcoholic beverages	2,0	1,8	1,8	1,3	1,6	1,3	1,9	1,9	1,8	1,5	1,0	0,9
expenses for services	21,4	23,8	25,9	27,6	21,4	23,8	12,6	14,2	15,4	15,6	16,1	17,7
cost of services provided by the employer on the basis of quantities or at preferential prices	0,5	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,4	0,3	0,1	0,1	0,9	0,2	0,01

industry are declining faster than average for all occupations. During one year, a sum of overdue debts in agriculture has decreased almost by two times, and its share in total arrears on economy dropped from 20.7% to 20.5%. As before, the main cause of debt is lack of own funds at the agricultural enterprises.

Our study of rural families income structure on average in 2010, has shown that rural people's main sources revenue are: wages — 59%, income from personal subsidiary farms — 21.9% (although forestry as a source of income is far from all families and only available where is access to productive resources and marketing facilities) and social payments — 15% (Figure 3). [3]

Most rural families have diversified sources of income. Self-employment seems to be the main instrument of diversification, mainly in private subsidiary economy. Rural residents' income from personal subsidiary sector played a significant role in a family and as money income, and as resources for their own consumption. Most rural families have their economy and produce products for its nutrition. On average budgets rural families 20–25% are natural food intake. But protecting smallholdings area citizens from poverty and unemployment does not help. Personal subsidiary farms of rural residents are largely unproductive and not cost effective, there is a decline in competitive agricultural enterprises who

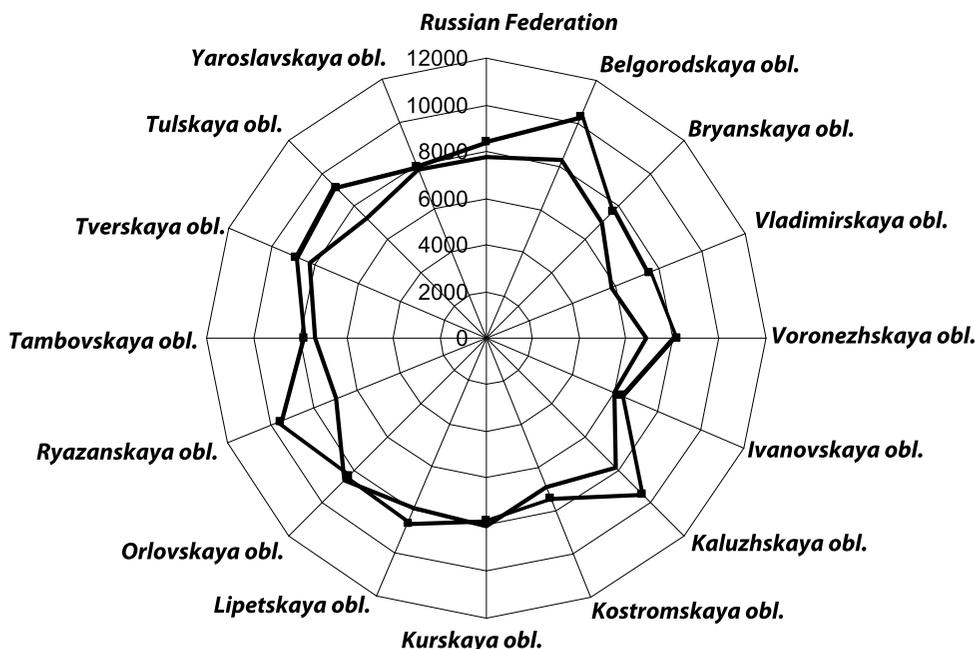
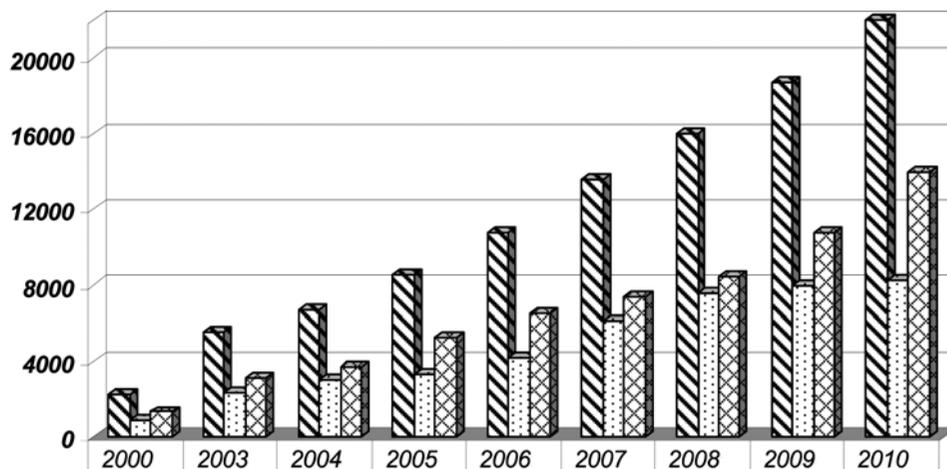


Fig. 1. Disposable resources of rural households in Russian Federation and regions of Central Federal District in 2010-2011 (average per household member per month; in Russian rubles); per capita resources of rural families are on average one third smaller than urban



	2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
■ Economics, rub.	2223	5498,5	6739,5	8555	10728	13527,4	15976,4	18679,5	22165,8
□ Agriculture, rub.	891	2339,8	3015,4	3304	4229	6127,7	7540	7952,2	8200,3
▨ Absolute difference, rub.	1332	3158,7	3724,1	5251	6499	7399,7	8436,4	10727,3	13965,5

Fig. 2. Average nominal accrued wages in agriculture and economics as a whole in Russian Federation, rub. (compiled data)

served as market integrators providing personal subsidiary sector with necessary resources and services [2].

Analyzing degree of differentiation of rural population under qualitative levels of well-being, it should be noted that the assessment of life quality of rural population should be carried out systematically and at all levels of governmental regulation: state, region and municipality to provide a decent living. Assessment of life quality at state level is to build a common policy in this area, policy alignment. At regional level, this assessment will form

a basis for formation of quality manpower, as an objective analysis will more effectively implement social programmes within a region, including provision of various facilities. At level of municipalities, primary assessment of life quality is a basis for monitoring studies.

Thus, evaluation methodology for life quality of people is an important analytical tool for state social and economic policy, which allows installation and guidance of socio-economic policy of the state in rural areas for the future; to analyze current levels of socio-economic development of rural ter-

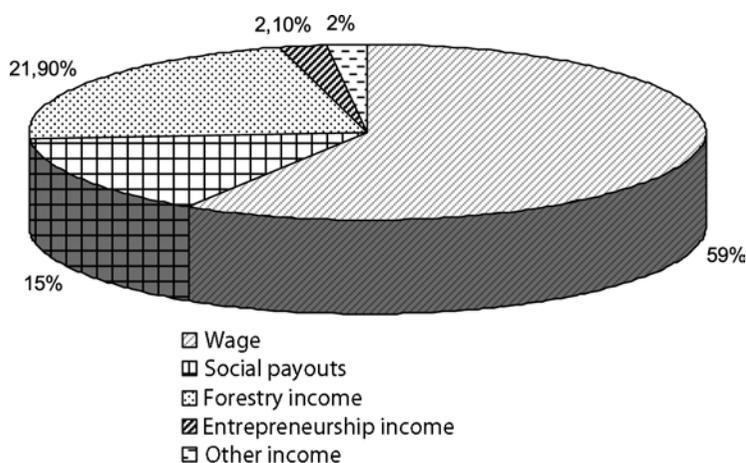


Fig. 3. Structure of agricultural households incomes in Russian Federation in 2010

ritories; undertake interregional comparisons of living standards and quality of life of rural population.

System indicators of socio-economic development of a region represent an ordered hierarchical structure with many private criteria, on basis of management tasks can include indicators that reflect social, infrastructure, economic and or effects development options. In general terms, a system indicator is an integration test that reflects population's standard living in a region.

We believe that the key to establishing a system for objectively-controlled quality of life indicators and socio-economic development is the use of assessment techniques based on a targeted approach, where appropriate to region, municipality to build a system of criteria and indicators that allow meeting these criteria, properly evaluated situation. Syncs of relevant to this requirement and at the same time characterizing results transformations that can serve

for achieving target levels for private performance, as reflected in the revised scorecard of evaluation of life quality of rural population (table 2).

We cannot fail to note some progress in promoting sustainable rural development through system policy of state regulation. Positive aspects of regional development are a result of federal targeted programmes: «Social development up to 2020, village and national high-priority projects: «Development of agro-industrial complex», «Health», «Education», «Accessible and comfortable habitation for the citizens of Russia»

and, of course, «State programme for development of agriculture and management of agricultural markets, raw materials and food for 2008–2020» [1]. However, it should be noted that these programmes do not cover the entire range of problems of rural development. The funds are divided, and the question arises on how to use them effectively. There is no systematic approach and consistency in addressing the problems of the village. The essence of system approach in management of life quality of the population in an agrarian region is the impact of state and non-state actors on key areas of people's life in a region in order to meet the needs.

To improve the standard of living and quality of life in rural areas, there must be systematic and qualified approach to develop following directions not only to significantly increase employment in rural areas but also to stimulate entrepreneurial ini-

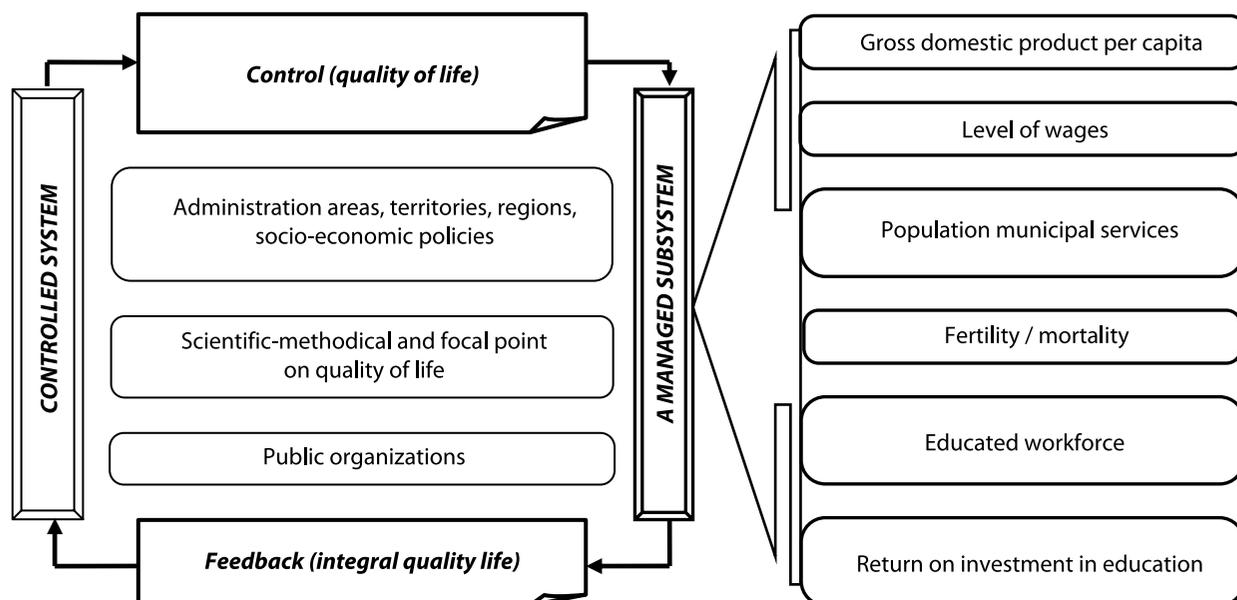


Fig. 4. System of quality management

Refined system of indicators of rural population life quality estimation

Evaluation criteria	Content criteria	Indicators
Income and consumption	Population incomes and expenditures, household budget income and expenditure	average monthly income; structure disposable household resources; concentration income-Gini; stratification population by income, growth average monthly wage inflation for year, based on consumer price index; level arrears wages and unemployment;
Working capacity	conditions and nature work, its tensions and efficacy, freedom choice occupation, material and moral evaluation labour, microclimate in collective work satisfaction	number/level economically active population structure economically inactive population working age; employment; qualifications; structure employed population by branch economy; existence effective working enterprises production; effective working enterprises non-productive sphere, degree safety
Housing conditions	Area and construction housing, environment, ease planning and improvement life settlement	housing in average per capita annual input of habitation; by forms of ownership, housing price with per capita incomes population; proportion comfortable housing, proportion of old and emergency housing; proportion families (including single parents) who received housing and improved housing conditions; percentage localities with drinking water quality residential settlements;
Health and health care	Physical and social well-being	life expectancy, fertility/mortality; family; no incidence on 1000 people; satisfaction with population quality care; number medical personnel for 1000 people; number of hospital beds per 1000 persons; security services sports establishments
Education	degree mastering scientific knowledge, artistic and moral level literature and television, access to libraries, museums, theatres and cultural institutions	structure employed population by level education; availability certified by branch economy, proportion professionals trained in day form training professional growth, prepared on day form training graduates agrarian Universities; university endowments in organizations of agro-industrial complex, agricultural organizations qualified services
Social security	Social disintegration, job security, pensions, assistance to families with children, etc.	population structure by sex and age; percentage population receiving social benefits payments; number unemployed persons and level social protection, pensions ratio to minimum subsistence; level of social cohesion and social tensions
Human rights and freedoms	Possibility realization human rights, protection against epidemics, catastrophes, stress strain in connection with military and national strife, political conflicts	level criminal activity, quantity committed fences 100 inhabitants, number of recorded crimes (per month), proportion of young people under 30 years of age in total number of convicts; % of detection of crimes committed; availability of qualified law enforcement security level;
Leisure and free time	Choice pastime, availability various facilities for leisure, sports, travel, health people during holidays and beyond	provision of access to leisure and sport; hygiene of life; good psychological climate of labor and leisure time; time; time satisfaction and relaxation
Ecological niche	concentration harmful substances; conservation genetic diversity flora and fauna, noise, vibration, radiation	weight of hazardous substances emitted into atmosphere from stationary sources per year per 1 km ² of territory; proportion of contaminated water in total volume of wastewater dumped into surface water bodies, mass of toxic wastes production and consumption per 1 km ² of territory; pollution of soil, proportion of population living in radiation-hazardous area; proportion organizations with access to treatment facilities; Platz reserves, protected game hunting farms and national parks spent an average 1000 km ² of territory

tiative: diversification of rural economy; increasing public support for agricultural producers; overcoming minding in management of rural development; rational integration into economic turnover and increased efficiency in use of natural, material and human resources within rural areas; development of market infrastructure.

Life quality management is an activity of local authorities in urban districts and municipal areas to identify goals and directions for sustaining and improving the level of satisfaction of the populations' life quality in municipal services in the areas of education, health, culture, housing and communal services, as well as municipal management (Figure 3).

A study of the problem enables systematic and comprehensive monitoring of populations' life quality in rural areas, which should be decisive in characterization of system processes and phenomena related to the solution of social problems in rural areas. In addition, this will make it possible to identify the level of satisfaction of the population with the quality of municipal services and activities of local self-government organs. Since the function of ensuring stable populations' life quality is a priority among functions of local government and due to socio-legal institution, as advocated by creation all necessary conditions for normal life in the municipality territory.

Summarizing all above, it is clear that in absence or underdevelopment of alternative agriculture em-

ployment and sources of income, a significant impact on qualitative characteristics of living standards of rural communities will provide economic situation and policy of income generation in rural organizations, which are principal employers in human settlements in rural areas. It is not to say that the price of agricultural work remains lowest among sectors of domestic economy, while rural incomes cannot ensure a dignified life and free development of human personality. The significance of living standards of rural population is increasing and human resources face dominant trends of ageing and depopulation is becoming scarce.

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