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Strategic Analysis of Sustainable Socioeconomic Situation of Rural Areas in the Samara Region of the Russian Federation

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ABSTRACT

On the one hand, the relevance of this problem is primarily determined by growing gap of rural territorial entities in socioeconomic development, and on the other hand, due to their significance in such prominent aspects for the country as food security, maintaining the existing land, industrial, ecological, demographic and human potential. The purpose of the article is comprehensive assessment of socioeconomic, institutional and ecological situation of rural areas in order to justify managerial decisions and effective policy making at the regional and local levels. The leading method for studying this problem is stratigic analysis of processes of developing rural areas, as well as factors, affecting development. The results of the study: In this article the authors assessed the situation in socioeconomic sphere of munitipalities in the Samara Region of the Russian Federation,accordingly, based on this, the authors concluded about a predominance of degradation processes, which form instability in the development of rural areas.The results of this study can be used by the regional authorities in their practice for making and implementation both regional policy , as well as strategy of socioeconomic development of rural area.

KEYWORDS
Rural areas, analysis, development strategy, comprehensive assessment

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Introduction

April the 1st, 1996 The Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed The Concept of the Russian Federation transition to sustainable development, in which there was initially planned the trinity of the major spheres of society economic life:

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economic, sociology and ecology. Stabilization in any branch of science is impossible without development of these spheres.

Since then, it has been developed quite a lot of branches, however today sphere of sustainable development of rural areas, which paid the least attention in the recent years, got its current development.

For example, federal special-purpose program for agriculture development and agricultural commodities, raw materials and food regulation «Sustainable development of rural areas for 2014–2017 and for the period till 2020» is aimed at increasing of rural economy competitiveness and villagers welfare. This program is aimed at the development of rural area infrastructure and formation of organization and territory management strategy (Voytyuk, 2012). Moreover, the relevance and significance of this program are determined by growing disproportions of rural areas within the munitipalities that has negative impact on food supply security, on maintaining of the existing land, industrial, ecological and human potential.

Sustainable development of rural areas means a stable socioeconomic development of rural areas, volume increasing of agricultural output, improvement of agricultural effectiveness, achievement of full-employment of rural population and increase in their level of living, rational land use (Strategy, 2015).

In the period of the country economy modernization and its placing on a path of sustainable development involves close complementarity and interchangeability of the following types of the capital: (Bobylev & Zakharov, 2011): human (directly labor), physical (production means), natural (natural resources), institutional (formal institutions: laws, rules and regulations; informal institutions: traditions and customs).

Experience of creating integrated indicator system «Kompas» developed by a strategic advisor, specializing in problems of sustainable development, an English economist A. Atkisson (2012) might arouse much interest. With the help of surveys of the local population from different spheres of industry and economic activities, as well as with the help of experts' assessments for each area, A. Atkisson (2012) deduced indicator system, aimed at analysis of four main spheres of sustainable development: nature (N), economy (E), society (S), welfare (W). This system is popular today, because practically, it can be used and adapted to any sphere of activity.

However, today in the Russian Federation there is no initial (unified) approach system in management decision making (Khasaev et al., 2013), and assessment mechanism of rural areas in the region, formed by the present, based only on analysis of used ranking and expert estimations, which are used in some industries, spheres and become the main for ranking the particular area in a number of administrative- territorial subjects (Kosiakova, 2012). But as a rule, even such assessment is not applicable at the rural territory level, and more often, it has not only objective, but also subjective factor.

Accordingly, need for comprehensive system for assessment of socioeconomic, institutional and ecological situations of rural areas is quite obvious, and its objective results will help in approaches development for an optimization of funding sources for life in rural areas and will enforce justified managerial decisions and effective policy making at the regional and local levels.

Methods

The methods of the study

In the study process we used such economic analysis methods as analogy, grouping, comparison, generalization, and general scientific methods of knowledge: analysis and synthesis, dialectical, abstract and logical, systematic analysis of social development processes, as well as abstract and logical, economic and statistical, computational and analytical methods.

Study information base

The study used information analysis product of the Russian Federal State Statistics Service (also known as Rosstat), including its territorial body of the Samara region, periodical information published in the national and foreign scientific literature, information from official www-servers, author's personal researches and observations.

Scientific papers, developments and scientific recommendations of the national and foreign scientists, concepts, methodological materials, acts, regulatory and procedural documents, program documents of the state, regional and local authorities on the theory and practice of socio-economic development of rural territories formed the theoretical basis of the study.

Stages of the study

Strategic analysis of sustainable socioeconomic situation of rural areas in the Samara Region of the Russian Federation was conducted by the authors in three stages:

- At the first stage there was studying of theoretical base of the existing concepts and approaches for analysis of socioeconomic processes in rural areas, as well as problem, the purpose and the methods were distinguished in the study;

- At the second stage analysis of consistence and tendencies of socioeconomic development of rural areas was conducted, the main causes of sustainable development disproportions of rural areas of the Samara region in the Russian Federation were identified.

- At the third stage experimental work has been completed, the author's substantiated recommendations for sustainable development of rural areas were justified.

Results and Discussions

In the concept of sustainable development of rural territories of the Russian Federation, the term "rural area" means "habitable area outside urban settlements" (The concept of sustainable development of rural areas of the Russian Federation). This definition proposes inclusion of temporary residence for people (foresters, loggers, etc.), lands, adjacent to the lands of rural settlements. Thus, the legislative and executive authorities have not clearly identified the object of control in this area yet.

It should be noted that officially the Federal Law № 131 identified only territory of rural settlements, and the term "rural settlement" according to the Article 2 of the Law 131 of the Federal Law interpreted as "one or several rural

settlements, united by the common area (townships, villages, stanitsa, countrysides, farm yards, kishlaks, mountain villages and other rural settlements), in which the local government is carried out both directly and (or) through elected and other self-governing authorities "(Federal Law № 131, 2003).

The main purpose of sustainable development of rural areas is to create conditions for achievement of welfare for population, to make territorial self-developing and unique social, ecological and economic territorial system, to preserve cultural values, to ensure reproduction and long-term use of natural resources for agriculture, local industry, crafts, trades, tourism, recreation and other areas of economic activity. Thus, the main purpose involves comprehensive accomplishment and life provision for rural population.

For the last 20 years there have been significant changes in rural economy structure of the Samara region, as well as in the Russian Federation at large. There has been a significant decline in agricultural production, share of employment in agricultural sector decreased annually (from 6.3% in 2010 to 6% in 2014 in structure of employment in the Samara region by economic activity), financial and economic situation of the majority of agricultural enterprises is still difficult.

Organizations of all types of activity only for the period 2010-2014 reduced by 5186 units or 4.6%, and, the main decline accounted for agricultural enterprises (down to 28.8%), wholesale and retail trade organizations (down to 10.2%), organization of manufacturing sector (down to 4.2%), i.e. actually there is a degradation of the industry potential of rural areas (Figure 1).

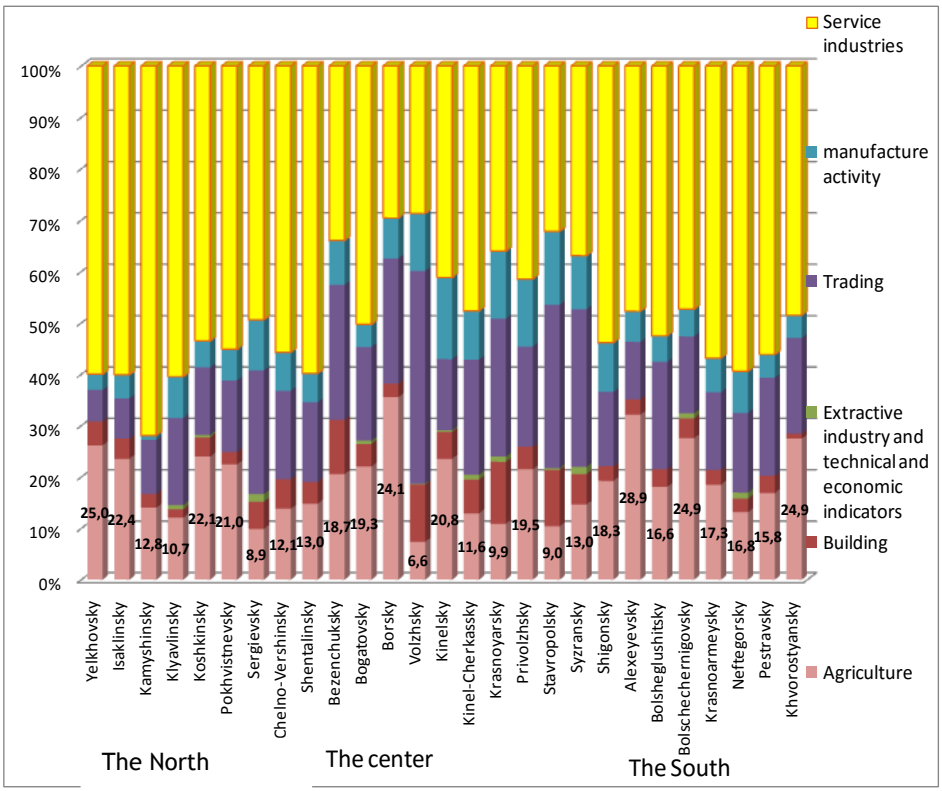

Figure 1. Industrial structure of economies in the Samara region municipalities in 2014

Analysis of capital investment behavior per capita showed that over the last three years there is a decline tendency of investment activity of the majority of rural areas in the Samara region. The highest capital investments ratio for each inhabitant (1/3 of the total investments of all municipalities) is observed in Kinelsky, Krasnoyarsky, Sergiyevsky, Volzhsky, Syzransky areas). In connection with this, there is run-up of key indicators of small business, despite having obvious dynamics in reducing of a number of individual entrepreneurs in 2014 in all the Samara region municipalities.

One of the most important factors of sustainable and effective development of the AIC is increase in employment of the rural population and providing this industry with the professional human potential. However, due to the changes in the economy (urbanization, intensification of socioeconomic transformation) over the past 20 years a number of people, engaged in agriculture in the Samara region, decreased by more than 1,5 times. In connection with this, consolidation of role of agronomy and education with extensive usage of modern IT for rural areas development should be one of the primary strategic directions of human resourcing, since the youth migration intensity to urban areas remains high.

Analysis of the rural population in the Samara region showed that, in spite of rural population growth, observed in the recent years, it did not prevent decrease in urban population, so process of depopulation has continued in the region (Figure 2).

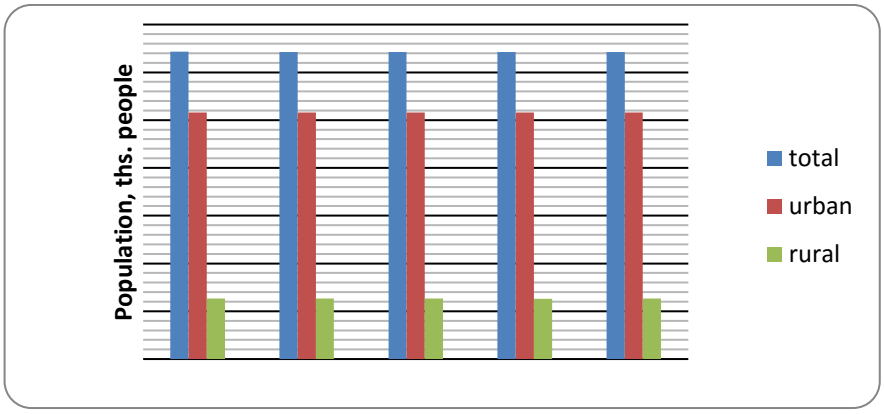

Figure 2. Rural population changes in the Samara region in 2010 - 2014. (At the beginning of the year, thousand people)

One of the most important estimated characteristics of sustainable development of municipalities is assessment of level of healthcare system development. Thus, over the last year a number of hospital beds has decreased in 16 municipalities, in 6 - has increased, and only in one it remained unchanged. Besides, a number of hospital stuff decreased in 1/3 municipalities.

Housing sector analysis in the Samara Region municipalities allowed us to follow growth tendency of the total area of living quarters from 2010 to 2013 to 705.5 thousand m^2. However, the pace of habitation input is insufficient for old and dilapidated house decommissioning.

The study of ecological situation in municipalities allowed us to make conclusions on necessity in annual work on the state land monitoring, special surveys. It is critical for making the program of sustainable development of the Samara region rural areas, based on prior information about the high risk of land erosion, widespread processes of deflation and other negative factors.

Thus, conducted state estimation of the socio-economic sphere in the municipalities of the Samara region allowed us to draw the conclusion on predominance of degradation processes that makes for imbalance in the development of rural areas.

The study of sustainable development problems of territories, including agricultural territories, was conducted by many academic - economists.

Originally, the term "sustainable development" was used only within the framework of ecology. On the basis of broader interpretation of the term "sustainable development", L. Brown (1983) developed the concept of sustainable development in the framework of the International Conference on Environment and Development Commission, established by the UN. Here to talk about the necessity for a balanced solution of socioeconomic problems and favorable environment protection problems, as well as natural resource potential, in order to meet the needs of present and future generations (Kalyagina, 2009).

The above-mentioned definition, which is fundamental and the most authoritative one, formed basis of the concept of sustainable development of territories. However, there are many interpretations of the term "sustainable development" in the world literature.

Sustainable development, according to V.I Danilov-Danilian (2009), - is "such development, which is based on natural forces, natural potential of wildlife. It is able to prevent demographic collapse, sharp decrease in population. The term "economic capacity of the biosphere" means "limit human-induced disturbance, after which follows irreversible degradation changes in the biosphere."

At the same time, in scientific researches the methodological issues for assessment of sustainable socioeconomic development of rural areas were not fully considered.

On the other hand, the particular aspects for formulating strategy for sustainable development of rural areas are set out in scientific papers of both russian and foreign authors. For example, research experience of academics - economists from different countries is quite versatile. Spanish researchers (Lopez & Pastor, 2015) argue that strategy for improvement of education level of entrepreneurs, engaged in agriculture, will contribute to development of rural areas. In this respect it is necessary to establish relationships between active entrepreneurial structures and educational institutions in order to study and analyze potential effects of capital investment project. However, in the authors' scientific papers the issues of strategic analysis of socioeconomic development of rural areas were not considered in details.

The long-term strategy for sustainable development was formulated by a swedish economist, Nobel laureate – G. Myrdal (1997). His scientific papers are devoted to development of agricultural sector as basis for sustainable development of rural areas. He noted that the approaches which are used for industrially developed areas will not fit for undeveloped areas, where structural

reforms are only going to be implemented. Moreover, it is necessary to consider both system of public capital formation, and especially its effective improvement, i.e. to rise in social standards of living, its qualification level, which meets the requirements of modern production.

Speaking about the global climate changes it should be noted that monitoring system development for agro-economic transformation in agricultural sector becomes more actual. For this, it is proposed to take regular agricultural census, which allows making timely changes of applied farming systems and agricultural technologies. Thus, the Italian University professor, the Nobel Prize winner R. Valentini (2016) noted the importance of using integrated approach for global climate transformations monitoring, as well as their influence on the development of the agricultural sphere, and the necessity for the five-year climatic changes monitoring, occurring as a result of economic and technological innovations.

Nobel Laureate R.K Chung (2016) argues that capital investments in educational activities and research projects can lead to sustainable economic development. In this connection it is necessary to work out a long term program of sustainable development that will ensure sustainable economic growth and sufficient job creation in the future (Dubikova, Antipova & Polyanskova, 2010).

Literature and educational practice surveys allowed to conclude that basic conditions for sustainable development of rural areas should include the following key factors: management improvement, especially agricultural production improvement; improvement of the agricultural efficiency, particularly increase in labor productivity; increase in income and primarily wages of agricultural employment; increase of capital investments; satisfaction of economic interests of the rural population; and increase of state support to this development.

Conclusion

System of indicators of socio-economic development of rural areas, as bases for organization of effective work of the authorities and management of municipalities was proposed.

Analysis of situation and tendencies of socioeconomic development of the Samara region rural areas in order to assess situation in industrial and social sphere of a village was carried out.

It was established that sustainable socioeconomic development of rural areas is possible due to development of human capital, economic development and increase of countryside investment attractiveness, development of agriculture, ensuring effective management and development of civil society.

Practical implications involve the ability to use theoretical conclusions, methodological developments and practical results of work of regional and self-governing authorities in development of the concept and programs of sustainable development of the rural municipality.

Materials of this article can be useful for teachers engaged in the regional economy research projects, agriculture, and also in the development of research methods and modeling of the national economy. Practical results can be useful for specialists in the field of sustainable development of rural areas, whose

activities are aimed at developing strategies for sustainable development of rural areas.

In the course of the research, the authors identified a number of contradictions regarding the scientists' points of view on the issue of sustainable development of rural areas, requiring its decision. In this connection, it is necessary to continue the researches in the field of analysis of the socio-economic, environmental and institutional factors in order to develop strategies for sustainable development in rural areas of the region.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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