

STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF LIVING OF THE POPULATION IS AN INDICATOR OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION

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ABSTRACT

The relevance of the problem considered in the article is due to the need to create comfortable conditions for human life on all Kazakhstan territories. The expediency of considering the level and quality of life of the population as an indicator during planning the socio-economic development of the territory has been substantiated. Analysis of scientific literature, domestic and foreign practices of studying the socio-economic development of the territories, assessing the attractiveness of the territories for permanent residence, the level and quality of life of the population, socio-psychological well-being, made it possible to develop and test tools for assessing the level and quality of life, socio-psychological well-being of the population of the region. According to the research results, there were identified the factors that have a significant impact on the assessment of the attractiveness of the territory, the level and quality of life of the population, which can serve as a basis for setting priorities in planning the socio-economic development of the territory.

Keywords: Socio-economic Development of the Territory, Planning the Development of the Territory, The Level and Quality Of Life of the Population, Northern Kazakhstan.

JEL Classification: R11 E24 I31 O18

INTRODUCTION

Diagnostics of the level and quality of life of the population is necessary and important things in assessing the potential level of tension in the region. The results of socio-diagnostics, performed in the context of administrative-territorial entities, can be used in the development of regional programs, plans for their socio-economic development. In this work, the authors rely on the fulfilled studies of monitoring the level and quality of life of the population of Northern Kazakhstan. The level and quality of life of the population, and the potential level of tension, it is advisable to consider as an indicator of socio-economic development, which must be taken into account when making managerial decisions to improve the socio-economic development of Northern Kazakhstan.

The relevance of the problem under the research is due, on the one point of view, to the determination and assessment of psychological well-being and the potential level of tension of the population of North Kazakhstan and its regions, on the other point of view, to the creation of

opportunities to improve the quality of life of the population of territorial-administrative formations on the basis of making managerial decisions to improve the system of social and economic planning.

Transformational processes have changed the social structure of society, lead to the differentiation of society, which manifests itself in different opportunities for access to material and spiritual resources and, accordingly, in ways of satisfying the main living individuals, groups and regions. The ongoing socio-economic and political transformations do not always take into account the interests of the main amount of the population. In this regard, it is important to check the influence of ongoing activities to the different groups of the population, to measure the level of social tension, observe the change in the dynamics of illegal actions in different regions. Some parts of the population will adapt themselves to the changing socio-economic reality. This emerging reality should become that reference point that should be assessed qualitatively and quantitatively by local executive authorities and used by them in the long-term planning of the socio-economic development of the territory.

In addition, it is necessary and valuable to have information about the level of satisfaction of the region's population with the development of social and industrial infrastructure, the quality of services provided, the level of income and its distribution, the state of the environment, the attitude and assessment of the population of the state economic and social policy. Also it is important to develop a methodology for conducting monitoring actions to study the level and quality of life of the population.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, quite serious studies have been carried out to assess the level and quality of life of the population, which their essential characteristics are considered, a system of indicators on the basis of which it is possible to measure the level and quality of life, directions for improving the standards of living of the population, tools of state regulation (Gavrilova & Makarov, 2017; Strategy 2050, 2018; Silin et al., 2003). Such studies were carried out both for individual countries and regions.

A special place in the series of such studies is occupied by works on the poverty of the population, considering the conditions and factors that led to the differentiation of society, the level of poverty, the state and level of economic development in the region, the level of development of social infrastructure, and its accessibility to the general population (Silin et al., 2003; Rodríguez-Pose & Hardy, 2015). These works often consider measures of state support for those groups of the population who do not have jobs or who do odd jobs. Such measures of state support include targeted social assistance to the needy people, disability benefits, social benefits and survivors' benefits, housing assistance, social benefits and payments for pregnancy and childcare, and social benefits in case of loss of work.

In assessing the living standards of the population, it is important to determine the level of provision with social infrastructure facilities, the degree of satisfaction with the quality of social infrastructure facilities, as well as the quality of services provided by social infrastructure facilities. Such research works are carried out with a certain frequency in general across countries, in different regions, and their results are often used to determine the rating of regions in terms of the level and quality of life, assess their attractiveness (Silin et al., 2003, Zheleznyakov & Risin, 2017; Talalushkina, 2015).

There is an interest in scientific publications that investigate issues of employment, the social status of an individual, income level, sources of income, structure of income and expenses,

income level per family member, purchasing power of wages, intercountry, in-country comparisons of wages. The results of such studies are used in the development and improvement of social policy, the development of regional social programs, the purpose of which is to improve the living standards of the population (Strategy 2050, 2018; Kuznetsov et al., 2017).

A special place is occupied by studies devoted to assessing the social and psychological state of society as a whole and its individual groups. Their significance is determined by the fact that their impact on social and demographic security in the region is significant (Kornilova, 2015; Mashukov & Zhukova, 2018). Measuring the level of social mood, social well-being of the population that are living in a certain territory allows local executive authorities to make and implement decisions aimed at the development of entrepreneurship, social infrastructure, environmental protection, development of health care, education, local self-government (Feraru, 2015; Fabry & Zeghni, 2013; Cowell, 2013; Salimova & Akhatova, 2017; Feraru et al., 2011).

The problems of exploring the sustainability (social, economic and ecological components) are the subject of research by many authors (Pearsall & Pierce, 2010; Davidson, 2009; Seto et al., 2017; Cowell, 2013; Kostina & Orlova, 2017; Anchorena & Anjos, 2015). The ratio of the social, economic and environmental components in a certain area greatly affects the person's assessment of the attractiveness of this settlement for permanent residence. At the same time, it is very often that a person, determining the degree of attractiveness of a region for living, makes a comparison with his expectations, how his relatives, friends, colleagues, classmates live, as well as with the conditions and standard of living of the population in developed countries, where the respondent, in his opinion, may be in demand.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological tools were developed and adjusted by us in order to be able to analyze the changes in time and in the territorial context.

The analysis of the results of the sociological survey was recorded separately for all cities and rural areas, social and age groups of the population so that local executive bodies of state power could receive reliable information about the perception of the population:

- The actual level of socio-economic development of a particular region,
- The conducted economic and social policy in the country and region,
- The activities of local executive authorities,
- The satisfaction with the level and quality of life,
- The confidence in the future.

In this regard, we have identified five groups of questions that allow:

1. To determine the assessment of the opinion of the population about the socio-political situation in the region,
2. To identify the population's assessment of the level and quality of life (satisfaction with their lives, the standard of living, the material situation of the family, the level and quality of the family's living conditions, the level of health care and education, the quality of infrastructure, the level of well-being),
3. To determine the degree of people's perception of political changes and transformations,
4. To determine the social and psychological well-being of the population,
5. To identify the potential level of tension.

RESULTS

In the research, the ideas about the state, trends and prospects of the socio-political situation in the region are considered to varying degrees, which makes it possible to determine certain factors affecting it. The majority of respondents, 91.5 percent in the region as a whole, define the socio-political situation as favorable and rather as favorable, and 0.8 percent as unfavorable one. A high positive assessment of the socio-political situation in the region was due to the population living in rural areas. The urban population, generally, is more radical in their assessments.

The respondents see the future of the Republic of Kazakhstan as a multi-ethnic, tolerant state in which all ethnic groups are respected by each other, also as a country with a good level of prosperity, with a thriving economy, with high rates of economic development, with advanced technologies and a digital economy, a state that is recognized and respected by other countries. The respondents' answers to the question posed correspond to the goals of the country's development for the future, defined by the Strategy "Kazakhstan-2050". Every Kazakhstani would like to live in the country with a high level of prosperity, as he would like to see Kazakhstan in the future.

Among the goals, the respondents identified: a modern fair state (22.9%); moving forward with a clear plan of action (33.0%); a life according to conscience-do not do to another person what you do not wish for yourself (31.2%); personal responsibility to the country and each other (11.9%); at the forefront is the prosperity and education of the population (15.9%); a state for a person, not a person for a state (5.1%); a country with high rates of economic development (12.9%).

The level of socio-economic development of the region reflects the assessment by the population of their standard of living. The majority of the population as a whole is satisfied with their lives. Dissatisfaction with the way of life is developing was expressed: rather dissatisfied is 3.5% of the respondents, completely dissatisfied is 0.6% and found it difficult to answer is 0.3%. Among those dissatisfied with their lives there are people who have a really low standard of living, but there may also be people whose expectations for their future have not been confirmed. The first group of people needs help aimed at increasing their subjective well-being. The respondents gave an assessment of their standard of living. There are 11.9% of the respondents consider their standard of living to be high, 81.1% as average, 5.0% as low, 2.0% as unstable and 11.9% of the respondents found it difficult to answer. Generally, representatives of the middle class give an assessment of the average living standard. Of course, it would be wrong to assume that 81.1% of respondents belong to the middle class. But the fact that people themselves assess their standard of living in this way can certainly be considered as a positive factor.

An important option that determines the standard of living is the material wealth of the family. The financial situation of the residents in the region does not cause any concerns - the majority (the option "*we can easily purchase durable goods (refrigerator, TV, furniture), but we have difficulties in acquiring more expensive things (a car, an apartment)*") is 66.3 % of respondents. Each sixth respondent believes that "*he can afford quite expensive things as a car, an apartment and much more*". It is 15.7%.

The difference in the assessment of the financial situation of the respondents is determined by subjective factors, which can be conditionally divided into factors of condition (gender, age, level of education, social stratum of society, marital status, size of the settlement) and expectation factors (assessment of the financial situation of their family, social status, confidence in the future, own mood).

The quality of life is determined by housing conditions, satisfaction with housing conditions, provision and satisfaction with utilities. Half of the respondents (53.4%) have a separate apartment (house); 35.1% live with relatives, but have a separate room; 3.3% live with relatives and do not have a separate room; 6.3% live in a rented apartment; 2.0% live in a hostel. The majority of respondents are satisfied with their living conditions that is 92.6%. The respondents of cities live in comfortable housing and the private sector, therefore, the provision of such utilities as central heating, hot water and sewerage is not 100%. The provision of landline telephones today can be viewed not under the prism of existing queues and installation of telephones in settlements, but rather economic considerations and the use of mobile communications. Attention is drawn to the negative assessment in some settlements of the quality of cold water, sewerage and solid waste disposal.

The quality of life of the population is also characterized by the “*grocery basket*”, the results of the survey on this issue show that the majority of the respondents have quality and balanced nutrition. Particularly, 23.3% of respondents believe that they have all the products they want, 52.7% have all the products, but no frills, 21.4% have only necessary products and seasonal vegetables and fruits, 0.9% think that their “*food basket*” is monotonous and poor, 1.1% use only the most necessary products, 0.2% of the respondents do not always have even the most necessary, 0.4% of the respondents find it difficult to answer.

The quality of life is also determined by the availability of medical services and medicines, the assessment of this component of the quality of life is seen as follows: all types of medical care are available - 36.6%; medical assistance is available, with the exception of treatment in expensive private clinics - 43.3%; medical care is available in paid departments of public hospitals - 12.3%; only guaranteed free medical care is available - 6.0% and it is difficult to answer - 1.9%. Of course, people would like to see guaranteed medical care in a wider range of medical services than they currently have. The population can receive complex types of medical services and operations free of charge, having a quota for its implementation. The list of guaranteed medical services is expanding every year. It is very important to mention that the disease is detected in the early stages, when assistance is provided to a person. The satisfaction of respondents with the quality of health care is quite high - 88.3% (completely satisfy and rather satisfy). The rating “*rather does not satisfy*” is not entirely negative, since it contains an element of the respondent's doubt.

The research assessed satisfaction with the quality of education in the country, region and place of residence, it is quite high and amounts of 91.9 percent.

The quality of life of the population also determines the satisfaction with the quality of infrastructure (preschool institutions, trade, cultural facilities, sports and physical culture, roads, landscaping). Satisfaction with the quality of all infrastructure facilities is quite high, except for improvement of roads. Comparative assessment of life in the place of residence with other regions of Kazakhstan is the point of interest. 5.4% of respondents consider it definitely better, 17.3% - rather better, 68.7% - just as good. Some of the respondents (3.8%) believe that it is as bad as in other regions of Kazakhstan, 1.3% - which is worse than in other regions, 3.4% - found it difficult to answer.

In assessment of the material wealth and spending income, it is important to establish what proportion of the received income is spent on food, utilities, education, treatment, recreation and entertainment.

It is rather difficult to determine the structure of spending funds, since the “*manager*” of the budget knows the true state of affairs in the family. The research involved men and women,

different age groups of respondents, different marital status. Most of the respondents spend from 20% to 30% of their income on food, from 5% to 10% on utilities, 10% to 15% on education, and from 5% to 10%, for recreation and entertainment from 5% to 20%. In older age groups, the cost of treatment increases, in younger age groups, spending on recreation and entertainment is higher than in older age groups. Utility costs are significant for people living in rented housing and those who have mortgage housing (people take into account mortgage payments together with utility costs).

In measuring the level and quality of life of the population, it is important to take into account the changes in the living conditions of the respondents in comparison with 2014. The basic living conditions in 2019 became better in most positions. There are financial situation (62.7%), earning opportunities (44.1%), opportunities to buy clothes (61.3%), food (56%), housing conditions (43.9%), prospects in life (48.1%), get a good education (39.5%), receive qualified medical care (39.9%), maintain a decent standard of living (36.7%), passenger transport began to work (38.9%), life in general became (55.3%). The deterioration of basic living conditions in the region as a whole ranges from 1.9 to 4.1%. The respondents in rural areas hardly notice any deterioration in basic living conditions in 2019 compared with 2014.

It is important for people to know whether state bodies are solving problems that concern the population, whether their activities are effective, and whether their activities meet the expectations of the population. According to the results of a sociological survey, it was revealed that the majority of respondents answered positively. Their problems are resolved (20.5% - yes; 67.1% - rather yes than no); actions taken by government agencies are effective (18.5% of the respondents answered - “effective”, 68.1% - “rather effective”); the work of local executive bodies on the ground is assessed quite high and basically corresponds to the expectations of people (30.1% - fully comply, 58.2% - rather correspond).

The socio-psychological well-being of the population is determined by the health of the nation, their own health, the presence of a comfortable living environment, and the availability of social services. It is important for each person to know the security of himself and his family, and to be confident in the future. Their confidence in different amount showed the majority of the respondents in the region (absolutely confident – 37.2%, partly confident – 30.1%, more confident than not – 27.4%). 16.3% of the respondents believe that the improvements will happen, but not soon, 44.0% hope that in near future the situation will be improved, 25.3% prefer to live today and do not disturb their minds. The population of cities and regions of Central Kazakhstan suppose that relativity of protests is impossible and quite low. This research revealed the reasons that can increase the protest actions. Quantitative assessments of the reasons that can increase the protest actions do not cause fear.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Central Kazakhstan, there is a stable socio-political situation and quite high and positive level of social and psychological well-being of the population. Most of the respondents (59.7%) are completely satisfied and rather satisfied with the way their life, 36.0% consider their situation as normal. Dissatisfaction with the way life (completely dissatisfied) is expressed by the respondents in the case if a person has defined a perspective for himself and has not achieved it; and indeed a person has a low standard of living for certain reasons.

93.0% of respondents assess their level of living as high (11.9%), medium (81.1%), and 5.0% of respondents note low level, which is evidence of a sufficiently high standards of living.

Most of the respondents (62.7%) believe that their financial situation has become better than in 2014, 55.3% of respondents believe that life in general has become better.

More than half of the respondents believe that protests will not take place in the near future. The possibility of conflicts on ethnic and sectarian grounds is unlikely for the majority of the respondents.

It is significant, that in the survey process, the respondents expressed their point of view on the issues that determine the level and quality of life, their socio-psychological well-being, desire and their own participation in the process of improving the well-being of the population in the region. The results of the research and specific recommendations for the region and settlements were transferred to the executive authorities for the development and adoption of measures, the use of these materials in the development of Programs and Plans for the development of administrative-territorial formations of Northern Kazakhstan.

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