

## **STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TERRITORIES**

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***Abstract:** The article examines key socio-economic problems of rural territories in Russia and abroad. The author examines the current problems of sustainable development of rural territories by the example of a specific region of Siberia on the basis of a survey of local residents from 32 districts of Omsk region, as well as provides a brief description of its socio-economic situation in the modern period. Methodological tools of statistical research include polling and interviewing the rural population and the analysis of statistical data. The problems of sustainable development of rural territories of the region are examined that describe the current situation and hinder their transition to a path of sustainable development. The crisis phenomena are considered in the context of development of social infrastructure, state of the economy and the environment in rural areas, state and municipal administration, which allows to generate a more complete picture of the quality of life of the population in the region. The author has identified the patterns of the development of rural territories and considered possible ways of improving their socio-economic development in Omsk region on the basis of the conducted research.*

***Keywords:** rural territories, problems, research, region, patterns, sustainable development*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Development of the rural territories is a key condition for the stability of any state and strengthening the country's food security. With Russia's accession to the WTO and in the conditions of evolving foreign policy, the interest in the problems of rural territories at all levels has increased significantly. Currently, one of the priorities of our state is to improve the quality and standard of living of the rural population, ensuring their full employment in the rural area. In this regard, the strategic documents are developed in Russia, and a variety of measures to resolve the crisis situation of the village are implemented, as well as new mechanisms for the development of the rural economy. The rural development is constantly monitored in Russia and abroad in order to identify

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the economic, social and environmental changes in rural areas, and this is mainly due to the following reasons:

- rural territories face the problems which undermine national security;
- rural area often has untapped natural and economic potential, the development of which will allow to improve the well-being of indigenous people;
- there is an urgent need to overcome the differentiation of the development of rural territories and search for tools to mitigate the negative external effects.

Lately, the problems of sustainable development of rural territories and areas of their development were covered in many scientific studies of domestic and foreign authors such as: Blokhin V.N., Degtyaryova T.D., Chulkova E.A., Torbina E.S., Kuznetsova E.R., Porvadov M.G., Loskutova M.V., Matveev D.M., Menyaykin D.V., Talanova A.O., Bagirova E.V., Merenkova I.N., Savenkova O.Yu., Michurina F.Z., Prokhorova L.V., Rubaeva O.D., Joel Jebadurai D., Luca L., Fernando M., Crunel E., Smith L.O., Petrin T., Tkachuk V.A., etc. It should be noted that not all the problems of the village were solved, and some have become even more acute. Meanwhile, the potential of rural territories in the development of sources and capacities of economic activity of the population was not fully explored, which, according to the author, can be a major factor of solving the existing problems.

It is obvious that without a systematic analysis of the processes taking place in the village, it is impossible to make effective managerial decisions to address the socio-economic problems and the further development of rural territories that contribute to a balanced development of the village and bring the standard of living in the village to the city level.

Thus, the foregoing suggests that the study devoted to the identification of problems and the search for possible areas of sustainable development of rural territories is urgent, has practical value and will be interesting to general public.

The goal of the study is to identify the key problems and to search for possible areas of sustainable development of rural territories on the basis of a sociological survey of rural residents.

## **2. METHODS**

The works of modern domestic and foreign scholars on the study of the socio-economic problems in rural areas and the sustainable development of rural territories became the theoretical and methodological basis of the study. The survey of the current state of rural territories was based on the methods of statistical research contributing to the justification of the conclusions and recommendations proposed in the paper: the collection and analysis of statistical data (GRP volume; volumes of production of meat, grains, milk; investment in fixed assets, number of workers employed in small and

medium-sized businesses, level of the average wage), grouping and summarizing the results. The study of the problems of development of rural territories on the regional level was conducted in the context of the development of social infrastructure, state of the economy and the environment in rural areas, state and municipal administration. The survey was conducted on the example of Omsk region through social research, using polling and interviewing the rural population and determination of the degree of urgency of the problems on the rating scale. The respondents rated the relevance (importance) of the problems on a five-grade scale from smallest to largest: 1 – the urgency of the problem is the lowest, 5 – the urgency of the problem is the highest. The abstract-logical and monographic research methods were the basis for the development of recommendations for the sustainable development of rural territories of the region.

### **3. RESULTS**

On the basis of the research, the author has identified the main problems of development of rural territories, which are found both abroad and in Russia. In result of the analysis of statistical data, it was found that the socio-economic development of the areas in a particular region does not occur uniformly. The best areas for living are considered those located not far from the regional center, and vice versa – the remote areas far from the city can be considered as problem-plagued territories, which often lack comfortable living conditions for the local population. These findings are confirmed by the survey of rural residents conducted by the author. 2,627 rural citizens in total participated in the survey of 32 districts of Omsk region. The results obtained are summarized through the region, grouped by individual municipalities and climatic zones of the region. A positive aspect of the survey is that the author first obtained unique information in the context of individual areas of Omsk region in the process. The study allowed to:

1. generate information about the presence of the most acute problems in the social area, in the area of economics and environment in rural areas;
2. identify the problematic issues related to the process of managing the rural development in the municipalities;
3. assess the degree of urgency of the problems under study both in the context of individual areas and climatic zones, and in the whole region;

On the basis of research, the author revealed the patterns of development of rural territories by the example of Omsk region, the main ones being: the dependence of rural livelihoods on the development of agribusiness, differentiation of rural areas depending on their degree of remoteness from the center of economic development, unbalanced development of economy in the areas of different climatic zones of the region, etc. As a result of research, the author offers activities for the development of the set of comprehensive measures for the sustainable development of rural territories.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The development of rural areas is a pressing need throughout the world today, because they are home to almost half of the world's population, of which more than 75% are officially considered poor people. While the riots of the unemployed in the cities have become familiar symbols of hardships, the problems in the rural areas have been largely ignored because of their remoteness from the cities. Due to this, most of the measures to overcome the poverty of the population are mainly focused on urban centers, thereby potentially destabilizing bottlenecks promoting migration of rural poor people to the cities or abroad in search of a better life (Luca et al., 2012).

This trend has provoked new and exacerbated existing problems of rural territories, which are similar in many countries and relate to the migration outflow, low income of rural residents, and uncomfortable living conditions. For example, in the agricultural countries of the world (China, Cambodia, Moldova, Romania, Argentina, etc.), the problems are divided into five main areas:

1. low level of implementation of innovative technology in production and a lack of professionals able to use them;
2. weak development of infrastructure (such as rural roads, facilities of storage and processing of agricultural products, transportation and logistics);
3. difficulty in solving the problem of trust between market participants and coordination of their activities in the arrangement of commodity and cash flows;
4. insufficient budgetary resources hampering the development of rural areas;
5. various microeconomic risks (Asian Development Bank, 2012; Tkachuk, 2015).

In addition, there are illiteracy of rural population, shortage of skilled specialists, low purchasing power of rural people, problems associated with poor quality of products, functioning of the dealers in the chain of delivery of goods to the consumer who buy up agricultural products at low prices from the local people, fierce competition between rural and city entrepreneurs due to standardization and the lack of product branding (Joel Jebadurai, 2013).

Although agriculture still ensures the income of rural residents today, the rural development is increasingly linked to the development of entrepreneurship. Since the national economies become more and more global, and competition is intensifying at an unprecedented rate, influencing not only the industry, but also any area of economic activity, it is not surprising that rural entrepreneurship is becoming increasingly important in ensuring the survival of the rural population (Petrin, 1994).

The development of entrepreneurship in the village could have solved the acute problems and sped up the process of development of rural areas. Many politicians consider entrepreneurship as a key strategy as a huge potential of employment and a factor contributing to the prevention of unrest in rural areas; farmers see it as a tool to



improve farmers' incomes; women see it as a possibility of employment near their homes, which ensures autonomy, independence and a reduced need for social support (Carter and Rosa, 1998; Feenstra et al, 2003; Paul and Sharma, 2013).

The study and analysis of the works of Russian researchers showed that the problem of villages in different regions of Russia is partly similar to a global one (Degtyarova et al, 2015; Kuznetsova, Porvadov, 2015; Matveev et al, 2015; Merenkova, Savenkova, 2015; Prokhorova, Rubaeva, 2015; Handazhapova, Lubsanova, 2015). For example, one of the severe problems of rural development in our country is the lack of state support for agriculture compared with developed countries. This is one of the reasons for the low profitability of agriculture, which do not allow to implement innovations, upgrade the industry to the extent necessary, ensure a decent level of wages of the workers in this area, and replenish the local tax base of rural settlements.

The infrastructure of rural territories as a whole is developed insufficiently and locally mainly in areas where a significant amount of investment is made in agribusiness, which further reveals the differentiation of development of rural territories.

The problem of development of health care in rural areas is still urgent due to several reasons: remoteness of settlements from central hospitals, bad roads, lack of medical staff, especially specialists (neurologists, cardiologists, surgeons), outdated medical equipment and more.

The development of vital health care and education infrastructure is subordinated to the goal of ensuring the economic efficiency to the detriment of public access to these essential social services, which in fact leads to a violation of the constitutional rights of the rural residents for health care and education.

The level of development of the system of modern means of communication and road infrastructure currently does not allow to narrow the communication and spatial gap between the village and the city.

Administrative barriers that restrict access of rural population to various resources persist. Civil society institutions in rural areas are poorly developed, and the reform of local government has not formed an institute of agricultural self-administration capable of solving the problems of the local population.

One of the major problems is urbanization. The heavy and often uncomfortable living in rural areas, lack of social benefits, unattractive working conditions are a considerable obstacle to the formation of the human resource base of the rural development (Michurina, 2012).

Development of rural territories could have been more efficient, but the lack of coordination between various departments and the lack of unified coordination in dealing with certain issues hinders rural development (Loskutova, 2013).

In the conditions of modern market relations in the economy, coverage of problems in rural development varies greatly, difficulties faced by the villagers engaged both in

farming and in non-agricultural activities manifest brighter. At present time, the vision of the term “policy of rural development” has also changed. In modern conditions, it is evident that the criteria that were used to describe agriculture are not sufficient to identify and form the policy of rural development (Blokhin, 2014). A comprehensive approach in research for sustainable development of rural areas is required.

Russia’s economic system is going through a difficult and complex process of formation of new social and economic relations in the conditions of growing contradictions of economic development. The instability has become a characteristic feature of functioning of economic systems at all levels under the influence of many destabilizing factors.

Moreover, social issues of life support and issues related to environmental protection come to the fore at the present stage of economic development. Concept of sustainable development now takes an advanced place in this direction, since the mankind came into a new historical stage of development with its advent.

The concept of “sustainable development” was first introduced in the Brundtland report in 1987. Later, the requirement of environmental integration in all policies was introduced in the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and updated in 1997 in the Treaty of Amsterdam, but the discussion on which criteria should be taken into account in the development of strategic objectives and methodological tools for the sustainable development of rural areas is still ongoing.

The author conducted an analysis of the socio-economic development of rural territories by the example of Omsk region to determine the dynamics of rural development. Omsk region is the subject of the Russian Federation included in the Siberian Federal District, and is located in the south of the West Siberian Plain. Omsk region includes 6 cities, 21 settlements and 1,476 rural settlements.

On the basis of statistical data, it was found that at year-end 2014, the growth rate of Omsk region economy formed above the average for the Russian Federation. GRP growth of Omsk region was estimated at 2% with Russia’s GDP growth by 0.6%. The growth in the volume of agricultural products amounted to 94.5% compared to 2013, due to the high base of the previous year. Omsk region takes the 2nd place in the SFD in the production of meat and grain, in milk production, the 3rd place in terms of agricultural production per capita. 3.1 mln tons of grain (in weight after processing) was harvested at an average yield of 15 dt/ha.

In 2014, the volume of investment in fixed assets of Omsk region on the full range of organizations amounted to 105.8 bln rubles, or 97.5% to the level of 2013. However, a non-uniform distribution of investments in the territory of Omsk region persists. Large organizations invested 8 bln rubles in the economy of the municipal districts. The volume of investment in fixed assets (except for budget funds) per 1 person in the whole of Omsk region was 30.7 thous. rubles, or 103.6% to the level of 2013. In 2014, Omsk took the leading position (46.9 thous. rubles), Moskalensky district was

second in the ranking (24.5 thous. rubles). Krutinsky, Sargatsky and Tarsky districts are also among the best, with more than 12 thous. rubles of off-budget investment per 1 inhabitant. In Sedelnikovskiy, Tevriskiy and Znamenskiy districts, off-budget investments per capita also accounted for less than 1 thous. rubles.

The pig-breeding complex in Omsk region, the plant for deep processing of high-protein oilseed crops in the Tavricheskiy district, the cereals plant in Cherlaskiy district, agrologistics center with vegetable storehouse of 3 thous. tons of capacity and a line for vegetables processing, the milk processing plant "Milkom" LLC, etc. were commissioned on the territory of Omsk region in 2014. 28 livestock buildings were built and upgraded.

In 2014, the regional measures to support small and medium-sized enterprises (hereinafter referred to as SMEs) were expanded, and the measures for the development of social entrepreneurship were implemented. In 2014, like in previous years, Omsk is a leader by the concentration of SMEs per 10 thous. people (449), 2nd place was taken by Omsk districts (436.4). Among these municipalities, the positive trend with respect to 2013 was only noted in Omsk district (10.8%). Bolsherechenskiy district showed improvement and moved into the leading group (252.7). The lowest number of SMEs was noted in Nazyvaevskiy (136.2) district; Muromtsevskiy (153.8) and Pavlogradskiy (164.9) districts also among outsiders. The trend of the falling number of operating SMEs in 2014 was noted in 11 districts and Omsk (0.2%), with the most significant decrease in the indicator noted in Nazyvayevskiy district (12.5%).

Following the results of the latest selection for the provision of subsidies to districts, 31.3 mln rubles was allocated to local budgets of 18 districts from the regional budget for the co-financing of measures to support entrepreneurs.

The share of the number of employees of SMEs in Omsk region in 2014 amounted to 28.8% of the average number of employees of all enterprises and organizations, and has increased by 1.2 percentage points in comparison with 2013. The number of people employed in small and medium business increased in 24 districts of Omsk region and Omsk. The highest value of the share of such employees was in Kormilovskiy district (53.6%), the lowest was in Russko-Polyanskiy district (19.5%). The largest increase in the proportion of employees of SMEs with respect to 2013 was noted in Sedelnikovskiy district (by 8 p.p.), decrease – in Tarskiy district (by 6 p.p.) (Consolidated report..., 2014).

Agricultural production in the region is one of the most developed in the Russian Federation. Agriculture produces 9.8% of the gross regional product and employs 9.3% of people in the region. Leading sectors are crops and livestock breeding. Of 311 agricultural organizations, 267 organizations received income resulting from the production and financial activity in the total amount of 5.4 bln rubles in Omsk region in 2014. The share of profitable agricultural enterprises on average in Omsk region was 85.9% of their total number. The positive financial result was achieved by all agricultural organizations in 10 districts. The increase in the share of profitable agricultural enterprises in 2014 relative to 2013 was noted in 14 districts, decrease was noted in 11 districts, no change was noted in 7 districts. Bolsherechenskiy, Znamenskiy,

Maryanovsky and Sherbakulsky districts moved to the leading group with the absolute proportion of profitable agricultural enterprises at year-end 2014. The share of profitable agricultural enterprises in 10 districts exceeded the average indicator that has formed in Omsk region.

The proportion of the length of public roads of local importance that do not meet regulatory requirements was 53.54% in Omsk region in 2014. The improvement in the quality of roads in 16 districts was noted. Russko-Polyansky district, on the territory of which 100% of local roads did not meet the regulatory requirements in 2014, had the lowest rating for this indicator: it has deteriorated by 3.7 p.p. compared to 2013. The indicator for Znamensky district hasn't fallen either (92.1%). The basic problem of improving the quality of local roads is the lack of funding of the road activities at the local level. Since January 1, 2014, the municipal road funds have been established in the districts, the total amount of which amounted to 2.4 bln rubles in 2014.

Following the results of 2014, positive dynamics of the average wage was noted in all the municipalities, which is largely determined by the financing of the public sector as part of implementation of the "May" Russian President decrees. The average value across districts was 19,166.5 rubles in 2014, or 8.7% growth compared to 2013. The group of districts with the size of the average wage of more than 20 thous. rubles includes 5 districts (Omsky, Kalachinsky, Kormilovsky, Novovarshavsky, Tyukalinsky). The lowest wage growth was in Azovsky German national (2.7%) and Nazyvaevsky (5.3%) districts (Consolidated report ..., 2014).

In order to form a more complete picture of the quality of living standards in the region, the author defined the positive and negative trends in the development of rural territories with the use of sociological research, the feature of which is to provide a subjective assessment of the key issues in the life of the village residents. The study was conducted as a questionnaire survey of rural residents of Omsk region, and the assessments of the quality of socio-economic and environmental development of the region given by them were analyzed.

The survey was conducted with the use of:

- questionnaire by mail, i.e. mailout of questionnaires to home or work addresses;
- personal interview;
- survey by telephone.

In total, 2,627 people participated in the study, which shows a sufficiently high coverage of the range of respondents, which in turn increases the reliability and quality of the survey and allows to conclude that the obtained results objectively reflect the situation in the functioning of rural territories.

The respondents were offered a questionnaire with a list of problems that hinder the effective development of rural territories. All the problems in the questionnaire

**Table 1**  
**Problems studied during the survey of rural residents**

<i>Block</i>	<i>Problems studied</i>
<i>I block.</i> Social problems	Lack of attractive jobs Arduous working conditions Severe demographic situation (decline, migration of the rural population) Stigma attached to living in rural areas Problems of alcoholism and drug addiction Crime Outdated engineering and utilities infrastructure, lack of basic conditions of social comfort: - roads and sidewalks - utilities and personal services - drinking water - Internet - mobile communications - gasification Inadequate housing construction Problems of pre-school and school education: - poor quality of educational services at schools - missing or insufficient computerization of schools - bad food in the school cafeteria Lack of children's health camps Poor sports facilities and limited range of sports clubs Insufficient development of leisure facilities Lack of medical stations in the village Low quality of medical care Lack of support for disabled people (pensioners, invalids) Problems in maintenance of public transport
<i>II block.</i> Economic problems	Low income Problems of development of agricultural production Difficult access to credit resources in rural territories Limited access of the rural population to the markets for products Insufficient development of the service sector Lack of professionals of necessary qualifications Low level of implementation of innovation in the rural economy
<i>III block.</i> Environ- mental problems	Degradation of the land reserves ( <i>reduced fertility, etc.</i> ) Contamination of water resources Degradation of the forest reserves Air pollution Problems of collection, storage and disposal of waste
<i>IV block.</i> Admini- strative problems	Low level of development of real local self-government Mostly administrative "downward" approach to rural development Distrust of the rural population of the territorial administrations

were divided into four blocks: social problems, economic problems, environmental problems and problems in the control system (Table 1).

The respondents were asked to rate the degree of relevance (importance) of the problems on a scale from smallest to largest: 1 – the urgency of the problem is the lowest, 5 – the urgency of the problem is the highest.

The data about the extent of urgency of the problems in the village received during the survey was compiled across Omsk region and grouped separately by climatic zones and districts of the region, by the studied areas, by age of the respondents. The materials obtained during the survey are based on a subjective assessment of respondents describing the current state of affairs in the field of development of rural territories. However, the results of this study certainly can serve as a starting point for a more advanced study of the operation and further development of rural territories in the region.

The study involved the rural residents of different ages from 32 districts of Omsk region. Characteristics of survey respondents are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Number of respondents participating in the study\***

<i>Natural and climatic zone</i>	<i>List of districts in the zone</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	
		<i>pers.</i>	<i>%</i>
Northern	Bolsheukovsky, Znamensky, Sedelnikovskiy, Tarskiy, Tevrizskiy, Ust-Ishimskiy	503	19
Northern forest-steppe	Bolsherechenskiy, Gorkovskiy, Kolosovskiy, Krutinskiy, Muromtsevskiy, Nazyvaevskiy, Nizhneomskiy, Sargatskiy, Tyukalinskiy	715	27
Southern forest-steppe	Azovskiy, Isilkulskiy, Kalachinskiy, Kormilovskiy, Lubinskiy, Maryanovskiy, Moskalenskiy, Omskiy	671	26
Steppe	Novovarshevskiy, Odesskiy, Okoneshnikovskiy, Pavlogradskiy, Poltavskiy, Russko-Polyanskiy, Tavricheskiy, Cherlakovskiy, Scherbakulskiy	738	28
	TOTAL	2,627	100

\*compiled according to the survey data

Of the total number of study participants, the northern natural and climatic zone of the region accounts for the lowest number of respondents – 19% (or 503 respondents), while the number of respondents in other climatic zones was almost identical: the northern forest-steppe – 27% (equivalent to 715 people), the southern forest-steppe – 26% (671 people) and steppe – 28% (738 people).

The study surveyed the respondents of different ages, 16 and older; they were combined into 6 groups. The structure of the survey respondents by age is shown in Figure 1.

The number of respondents in different age groups was approximately the same and ranged from 13 to 19%, of which there are 1,431 men and 1,196 women.

In the opinion of the author, the survey results showed that there are still quite a lot of unresolved problems in rural areas in the region. At the same time, the urgency of similar problems and their relevance to local residents varies across various natural and climatic zones and certain districts of Omsk region. This is due to the peculiarities

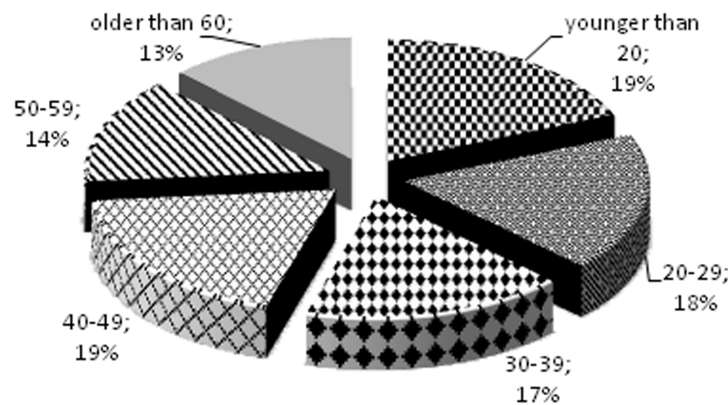


Figure 1: Age structure of the respondents (compiled according to the survey data)

of geographical location, level of development and specificities of agriculture. In general, the farther the distance of the rural territories from Omsk, the more tense the situation in the field under study.

The study of the obtained data allows to make a conclusion about the most important problems in the region. The most urgent problem in the social field is poor quality and accessibility of medical care to villagers. In 20 districts of the region (Bolsheukovsky, Znamensky, Sedelnikovskiy, Tevrizskiy, Ust-Ishimskiy, Gorkovskiy, Kolosovskiy, Muromtsevskiy, Nizhneomskiy, Sargatskiy, Okoneshnikovskiy, Poltavskiy, Russko-Polyanskiy, Scherbakulskiy, etc.), the local residents rated the importance of the problem higher than 4 points, where 5 is the highest score. This is due to a number of objective reasons. Typically, the departments of general practitioners and feldsher-midwife stations (FMSs), which employ midwives and community nurses, operate in the village. FMSs are mostly preventive health care organizations and offer a minimum set of health care services. Outpatient clinics and district hospitals operate in the regional centers, but it is not always possible for the inhabitants of the rural hinterland to get there due to the remoteness and often poor condition of roads. There is a heavy load on a general practitioner due to the low population density (Table 3) and the remoteness of settlements from each other.

Table 3  
Density of population in Omsk region (people per 1 sq.km)\*

Natural and climatic zone	Years				
	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Northern	2.2	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.0
Northern forest-steppe	4.9	4.8	4.2	4.1	4.1
Southern forest-steppe	16.7	16.8	16.1	15.9	16.0
Steppe	9.0	9.1	8.2	8.2	8.2

\* Source (Socio-economic situation ..., 2014).

In addition, the quality and level of care to the villagers are affected by high depreciation of material and technical base of rural health care and low provision of rural health organizations with modern medical equipment. The urgency of the problem of health care is confirmed by all respondents, bringing it to 1st place in a number of problems in the social field.

As you know, for a comfortable stay in the territory, a person requires the well-developed social infrastructure: pre-schools, schools, facilities for recreation and sports. This infrastructure has been preserved from the Soviet times in many rural areas, but now there is a significant deterioration of social and cultural facilities. The survey confirmed that the villagers note the underdevelopment of leisure facilities, poor sports facilities and limited offer of sports clubs for children, as well as the absence of children's recreation camps near settlements.

The most global problem of rural territories is bad roads. According to a survey, the vast majority of the rural citizens of Omsk region make negative statements about the condition of roads and asphalt pavement on the main highways. Average score on this problem across the entire region was 3.77. According to official data, the length of roads in the region is 10.4 thousand km, including paved – 7.3 thousand km (of which 5.7 thousand km do not comply with transport and operational standards), unpaved – 3.1 thousand km. 584 settlements do not have a transport link with regional centers of Omsk region by paved roads. More than 30% of the total number of bridges, through which the roads lie, do not meet modern requirements for tonnage (Long-term ..., 2009). This problem is particularly acute for the inhabitants of the northern districts of the region, where roads become impassable or rugged in spring and autumn. However, despite the presence of the active agricultural enterprises in rural territories, they often do not have adequate support in addressing the problem of bad roads.

The study of information on manufacturing activity in agriculture and the service sector in rural areas shows that the local residents indicate lack of attractive jobs and arduous working conditions as some of the urgent problems. This is due to the specificity of agricultural production, which is dominated by intense seasonal labor in the crop breeding industry and heavy manual labor in the livestock breeding industry.

In addition, the villagers indicate the low level of their income as a major problem. For example, the average nominal monthly wage of agricultural workers in April 2016 in municipal areas averaged to 16,030.5 rubles, while this figure is much higher in the whole region and the average wage amounted to 28,162.3 rubles on the same date (Federal ..., 2016). The level and the ratio of wages in agriculture with the average for the region are shown in Figure 2.

Due to the lack of active support for rural social field, weak motivational component for young professionals, a certain stereotype has formed and a public opinion has developed about the stigma attached to living in rural areas. Youth is not satisfied with the fact that the comfort of living in rural areas is much lower than in the city due



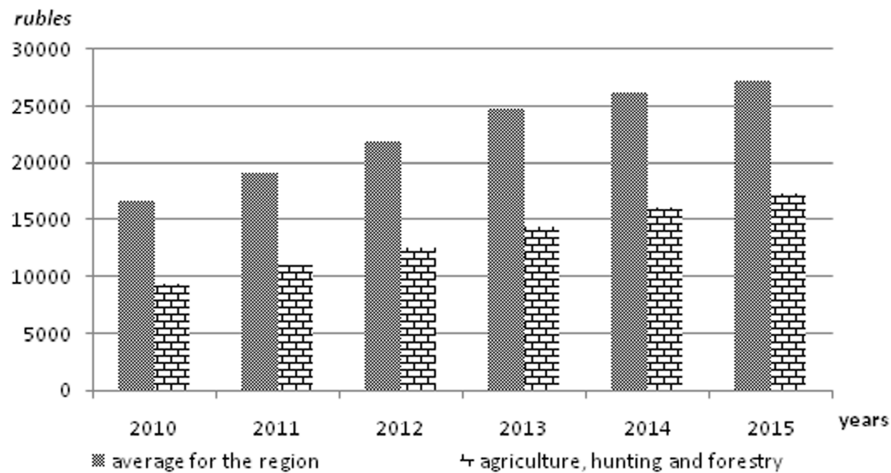


Figure 2: Level of average nominal gross wages in Omsk region (compiled based on data from [Federal ..., 2016])

to problems accumulated in the rural life (low income, housing difficulties, and poor social infrastructure). This in turn gives rise to another topical issue – migration of people from the village to the city and depopulation of villages. The indigenous people of the northern districts of Omsk region noted the most severe demographic situation and intensive migration (Table 4).

The results of the survey showed that the majority of respondents noted a lack of professionals of necessary qualifications in the field of agriculture as a serious problem. Another important reason, which hinders the development of rural territories, is the low level of implementation of innovation in the rural economy. However, the process of introduction of modern innovative technology will allow agricultural organizations to increase their competitiveness and contribute to the progressive development of rural territories.

Currently, much attention is paid to environmental issues. In order to determine the urgency of these issues, respondents were presented with the most common ones:

**Table 4**  
Assessment of the urgency of social problems by the rural residents of Omsk region\*

Natural and climatic zone	Lack of attractive jobs	Arduous working conditions	Migration of population	Stigma attached to living in rural areas
Northern	4.46	4.44	4.35	4.43
Northern forest-steppe	4.64	4.45	4.24	3.97
Southern forest-steppe	3.32	3.38	3.28	3.40
Steppe	3.90	4.04	4.24	4.00

\* compiled according to the survey data

degradation of the land reserves (reduced fertility, etc.); contamination of water resources; degradation of forest reserves; air pollution; problem of collection, storage and disposal of waste. Analysis of the responds allowed to find that the villagers mainly note the issue of the degradation of the land reserves. Over the past decade, the number of agricultural organizations has reduced in the region, and, accordingly, the share of abandoned and unused agricultural land increased. In the northern part of the region, it are overgrown with forest and turns into swamp, while in the southern part there is soil salinization and its withdrawal from the arable land reserves. However, on the subjective assessment of the villagers, there is a need to improve control over the reproduction and conservation of natural resources.

The survey revealed two important problems related to the administrative system. One of them is distrust of the rural population to the territorial administrations. Most likely, this is due to the set of accumulated unresolved problems in rural areas and the lack of comprehensive measures to address them. Another problem mentioned by respondents is predominantly administrative "downward" approach to rural development. This system of administration is based on an administrative basis and ignores the initiative and participation of indigenous villagers in solving problems. The dominance of the administrative-team "downward" approach to the development of rural territories does not allow for a full use of the local population experience, their knowledge of the specifics and the problems of rural development in a particular territory. Elimination of problems in this direction will allow to develop effective administrative decisions in the field of development of rural territories.

The survey has expanded our understanding of the most important and urgent problems that hamper the development of rural territories, while the resulting indicators could allow to assess the stability or instability of the condition of rural territories.

On the basis of research, the author revealed the patterns of development of rural territories by the example of Omsk region, the main ones being the following:

- dominance of the agricultural mono-industry in the rural economy and the dependence of its efficiency on the conditions of the organization of production, location area of the enterprise, environmental factors;
- disproportionate development of the economy in the areas of different natural and climatic zones of the region, combined with their specialization;
- availability of unutilized natural resources that allow to attract investments for the diversification of the rural economy;
- dependence of the environment on the way of the organization of agricultural production;
- socio-economic development and quality of life of the rural population lagging behind the urban level;

- strengthening of the migration outflow of the rural population and its concentration around the urban centers of economic activity, with a consequence of the lack of qualified professionals in rural areas;
- decentralization and deconcentration of public services;
- differentiation of rural territories depending on the degree of their remoteness from the center of economic development: the farther from Omsk, the more acute socio-economic problems.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Analysis of the trends of development of rural territories allows to conclude that maintaining the current dynamics in their development described by relatively low quality and standard of living of the rural population will lead to continuation of migration of perspective human resources, and as a result – the further growth of social tension and degradation of human potential of rural territories, reduction in the volume of lending and reducing the availability of borrowed funds for the poor rural population for the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas, discontinuation of the activities of large customers with economic entities in rural areas, etc.

According to the author, the way out of this situation is the development and implementation of comprehensive measures for the sustainable development of rural territories, the main of which should be:

1. development of organizational and economic mechanism for sustainable management of multifunctional development of rural territories;
2. development of a multi-faceted integrated approach to promote the development of rural territories, the empowerment of municipal authorities and capabilities for the planning and management of their development;
3. development and improvement of regional programs for the diversification of the rural economy, including: development of regional agribusiness on the cluster basis, support for entrepreneurship, development of non-agricultural activities (including the development of agro-tourism and crafts), improving the mechanisms of information and consultation activities in the field of agriculture support, development of local self-government, improvement of methods of planning of development of rural territories;
4. assistance in the construction and modernization of livestock buildings, development of innovation and investment capacity in the field of agriculture, intensification of livestock and crop sectors;
5. formation of partnerships between the market participants in order to coordinate their actions and ensure effective development of the rural economy;

6. lowering of administrative barriers for the access of business entities to the development resources (financial, material, land and information);
7. development of the necessary infrastructure in rural areas, and more.

The integrated approach proposed by the author to solving problems in the field of sustainable development of rural territories in the region will allow to develop the rural economy more efficiently and to guarantee a decent standard of living to the rural population.

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