

PECULIARITIES OF RURAL SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

This paper summarizes the results of a theoretical study as well as practically oriented research about the concept of managing the social sphere of the village and considers the problem-perspective field of development of the social infrastructure management in the villages of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The chosen topic is relevant as an insufficiently studied scientific problem, and also has practical significance for the well-being and stable development of rural areas.

The study describes the scheme of management of the rural social infrastructure in the Republic of Kazakhstan from the standpoint of object-subject, methods and results. Interviews of the rural population were conducted about the satisfaction with the rural social infrastructure and attitude towards the work of local governance. Rural settlements of Mangystau oblast currently have an average not significant level of social infrastructure development, and the level of satisfaction of residents in different areas with its condition varies from very low to sufficient.

The most important principles for the development of definition of rural social infrastructure management and its functions have been highlighted with the help of a comparative analysis of various approaches.

According to the results of the study, it was concluded that the development of promising directions of management of the rural social infrastructure requires a comprehensive study and evaluation of the facilities, mechanism and principles of this management and the identification of its current problems with regional development tasks.

Key words: rural population, social environment, local government, quality of life, rural social infrastructure (RSI).

Introduction

The relevance of the scientific problem being studied is primarily due to the fact that by the present moment the management of RSI is fragmented, poorly systematized. Traditional solutions in this area are not sufficiently incorporated and often do not take into account the long-term development prospects of rural areas, all needs of current and future generations of rural residents. The theoretical foundations that were formed decades ago turned out to be unsuitable for creating innovative management of RSI that meets its present interests. For this reason, the multi-component definition of the management of the RSI and its principles should be defined and justified.

In modern conditions, the rural social environment is characterized by a low level of equipment and material means, a small amount of services provided, and insufficient funding. Over the past decades, the demand for social benefits and services in rural areas has remained high and often unsatisfactory, while their supply has been narrow and obviously insufficient. As a result, the rural population does not have free choice of residential premises, quality education and high-quality medical care; there is insufficient availability of goods and services which has a negative impact on the life quality. Contemporary rural life conditions have lost stability, creativity, and rural residents have become the lowest paid labor. All of the above actualizes attention and interest in the management of the social environment of rural life.

The problem of research: to reveal the essence and content of the concept of social infrastructure, identify the conditions for the development of the rural social

infrastructure in the Republic of Kazakhstan, identify the problems of managing the social infrastructure of the village in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The aim of the study: to analyze rural social infrastructure's development level of Kazakhstan and highlight specific problems with its management.

Objectives of the study: to conduct a literature review on social infrastructure development problems; conduct interviews with village residents about the existing problems in the social infrastructure of the Mangystau oblast of the Republic of Kazakhstan; identify the main problems in the management of social infrastructure in rural areas of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Materials and Methods

The study of the rural social infrastructure management is extremely important in connection with the problem of achieving the well-being of its inhabitants, directly related to the level and quality of life of the population of any country. Social infrastructure is a multidimensional phenomenon; therefore, it would be a mistake to evaluate it from the point of view of any one opinion. To study the scientific views on the problem of managing rural social infrastructure, we reviewed the studies of the following authors: Д. Баландин (2014), V. Atkociuniene, G. Vaznoniene, & R. Pakeltiene, (2015), В.Ф. Стукач (2015), В.Н. Бобков (2018), G. Vaznoniene, & I. Kiausiene, (2018), I. Manggat, R. Zain & Z. Jamaluddin (2018).

The methodological basis of the study was a systematic, regulatory and integrated approach in

solving certain problems. Well-known research methods data collection, literature review, data systematization, comparative and logical analyses, interview, induction, deduction, logical reasoning was used in this paper.

Scientific-theoretical research is aimed at clarifying the terminology and the substantive foundation of the concept of 'rural social infrastructure'. A content analysis of the evolution of approaches to the study of RSI was conducted.

The empirical research was conducted in Mangystau of Kazakhstan. 12,200 respondents from several rural areas of Mangystau oblast were questioned in a phone interview.

Results and Discussion

Based on the specific tasks, as well as the specifics of the research, scientists use different approaches to determine the content of the category 'social sphere (environment)'.

One of the most common is the economic, more precisely economic and sectoral approach to the interpretation of the social sphere, essentially as a synonym for the concept of 'social infrastructure'.

Е.В. Тишин (2017) gives the definition 'social sphere' concept from the standpoint of the structural-functional approach, revealing it in two

manifestations: through the social infrastructure and complex of its industries and through the social space, covering the system of social relations, numerous social connections.

Social infrastructure can be understood as a system of relations between citizens for the effective use of resources related to the implementation of social programs, maintaining the standard of living and incomes of citizens, for building employment potential and economic growth in a multi-level system. Social infrastructure determines its place in the national economy in accordance with various possibilities to meet the social needs of citizens (Тылл, Есенгельдин, & Мухамедиева, 2016).

The scientific category of 'infrastructure' in relation to the social sphere of the village (SE) received a number of definitions given by scientists from different countries of the world, a brief overview of which is presented in Table 1.

Thus, above mentioned definitions and a more extensive analysis of the RIS research allow us to conclude that today there is no unambiguous definition of this economic category, no single opinion on its structure.

The term 'social infrastructure' is also mentioned in the context of quality of life as its main component (Бобков, 2018). This draws attention to the fact that the

Table 1

The evolution of rural social infrastructure term

Author, year of publication	Definition
Berry, 2011	Processes, programs, events, services, networks and actions that support individuals and families to meet their social and personal needs in a particular place through personal growth, social interaction, support of social services and the development of rural communities.
Светлаков & Зейкин, 2012	RSI includes infrastructure of labor activity (organization of industrial site, transport services, road construction, public service communications, personnel training), social infrastructure (trade, public catering, housing and communal services, domestic services), social security (pensions, support for the poor, physical culture and sports, environmental protection, health care), spiritual culture and the labor sphere (public education, cultural objects, art.
Сюсюра, 2012	A set of economic sectors, often its non-productive sphere, associated with the provision of goods and services that meet the needs of people and form the conditions of their daily life activity of the inhabitants of the village.
Atkociuniene, Vaznoniene, & Pakeltiene, 2015	RSI as it is a territorial and spatial system of interrelated types of economic and social activity and relations creating conditions for functioning of ecosystems, creation of physical and social capitals used by the individuals and communities to satisfy individual and social needs.
Омаров, 2015	A set of social objects located in the territory of a rural settlement and implementing target tasks of a social and economic nature, the solution of which is aimed at ensuring the vital activity of the population.
Стукач, 2017	A complex of interconnected and mutually complementary material elements that are in the maximum accessibility and spatial-temporal proximity to spheres of human activity, aimed at meeting a wide range of needs of the entire rural population and creating conditions for the development of human capital.
Vaznoniene & Kiausiene, 2018	RSI as social economic system it forms the living environment features, promotes or reduces the attractiveness of a living space; social infrastructure services enhance or decrease local community wellbeing depending on its development level, supply and accessibility of services.

material base and intangible assets of the infrastructure should provide a choice of alternatives for goods and services with good quality. This may concern such aspects as the choice of housing, household services, medical services, social protection, employment, freedom of movement, educational opportunities and spiritual development, as well as leisure.

We share the opinion and position of scientists who believe that the RSI is a complicated complex. RSI includes: a rural territory that is economically equipped for the public and individual life of rural residents; organizations and institutions of the social and services sectors; as well as the management system of functional development of the RSI, ensuring the safe livelihoods for the population working and living in this rural area (Баландин, 2014).

According to this definition, the following features of the RSI in modern conditions can be distinguished:

- first of all, it is a complex of interconnected and mutually complementary material and social objects, aimed at creating favorable conditions for the life of the rural population;
- the operation of the RSI aims to meet the needs of not only agricultural producers, but also all other groups of the rural population, including children, pensioners, the disabled, and others;
- the creation and development of RSI facilities on the territory of a rural settlement should be the most important task of local governments.

The essence of a RSI as a system category revealed through diverse functions: public, targeted and specific. Thus, performing public functions, the RSI has a significant impact on the entire national economy of the country.

Target functions of RSI are aimed at implementing the tasks for which its facilities are organized and functioned, while specific ones are subordinated to the goals of the socio-economic development of the village and improving the quality of life of rural residents.

The role of infrastructure in rural development is increasing due to new challenges – globalization, climate and demographic changes. Improving the infrastructure and quality of life in rural areas experiencing an aging population and migration of young educated people can attract domestic investment in order to expand education and labor market opportunities and so support social inclusion (Модернизация инфраструктуры..., 2016).

The authorities at three levels carry out the management and control of the social sphere; the powers at each of them are legally delimited:

- Macro: state (President and Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan).
- Mezo: departmental (ministries of social profile) and regional (relevant governing bodies).
- Local (city and district akimats).

According to the G. Vaznoniene, R. Pakeltiene, (2017) local residents' needs may be analysed on various levels. The depth and width of research of the local residents' needs determines not only the level of needs analysed, but also the level of the analysis: community, eldership, municipality, region, etc. Analysis of area-specific residents' needs and trends is possible only if the level of development of the area is taken into account.

We presented the management scheme of RSI in the Republic of Kazakhstan from the standpoint of object-subject, methods and results in Figure 1.

Based on the presented model, the management of the social sphere of the village, in our opinion, is a complex of legal, organizational, social, economic and financial measures taken by the authorities and public representatives of the rural community in order to implement the provisions of state and regional programs and achieve a better quality of life for local people.

When implementing measures of regional regulatory impact in ensuring the sustainable development of the social system, particular importance should be given to the basic human needs. First, the living conditions, it is one of the basic human needs. Secondly, the services provided by local executive bodies are medical, educational services, utilities, street lighting, transport links, etc. (Солтангазинов, Амирова, & Кадырова, 2019).

It should also be understood that the main owner of RSI facilities in rural areas at present is the state and its bodies that 'set the tone' and determine the main parameters of the development of the social environment in rural areas of the republic. Due to the relatively small experience of the movement of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the direction of sustainable development of rural areas, one has to admit the existence of a considerable number of problems in the field of RSI management.

Interview of village residents in the Mangystau region of Mangystau oblast of the Republic of Kazakhstan, conducted in early 2018 and covering 12, 200 people, provided additional information on the attitude of the population to the work of local governments (rural akimats), to determine the degree of satisfaction of rural residents with the level of RSI development (Table 2). To conduct the study, a research group was created and a questionnaire was developed, the survey was conducted by phone, the respondents were aged 20-70 years who have lived there for more than three years, which is 32% of the total region's population.

Sociological survey showed that only 81.5% of the rural population of the region is fully satisfied with the work of government bodies, 18.5% are satisfied with the work of the administration. But still rural residents

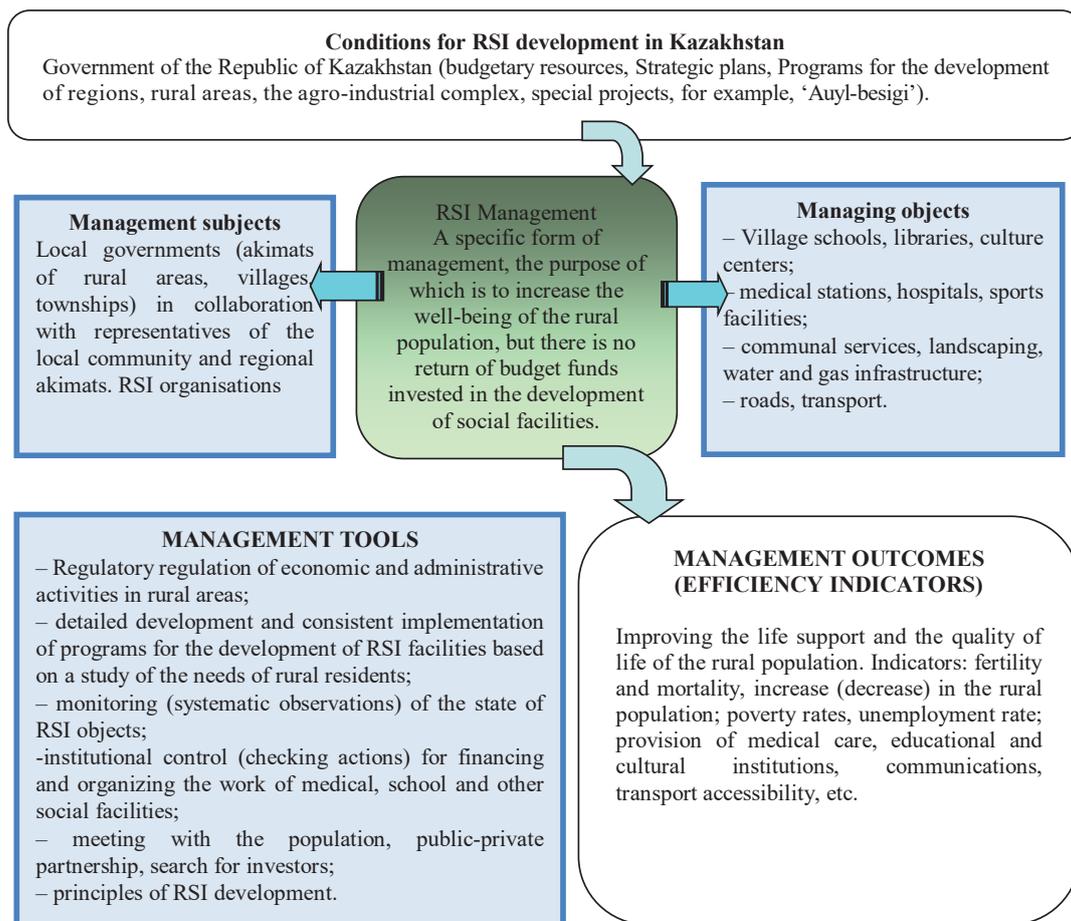


Figure 1. Contemporary model of RSI in Kazakhstan.

Table 2

Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: 'To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the condition of the following aspects of your life in a village?' (%)

Parameters	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
1. The quality of school education	90.1	9.9
2. Medical services' quality	86.3	13.7
3. Employment opportunities	56.9	43.1
4. Road and passenger transport infrastructure development	64.1	35.9
5. The level of development of telephone communications, Internet	86.4	13.6
6. Social services work performance (assistance for disabled people, family support, etc.)	89.3	10.7
7. Local authorities work performance	81.5	18.5

Note: compiled by the authors on the basis of systematization of empirical research data.

are dissatisfied to the most significant degree: employment opportunities, roads and passenger transport, and the quality of school education. The best reviews were obtained on the work of telephone communication and the work of social services.

Meanwhile, the Common European strategic guidelines imply the following principles for the implementation of rural development policies:

- self-financing and decentralization of management;
- partnership of stakeholders with the participation of local government, private organizations and the public;
- hierarchy – maintaining the correspondence between the size of a settlement, its administrative and economic significance,

the service area and the number, size, and functionality of objects located in a rural area (Газизов, 2014);

- complexity and complementarity – the presence of a complete set of elements, their spatial complementarity and consistency (Алашбаева, 2013);
- balance – maintaining sectoral proportions between the social infrastructure at the level of the region and at the level of an individual settlement;
- spatial concentration and territorial availability of objects;
- sufficiency – provision of population with objects in the volume necessary for the full development of all members of society (Ахинов & Калашников, 2016);
- equitability – ensuring equal access to facilities for all consumers;
- completeness of reflection of existing and potential threats (Хилинская, 2018).

Another problem of the management of RSI is a significant variation in the issues of identifying indicators that most fully characterize the level of development of the social environment in rural areas and at the same time show the effectiveness of management efforts to modernize it. In the model presented by authors (Figure 1), some of the most common social standards are listed.

For example, social quality of life is a complex indicator that combines economic and social aspects and is expressed in such indicators as income and expenses, poverty level, guarantees of social protection and support, low unemployment rate, and development of social facilities. These indicators are widely used in the works of both domestic and foreign researchers, and are also used by statistical agencies of almost all countries of the world and international organizations. However, in modern conditions of development of social relations, it is necessary to take into account the existing shortcomings of these indicators.

According to the latest approaches, ‘with radically reduced levels of resource use, the work of various infrastructure systems must be integrated and regulated in such a way as to rethink the assessment of current infrastructure’ (Албеков & Хайтаев, 2018).

However, the process of integration and coordination does not happen itself, it must be managed according to certain principles. It is necessary to discuss with the stakeholders the main principles for RSI management: coordination of principles ‘from top to bottom’ and ‘from bottom to top’; satisfaction of social needs and local initiatives; partnership and division of responsibility; involvement of local residents and decentralization of decision

making processes; continuous study, professional development and stimulation of self-esteem; integrity and hierarchy; innovations, readiness for changes, efficiency; ecology (Atkociuniene, Vaznoniene, & Pakeltiene, 2015).

The third, most acute problem of managing the RSI in Kazakhstan is the absence of its well-functioning mechanism, which is reflected in the following difficulties:

- ‘fragmentation’ and dispersedness of objects of the social sphere, due to the specifics of rural settlement, making it difficult to use them efficiently;
- accommodation in villages mainly of grass-root elements of infrastructure, providing services of daily and periodic demand (kindergartens, secondary schools, clubs, canteens, etc.);
- insufficient provision of the population with infrastructure, poor material and technical equipment of social infrastructure institutions and insufficient staffing;
- profitability of social infrastructure, due to the nature of the activities carried out and the low solvency of the rural population (Roelich *et al.*, 2015).

It should be noted that rural areas of the country themselves are complex and many problematic objects of management, which is manifested in:

- unevenness of the rural population’s demand for a number of social infrastructure services, predetermined by the seasonality of agricultural production and the maintenance of personal subsidiary farming, determines the rhythm of the activities of these objects;
- lack of opportunity for the rural population to choose a service provider, since many sectors of social infrastructure in rural areas are a sphere of natural monopolies;
- long time spent by rural residents to receive services due to the low territorial availability of infrastructure facilities.

Д. Баландин (2014) identified four groups of principles that should underlie the management of the sustainable development of RSI:

- 1) economic principles (equitable distribution, rational use of natural resources, growth of incomes of the rural population);
- 2) social (increase in the duration and quality of life of the rural population);
- 3) common (consistency, purposefulness, continuity, balance, efficiency);
- 4) institutional (improvement of public administration institutions);
- 5) development of self-government bodies of the rural population; formation of social capital in rural areas, etc.

Sustainable development of rural areas can be achieved if all types of resources, as well as work on the development of rural infrastructure, social welfare of the rural population are combined into a single multi-sectoral complex of interrelated activities (Ибришев *et al.*, 2018).

In our opinion, this system of principles of management of RSI is one of the most complete. In addition, we believe that one of the most important principles of management of RSI facilities in Kazakhstan should be the maximum accessibility and spatial-temporal proximity of the RSI branches deciphering the spheres of life of a rural resident. Thus, effective management of the development of RSI is possible only with the use of appropriate tools and principles that represent the ways and means of managing the social sphere and infrastructure, as well as the basic conceptual framework for the regulation of social processes and phenomena.

Conclusions

1. RSI in Kazakhstan represents a set of legal, institutional, social, economic and financial measures taken by government and community representatives of the rural community in order to implement the provisions of state and regional programs and achieve a better quality of life for the local population.
2. The definition of three levels RSI management should be improved. Especially the integration of the concept of sustainable development, the principles of RSI have to include all types of resources, as well as work on the development

of rural infrastructure, social welfare of the rural population should be combined into a single multi-sectoral complex of interrelated activities.

3. The effective management of the development of RSI is possible only with the use of appropriate tools and principles that represent the ways and means of managing the social sphere and infrastructure, as well as the basic conceptual framework for the regulation of social processes and phenomena.
4. The results of a sociological survey in the Mangystau region showed that despite significant amounts of funding for rural health and educational organizations, vast majority of rural residents is not completely satisfied with the quality of their services. The *road and passenger transport infrastructure* can be a bottleneck of Kazakhstan economy, since the problems of transportation system facilitate the infrastructural restrictions and create the threat of deceleration of social development of the country.
5. The study revealed that, along with the positive trend of growing attention to the management of RSI in Kazakhstan, there is a negative tendency to insufficient substantiation of the principles and tools of social policy in the village, the weakness of local governments in addressing the pressing problems of developing the social environment of rural areas. A small part of rural population is fully satisfied with the work (related to the management of RSI) of government bodies, the majority is only partially satisfied.

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