

MIGRATION OF RURAL YOUTH IN PAVLODAR REGION  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНЫҢ ПАВЛОДАР ӨҢІРІНДЕГІ  
АУЫЛ ЖАСТАРЫНЫҢ КӨШІ-ҚОНЫ

МИГРАЦИЯ СЕЛЬСКОЙ МОЛОДЕЖИ В ПАВЛОДАРСКОМ РЕГИОНЕ  
РЕСПУБЛИКИ КАЗАХСТАН

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**Abstract.** The purpose of the study is to analyze the process of migration of rural youth within the region. The relevance of the topic is predetermined by current problems of development of social environment of the life of rural residents. In Kazakhstan, there are trends of urbanization and, as a result, migration from rural areas to cities, which is especially noticeable in relation to rural youth. It is due to various factors: this is, first of all, introduction of innovative technological solutions in the field of agricultural management, socio-economic living conditions in villages. The article analyzes changes in the scale and structure of real and potential migration of rural youth and the impact of key regulators in Pavlodar region based on the use of statistical data, the results of quantitative and qualitative surveys of the population and experts, and the study of public policy directions. A model of migration flows of young personnel is shown, taking into account outbound and seasonal movement, and a quantitative assessment of its scale is presented. The increasing influence of family networks - a catalyst for movement of young people to cities and the role of rural business as a constraining factor - are revealed. The tendencies of public policy and its impact on socio-economic development of rural areas in the region, social status of young specialists, and, consequently, reduction of their migration are considered. The author has developed recommendations for solving these acute problems, contributing not only to the sustainable development of rural areas, but also the perspectives of rural youth.

**Аңдатпа.** Зерттеу мақсаты - өңір шеңберінде ауыл жастарының көші-қон процесін талдау. Тақырыптың өзектілігі ауыл тұрғындарының әлеуметтік өмір сүру ортасын дамытудың заманауи проблемаларымен алдын-ала анықталған. Қазақстанда урбандалу үрдісі және соның салдарынан ауылдық аумақтардан қалаларға көші-қон орын алып отыр, бұл ауыл жастарына қатысты ерекше байқалады. Бұл әр түрлі факторларға байланысты: бұл, ең алдымен, ауыл шаруашылығын басқару саласында инновациялық технологиялық шешімдерді енгізу, ауылдарда тұрудың әлеуметтік-экономикалық жағдайлары. Мақалада статистикалық деректерді, халық пен сарапшылардың сандық және сапалық сауалнамаларының нәтижелерін пайдалану, мемлекеттік саясаттың бағыттарын зерделеу негізінде ауыл жастарының нақты және әлеуетті көші-қонының ауқымы мен құрылымындағы өзгерістер және Павлодар өңіріндегі негізгі реттеушілердің ықпалы талданады. Көшпелі және маусымдық орын ауыстыруды ескере отырып, жас кадрлардың көші-қон ағындарының моделі көрсетілді және оның ауқымына сандық баға берілген. Отбасылық желілердің жастардың қалаларға қоныс аударуының катализаторының өсуі және тежеуші фактор ретінде ауыл бизнесінің рөлі анықталды. Мемлекет саясатының үрдістері және оның аймақтағы ауылдық аумақтардың әлеуметтік-экономикалық дамуына әсері, жас мамандардың әлеуметтік жағдайы, демек, олардың көші-қонының қысқаруы қарастырылады. Автор ауылдық жерлердің тұрақты дамуына ғана емес, сонымен қатар ауыл жастарының болашағына да ықпал ететін осы өткір мәселелерді шешу бойынша ұсыныстар жасалған.



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analysis of transformation processes in rural communities and population migration.

The article examines the migration processes affecting rural youth, as a manifestation and consequence. The influence of state policy, various practices of self-organization and interaction of rural residents has been studied. The research results presented in this article are partially based on data from the 2009 population census, as well as state programs for the development of regions until 2020 and for 2020-2025, the concept of migration policy for 2017-2021. It is necessary to stop the massive outflow of young people from the village. Already, there is no clear idea of who will work in rural areas in 5-10 years.

**Results and its discussion.** Quantitative changes in the demographic structure of the rural population since the early 2000s, mainly associated with migration outflow, have acquired, in our opinion, a new qualitative manifestation in terms of their influence on the reproduction process [4]. Moreover, the main losses are incurred by the agricultural regions. Rural territories, especially in agrarian regions, are actively losing youth as the main resource for demographic reproduction and socio-economic development [5,6]. For example, according to statistics, the number of rural youths in Pavlodar region from 2000 to 2019 decreased by 1.6 times, and in Kazakhstan - by 1.2 times. Among rural residents of working

age, the share of youth in the region is declining. According to scientists and practitioners, the "point of no return" in demographic reproduction for some territories has already been practically passed.

In contrast to the second half of the 1990s, the 2000s are characterized by a significant migration outflow of the rural population. By the end of the 2000s, according to the Committee on Statistics of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the annual migration outflow of rural residents in Kazakhstan increased to 5%; in the Pavlodar region, it doubled, to 10%, but in recent years the outflow has been steadily decreasing.

The main migration outflow occurs at the expense of rural youth. In Pavlodar region, young rural residents were distinguished by a higher migration activity compared to other rural residents and, until 2017, urban youth. Young people are lost in almost all rural areas of the region, with the exception of the suburbs (near Pavlodar).

The results of a sociological survey concerning the migration mood (potential migration) of rural residents, in general, confirm the statistical downward trend. From 2000 to 2019, the potential migration of young people from rural areas of the Pavlodar region decreased by 1.3 times, Figure 1.



Figure 1 - Migration intentions of young rural residents of Pavlodar region, %

These changes are due to the impact of a complex of multidirectional factors, conditions and regulatory factors, which both positively and negatively affect the situation for rural res-

idents [7]. On the one hand, these are the results of a more active agrarian and rural policy, anti-sanitation, improvement of the quality of roads and the provision of communication

means, and on the other, the crisis phenomena of recent years, including the growth of poverty and unemployment [8].

According to the survey results, the proportion of young people who leave large and small villages after graduating from school to study in cities is 70–75% and 90–95%, respectively. Only a small part of them leave to work in cities immediately after leaving school, or move to cities after trying to find work in their village, as well as after serving in the army. For young people, the attractiveness of moving to cities is associated with the opportunity to get a professional education, find a job, improve living conditions and organize leisure. However, there are also factors that hinder migration to cities and factors that facilitate the return of young people to villages after school. The problems that arise when moving to cities include, first and foremost, the same problems with employment, lack of suitable jobs and obtaining affordable housing.

Some young people (12-17%) stay to study in large villages, where there are colleges and other secondary vocational educational institutions. Some of them find work combining work and study. Quite often, this choice is determined by their low preparation for studying in the city.

Immediately after studying in cities, young people return mainly to large and suburban villages, where there are suitable jobs. According to local authorities, between a third and a quarter of those who left to study are forced to return to large villages, and the same proportion do this voluntarily. Moreover, a significant part of the returnees (up to 25–35%) become suburban or seasonal migrants.

Not only seasonal migration, but also study trips and work trips are increasingly becoming an alternative to moving to the city for permanent residence. While the scale of seasonal migration has gradually increased since the 1990s (most actively during the crisis years), the most significant increase in labor migrants has been observed since the second half of the 2000s, when it increased several times, which is caused, on the one hand, by a significant reduction in the number of jobs in the villages, and on the other - qualitative changes in the development of the road transport network and the rise in the cost of housing and apartment rent in large cities.

Residents of settlements, usually located within 1.5–2 hours of travel from Pavlodar, Ekibastuz, Aksu, daily commute to work at enterprises, construction, trade and other organizations. Among them are not only young

people, but also many representatives of the middle and older working age population.

Due to the lack of jobs in small villages, travel to larger villages has also become more intense. This process is more typical for people of middle and senior working age, since young people more often choose jobs with relatively high wages, which is extremely rare in rural areas.

A new phenomenon of travel to work, which, of course, has not become widespread, is the work trip from city to village, when rural youth remain in the city after school (partially satisfying the need to lead an attractive urban lifestyle), but go to work in the countryside.

The improvement in the educational structure of rural youth is an indicator that young people are returning to the village after school. According to the 2009 census, young people with vocational education make up almost half of the young population, and this increase was achieved through secondary vocational education and, to a large extent, higher education. According to the results of the 2009 population census, the share of rural youth with higher education more than doubled - from 4.4% to 9.4%. As a result, the share of employed rural youth with vocational education has increased to 55%, while the share of rural youth with higher education has almost doubled, to 16%. As usually, the gap between rural youth and urban youth continues to grow (the gap in secondary vocational and higher education is 1.5 times, respectively).

Influence of rural social regulators on youth migration. First, the social regulators of youth migration include the influence of family networks, which has increased significantly as a catalyst for the migration of young people to cities: in more than 90–95% of cases, parents and other relatives actively promote the departure of young people to cities for study and work. This was facilitated not only by the qualitative growth of the need for higher vocational education and the attractiveness of the urban way of life, the decrease in the number of vocational schools, colleges and branches of higher educational institutions in rural areas, but also an overall improvement in the quality of life.

As a result, young rural residents, poorly connected to the rural living environment, have the highest migration potential: those who do not have well-paid jobs and their own housing receive vocational education in cities and at the same time actively use support resources from family networks.

The general vector of the influence of family networks on young people “displaced”

from the village has not changed, but there has been a fairly stable trend in the form of a "stream" of re-emigration of children of rural entrepreneurs. After studying in cities, young people often return to villages to work in family businesses (in farms, in small trade, construction and transport organizations, in public catering establishments). Sometimes parents help their children who graduated from universities to organize individual enterprises in agriculture, trade, transport, medicine. This has a multiplier effect, contributing to the creation of new jobs for other young people.

Second, the role of rural business as an inhibitor of youth migration has increased since the early 2000s. According to the results of our research, both the rural population and local authorities recognize the significant and growing role of the rural (primarily agro-industrial) business in the social support of young workers and in solving the social problems of the village. The period 2008–2019 brought particularly wide and systematic support to young people in rural business through the use of various practices to increase income, improve skills, support young people through educational programs, improve the health of young workers, provide them with housing and organize comfortable living conditions.

What are the latest practices of the impact of rural business on reducing migration to cities and on the return migration of young people can be seen in rural areas? In recent years, practices have been developing that are directly related to the economic effect of attracting young workers. As farm managers are acutely short of young skilled workers, they are increasingly involved in training in rural colleges and recruiting young people there, inviting them to join their organizations. Strong entrepreneurs are actively seeking to rejuvenate their cadres: they accept university graduates into the management staff and more and more often purchase housing for young professionals, giving them the opportunity to defer payments.

Meanwhile, in the countryside, a paradoxically high potential for the survival of business social responsibility is still manifested: having a choice between rigidly efficient production and preserving the countryside, even effective entrepreneurs choose the latter, sometimes supporting excess employment and helping young people.

The significant reduction in the gap between agricultural wages and average wages in the economy also contributes to the decline in youth migration: over the past ten years, it has decreased from 50 to 30%. There are

many jobs for young people with wages above the regional average.

Government policy and its impact. Analyzing the effects (effectiveness) of state policy in relation to the migration of rural youth on the basis of strategic planning documents, republican and regional programs implemented in the Pavlodar region, we have identified two areas: the impact on the socio-economic development of the village and the effects of targeted impact on the social situation of rural youth. The group of tasks of the socio-economic development of the village includes, for example, reducing the interregional and intraregional differentiation of the socio-economic development of the countryside, overcoming the differences in the living standards of the urban and rural population, converging the living standards of rural residents, the living standards of urban residents, preserving and developing rural full use of comfortable living space, improving the quality of engineering and transport services in rural areas. Among the tasks aimed at improving the social situation of rural youth, the most significant are the management of migration processes in order to reduce the labor shortage and attract young people in the interests of demographic and socio-economic development, increase the birth rate and value of the family, life, develop a system of state support for families (in particular, in the case of the birth and upbringing of children), improve the health of young people, increase the availability of quality education for young people in accordance with the needs of the regional economy, promote the employment of young professionals, increase the educational and labor mobility of young people and create accessible social lifts for socially vulnerable groups.

An analysis of the fulfillment of tasks and the implementation of public policy measures showed that the role of this policy as a regulator of migration of rural youth in general has grown significantly since the early 2000s. Rural residents note a positive, albeit pointwise, insignificant impact of many programs, projects and other state policy instruments. Moreover, rural youth are well aware of the impact of such programs and projects: young people cite the renovation of schools, kindergartens, sports complexes, stadiums and parks as a significant effect of changes in the village due to the impact of public policy instruments.

However, there is no effective movement to reduce the differences between the countryside and the city in the level of socio-economic development, and territorial differences continue to grow. Rural youth, for the most part, assess the final effect of the implementation of

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state policy measures aimed at developing the social and engineering infrastructure of the village, improving the quality and availability of social services as unsatisfactory.

The statistics on the development of the social infrastructure network in rural areas partially reflect the model of restructuring and so-called optimization that was carried out in rural areas, and confirm that the concerns of rural youth and their dissatisfaction with changes in the social sphere do not matter, indeed, despite the targeted grant support For the repair and restoration of schools, hospitals, kindergartens, clubs and stadiums, in the Pavlodar region, a large-scale liquidation of

social facilities is underway, which often does not correspond to the decline in the population and the real needs for these facilities.

As a result of this policy, according to the survey, the majority of rural youth are dissatisfied with the situation in the field of health care, housing and communal services, culture, physical culture and sports, and the development of settlements. The satisfaction of young villagers with living conditions is shown in Figure 2. High satisfaction with the situation in preschool education (construction and renovation of dozens of kindergartens and the organization of playgrounds for programs and grants).

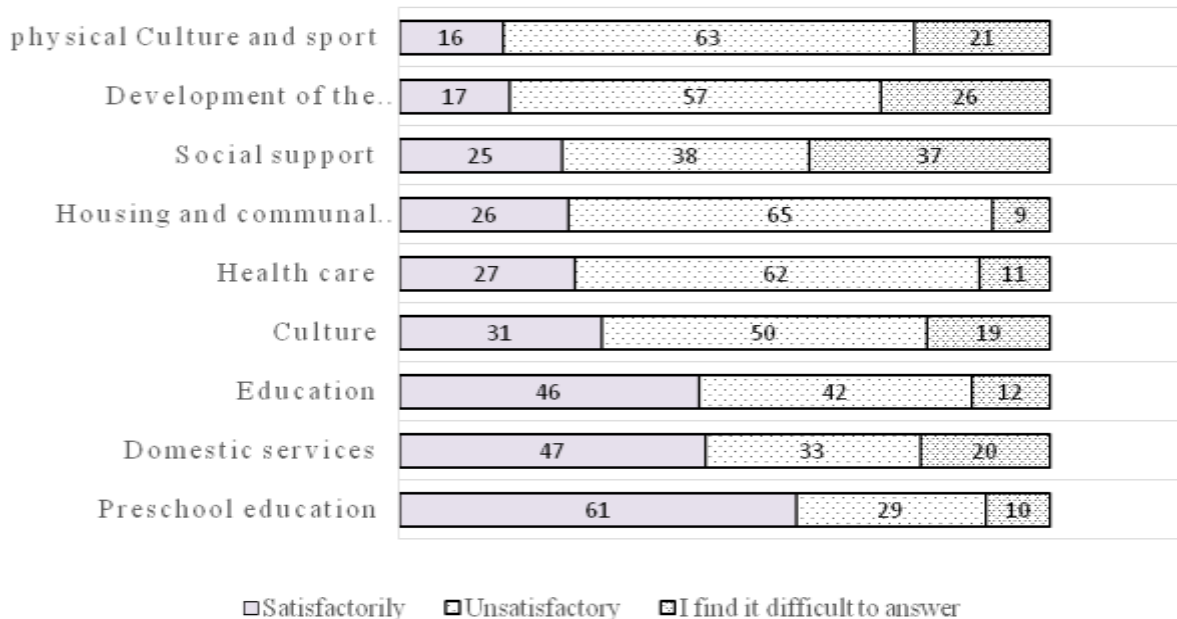


Figure 2 - Satisfaction of young rural residents of Pavlodar region with living conditions,%

The measures taken by the state to improve the social situation of rural youth and, thereby, reduce their migration, were also insufficient to overcome the decline in the birth rate in rural areas, to stimulate the reproductive plans of young rural residents and improve their health. Rural youth on the whole give unsatisfactory assessments of the ultimate effectiveness of state policy in these areas. The reproductive mood of rural youth has significantly deteriorated in recent years. The average desired number of children in a family has significantly decreased: the share of those wishing to have only one child is already 40% (in 2009 this share was 25%), and the share of those wishing to have two children, three or more - 45 and only 13%, respectively (in 2009 61 and 15% respectively).

What shortcomings in the actions of the state and local authorities do villagers, includ-

ing young people, notice? This is, first of all, a delayed reaction to degradation processes in the social development of the village. There is a lack of attention of the authorities to the motivation of young people to live in the countryside, which is expressed, in particular, in the insufficient number of youth leisure facilities, as well as the targeted and slow restoration of sports facilities.

In general, there is no comprehensive approach, and the point approach gives very little, and sometimes even negative results.

### Conclusions.

1. Thus, the analysis of the changed trends in migration of rural youth and the influence of key factors on their migration showed a contradictory picture. Against the background of the growing influence of the need to improve the level of education and improve the status of employment and work-

ing conditions, as well as family networks as traditional catalysts for migration, the influence of state policy and practice of rural business as its main constraints has become more active. Statistical data and surveys indicate a decrease in real and potential migration of rural youth in recent years. But can this result be considered sustainable?

2. Despite the generally positive dynamics of social attitudes of rural youth since the early 2000s, which manifested itself, in particular, in the last decade (after 2011) in an increase in confident optimism, as well as in a decrease in anxiety and uncertainty about the future, we did not find any serious grounds to assert that the real consolidation of young people in the village is based on their growing interest in staying and working there. This is largely a forced situation, as evidenced by an increase in the scale of travel to work and seasonal migration, an increase in dissatisfaction with certain aspects of life (in terms of financial situation and living conditions in the village) and increased stress (a sense of lack of prospects). In addition, poverty problems are exacerbated, ranging from the most severe forms, when there is not enough money even for modest food or to buy clothes and other necessities, to prevailing relative poverty, when there is only enough money for food, inexpensive clothes and housing and communal services.

3. The real prospects for the development of rural space are, to a greater extent, an inertial option with a gradual differentiation of the socio-economic situation in rural areas, with a point growth of large, strong villages with successful farms and tourist centers, as well as with a gradual abandonment of small villages. In order to develop a more attractive investment option with innovative elements, it is necessary, at a minimum, to take an inventory of existing programs aimed at supporting rural areas and rural youth in terms of their systemic effect, which will make it possible to use existing resources more efficiently.

4. In order for positive changes to take place in the migration behavior of rural youth, it is necessary, first of all, to create attractive jobs based on new technologies and a system of living conditions in rural areas, taking into account the interests of young people, to create an attractive rural lifestyle in general.

5. According to the results of six focus groups conducted in 2018-2019 with the participation of rural youth studying in higher educational institutions of Pavlodar, the most powerful conditions for the re-emigration of young rural residents and their return to the

village after studying at universities are employment opportunities for suitable (qualified) work with adequate wages and prospects for solving housing problems (for example, through participation in programs to support young people in obtaining housing). Among the necessary set of social services and objects of the social sphere, objects of youth leisure and sports are especially important for students. It is also important to have the Internet and mobile communications, medical institutions, schools and kindergartens, high-quality roads connecting the village with the nearest large or medium-sized city, and regular transport links. According to the results of focus groups, the potential for re-emigration is less than 2–5%, but it will sharply increase (up to 30–50%) when the complex of the above conditions is created. However, this is true only for relatively large, well-developed villages and regional centers (with a population of at least 2000 people). There are many potential immigrants who value the attractiveness of the rural lifestyle.

6. State policy, first of all, should be aimed at stimulating the activity of rural youth and differentiated social support of young rural residents, taking into account the territorial, demographic and other characteristics of their situation, including:

- development of vocational guidance, increasing the availability of vocational education and encouraging people to receive it;
- targeted training and social support of young specialists, consolidation of young specialists in various sectors of agriculture, introduction of a system of orders for personnel training, taking into account the needs of local labor markets;
- assistance in the employment of graduates of higher educational institutions in their specialties, in the employment of unemployed youth, encouraging employers to create qualified jobs for young people, the development of youth entrepreneurship;
- support for the development of social infrastructure, taking into account territorial differences and the interests of young people;
- social support for young rural families with children, assistance in the employment of young rural women with small children, support in the construction or purchase of housing in places of permanent residence.

7. At the same time, special attention should be paid to strengthening state social support for a very small and actively disappearing layer of rural youth, formed by people with traditional values of the rural community,



and creating effective social lifts for them in order to support living in rural areas.

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