

**DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN RURAL VILLAGES AND  
MIGRANT ISSUE (THROUGH THE EXAMPLE OF OBLASTS IN  
CENTRAL CHERNOZEM REGION)**

Today the demographic situation in Central Chernozem region is such that there is a significant decrease in the number of indigenous people and its replacement by the foreign labor force. The author of the system is considered the main problems caused by these trends.

*Keywords:* labor migration, Central Chernozem region, demographic situation.

According to experts and analysts' estimates, peculiarities of regional politics formation in the field of interethnic relations depend, in the first place, on the demographic situation. The issue of people preservation is still acute for Central Chernozem region; it is, in particular, confirmed by results of the surveys conducted by Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat).

We consider it reasonable to present the demographic situation in the oblasts of Central Chernozem region from 2008 to 2014 in the form of a table. In some areas this time segment covers the working periods of two heads of regional administration, which allows to determine more precisely which of the governors has achieved considerable success in solving demographic problems.

**Table 1**

**Key figures for Belgorod oblast in 2008-2014**

Year	Belgorod oblast			
	Population size, people	Birth rate (per 1000 people)	Mortality rate (per 1000 people)	Natural population increase (per 1000 people)
2008	1 519 137	11,0	14,7	-3,7
2009	1 525 083	11,0	14,4	-3,4
2010	1 532 526	10,9	14,4	-3,5
2011	1 532 353	11,0	14,1	-3,1
2012	1 536 073	11,7	14,0	-2,3
2013	1 540 985	11,6	13,9	-2,3
2014	1 544 108	11,6	14,0	-2,4

As it follows from the table, Belgorod oblast manages not only to increase the birth rate, but also to considerably decrease the mortality rate, despite negative population increase. Active engagement of the population in birth rate increase programs, encouragement systems of consolidation in home area for native population, modernization of healthcare demonstrate that it is Belgorod oblast which is leading in the efficient politics of people preservation in Central Chernozem region.

**Table 2**

**Key demographic figures for Voronezh oblast in 2008-2014**

Year	Voronezh oblast			
	Population size, people	Birth rate (per 1000 people)	Mortality rate (per 1000 people)	Natural population increase (per 1000 people)

2008	2 280 406	9,8	17,7	-7,9
2009	2 270 031	10,4	17,0	-6,6
2010	2 335 380	10,2	17,0	-6,8
2011	2 334 809	10,2	15,9	-5,7
2012	2 331 506	10,9	15,6	-4,7
2013	2 330 377	10,7	15,7	-5,0
2014	2 328 959	10,9	15,7	-4,8

The situation is the opposite in Voronezh oblast. It must be admitted that social policy for the increase of birth rate pursued by the Governor A.V. Gordeyev is more efficient than the one pursued by his predecessor V.G. Kulakov; however, statistics indicate that mortality rate «froze» on a rather high level. In addition, according to the data of regional business publication *Ekonomika I Zhizn-Chernozemie (Economics and Life – Chernozem region)* [1], natural population loss in 2009-2014 accounted for 77 707 people (approximately 2 average municipal districts). Preservation of such negative dynamics in the presence of several industrial and technological parks on the territory of the region will lead to shortage of skilled labour which can be substituted for with not as much experienced migrants.

**Table 3**

**Key demographic figures for Kursk oblast in 2008-2014**

Year	Kursk oblast			
	Population size, people	Birth rate (per 1000 people)	Mortality rate (per 1000 people)	Natural population increase (per 1000 people)
2008	1 162 475	10,7	18,3	-7,6
2009	1 155 417	10,8	17,6	-6,38
2010	1 127 081	11,2	17,6	-6,4
2011	1 125 648	11,6	16,8	-5,2
2012	1 121 563	11,9	16,6	-4,7
2013	1 119 262	11,7	16,3	-4,6
2014	1 118 915	11,8	16,6	-4,8

Drastic decrease in mortality rate found in Kursk oblast is indicative of competent adjustment of these rates as a part of regional development strategy up to 2020. As shown by statistics, starting a new perinatal centre, substantial transformation of healthcare system and social support program for elder people bring their results: during the specified period birth rate has increased by 1,1 person per 1000 inhabitants.

**Table 4****Key demographic figures for Lipetsk oblast in 2008-2014**

Year	Lipetsk oblast			
	Population size, people	Birth rate (per 1000 people)	Mortality rate (per 1000 people)	Natural population increase (per 1000 people)
2008	1 168 814	10,8	17,1	-6,3
2009	1 163 348	10,9	16,5	-5,6
2010	1 173 513	10,9	16,7	-5,8
2011	1 172 026	10,7	15,2	-4,5
2012	1 165 916	11,6	15,3	-3,7
2013	1 162 235	11,4	15,3	-3,9
2014	1 159 866	11,6	15,4	-3,8

Qualitative development of particular economic areas in Lipetsk oblast, attraction of investors to the region and, as a result, formation of new jobs and increase of tax proceeds allow regional authorities to reach a new level of people preservation policy. At the meeting of administrative board held in February 2015 under the Governor of Lipetsk oblast O. Korolyov considerable attention was given, in particular, to the problem of preservation and increase of native population size. According to the head of administration, essential measures to achieve this goal include reduction of alcohol-related diseases rate, incentives for creation of close-knit families and increase of birth rate among the native population.

**Table 5****Key demographic figures for Orel oblast in 2008-2014**

Year	Orel oblast			
	Population size, people	Birth rate (per 1000 people)	Mortality rate (per 1000 people)	Natural population increase (per 1000 people)
2008	821 934	10,2	17,2	-7,0
2009	816 895	10,4	16,6	-6,2
2010	786 935	11,0	17,4	-6,4
2011	785 592	10,5	16,3	-5,8
2012	781 281	11,1	16,2	-5,1
2013	775 826	11,1	16,3	-5,2
2014	769 980	11,0	16,4	-5,4

Demographic situation in Orel oblast remains among the most strained in the region. Although the rate of natural population loss is still high, mortality rate in the area has decreased.

**Table 6**

**Key demographic figures for Tambov oblast in 2008-2014**

Year	Tambov oblast			
	Population size, people	Birth rate (per 1000 people)	Mortality rate (per 1000 people)	Natural population increase (per 1000 people)
2008	1 106 035	9,2	17,8	-8,6
2009	1 096 879	9,3	17,3	-8,0
2010	1 091 994	9,5	17,5	-8,0
2011	1 089 700	9,3	16,4	-7,1
2012	1 082 545	9,6	16,1	-6,5
2013	1 075 748	9,6	16,1	-6,5
2014	1 068 934	9,8	16,3	-6,5

According to Rosstat, demographically Tambov oblast shows the most depressive figures in the region: while birth rate is 9,8 per 1000 people, mortality rate is still high – 16,3 per 1000 people.

As it follows from the table, only 2 oblasts of Central Chernozem region can boast at least of mortality rate reduction if not positive rate of natural population increase. On the other hand, the situation in other 4 regions can be called depressive, which seriously affects general economic situation in those areas. As stated before, it happens more and more frequently that regional, municipal and local authorities have to face the problem of involving migrants into working at major enterprises. This kind of labour force is often not only low-skilled, but also culturally and civilizationally threatening for native population.

Living outside their homeland, migrants are forced to accept lower wages, which, in its turn, works in favour of some business owners. On top of that, in the estimation of specialists, certain villages in Voronezh oblast have already become nothing but shaped ethnic enclaves with only 30% of native inhabitants.

Naturally, offering migrants a job partially reduces the tension of demographic situation in depressed regions. However, if this is the only instrument for stabilization of population increase rate used, it makes local and regional

officials «forget» about taking measures aimed at birth rate increase and mortality rate decrease: shortage of skilled medical staff in villages has been pointed out as one of the most serious problems in Central Chernozem region. Also, wage level in the field of healthcare remains rather low.

Apart from underemployment among village native population, increase in the number of migrants may result in severe nationality conflict which can be caused by possible cases of drug-trafficking on the part of the migrants. Let us recall a serious conflict between native inhabitants and diaspora representatives on 1 July, 2011, in the village of Sagra in Sverdlovsk oblast. It was prompted by the request of native inhabitants: they asked the «guests» who were trafficking drugs to leave the village. Is it possible for such conflicts to happen in the districts of Central Chernozem region? How high are the chances of it reoccurring there?

In this context we would like to mention the construction of Voronezh Oblast Centre for Temporary Stay of Immigrants. In winter of 2014 several mass media reported that in a small village of Staraya Veduga (Semiluksky District) there may be built a special Centre for illegal immigrants to stay until they are officially deported back to their home country. It would be situated in a local school in the very centre of the small village. Local community was tepid about this initiative of local and regional authorities; they tried to make an appointment with a region deputy (V. Kliuchnikov, Speaker of regional parliament) and ask to stop the construction process [2]. Despite the villagers' protests, the construction of the Centre was continued. Local activists were promised that the construction of this complex would considerably improve social infrastructure of the village, allow to build new roads and create new jobs. However, there have been no attempts of infrastructure improvement so far [3].

And, finally, another contradiction, that should be brought to notion when the issue of solving demographic problems by means of migrants is covered, is formation of national enclaves, powerful ethnic diasporas which affect the decisions of local and regional authorities. Are the measures aimed at educating migrants in terms of Russian culture and values effective? According to a political

scientist A. Ryazanov, «Surveys show that civil identity is mainly characteristic of Slavic population. Russian people of different descent more often associate themselves with ethnic or religious identity[4]». We have to state that such opinion is confirmed in mass media reports of murders and other violations of law which often involve non-native inhabitants.

In summary, the solution of demographic problem in villages of Central Chernozem region should be based on formation of new socioeconomic birth rate stimulation tools, creation of new jobs, update of support methods for multi-child families. Focus on migration resources only, in its turn, may seriously aggravate confessional and ethnic conflicts for a variety of factors, including reduction of jobs for native Russian (Slavic) population, reluctance of entrants to observe the rules and follow the cultural practice of host region.

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