

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES AS A FACTOR OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH OSSETIA DURING THE PERIOD OF THE PLANNED AND ADMINISTRATIVE ECONOMIC SYSTEM¹

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Considering the opinion of a number of scientists, the revolutionary explosion in 1917 was not so much a natural change of economic formations, as a form of resolving the most acute contradictions of Russian society in the socio-economic sphere. One of the main contradictions was the lag of Russia from industrialized countries both in the direction of the development of technology and labor productivity and the general culture of the population. It is justified that the development of infrastructure services sector during the period of the planned economy contributed to economic growth and was important in solving the strategic tasks of the country's economic development for the effective use of material and labor resources, since insufficient level of its development is a significant deterrent to achieving economic growth, which requires state policy strengthening in relation to infrastructure services sector. Objects of social and household infrastructure create opportunities to meet both the biological needs of a person for creation of conditions for his survival as a member of a social community, and from the point of view of his existence and realization as a person. The formation of these minimal needs and the process of their implementation in relation to the Soviet period are insufficiently studied, which is explained by certain socio-economic reasons, one of which is disregard for the social needs of a person. The study of the socio-economic needs of the population, including in the dynamics of its development, is necessary for the more complete understanding of the social policy of the Soviet state, and determining the degree of its influence on the daily life of the people.

Key words: social sphere, income of the population, the presence of imbalances, socio-economic situation, essential commodities.

[И.К. Джииоева, Н.Г. Каберты, А.В. Техов Услуги социальной инфраструктуры как фактор развития экономики Южной Осетии в период планово-административной системы хозяйствования]

Учитывая мнение ряда ученых, революционный взрыв в 1917 г. был не столько закономерной сменой экономических формаций, сколько формой разрешения острейших противоречий российского общества в социально-экономической сфере. Одним из основных противоречий было отставание России от индустриально развитых стран как в направлении развития технологий, так и производительности труда и общей культуры населения. Обосновывается положение, что развитие сферы инфраструктурных услуг в период плановой экономики способствовало обеспечению экономического роста и имело важное значение в решении стратегических задач развития экономики страны для эффективного использования материальных и трудовых ресурсов, поскольку, недостаточный уровень ее развития является существенным сдерживающим фактором в достижении экономического роста, а это требует усиления государственной политики по отношению к сфере инфраструктурных услуг. Объекты социально-бытовой инфраструктуры создают возможности для удовлетворения как биологических потребностей человека для создания условий его выживания как члена социальной общности.

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сти, и с точки зрения его существования и реализации как личности. Формирование этих минимальных потребностей и процесс их реализации применительно к советскому периоду изучены недостаточно подробно, что объясняется определенными социально-экономическими причинами, одной из которых является пренебрежение к социальным потребностям человека. Исследование социально-экономических потребностей населения, в том числе в динамике ее развития, необходимо для более полного понимания социальной политики советского государства, выяснения степени его влияния на повседневную жизнь народа.

Ключевые слова: социальная сфера, доходы населения, наличие диспропорций, социально-экономическое положение, товары первой необходимости.

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The impact of the social sphere on the effectiveness of the entire reproduction process is essential for economic science and practice. This can be explained by the fact that production and social infrastructure, contributing to the creation of a common productive environment in a single reproduction activity, are of paramount importance in solving the strategic tasks of developing the country's economy and effective usage of material and labor resources. At the same time, it is important to balance the development of basic production and infrastructure, both production and social. The development of the economy of the study period shows that if the growth of main production is not supported by the expansion of all components of infrastructure, deceleration of scientific and technological progress, a decrease in the efficiency of capital investments, a drop in output and a decrease in the standard of living of the country's population begin [1, p. 35].

As is known, in the first post-war years, the main way to increase real incomes of the population was a systematic decrease in state consumer prices, while the real level of incomes of all segments of the population, including those with fixed monetary incomes, increased, the purchasing power of the ruble strengthened.

On September 1, 1957, the tax-free minimum income was increased from 250 to 370 rubles per month [14]. In general, wages of workers and employees had increased by 30% [25]. Over the next four years, the poor were completely exempt from taxation [12]. Since the first half of the 1980^s, the consumption fund had not provided the necessary level of average wages and the corresponding to it wage fund. The consequence of this was an equalization, when differences in the earnings of workers turned out to be less than differences in their work. This inevitably led to a drop in interest, the employee became estranged not only from the means of production, but also from the results and the process of work itself.

In the eighth, and especially ninth, five-year plans, regular centralized measures were carried out to increase wages, associated with the introduction of a minimum of 70 rubles per month. From 1965 to 1970, the average monthly wage increased significantly – by 22% in Georgia and by 13% in South Ossetia and amounted to 96.5 rubles [3, p. 244].

In 1976, the average monthly wage growth was 19% in Georgia, and in South Ossetia – 2.6%. The highest level of average monthly wages was observed in 1979, when its value reached 196,1 rubles in Georgia, 134 rubles in South Ossetia. This is not only the evidence of a rapid increase in this standard of living of the population, but also of the structural features of the employed labor resources of the region mentioned above. The faster growth of real incomes of the population of South Ossetia in relation to the republican indicators is also noteworthy. The largest upswing is observed in 1975 compared to 1965: in South Ossetia – 226%, in Georgia – 160%. In the future, in the 70^s, the growth of real incomes of the population of South Ossetia was more stable and closer on the pace to the indicators of Georgia. In 1978-1979 in Georgia 119 and 117%, in South Ossetia, respectively, 110 and 112% [17, p. 89; 3, p. 244].

In the analyzed period, according to the regional statistical office of the South Ossetian Autonomous Region, the total population was over one hundred thousand people. In working age, there were more than fifty percent of the population (in 1980 – 51.45 thousand people, and in 1988, respectively, 52.4 thousand people), in 1988, there were 27.7 thousand children under 15 years old in the region, only 16.5 thousand people older than working age.

Table 1

**Availability and employment of labour resources
 South Ossetian Autonomous Okrug (people)***

	Indicators	1975	1980	1988	Growth rate in (%)	
					1980 1975	1988 1980
1.	labour resources taking into account the push-pull migration	50827	52957	54252	104.2	102.4
2.	Employed in the public economy:	32767	36020	39083	106.0	108.5
	a) in the material production sectors	23674	25186	26631	106.4	105.7
	b) in non-production sectors	10093	10834	12452	107.3	114.9
3.	Full-time students aged 30 and over	5477	6176	6122	112.8	99.1
4.	Employed in household and personal subsidiary farms	11583	10761	9047	92.9	84.1

The table is compiled according to the regional statistical office of the South Ossetian Autonomous Region

Labour resources growth declined by 2.2 percent in 1988 compared to 1980 (Table 1). The largest number of workers, 26,631 people, was concentrated in the material production sectors, 12,452 people in the non-production sectors, 9047 people were employed in household and personal subsidiary farms.

One thousand eight hundred and twenty people graduated from Vocational Technical Schools. In South Ossetia, the system of vocational technical education began to

be introduced much later than in Russia and did not last long. In 1991, they ceased to exist.

The growth of specialists in the national economy had also led to changes in their distribution among industries. The analysis of these trends reveals the following features: the number of engineers increased at the fastest pace during the study period. In 1975, 1021 people were employed in the national economic complex of South Ossetia, and in 1985 – 3250 people. During the same period, the number of economists increased by 1.8 times, 1.6 times – agronomists, livestock experts, veterinarians and foresters, 1.8 times – doctors and other specialists. At the same time, the number of personnel who received vocational secondary education was growing. This made it possible in industry as a whole to increase the number of skilled workers during this period by 2.5 times, in agriculture by 1.8 times, in the sectors of non-material production by 1.5 times [17, pp. 75-78].

This trend towards the growth of specialists with higher and secondary education suggested the need to take it into account in the near term when developing a scientifically based concept of economic and social development of the entire region.

In order to replenish personnel in agricultural production, a correspondence branch of the Tbilisi Agricultural Institute functioned in Tskhinvali, with a contingent of 297 students. The existence of such a form of education played a great role, since during this period there were only 19 agronomists and livestock technicians with higher education and 113 people with secondary specialized education in agriculture. Moreover, in all collective farms of the Dzhávkii region during this period there was neither specialists with higher nor with secondary specialized education [23 p. 78,135]. The number of specialists with higher and secondary specialized education, employed in the national economy of South Ossetia in 1970 was 6 thousand people, in Abkhazia – 25.1 thousand people, and in Adjara – 198 thousand. Among them there were 3.7 thousand people with higher education in South Ossetia, 12.8 thousand people in Abkhazia, 10.2 thousand people in Adjara. Among 3.7 thousand people with higher education there were 324 engineers, 221 agronomists, 107 economists, 164 specialists of other specialties. The number of doctors of all specialties in South Ossetia in 1940 was 66, and in 1965 – 196 people. In the 80th year, the number of doctors reached 549 people, and the number of average medical personnel – 1370 people [17, p. 111].

In the study period, a relatively small decrease in the number of employees was noted in the complex of industries combining housing and public services and non-production types of consumer services. The number of people engaged in health care, education, culture, art had noticeably increased. In 1988, 3.4 million rubles were allocated for the development of the non-production sector for South Ossetia. The average monthly wage of workers and employees in the region was 160.3 rubles, compared to 148.2 rubles in 1985 [16].

The most important characteristic of living standards is the growth of consumer consumption, which is largely reflected in the indicators of retail trade.

During the study period, trade indicators improved significantly. The volume of retail turnover of state and cooperative trade for 1960-1970 was increased by 18.8 million rubles. The area of sales outlets in 1970 was 14,783 square meters [20, p. 93]. The retail turnover in South Ossetia by the end of the study period was 400 rubles (225 rubles less than the average in Georgia).

The average annual number of retail and public service workers reached 869 in 1960, and 1821 in 1970 [24]. However, the increase in retail turnover did not reach the full realization of monetary resources. As a result, plans for public bank deposits were significantly exceeded. The proportions between deposits and inventories changed in favor of the former. In 1988, the population of South Ossetia contributed 12.5 million rubles to Sberbank institutions, or 12.4% more than in 1985 [16].

Deposits of the population in South Ossetia had exceeded inventories by 3.3 times by the end of 1970. The absolute value of the average deposit in South Ossetia was 1350 rubles, in Georgia – 1625 rubles, in the former USSR – 1029 rubles [26]. However, given the scarcity of some essential goods in the 1970^s, the prevalence of cash stocks over inventories was not normal. During 1975-1985, the growth of retail turnover increased almost doubled in South Ossetia (Table 2).

Table 2

Retail turnover of state and cooperative trade (including catering)

	Total retail turnover	Distribution of total retail turnover					
		state and cooperative trade		retail turnover trade and catering		trade in cities and rural areas	
		state trade	cooperative trade	retail turnover trade	catering	in cities	in rural areas
1970	39.9	21.2	18.7	35.0	4.5	21.2	18.7
1975	54.8	31.2	23.6	48.5	6.3	39.2	15.6
1980	64.2	37.8	26.4	56.5	7.7	48.1	16.1
1985	75.6	45.7	29.9	66.7	8.9	56.9	18.7

Compiled by [26, p. 95; 17, p. 101,]

During the study period the total volume of trade turnover was dominated by state trade, the growth rate of which was ahead of the increase in trade turnover of cooperation. The share of catering almost doubled, but remained low, not reaching 10%. The total volume of trade turnover was dominated by urban trade, the share of which had exceeded the rural one by almost 3.5 times by the end of the study period.

Retail turnover per capita in South Ossetia was relatively low compared to Georgia, where it amounted to 665 rubles per year. The reason for this low indicator is that the rural population of South Ossetia covered part of the food needs from income from personal subsidiary farms. In addition, trade shortages affected. Insufficiently studied demand and the presence of imbalances in the structure of trade turnover did not allow to fully realize monetary income. As a result, the plans for deposits of the population to savings banks were significantly exceeded, the proportions between deposits and inventories changed in favor of the former [25]. This phenomenon is also characteristic of South Ossetia. The number of deposits in the savings banks of South Ossetia in 1970 was 30,100, and in 1985 – 58,800, that is, increased by 28,700. The number of deposits was 26630 thousand rubles in 1970 and 114897 thousand rubles in 1985. The average amount of deposits over these years increased from 884 to 1954 rubles [26, p. 94], which is generally more than in Georgia.

The important indicator for assessing the development of trade is the structure of trade turnover, the ratio of food and non-food products in it (Table 3).

The given data indicate that there were practically no progressive changes in the structure of the trade turnover, more than that, in 1970 the share of non-food products was 1% higher than the final result.

Table 3

Ratio of food products to non-food in the total volume of trade of the state and cooperative trade, including catering (%)*

	1970	1975	1980	1985
All products	100	100	100	100
including:				
food products	44	48	46	45
non-food products	56	52	54	55

Compiled by [17, p.95]

Consumer services were not at the proper level. In 1965, the number of enterprises, including ateliers was 114, and in 1970 – 175, but more than 90% of them were small enterprises; only 8 large consumer services facilities functioned in South Ossetia as a whole and 4 of them were in the city of Tskhinvali. The volume of sale of consumer services to the population in 1965 amounted to 408 thousand rubles, and it had reached 964 thousand rubles by 1970 year, 608 people [2] had been working in this area by the end of the eighth five-year plan. In rural areas, consumer services began to operate only by the end of the eighth five-year plan and the service was at a very low level, but again, everything depended on the financial capabilities of the region.

The number of consumer service enterprises had amounted to 210 by 1985. Among them there were 135 enterprises in rural areas. The volume of sale of consumer services to the population in 1985 reached 2824 thousand rubles (in comparable prices in 1981), that is twice as much as in 1970. The average annual number of workers in this area was 1,050 people, but this branch of the social sphere lagged behind the needs of the population and still needed significant improvement.

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