

Suicide as a Negative Factor in Reproduction of Human Potential of the Kurgan Region, its Determination and Prevention

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Abstract—The article notes a debatable nature of the concept of “human potential”, the criteria for its assessment, including economic, social and demographic indicators, and discusses the problem of reducing the demographic indicator of human potential in the Kurgan region, where the population has been steadily decreasing for more than five years due to migration decline and attrition. The author studies the problem of the negative impact of suicide, which, along with the natural mortality of the population, and other external causes, is a factor determining the process of reproduction of the regional human potential. The article describes the current state of a suicide level in the territory of the Kurgan region. The region is in the top ten regions of Russia with the highest level of suicides, this year an increase of the number of suicides in the region has been recorded, and to disclose the specificity of suicide determination is fundamental for developing preventive measures in order to increase the number of individuals in population in the region. The author conducted an empirical study of suicidal behavior of the Kurgan region residents using a questionnaire method. The results of an empirical study lay the foundation for the basis of a complex of measures proposed by the author for preventing suicides, including by changing the current criminal law (at the federal level), which correspond to the main areas of reproduction and development of human potential, but supplement them with specific legal measures. These changes will increase the level of the human potential demographic indicator in the territory of the Kurgan region and the Russian Federation as a whole.

Keywords—suicide, factors, prevention, Kurgan region, human potential.

I. INTRODUCTION

The content of the concept “human potential” remains the subject of scientific discussions, and is considered broad (as an aggregate of individuals being carriers of socially and economically significant qualities and abilities) and narrow (a potential ability of an individual to generate income and other socio-economic benefits) [1]. Considering the concept of human potential in a broad sense, we can agree with B. S. Pavlov, according to which “human potential of any community (of a micro and macro region, of a country as a whole) represents its human resources, possessing qualities and properties that determine potential development of this society (or its degradation)” [2]. Therefore, reproduction of human potential is understood as “renewal of the processes on creating human resources, as well as on their self-production

within the framework of a particular system of social relations” [3].

Economic, social and demographic indicators are the criteria for assessing human potential, these indicators all together constitute the Human Development Index. The demographic indicators include fertility, mortality, total life expectancy, etc. Moreover, a suicidal behavior of citizens affects the demographic indicators of human potential so that it increases the mortality rate, reduces overall life expectancy, and in case of suicide by people without children, it reduces the level of birth rate in the region, and also indirectly affects socio-economic indicators. Indeed, without physical presence of an individual as a carrier of intellectual and labor potential, his/her reproduction is impossible, and therefore preservation of the region’s population is a paramount task of the state authorities of the Russian Federation and of the local governments.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

At present, the problem of human potential is the subject of a comprehensive study of various sciences of the humanitarian cycle, including economic theory, sociology, management, psychology and other sciences. The prerequisites for formation of the concept of human potential are laid in the works of K. Marx, V. Pareto, D. Ricardo, A. Smith [4]. The theory of human potential development in Russia has undergone a significant change over time from a special economic concept of “labor resources”, which reflects the issues of manpower utilization and its distribution across various sectors of economy, leveling the problem of reproduction of labor resources, to “labor potential”, which laid the foundation for understanding a person as a subject of labor, possessing a variety of individual qualities implemented in labor activity, formation and reproduction of these qualities, with the following development of this topic within the framework of the theory of “human capital” (T. Schulz and G. Becker) as an aggregate of all human abilities and properties that can be developed with the help of appropriate investments, i.e. involving the employer’s investment in the development of workers (education, healthcare, training) as a means of increasing labor productivity and income. Subsequently, the developing idea of anthropocentrism in economic relations was transformed into a concept of human development, where the development of human potential is not a means of increasing profitability, but an independent goal of socio-economic relations in the society. The theory of

human potential development was described in the works of foreign (C. Griffin, D. Collins, A. Moris, J. Knight, A. Sen, and M. ul-Haq, R. D. Ehrenberg et al.) and Russian (M. L. Agranovich, O. N. Antonenko, S. N. Bobylev, A. O. Verenikin, A. N. Grechanov A. N., A. B. Doktorovich, V. P. Kolesov, O. V. Kuznetsova, N. E. Pokrovsky, A. A. Razumov and others) researchers [5]. The peculiarities of human potential research in certain regions of Russia are presented in the works of E. Krivokory, V. Strielkovsky, V. Fursov [6], E. V. Chuchulina [7], A. G. Shipovalov [8], A. V. Yarashev, S. V. Makar [9] et al. The analysis of the human development index begins with describing the demographic indicators of the population in a certain territory, therefore, studying the issue of determining the number, reproduction and attrition of the population is of transcendent importance, at this one of the factors affecting the population is consistency and mass character of suicidal behavior. Many domestic and foreign scientific studies have been devoted to the problems of suicide, in which suicide is considered from the point of view of sociology (for example, Ya. I. Gilinsky, G. Rummyantseva [10], A. Yu. Myagkov, S. V. Erofeev [11], E. Durkheim [12] and others), of psychology and psychiatry (I. Zalar [13], H. J. Moller [14], A. G. Ambrumova [15], G. V. Starshenbaum [16]), of criminology and criminal law (I. B. Boyko [17], D. A. Koretsky, E. S. Steshich [18], et al.).

The Kurgan region refers to the regions with negative demographic dynamics. According to the statistics, as of January 1, 2019, there were 834,7 thousand people in the Kurgan region, i.e. within 2018 the population decreased by 10.9 thousand people, with 61% of migration and 39% of attrition. The mortality rate in the Kurgan region within 2018 increased by 1.3%, thus, the region occupies 70th place in terms of mortality among 85 constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

The most common among external causes of death in the Kurgan region are suicides (23.9%) [19]. The Kurgan region is in the top ten regions of Russia with the highest suicide rate, with an indicator of 36.6 cases of suicide per 100 thousand people in the region (the average for Russia is 13, and for the Urals Federal District - 15.3) [20], while according to the criteria of The World Health Organization, the suicide rate of over 20.0 cases per 100 thousand people per year is considered critical [21].

Thus, the high level of suicides in the region is an urgent problem and, among other factors, prevents reproduction of the Kurgan region human potential.

The determinants of suicidal behavior include economic (high unemployment and poverty, a polarized income level that generates economic deprivation, combined with progressive inflation and rise in prices for consumer goods, protracted crisis in the economy), social (family and household problems, lack of social support for the population belonging to the "risk" groups, i.e. people with disabilities and orphans, lack of an effective mechanism for resocialization of people, deficiencies in living conditions, organization of life, culture, social services, as well as high conflict intensity in small social groups, i.e. in the family, among co-workers, among students in educational institutions), moral and psychological (defects in the moral sphere of individuals and social groups, religious contradictions, alcohol abuse and narcotization of the population, contradictions in the conditions of education and upbringing).

In the recent years, the Russian society has actively promoted the concept of suicidal behavior determination due to the information impact made on the information and telecommunication network "Internet", including social networks where thematic communities ("groups of death") form an individual's negative attitude to basic human values such as life and health, with the greatest impact on minors. According to the children's ombudsman A. Kuznetsova, an increase in the number of suicides among minors in the country is associated with suicidal publics. A similar point of view was expressed by the specialists in the Ural Federal District, according to the main external expert, psychiatrist, of the Kurgan region I. Soboleva, suicidal communities on social networks provoke suicides among minors, including in the regions with a higher standard of living, for example, in the Chelyabinsk region [22].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the course of the study, methods of system analysis of the current criminal law of the Russian Federation, content analysis of scientific literature and other publications, a statistical method, and also a sociological method were used. The author conducted an empirical study of the public opinion about the problem of suicide, determination of suicides and an impact of suicidal information on suicide. It was a survey (in the form of questionnaire), in which more than 735 respondents took part, of whom students (persons) under the age of 21 made up 62.2%, including minors 17.2%.

IV. RESULTS

The majority of adult respondents (54.7%) considered suicide to be a socially dangerous act, while 58.8% of minor respondents indicated that they did not consider suicide to be socially dangerous, since it does not cause harm to third parties.

The vast majority of respondents 83% are aware of the "groups of death", among the respondents 100% of minors, 5.9% of whom were the members of such groups. 86.9% of the respondents, including the minors who were in the "groups of death", after reading suicidal information (photo and video materials containing suicide scenes, written materials containing information about suicide methods, ideation on the topic of suicide, its justification and encouragement, etc.) did not reveal a desire to commit suicide. At the same time, none of the respondents made attempts to commit suicide immediately after viewing the information in the "groups of death", despite the fact that some respondents (12%) explained that they had made suicide attempts earlier, the attempts were not related to viewing such information on the Internet.

However, despite the fact that immediately after viewing the information in the "groups of death", none of the respondents had a desire to commit suicide, 58.1% of the respondents (including 59% of minors) believed that dissemination of such information poses a real danger to the society. Further, 54.2% of the respondents (including 52.9% of minors) indicated that it is necessary to arraign on a criminal charge for advice, guidance, provision of the information about suicide, even if these actions did not lead to suicide, 22.5% found it difficult to answer, and only 23.3% replied that there is no need in criminal prosecution.

More than 83% of the respondents stated a need for introduction of criminal liability for exhorting to commit

suicide through persuasion, offers, bribery, deceit, if these actions did not lead to suicide, and 8.1% found it difficult to answer this question. Besides, 70.7% of the respondents (including 88.2% of minors) spoke in favor of criminal liability for organizing activities to disseminate information about the methods of committing suicide, exhortation to commit suicide if these actions did not lead to suicide, and 12.3% found it difficult to answer. Among the main reasons causing a desire to commit suicide, the respondents note conflicts with peers (including conflicts in educational institutions) - 35% (50% in the group of the minor respondents), conflicts in the family - 29% (35%), lack of work/ financial straits - 20%, "unrequited love" - 13% (15%), mental illness - 3%.

V. CONCLUSION

It should be noted that the main measures contributing to development and reproduction of human potential, indicated by the researchers in the special economic literature on this issue [23] correspond to criminological measures to counter suicides.

Specifically, the general social measures to prevent exhortation to commit suicide are those that are not directly related to the impact on the persons who plot, prepare or cause somebody to commit suicide and on their victims, but objectively contribute to neutralizing or eliminating the causes and conditions of committing suicide.

Reaching stability in the economic sphere and implementation of the social state functions as a whole, as well as improvement of the economic situation in the region can be considered paramount among general social measures. Article 7 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation states: "The Russian Federation is a social state whose policy is aimed at creating conditions ensuring a decent life and free development of a person. In the Russian Federation, labor and human health are protected, a guaranteed minimum wage is established, state support for families, motherhood, fatherhood and childhood, for people with disabilities and senior citizens is provided, a system of social services is developed, state retirement pensions, allowances and other guarantees of social protection are established" [24]. Despite the fact that almost twenty years have passed since the adoption of the Constitution, its basic provisions in the required volume have not yet been implemented. In particular, the general social measures include:

- increase in wages, pensions, child allowances, unemployment benefits and other social benefits (including regional);
- ensuring employment (support for industry and agriculture);
- resource allocation for the minimum wage of the citizens;
- solution of housing and household issues;
- making changes into the existing taxation policy;
- reduction in consumer prices for essential goods and services;
- ensuring the stability of operational state management of property and economic activity, fighting against monopolization of the economy;

- strengthening the financial system and national currency, reducing inflation;
- improving the level of education and improving the quality of medical care, etc.

Improvement of the socio-economic situation in the country and in the region positively affects the psychological mood of the population and reduces the tendency to suicide, therefore, prevents incitement to suicide/exhortation to commit suicide. These areas of government bodies activity are also noted in the scientific literature on conservation, reproduction, development and realization of human potential [25].

Contrary to experts' opinion, among the main reasons for suicides, the respondents are still indicating economic and social factors, with the prevalence of the latter (which is confirmed, in addition to the results of the author's study, by the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs [26]). These factors can be taken into account for formulating the measures to prevent suicide in the territory of the Kurgan region, however, political as well as ethic and psychological factors also have a significant impact.

In compliance with the concept of human potential, according to B. G. Yudin, "a comprehensive aggregate of characteristics of human potential includes health (bodily and mental), which ensures overall human system capability; readiness for family life and parenting; knowledge and qualifications; adaptation to the social infrastructure; cultural and value-based orientations and psychological competence" [27]. Thus, effective reproduction and development of human potential is impossible in the context of spreading a destructive model of suicidal behavior among the residents of the Kurgan region. It reflects a low level of individual adaptation to public life, absence of stable prosocial value orientations and psychological health, and it needs to be corrected by developing appropriate countermeasures.

Arrangement of conditions for preservation, reproduction and development of human potential in the Kurgan region is designated as one of the priority areas in the "The Draft of the Strategy for the Socio-Economic Development of Kurgan Region until 2030". According to this document "the priority is aimed at creating the conditions under which a person is in demand, successfully develops, implementing his/her personal and labor potential, which will provide for natural demographic stabilization, slowing down, and ideally, "redirecting" the migration outflow, improving the quality of human capital in the Kurgan region" [28]. Among the measures facilitating reproduction and development of human potential by the government authorities, the following ones have been identified: rise in living standards of the population and labor market development and employment guarantee/assistance, rise in providing services for the population as objective factors in the development of the region as a whole; development of the education sector and public health improvement. At the same time, the abovementioned measures reflect improvement in the socio-economic sphere of the life of the Kurgan region population, at this leaving aside cultural and value-based orientations and formation of the psychological competence of individuals, i.e., development of a person's (existential) potential, which includes a detailed aggregate of characteristics of human potential. As B. G. Yudin points out, "some negative trends associated with the practical use of the latest technologies are

risk factors, that is, phenomena, processes, trends, etc. that create threats to conservation, reproduction, development and realization of human potential; other risk factors are cardinal changes taking place in the cultural and educational space of the development of young generations” [27]. Having stated that, we believe that introduction of measures aimed at developing personal potential, indicated among psychological measures to prevent suicidal behavior, will increase effectiveness of the measures to preserve, reproduce and develop human potential in the region.

Among the political and psychological measures to reduce risk factors for reproduction of human potential and prevention of suicides, it should be noted:

- creation of an effective system of interaction between federal, regional and municipal authorities and administrations as well as officials with a clear distribution of functions and responsibilities between them;
- increase of public confidence in governments and administrations at all levels, law enforcement agencies and courts by fulfilling basic obligations, by timely and rigorous implementation of legislative acts;
- expanding the scope of interaction between the citizens and government structures;
- restoration of the system of basic moral values on the basis of existing social relations (improving the culture of life, maintaining the authority of the family, parents, friendship, ideals of goodness, mutual assistance, etc.);
- change in public attitude (to negative) towards illegal methods of resolving domestic conflicts and violence;
- overcoming legal nihilism and creating a positive stereotype of legal behavior, reducing the amount of information that “romanticizes” the image of a suicide victim.

It should be recognized as positive appearance in the media of a significant number of programmes and articles aimed at legal education of citizens, victimological prevention, as well as of TV serials and TV shows demonstrating effective work of law enforcement agencies, etc. These measures have significant preventive potential and, as the study showed, are the main source of information about law enforcement.

The special measures of victimological prevention of suicide are:

- increasing effectiveness of the diagnostic activities of school psychologists by taking advanced training courses in the field of detection and prevention of suicides among minors;
- carrying out preventive measures with students of schools and universities, as well as with their parents in order to raise awareness of the signs of suicidal moods in humans and the causes of their occurrence;
- suppression of a conflict behavior by psychologists of educational institutions in the system of communication "student-teacher", "student-student";
- Organization of free courses of "mutual assistance" for the persons prone to suicidal behavior;

- The organization of telephone "hotlines" of psychological assistance to citizens;
- identification and preventive conversations of law enforcement officials with the administrators of “groups of death” from social networks, their timely identification and criminal prosecution.

One more direction in prevention of suicide should be considered improvement of legislative regulation of criminal liability for incitement to suicide (inducement to suicide). Incitement to suicide is a formal element of a definition of a crime which endangers the life and well-being of a person (Art. 110 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation). It is assumed that the person against whom the criminal act was carried out was physically capable of harming himself through his own actions. The fact that, in attempting suicide, the victim must be aware of the inevitability of death as a result of his own actions or at least of danger of the consequences of such an action (inaction) and must be in control of his/her actions, allows for excluding the life of persons with mental illnesses (which excludes sanity) from the objects of criminal assault, as well as life of minors, the elderly, those suffering from diseases distorting cognitive processes. Additional objects of the crime are health as well as the honor and dignity of a person forced to commit suicide as a result of ill-treatment, systematic humiliation of dignity. Both the body of the victim and his/her psyche are an object of a criminal assault when inciting to suicide. In accordance with Art. 110 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, a crime is carried out by direct physical impact on the victim’s body, as well as by both direct and indirect effects on his/her psyche, such a generic object is a healthy person, and a specific one is the psyche. The object of Art. 110 of the Criminal Code is generic, it can be any person who has reached the age of sixteen.

Federal Law as of June 7, 2017 N 120-Ф3 introduced a number of amendments to the disposition of Art. 110 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, i.e. qualifying features of the composition have been established and new elements of crime have been introduced, specified by Articles 110.1 and 110.2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. However, a detailed study of the mentioned changes allows us to conclude that there are defects in the regulation that lead to violation of the consistency of legal norms that criminalize incitement to suicide and sequences of their application.

In particular, it seems inappropriate to criminalize the actions provided for parts 1-3 of Art. 110.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (“Exhortation to committing suicide or assistance in committing suicide”). The indicated compositions are formal, which means that it will be almost impossible to prove in practice the motive for exhorting or counseling to commit suicide. So, the volunteers analyzed potential “groups of death” with more than 100 thousand subscribers, according to the analysis, near-suicidal materials were found in only 1.5% of publications, but even in this content there was no direct call for suicide [29] or the evidence can be reduced to absurdity. Many people may become criminally liable, for example, sellers of ropes and other items that may be used as a tool for committing suicide; persons who reposted images with the approval of death on social network; or even parents who talked to their children about possible consequences of suicide.

By analogy, it is necessary to replace the formal composition with material one in Art. 110.2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (“Organization of activities aimed at exhorting to commit suicide”), wording part 1 as follows: “Organization of activities aimed at exhorting to commit suicide by disseminating information on methods of committing suicide or pushing for suicide, which lead to suicide or attempted suicide. ”

Besides, it should be noted that Part 1 of Art. 110 and Part 4 Article 110.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation form similar compositions, differing only in methods of committing a crime, at this, it should be mentioned that threats, ill-treatment and systematic humiliation of human dignity cause a greater negative effect on the victim than persuasion, suggestions, recommendations, etc. That is, within the meaning of disposition of Art. 110.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, the criminal act stipulated by it carries a lesser public danger than the act specified in Art. 110 of the Criminal Code. With that in mind, the disproportion of sanctions of the aforementioned compositions is striking: Part 4 of Art. 110.1 of the Criminal Code specifies a possibility of imprisonment for a period of 5 to 10 years, and in part 1 of Art. 110 of the Criminal Code - only from 2 to 6 years. In order to impose a fair punishment, we consider it necessary to tighten the sanction of part 1 of Article 110 of the Criminal Code, and to mitigate punishment for committing a crime under Part 4 of Art. 110.1 of the Criminal Code.

In addition, the legislator did not specify in Art. 110.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation specially qualified compositions for the specified acts committed by a group of persons in collusion or by an organized group, as well as in a public speech, a publicly displayed work, in the media or on information and telecommunication networks (including the Internet), resulting in suicide or attempted suicide. These qualifying features are contained only in Part 3 of Art. 110.1 of the Criminal Code with a formal elements of crime. Thus, we consider it necessary to supplement Art. 110.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation with the above qualifying features with material compositions.

In Part 6 Article 110.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, sanctions must include deprivation of the right to occupy certain positions or be engaged in certain activities by analogy with the previous parts of this article, because absence of this type of punishment in the part can only be a stimulus for increasing the scale of criminal activity. Consequently, in the current criminal law that regulates incitement to suicide and related compositions, there is a violation of consistency in fixing the qualifying signs of crimes, disproportion of sanctions to the nature and degree of public danger of such acts, lack of unity in the system of types of punishments imposed, which negatively affects the preventive potential of these norms.

Thus, suicide prevention measures should be systematic and consistent both at the federal and regional levels, in order to increase effectiveness of their application, covering all spheres of life in the society, including by changing the legislative framework, which will create favorable conditions for preservation and reproduction of human potential in the territory of the Kurgan region and the Russian Federation as a whole, on the basis of reducing an impact of such a risk factor as suicidal behavior of citizens.

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