

CONDITIONS AND COURSES OF ECODEVELOPMENT IN OPINION INHABITANTS OF SELECTED MUNICIPALITY IN SWIETOKRZYSKIE VOIVODESHIP

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ABSTRACT

The area covered by protected areas in Poland sums up to 33,1% and amount of it varies as far as single regions are concerned; the region with the highest percentage of areas covered by them is in Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship – 62 %. There are 72 municipalities in Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship among which in 49 protected areas cover more than half of the area. These areas are usually landscape parks and protected landscape areas. One of those 49 is Sobkow municipality, which is covered by protected areas in 72 %.

The research was conducted among 103 inhabitants, who expressed their opinions in questionnaires. This dissertation presents the courses of development preferred by the inhabitants of municipality in the aspect of sustainable development. The research was based on inhabitants' opinions concerning particular courses of development, i.e. tourism, services, handicraft, industry and small business, folk culture and art, agriculture, food processing, and wildlife protection. Moreover, the inhabitants pointed the most urgent courses of actions for local governments from the following: financial security, social and health welfare, shaping the consciousness of social role, development of municipality's economic potential, shaping and protecting of environment, shaping of spatial structure, safety of inhabitants.

The results show that agriculture and agricultural products and food processing are the most preferred courses of development on the protected areas of Sobkow municipality (commune, gmina), while the inhabitants chose the development of industrial potential, health and social welfare to be the most important courses of actions for local authorities.

Key words: eco-development, rural areas, protected areas, protected landscape area

Introduction

Landscape parks and protected landscape area should constitute natural enclaves of an equable and constant development where basic rules of nature preservation are observed. Therefore the formation of principles of an appropriate regional development based on the concept of constant and moderate development, especially in valuable areas where nature is preserved, is particularly significant. Development conditions of the protected areas are the result of both the potential of natural resources of those areas as well as of objective exterior factors shaping the position in the whole area.

Regional development can be defined as a process of economic, social, cultural and political changes leading to the rise of the level of residents' prosperity through the process of transformation from less advanced states to the ones more advanced and complex (Adamowicz 2003). What belongs to the tasks of a gmina is especially securing a harmonious development, i.e. balance between social and material elements of the gmina, as well as between economic and ecological ones. In order to achieve that, the gmina performs a variety of its own tasks, which boil down to four groups:

- economic, spatial and ecological order; shaping economic development, space planning and protection

of the environment

- technical infrastructure (roads, water-supply, public transport, etc.)
- social infrastructure (educational system, social welfare, etc.)
- order and public safety (for instance fire-fighting service) (Wiatrak 2003)

Gminas may, and even are obliged to, prepare and accomplish strategic plans on their own as well as search for the most efficient strategies of regional development. The strategy of regional development embraces certain purposes and a general way of acting of a subject within the scope of the most significant and crucial decisions concerning the future of a given area. This strategy, as a management tool, enables us to work efficiently and to select appropriate solutions and directions of activity. Working out a strategy of commune development requires an active participation by involving commune authorities, its administration, external experts, representatives of local society as well as district and voivodeship government and the voivode (Poskrobko 1999). The basis of the strategy efficiency is accepting it by the society, which can be achieved by involving the regional society in the process of strategy building, especially regional authorities and opinion-shaping circles.

This paper aims at presenting courses of socio-economic development favoured by the inhabitants of Sobkow gmina, 72 % of which is situated in Włoszczowsko-Jedrzejski Protected Landscape Area and Checinsko-Kielecki Landscape Park.

The scope and methodology of research

The research consisting of setting the courses of development of protected areas in Swietokrzyskie voivodeship include, among others, recognising nature and landscape value of protected areas in Swietokrzyskie voivodeship. This research has been carried out since 1998. The stock-taking of environment components was limited to basic factors conditioning multifunctional and balanced development of rural areas and agriculture i.e. identification of soils, identification of water and soil conditions and plant cover.

This paper is based on personal research, in particular: survey results, meetings with Sobkow authorities and inhabitants concerning development. The surveys were particularly prepared from the perspective of possibilities for protected areas development and they included households' representatives. People with different level of education took part in it, including mainly people considered as leaders according the notion presented by Siekierski (2004) that mainly such people set the courses of development actions within particular rural community.

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The number of questionnaires addressed directly to inhabitants was 230, out of which 123 were filled in and 103 were analysed. In the group of questioned inhabitants the majority were women, 19 men filled in the questionnaire. 17,5 % of respondents had professional education: 17,5 % secondary education, 51,5 % higher education, others had elementary education. The respondents were mainly white-collar workers (72,8 %) and farmers (1,9 %). The survey carried out concerned: favoured courses of development of research area, ecological awareness, possibility of maintaining agricultural and turistic activity, problems of everyday life making the development difficult, some demographic aspects, development chances and obstacles. Statistic data and materials obtained from gmina – mainly local plan for bringing land into cultivation – constituted supplementary element of the research.

Sobkow is a typical rural gmina in Swietokrzyskie voivodeship with a total area of 145 sq km, inhabited by 8 225 people and a population density of 56,5 (population growth rate is " - 3,64" %). There is 66,7 km of water supply network and 0,1 km of

sewage system. There are 462 business entities according to Polish Classification of Activity (PKD). It is mainly trade – 174 entities. Investment outlay for water management amounted to the total of 269 600 PLN out of which 269 600 PLN were spent in 2002 for water intake and water supply. The total surface of soils is 9 598 ha in which land have 8 366 ha and arable land have 6 613 ha. There are 2 525 heads of cattle and 13 062 heads of swine.

Courses of development of Sobkow gmina in the opinion of its inhabitants

Taking into consideration external factors a question, about institutions' influence on gmina's development, was asked. In the opinion of respondents it is as follows: the most favourable influence have gmina's self-government units (53,9 %) and agricultural consulting centres (32,3 %). Such institutions as political parties and trade unions have negative influence on the situation. Among all respondents 64,1 % are conscious of the fact that they live in a protected area.

Gmina's inhabitants take indifferent attitudes, particularly over such social issues as organisational abilities (23,8 %), enterprise (17,6%), and authorities' initiative (29,7 %). 37,3 % of respondents maintain that the inhabitants identify themselves with their region, 31,3 % claim that they are hard-working and determined; 35,7% indicate social pathologies as the negative feature.

As far as the influence of the spatial structure on the gmina's development is concerned, 53,9 % of respondents stated that the aesthetics of landscape and availability of terrains have a positive influence (48,0 %) and 50% pointed at the location in the region.

Most of the courses of actions of the gmina's authorities mentioned in the questionnaire were thought to be the most important by the respondents, and the percentage of particular answers was as follows: health care and welfare – 53,4 %, shaping the social awareness and attitude – 35,0 %, developing the economic potential of the gmina – 49,5 %, protection of environment - 37,3 %, material status - 41,7 % and safety of inhabitants - 52,9 %.

As far as the cooperation with other gminas is concerned the respondents think that there should be actions connected with planning and carrying out investments (53,5 %), building and exploitation of waste dumps (59,8 %) and health protection (64,6 %)

The respondents believed the following courses of economic development to be of highest for gmina:

- agriculture – 55,9 %
- agricultural and food processing – 46,0 %
- tourism – 54,5 %

- environmental protection – 50,5 %
- services – 44,6 %
- handicraft – 39,6 %
- culture and folk art - 37,6 %
- industry and small-scale production – 46,9 %

Later on the respondents answered the questions concerning barriers and chances for development in abovementioned courses of development.

As main barriers for development of tourism in gmina they mentioned:

- lack of financial resources for such a development – 39,2 %
- lack of economic instruments supporting such a development – 39,6 %

While a chance for development they saw in help in free legal and economic consultancy services (44,1 %) and credit guarantees (47,0 %).

In respondents' opinion the main obstacles for services development in gmina were:

- unprofitability of such an activity – 39,0 %
- lack financial resources for such a development – 41,0 %

While a chance for development they saw in means of transport tax allowances and exemptions (41,2 %), help in free legal and economic consultancy services (41,2 %) and credit guarantees (41,4 %).

In respondents' opinion the main obstacles for handicraft development in gmina were:

- lack o economic instruments supporting handicraft – 33,7 %
- lack financial resources for such a development – 40,6 %

And as a chance for development they saw again in credit guarantees (43,4 %) and property tax allowances and exemptions (41,2 %)

In respondents' opinions main obstacles in development of industry and small-scale production were:

- lack of investors supporting development of industry – 41,6 %
- lack of economic instruments supporting such a development – 39,8 %

Again, a chance for development would be in free legal and economic consultancy services (37,8 %) and credit guarantees (46,0 %).

In respondents' opinions main obstacles for development of environmental protection were:

- lack of financial resources for such a development – 37,2 %
- lack of interest of gmina's inhabitants in environmental protection – 34,7 %

Again, a chance for development would be in free legal and economic consultancy services (39,6 %) and credit guarantees (44,4 %).

In respondents' opinions main obstacles for

agricultural and food processing development in gmina were:

- lack of investors interested in processing development – 36,7 %
- lack of financial resources for such a development – 36,9 %

And as a chance for development they saw again in credit guarantees (41,1 %) and property tax allowances and exemptions (42,9 %)

The main obstacles for development of agriculture in gmina were in respondents' opinions the following:

- unprofitability of agricultural production – 34,3 %
- lack of organised market for produce – 34,7 %
- lack of positive patterns to follow – 35,1 %

Again, a chance for development would be in free legal and economic consultancy services (41,8 %) and credit guarantees (45,4 %).

As the most important objectives concerning gmina's economic potential development the respondents mentioned:

- promotion of well organised and specialised farms – 52,5 %,
- presenting an offer for the prospective investors – 53,5 %,

The respondents thought the influence of the protected area on the gmina's development to be: neutral in the following aspects: industry, shaping and protection of environment, agriculture and tourism.

According to the respondents the problems listed above are the most urgent and should constitute the priority in the field of the gmina's activity:

- Extending and repairing roads – 64,7 %
- Creating new working places and curbing unemployment – 70,6 %
- Organised collection of litter and disposing of illegal waste dumps – 69,0 %.

Conclusion

Despite many limitations resulting from nature preservation and infrastructure deficiencies the gminas situated in protected areas give the inhabitants of rural areas the possibilities for development because of chances for multifunctional development, among others, through tourism or health foods production. This kind of actions require special form of subsidising, i.e. they should first of all obtain financial resources for multifunctional development, especially for creating new non-agricultural working places and for creating infrastructure for nature preservation and structural changes in agriculture. Moreover, business entities should have the chance to obtain subsidies in recognition of limiting conventional production for the environment friendly one in protected areas in order to level their chances on

the market, which would be favourable for active nature preservation. Such instruments would force the multifunctional development based on ecological farming, tourism and services concerning leisure activities. These instruments already exist in Poland, for example agro-environment program since September 2004. There exists the necessity to intensify such actions in order to obtain larger resources from other sources assigned for this goal. There exist, moreover, the need to introduce a program promoting such actions for nature preservation in order that inhabitants interested in it have information on where and how to apply for resources assigned for this goal, because there is a minutely knowledge on this field and farmers ask about it.

The improvement of life quality, natural environment preservation and extension of economic potential are the basic and strategic goals of the actions of local authorities and local community.

Because of its geographical situation in relation to industrial centres of the region the gmina has little employment possibilities outside agriculture, which constitutes an adverse factor.

The result of the research carried out shows that agriculture constitutes a favoured course of economic activity in the gmina area (55,9 % of respondents). Agro-alimentary processing and tourism – mentioned by respondents on further positions (respectively 46,0 % and 54,5 %) – give also chances

for multifunctional development. The course and type of proposed agriculture in this gmina is explicitly pro-ecological, that is based on ecological farming. The role of ecological farming in durable and eco-development of protected areas is particularly important because of agriculture being the dominating course of development on these terrains.

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