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State Regulation of Social Policy During the Global Pandemic: Russian Experience and Foreign Practice

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Abstract. The focus of the study is the global pandemic COVID-19 and its negative impact that includes high mortality and pressure on the national and world economies. The author analyzes effective functioning of information and communication channels in the social sphere, related to reports of public health, prevention of outbreaks of epidemics and pandemics. There are evident problems with the delivery of information to various social groups about therapy, vaccination, which is also complicated by the fact that not all countries are sufficiently developed in a “digital” format, as well as domestic policies, norms, customs, personal biases, religion, news avoidance, quarantine fatigue, etc. All these factors increase the risks of destabilization of the socio-political system, increase the number of socio-political protests, and worsen the reputation of government and management bodies at different levels of political systems of states. The article analyses the theoretical aspects of the category “social policy” as one of the main directions of public policy and management. The author analyzed international experience and practices of state regulation of social policy during the global pandemic. The main attention was paid to social and economic support during the COVID-19 pandemic in contemporary Russia and the peculiarities of sectoral measures.

Key words: global pandemic, pandemic of coronavirus infection, pandemic COVID-19, social policy of the state, public policy and management, social support of citizens

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Introduction

The problems of the study are most relevant in the context of the social nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the degree of its impact in relation to specific territories and regions, this is especially important for the Russian

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Federation because of its territorial extent. The restriction of mobility carries a socio-psychological burden for the population, and, as a rule, economic costs that affect the representation of the state in this crisis period. In this regard, adaptive social processes formed and implemented by the Russian state on the basis of socio-political theories, research and practices are of special importance.

The specificity of the situation with the coronavirus pandemic lies in the uniqueness of the actions of governments of different countries, which determines the wealth of managerial crisis experience that should be studied. The actions of political leaders and political institutions have transformed, a new awareness of cross-border threats has emerged, which have spread to health care, economic and socio-political systems. Therefore, it is important to explore new mechanisms of the state's social policy in the current crisis situation.

The global pandemic affects the social sphere of an individual's life. She demonstrated that with all the coverage of the disease, the response to it is local, as a rule, within one state. In this regard, effective response methods depend on the level of development of public administration, the political situation, the use of social technologies and innovations, on the perception and behavior of citizens. The coronavirus pandemic has affected rich and poor, urban and rural segments of the economy, developed and developing countries and communities in different ways. It has formed a new political agenda for the medium and long term.

Social Policy of the State in the Era of the Coronavirus Pandemic in Russia and Abroad: Theoretical Aspects

The spread of the COVID-19 virus in the world caused not only a pandemic and mass death of people, but also provoked a huge wave of social and economic problems for most states, aggravated the global socio-economic crisis caused by anti-epidemic measures. In each country, this has materialized into an aggravation of social problems, resulting in mass unemployment and a significant decrease in citizens' incomes. This caused an urgent demand for urgent response measures from States, and on a scale never seen before.

According to statistics, only from March to October 2020, 1,414 measures aimed at social protection of the population in 215 countries of the world were implemented in the form of unemployment benefits, disability certificates, subsidizing social security contributions, direct cash transfers to the population, cash transfers or interest-free loans to businesses to pay wages to employees. However, these measures cannot be called systemic, despite their significant scale, they could not cover all categories of the population in need. In addition, these measures had a huge difference in the amount of costs for the needs of the population, depending on the country.

Based on this, the formation and implementation of an effective social policy in the face of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the

consequences caused by it, takes priority positions for many modern states, and the Russian Federation is no exception here.

For a full understanding of the thematic direction, let's consider the basic concepts of social policy. In the scientific literature, there are several interpretations of social policy that have evolved throughout the development of the state and society, as well as the systematization of scientific ideas about the system of measures of state structures aimed at supporting their citizens. Exploring the historical conditionality of the formation of social policy, one can also point to the ancient Greek philosophers in the person of Aristotle, who declared the need for the state to feed its people, take care of their well-being, strive for the common good.

In Modern times, the English philosopher T. Hobbes, and later prominent representatives of German classical philosophy I. Kant and G.V.F. Hegel developed the idea of the duty of the state to its people, highlighting social justice as an indisputable moral value. Scientific judgments in this direction were first formulated by the theorist of early (utopian) socialism, the French philosopher S. Fourier [1].

He was the first to start reasoning about social policy, raising the question of the need for the state to provide social guarantees to its citizens, that is, certain obligations that it assumes. Of course, the interpretation of S. Fourier was only the first step towards the development of the idea of the need for social obligations of the state to its population in the form of systemic measures, expressed much later in social policy. From our point of view, the main merit of S. Fourier is precisely in the formulation of this thesis, the idea of the need for social policy, and this happened at the beginning of the XIX century. At that time, the development of the state and society was a very progressive idea. Even though the theory of S. Fourier [2], along with A. Saint-Simon [3] and R. Owen [4], is commonly called utopian socialism, they laid the foundations of the concept of the welfare state. In the late XIX–early XX centuries, the scientific and theoretical foundations of social policy were formed. This happens through the efforts of sociologists and economists. M. Weber, V. Zombart [5; 6] and a number of other researchers are trying to identify the features and characteristic features inherent in social policy, build concepts of ideal models of the social impact of the state on society in the context of ensuring social justice, highlighting along with social also “personal policy”. M. Weber in his writings rightly puts social policy in the economic field, at the same time suggests considering it in the political plane [5]. It is during this period that social policy acquires the status of a part of economic policy and is institutionalized.

In political science, an idea of the modern essence of social policy has been formed. From the point of view of researchers, this is one of the priority types of state policy. However, today there is no unified approach to the content of the phenomenon of social policy. Rather, this position remains very controversial, depending on the political ideology that dominates the political system of states,

approaches to building state social policy are very polar. Starting from a liberal approach, in which the tools for ensuring earnings and self-realization in life should be provided by the state, and the rest depends only on the citizen, how skillfully he was able to use it. On the other side is the socialist approach, where one of the most important goals of the existence of the state is equal access of citizens to social benefits, and here tools are no longer as important as providing every citizen with these benefits in the broadest sense, this concerns free access to medical care, education, including higher education, assistance in employment and state regulation of the minimum income for everyone. In this model, the amount of social obligations imposed by the state on its shoulders often becomes too much for it, and it suffers a fiasco.

Therefore, very few countries in the modern world can afford to implement social policy in such a way, which ultimately allowed us to come to the ideal desired model of a welfare state. Scandinavian countries are most often cited as an example of the socialist model. It should be noted that their economy is socially oriented and allows achieving low polarization in the incomes of the population, and hence the standard of living, which is one of the main goals of the ideologists of socialism.

However, the overwhelming majority of the states of the world community face a dilemma about choosing the ratio of social assistance to the population and the opportunity to develop the economy and society on a competitive basis, excluding the risks of economic losses and socio-economic parasitism on the part of society. This economic approach is close to the Social Democrats, who are building a balance of social support for citizens and stimulating their own social activity, which allows them to achieve bright successes in certain cases, for example, in Germany. But even the Socialists and Social Democrats were forced to increase the direction and intensity of their social support towards citizens. Social problems were comparable to the tsunami, for example, in Uruguay during the coronavirus pandemic, poverty increased by 38%. Liberal economies led by the United States also did not leave their citizens alone with the lack of work, income, and access to medical care. Measures of social support for citizens are of an unprecedented scale for many countries. The pandemic forced humanity to rethink once again the approaches of states to building social policy, exposing the fragility of the liberal model.

The governments of foreign states and Russia were forced to implement several measures of social support for their citizens in various directions. Consider the most popular of them. Measures of direct support to citizens and families include:

- Increasing the amount of social benefits;
- Subsidies, grants, soft loans, vouchers;
- Postponement of tax payments and other mandatory payments to a later date;
- Payment of state subsidies for partial compensation of employees' wages.

Measures of indirect support for families and citizens were expressed in support of business, primarily to preserve jobs and prevent mass unemployment. Business structures were supported with various financial and tax mechanisms, among which are:

- Preferential loans for business;
- Provision of grant support;
- VAT reduction;
- Provision of tax holidays.

The state also subsidized workers' wages and stimulated non-traditional forms of employment, such as remote work and short-term employment. Our analysis of sources and research literature has shown that in addition to these measures of social support for the population and entrepreneurs, which are conditionally typical, since they were applied with minor adjustments in many countries of the world, there are also forms of support of a more unique, less widespread nature. Among these social policy measures are:

- Facilitating the employment of certain groups of citizens, including migrants, students, disabled people, demobilized military personnel, such measures have been implemented in China, Canada, Australia;
- In Germany and Belgium, additional leave was paid at the expense of the state to parents who have young children under 12 years old and are unable to work due to the closure of educational institutions during the pandemic;
- Social payment to employees who are in remote employment mode to compensate for expenses spent on electricity, heating, purchase of office equipment (moderate cost), or other materials necessary to create a "home office" – implemented in Belgium;
- China has actively developed digital platforms focused on vocational training and retraining;
- In Australia, financial support was provided to higher education institutions for uninterrupted student learning;
- In Australia, Belgium, Turkey and Canada, governments have stimulated an increase in the scale of charitable activities by providing preferential taxation, increasing the share of grant support and other financial mechanisms [7];
- Additional support for indigenous peoples has been provided in several states, for example, in Australia and Canada.

Analyzing the above-mentioned measures of social support of the population in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, we note that for the most part they are effective and have had a positive impact on the support of the target groups of citizens and communities they were targeted at. Taking into account the fact that the pandemic and the crisis phenomena caused by it continue to affect the incomes of the population, the level and even the lifestyle of the population, we believe that the expediency of adapting these measures to the Russian reality can be quite productive and able to smooth out the severity of a

number of problematic areas. Of course, the Russian model of social policy has its own specifics, regulatory and financial constraints, however, in our opinion, it needs to be expanded and additional measures to support the population and social groups.

Social and Economic Support During the Pandemic COVID-19: Features of Sectoral Measures in Modern Russia

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the formation of new approaches to the implementation of the state's social policy, as well as the measures implemented to provide social support to citizens, which has somewhat reduced the level of socio-economic tension. Of course, the virus has affected the life of every person, and put many in difficult conditions of existence. In this regard, the prevention of various negative phenomena affecting the fulfillment by the state of its social guarantees, various sectors of the economy, the credit and financial sphere, requires the implementation by the state authorities of coordinated, balanced anti-crisis policy measures equally directed to the sphere of social security of citizens, budget planning, regional development, credit and financial, tax and economic spheres.

Monitoring the implementation of world practices in providing social support allows us to state the existing differences due to the resource capabilities of specific states. However, for all States, without exception, measures in the field of employment of the population are quite characteristic, consisting in preserving jobs, protecting incomes, including those employed in the informal sector, providing alternative work [8].

Thus, according to the experts of the World Bank, in 2020 alone, more than a thousand anti-covert social protection measures related to various financial payments, insurance payments, wage subsidies were implemented by various countries of the world.

Considering the situation in the Russian Federation, it should be noted that the starting point for the implementation of anti-Covid measures can be considered the adoption of the "National Plan for the Prevention of the importation and spread of coronavirus infection", adopted in February 2020.

Also, an important element of the relevant administrative and managerial decisions were the decrees of the President of the Russian Federation regulating various measures of social support following a direct appeal to citizens.

It can be said that the coronavirus pandemic turned out to be a kind of tester of the political and managerial system of modern Russia in terms of its focus on fulfilling its social obligations. The negative impact of COVID-19 on the economy, especially considering sanctions, however, did not affect the solution of such tasks as ensuring the health and well-being of Russian citizens [9].

We can agree with the statement that, in general, the authorities of the Russian Federation reacted quite quickly to the relevant threats and challenges not only within the framework of preventive and restrictive measures, but also

in the context of the implementation of administrative and managerial measures to support the population and business, which can be structured in several directions

- Cash payments, which are a direct financial instrument assistance not only to traditional recipients, but also to a much larger category of citizens;
- Expanding the package of social services to the population, including in a remote format, extending the validity of various documents, the activities of volunteer and volunteer organizations;
- Measures of economic support for small businesses and service sector enterprises most affected by the restrictive measures taken;
- Adjustments to labor legislation aimed at preventing the reduction of jobs and wages, including through remote work tools.

Speaking about specific general measures taken by the Government of the Russian Federation, we will highlight the extension of licenses and permits, a moratorium on routine business inspections, a special procedure for providing public services, the transition to a remote form of interaction, etc.

In the healthcare sector, work has been done to redesign medical institutions and laboratories, provide free medicines and test systems, organize mobile medical teams, simplify the import and labeling of medicines, etc.

In the tax sphere, attention is drawn to the announced tax holidays, reduction of insurance premiums for small and medium-sized businesses, extension of the deadlines for submitting tax reports, exemption of sole proprietors, SMEs and NGOs operating in the sectors most affected by the pandemic from taxes for a certain time.

Programs of preferential loans, including mortgage loans, restructuring of existing loans, deferred payments, credit holidays for citizens, a moratorium on bankruptcy of enterprises from affected areas were also introduced.

These measures were applied to certain sectors of the Russian economy that were most affected by the restrictive measures taken due to the COVID-19 pandemic, namely: leisure and entertainment, tourism and hotel business, catering, education, household services, air transportation [10].

It is obvious that the implemented anti-crisis policy aimed at supporting individual sectors of the economy has demonstrated its effectiveness, which makes it possible to use such a “sectoral” approach to providing targeted assistance, providing for the development of specific measures of socio-economic and financial support.

Separately, it is worth mentioning the measures of social support for the population:

- Lump-sum payments to pensioners and children;
- Additional payments to medical workers;
- Increase in the maximum unemployment benefit;
- Retraining of the unemployed;
- Cancellation of certificates for registration of social payments;

- Remote format of sale of medicines;
- Remote examination of disability determination and disability extension;
- Extension of subsidies for housing and communal services;
- Mitigation of migration legislation.

As we can see, the leading role of the state in the aspect of the development and subsequent control of the implementation of social support measures in the post-coronavirus era allows us to state a certain crisis of the classical liberal model of public administration delegating certain functions. The state, as part of its social contract with society, on the contrary, assumes additional functions of regulating administrative and managerial processes not only within the framework of social policy, but also supporting individual sectors of the economy.

It can be said that the protectionist role is assigned exclusively to the authorities, which must create or implement a set of measures that not only protect the interests of the population, but also help maintain the stability of business [11].

Another feature of the implementation of various social support measures is the increasing involvement of regional authorities in these processes. So, S. Cohen notes that the new challenges of the pandemic require more publicity and action from the governors and mayors of large cities. As an example, he cites the Mayor of Moscow, S.S. Sobyenin, whose experience and measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus infection were subsequently also implemented in other Russian regions. At the same time, the adoption of certain restrictive decisions was made by the head of the subject, considering the epidemiological situation, the opinions of Rospotrebnadzor, virologists and infectious disease specialists [12].

At the same time, both at the federal and regional levels, the social policy of the state in the conditions of the pandemic is built in the paradigm of minimizing damage to citizens, families, vulnerable groups of the population from the restrictions of habitual life, which in turn requires the development of interaction between regions and the need to stimulate the economy of the regions in order to meet the needs arising during such crisis phenomena for example, in disposable masks, gloves, other personal protective equipment, production of PCR tests, etc.

One of the main tasks of the modern state is the conservation of human capital. In the new conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the solution of this kind of task requires coordinated actions of the federal and regional authorities, which should be specifically regulated by relevant regulatory legal acts aimed at protecting not only life and health, but also preserving the economic activity of the population, its material well-being.

Thus, having considered certain features of the measures of social support of the population and economic measures of business support adopted in the Russian Federation, we can state their sufficient effectiveness, which made it

possible to neutralize the risks of restrictive measures aimed at countering the spread of coronavirus infection in the context of potential reputational risks of federal and regional authorities, as well as contributing to maintaining a certain level of loyalty on the part of the business, communities, citizens, including socially unprotected, what ensured the stability of the political system at this difficult stage.

Conclusion

The analysis showed how states and societies of different countries form and implement counteraction measures in response to the global impact of COVID-19 in the context of social policy. The crisis of the capitalist economy has intensified due to the closure of borders, there has been a decline in business activity, the number of jobs has decreased and a large-scale decline in the level of well-being of people has taken place, exacerbating poverty all over the world. At the same time, some local communities have mobilized their resources to strengthen their social solidarity and mitigate the social costs of the ongoing global disaster. We state that different states approach social protection as a method of maintaining the well-being of citizens beyond the parameters of a weakened market economy.

The analysis found that states can introduce innovations and promptly make socio-political decisions in response to crisis phenomena (a sharp local spread of infectious diseases). States are evolving into more advanced state systems, becoming more stable. An interdisciplinary approach is needed, covering political science, economics, business, public administration, psychology and public health research, to analyze the impact of COVID-19 in states and appeal to effective socio-political practices related to government decisions and institutional changes. The focus of the research should be shifted to theoretical and methodological research of such solutions related to COVID-19, stimulating future studies of global pandemics and their impact on states and societies at different levels of their functioning.

The analysis demonstrated that the vectors of development of corporate social responsibility, legislation, economic relations, financing, government intervention in the market, disclosure of financial information, unregulated financial sectors, and the growth of crime related to coronavirus have changed.

The States that were the first to apply innovative methods in social, economic and technological structures and processes in order to combat the coronavirus pandemic minimized its costs. During the crisis, states and enterprises successfully rebuilt to ensure economic survival. They revised social contracts, rethought activities and consumption parameters, mobilized resources, switched from global standards to local ones. The developed innovative models made it possible to preserve and ensure economic and social development in order to preserve the quality of life.

For Russia, in the context of the spatial and temporal prospects of COVID-19 and its impact, the question of understanding the dynamics of social

policy during and after the global pandemic remains relevant. A critical assessment of the social policy of the state allowed us to form a paradigm of the existence of Russian society in the coming years. The pandemic has opened new political implications related to conceptual, theoretical problems, analysis and modeling, social mobility and migration, sustainability of public health, alternatives and disagreements in the context of devastating global disasters. The developed imperative will be crucial for optimizing public health and making social and economic decisions.

Thus, the global pandemic has revealed the inadequacy of health and social systems of all states, even advanced ones. At the beginning, the priority for governments was to prevent the spread of infection, and then the main task was to minimize the negative consequences of decisions already made, combat fraud and corruption in this area, make up for financial losses, optimize resources spent, increase transparency in the work of governments and government decisions, counteract disinformation and information speculation of destructively oriented political forces, substantiate new ethical the principles of coexistence of society, etc. These problems have not yet been fully resolved by the states.

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Государственное регулирование социальной политики в период глобальной пандемии: российский опыт и зарубежная практика

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Аннотация. Актуальность темы исследования обусловлена тем, что глобальная пандемия COVID-19 интересует исследователей с точки зрения применения разных методологических подходов: ее изучают политологи, социологи, экономисты, математики, ученые в сфере медицины, безопасности, биологи и др. Основной фокус исследования пандемии сосредоточен на высокой смертности и негативном воздействии на национальную и мировую экономики. Насущность исследования обусловлена недостаточной эффективностью функционирования информационно-коммуникационных каналов в социальной сфере, касающихся проблем здоровья населения, предотвращения вспышек эпидемий и пандемий. Существуют проблемы с доставкой информации разным социальным группам о терапии, вакцинации, что осложнено еще и тем, что не все страны достаточно развиты в «цифровой» сфере, а также внутренней политикой, нормами, обычаями, личными предубеждениями, религией, избеганием новостей, усталостью от карантина и т.п. Все эти факторы повышают риски дестабилизации социально-политической системы, увеличивают количество социально-политических протестов, ухудшают репутацию органов власти и управления на разных уровнях подсистем политических систем государств. В статье рассматриваются теоретические аспекты категории «социальная политика» как одно из главных направлений государственной политики и управления, представлены различные подходы и концепции. Вместе с тем проанализирован зарубежный опыт государственного регулирования социальной политики в период глобальной пандемии, выявлен лучший опыт и практики реализации. Важное внимание уделено социальной и экономической поддержке в период пандемии COVID-19 в современной России, дан анализ особенностей секторальных мер.

Ключевые слова: глобальная пандемия, пандемия коронавирусной инфекции, пандемия COVID-19, социальная политика государства, государственная политика и управление, социальная поддержка граждан

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