Problems of Development of Social and Charitable Activities in the Jewish Autonomous Region

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the issue of charity which is highly topical in the contemporary society. The subject of the research is the peculiarities of social and charitable activities in the Jewish Autonomous Region (JAR). The authors aim to reveal the problems of the development of charitable activities in JAR. Having analyzed statistical data and a survey of JAR residents, it is revealed that social and charitable activities are underdeveloped in the region. There are a small number of charitable organizations in the region that cannot provide help to all categories of people in need. In many respects, the development of charitable activities is retarded by the problems of material well-being of potential benefactors, as well as the lack of awareness of the population. The authors hold the view that it is necessary to implement a clear regional policy in the field of charity and promote ideas of charity among the residents of the region. The authors also put forward a suggestion that the creation of a public register, which will compile needs of citizens facing hardship, for one or another gratuitous service, can contribute to the development of charitable activities in the Jewish Autonomous Region.

Introduction

Nowadays, social and charitable activities are an important means of helping citizens who experience hardships. It allows us as intensively as possible to integrate people with disabilities and single pensioners into society, and also contributes to their rehabilitation and, to a greater extent, helps to improve the quality of life of this category of population.

The urgency of this problem is enhanced by the motivation of modern society to carry out social and charitable activities, to be indifferent to someone else’s misfortune. So far the problems of providing assistance to citizens who found themselves in difficult situations have been particularly acute in the region as well as in modern Russia.

In modern Russia, the problem of charity holds a special place in the social sphere of society. These issues are reflected both in the practical activities of the region and in the works of specialists studying charity as a means of helping people who experience hardships.

Literature Review and Theoretical Concepts

L.F. Babkina and A.V. Vlasova [1] doing research on the place of charity and its forms in the system of social values identified charity as a social tool to help people facing difficult situations. The authors believe that the basis of charity is social care, need for providing help and support for socially vulnerable citizens.

Unfortunately, not all citizens are ready to support charity. L.F. Babkina and A.V. Vlasova identified the main reason for the lack of private donations, namely the lack of awareness of citizens
about charitable organizations [1]. According to the authors, one of the important conditions for charity is the development of socially oriented civic consciousness, attraction of citizens’ attention to social problems of people finding themselves in difficult situations.

The understanding of the meaning and content of this social phenomenon by each member of our society helps to develop charitable activities.

Yu.P. Averin [2] studying the state and development of the social potential of charity in Russian megacities noted a widening gap between different groups of the population in terms of material well-being, access to medical services and education. This primarily concerns people with disabilities, orphans, the homeless, pensioners, etc. According to the author, charity is one of the means that helps to mitigate social stratification and helps fight social and physical diseases.

Yu.P. Averin said that there were different types of charity. He grouped them according to the meaning (gratuitous, voluntary assistance, donation of funds), to the focus (gratuitous, unselfish and voluntary assistance to the poor), to the moral content (mercy, moral duty, kindness), to the organizational content (fundraising for the needy, volunteer activities). The understanding of the meaning, content and necessity of charity is a necessary condition for the development of charity.

N.G. Privalov [3] studying charity from the point of view of economics considered this concept as a type of investments in the product of non-political and non-profit action. The motivation of philanthropists making donations to the non-profit sector of the economy is very significant; it depends on the material and spiritual interests of a sponsor (benefits from the state, tax benefits, advertising, etc.).

G.L. Tulchinsky [4] examining the problems of charity in modern Russia found ways of solving them, namely to form public opinion, draw attention to the problems of charity, fill in gaps in the legislative framework, develop the non-profit sector and the charity system, develop the information and organizational infrastructure of charity, inform the public about programs and projects, form a database and information service market, create a service of administrative support, to explain the mechanisms of charity, to discuss the problems of organizing charitable activities by professionals at all levels of government, etc.

I.A. Tolmacheva [5] considered Russian charity from the points of view of systemic, essential and institutional approaches. The author defined the criteria that characterized the biological, ethical and rationally egoistic essential models of charity. It is noted that the biological nature is the basis of archaic charity, the ethical one is the basis of orthodox and secular charity, and the rational-egoistic one is characteristic of philanthropy.

T.A. Mordasova [6] studying the social model of charity as a factor in the development of the civil society institution, came to the conclusion that the key factor that allowed limiting charitable activities was the unpreparedness of authorities and society for the transition to new relationships. The analysis of the problem reveals a contradiction, i.e. the state understands the importance of charity, but does not focus citizens’ attention to the fact that charity provides a resource for self-expression and self-realization of a person.

Today, the development of charitable activities in Russia contributes to the unification of civil society for solving social problems. Many researchers note that recently charity has become a widespread phenomenon in Russia; even the economic crisis has not prevented it. According to Federal State Statistic Service, as of April 18, 2018, there were 8,549 charitable foundations and 1,615 charitable organizations, movements and institutions in Russia.

Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) published a study on the issue of charity. The experts took the last decade from 2007 to 2017 as a basis. Their analysis showed that over 10 years the number of citizens who were involved in charitable activities had increased significantly. In 2007 only 50% of respondents participated in various charity events, in 2017 about 70% did charitable activities [7].

The study showed that the number of citizens who were willing to participate in charitable activities was much smaller than those who did not say about this readiness. Perhaps a low level of
citizens’ trust to charitable organizations indicates the lack of information about the activity of these organizations.

The results of many studies conducted in Russia confirm the findings of this survey. For example, the research work of I. Baranova and O. Zdravomyslova *Attitude of the Population to Charity in Russia*, having conducted in eight cities of Russia, emphasizes that the very problem of the development of charitable activities is little known to Russians. So, for example, the survey participants from the city of Khabarovsk believe that there are no charitable organizations in their region, although in fact there are over a hundred of them. In most cases, the distrust of respondents are created because of their ignorance of the non-profit sector, lack of information provided for residents of the city and the region about the results of activities of charitable organizations [8].

**Purpose and Methods of the Study**

**Purpose of the Study.** The purpose of this study is to reveal the problems of the development of charitable activities in the Jewish Autonomous region.

**Research Methods.** To achieve this purpose, the authors conducted a survey of JAR residents, namely 100 people aged 20 to 65, including 61 women and 39 men.

Our survey showed that among the inhabitants of the region 25% of respondents regularly participated in charitable activities, 47% took part in them from time to time. Most of them are women aged 20 to 50 who have higher education. 8% of respondents have never been involved in charitable activities. 20% of respondents said they would like to do charitable activities, but they do not have an opportunity. They set out different reasons, namely they have no free time, free financial and material resources, and they are uncertain about the targeted use of these resources.

42% of respondents preferred to send money using SMS to help a particular person or a child. 35% preferred to give clothes or food to those people who are in need. More than half of them are also women aged 20 to 50 years old. 15% of respondents said that they often help homeless people.

To the question “What charitable organizations of the region do you know?” 65% of respondents said they know about the charity canteen at St. Nicholas Church of the Birobidzhan Eparchy and about the Russian Red Cross. 19% mentioned the Mayak Charitable Public Organization. 10% of respondents did not know what charitable organizations are located in the region and 6% believed that there are no such organizations in the region at all. This is to say that the inhabitants of the Jewish Autonomous region are not informed enough about the activities of such organizations through the media.

More than half of the respondents (59%) said that charitable activities are not well developed in the Jewish Autonomous Region, 33% of the respondents said that they are completely undeveloped and only 8% of the respondents believed that charitable activities are well developed in the region. Almost 100% of respondents believe that it should be developed by means of assistance to vulnerable groups of the population.

**Results and Discussion**

Analyzing the state of charitable activities in the Jewish Autonomous Region, we face a problem, i.e. there is not enough public information about benefactors, beneficiaries and charity in the region.

At the regional level, the legal status of charitable activities in the Jewish Autonomous Region is regulated by the Law of Birobidzhan No. 248-OZ of January 28, 2004 on Charitable Activities in the Jewish Autonomous Region. According to the law, regional government bodies and local self-government bodies in the region can support charity participants in accordance with Federal and regional legislation. In order to provide this support, the governor of the region also established a Charity Coordinating Council.

Our analysis shows that there are three charitable organizations in the region, namely the regional branch of the Russian Red Cross, the branch of the All-Russian Charitable Fund ‘Russian Children’s
Fund’, and the Mayak (Lighthouse) Charitable Public Organization. They are entered in the Register of socially oriented non-profit organizations of the region [9].

In addition, in the Jewish Autonomous Region there is the Blagoveshchenye (Annunciation) Charitable Foundation (Church charity). There are about 20 more associations, clubs, initiative groups that do not have a legal status of charitable organizations. For example, they include the JAR public organization Society for the Protection of Animals ‘Good Hands’; its main objective is to help homeless animals, appeal for donations in support of animals. They also include groups on social networks; their members are ready to provide assistance to low-income categories of citizens.

Through the analysis of statistical data based on the survey of JAR residents and the investigation of the charitable activities status in JAR, the main problems of the development of social charity in the Jewish Autonomous Region are as follows:

1. In the Jewish Autonomous Region, there are only three charitable organizations and one charitable foundation that cannot provide help to all categories of people in need.
2. Some inhabitants of the region are uncertain about the targeted use of these resources.
3. Lack of awareness of people’s participation in charity.
4. The inhabitants of the Jewish Autonomous region are not informed enough about the activities of such organizations through the media.

Conclusion

The analysis of statistical data makes it clear to us that today more than 20 thousand people, namely 6 525 unemployed pensioners, 13 274 disabled people and 751 children with disabilities need some kind support. In the Jewish Autonomous Region, there are only three charitable organizations and one charitable foundation that cannot provide help to all categories of people in need.

The development of charitable activities is retarded by the problems of material well-being of potential benefactors, as well as the lack of awareness of the population.

We believe the factors that can contribute to the development of charitable activities in the Jewish Autonomous Region are as follows:

- implementing a clear regional policy in the field of charity,
- doing voluntary activity, i.e. personal contribution in the field of charity,
- providing tax benefits and other preferences for benefactors,
- creating a positive image of charitable organizations, private benefactors,
- providing information support of charity,
- popularizing and disseminating ideas and values of charity,
- creating a public register, which will compile needs of citizens facing hardship.

References


