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Social innovations: main forms and issues of their implementation at the present stage of Russia's development

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Subject. The aggravation of such social issues as increased tension in the labour market, an accelerated rate of inflation, a drop in people's incomes, declining birth rates and increasing natural population decline, insufficient state social services, environmental pollution, and others has been typical for Russian during recent years. An introduction of social innovations in the operation of economic entities may serve as a solution for these social issues. Therefore, social innovations whose forms depend on the objectives, tasks, needs, and interests of economic entities as well as general conditions and factors of their presence become relevant.

Objectives. The goal of the articles was to study the main forms of social innovations and to identify the issues of their implementation and propagation within the contemporary conditions of the operation of economic entities.

Methodology. To achieve the set goals, the following scientific methods were used: dialectical, analysis and synthesis, generalisation, and comparison. The research was based on the study of relevant scientific literature and economic journals.

Conclusions. As a result of the study, it was established that the main forms of social innovations are social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, social cooperation, social partnership, and social contract. However, the process of propagating and scaling up social innovations in Russia is taking a long time due to the negative influence of objective and subjective factors. Among these factors are the following: lack of a single regulatory framework in the field of social innovations, uneven development of some regions of the country, lack of resources, regional budget deficits, etc. Thus, under these conditions, an effective state social and innovative policy determines the diffusion of social innovations. Using alternative methods and practices, it will help to reduce social tension, increase people's real income and life quality, which, as a result, should lead to an extended propagation of all results and factors of economic growth. The scientific novelty of this study is that it explains the content of the forms of social innovations that act as an efficient tool of state policy.

Keywords: social problems, social and economic development, forms of social innovations, social responsibility, public welfare.

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Introduction

In the current context, state structures are an important element of the operation of a social and economic system of the society. They help to reduce the negative impact in the social sphere, to ensure normal living abilities for each citizen, and determine the main areas of sustainable social development. Nevertheless, the aggravation of social issues has been typical during the recent years for many countries of the world, including Russia. Among them are a growth of unemployment and inflation, a drop in people's incomes, declining birth rates and increasing natural population decline, insufficient state social services, environmental pollution, etc. Such important social issues are solved through the development of an efficient state policy whose successful implementation is related to the formation of conditions for an accelerated transformation, primarily in the social sphere. The state and regional administration requires an introduction of modern methods which contribute to the positive effects for society. Therefore, it is necessary to form the innovative objectives of social development and new areas of state social policy related to the increased level of the development of human capital as people are the main drivers of the economic growth in the country. At the present stage, according to Tsvetkova & Tukkel [18, p. 106], "... Russian economy is being transferred to an innovative path of development... and state innovative policy is being improved".

Theoretical and methodological aspects and features of social innovations, as well as the issues of their implementation at the current stage are presented in the works of many contemporary economists (see, for example, Vasin [1], Veretennikova [8], Gamidullaeva [1], B. G. Ivanovsky [3], Kantor [4], Kozlova [14], Kraenkova [6], Mukhacheva [16], etc.).

At the regional level, the implementation of social innovations in Russia contributes to sustainable social and economic development. Uskova [17, p. 9] believes that "... the solution of the tasks related to the sustainable development of the country and its regions requires active steps to be taken by the authorities and the administration as part of the social and economic policy...". Therefore, the organisation of social enterprises in the regions of the Russian Federation, the expansion of the area of social entrepreneurship and cooperation, as well as the development of social partnerships and the conclusion of social contracts become innovative forms. In view of the foregoing, it can be argued that in order to achieve sustainable economic development, a state policy must be implemented which is based on the continuous social and innovative development and the implementation of human potential as well as the improvement of the population's welfare in a particular region with minimal risks and losses.

Let us consider the definition of social innovations based on the current level of the exploration of this topic in academic literature. According to Popov, Omonov, Naumov & Veretennikova [8, p. 39], social innovations are "... new ideas in the social area presented as products or services and aimed at the solution of social issues". Kantor & Kuznetsova [4, p. 17] stated that "social innovations are ideas, projects, and organisations aimed at the satisfaction of the society's needs and improvement of the population's life quality". The authors identify the following criteria for social innovation: novelty, from idea to implementation, effectiveness, the satisfaction of social needs, and the promotion of social development. The main features of social innovations are their cross-sector nature, openness and cooperation, network-wideness and comprehensiveness, shared consumption and production, interdependence of organisations, creation of new roles and relationships, improved use of assets and resources, as well as development of opportunities and intensification of resources. Thus, for example, Talerchik [15, p. 186] believes that "social innovations are largely the determination of new approaches and ways to use the existing social benefits and resources". He also noted that social innovations were the drivers of the increased life quality. Schreder, Menapache, & Shabunova [19, p. 218] stated that "Innovations are social to the extent in which they change social activities and are accepted and distributed in the society". Therefore, social innovations are an objective condition for sustainable social and economic development, although today their formation, implementation, and scaling are accompanied by a number of issues and barriers.

The goal of the study presented in the article was to consider social innovations from the point of view of the implementation of state social and economic policy of sustainable development based on the comprehensive analysis of theoretical studies of the forms of social innovations. It is reasonable to use this approach as there is quite a large number of social issues that have a negative effect on the social and economic development of each region in Russia. As a result, the main objectives of the study were the following: to study the forms of the implementation of social innovations, to identify the issues of their scaling and propagation at the regional level, and to determine the role of state policy in their distribution.

Research methods

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study includes scientific achievements of the researchers in the field of the development of social innovations. During the study, we used such general scientific methods as the method of formal and dialectical logic, analysis and synthesis, generalisation, and comparison. In particular, the dialectical method helped to identify the main features of social enterprises, social entrepreneurship, social cooperation, social partnership, and social contract. The analysis and generalisation of scientific literature as well as periodicals allowed identifying the issues related to the implementation of social innovations and justifying the role of state policy in their scaling and propagation. We used comparative methods to formulate the main scientific hypothesis and conclusions based on the results of the conducted research. Our scientific study is based on the publications of researchers from monographs and periodicals related to the studied issues.

Results

Social innovations are important for society as any innovative activity is one of the priority areas of regional development at the present stage because it is associated with social and economic changes and processes of technological transformation that may cause a significant social effect. On the whole, social innovations are considered as new technologies that are used in state management in order to ensure positive changes in social life, to solve pressing social issues, and to develop regional infrastructure. Universal diffusion of best practices of social innovations and successful practical implementation of state projects in this area have a positive social and economic effect on society.

The introduction of social innovations also contributes to the reduction of unemployment and social disparity, development of human capital, an increase in the income of households and provision of comfortable life conditions, an improvement of the social security of the population and environmental situation, the creation of an accessible environment for

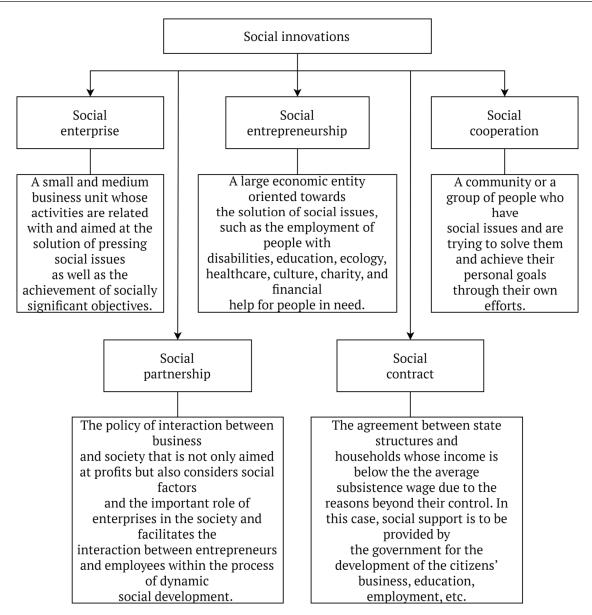


Figure 1. Forms of social innovations

every person, and the development of social infrastructure.

There are different forms of social innovations since social life is characterised by many social and economic phenomena and processes. Among them are innovative projects implemented in the social sphere that allow having a positive regulating effect on social development of a certain area. Therefore, we will mention the main projects in Figure 1.

The idea of social entrepreneurship is that the economic activities of businessmen are aimed not only at profits but also at the solution of social problems and at the achievement of the objectives of sustainable social and economic development. Contemporary scientists, particularly Kraenkova [6, p. 141], state that "social entrepreneurship is one of the most dynamically developing areas of activity worldwide". It can be argued that such a business has features typical of traditional entrepreneurship and charity activities.

The scale and the form of economic activities are not important but the business itself must correspond to the main criteria established for social entrepreneurship. Among them are employment of people with disabilities, production and sale of socially significant goods, environmental activities, helping social groups in need, etc.

Social entrepreneurship is usually initiated by a representative of a business community that implements different socially oriented investment projects (construction of treatment facilities and other environmental units, development of public infrastructure in the region of the company's operation, provision of additional social guarantees to employees, investments in the development of human capital, etc.).

The company may also develop programmes of corporate social responsibility that are aimed at the solution of important social issues and contribute to the achievement of social development objectives. In this case, the entrepreneurial sector of economy voluntarily accepts additional social responsibilities aimed at the improvement of life quality of the company's employees and their families as well as at the development of the local community in the region of the company's operation.

Programmes of corporate social responsibility go far beyond the mandatory norms and guarantees established at the state level and provided for the employees of enterprises. However, the development of such programmes is mostly typical for large businesses as their implementation requires significant funding. As a rule, small and medium-sized social businesses are involved as much as they can in social activities aimed at the solution of one or several social problems, such as employment of the disabled and orphans, participation in charity events, volunteering, etc. The government provides all kinds of assistance to socially oriented companies in the business sector, including various tax exemptions, government loans at low interest rates or even interest free loans, targeted financial support, etc.

Many innovative projects in the social sphere related to the solution of important social issues and the development of infrastructure are carried out based on the principles of public-private partnership. Both business sector funds and state resources are attracted for their implementation. They include different types of activities of the government and business community aimed at sustainable and dynamic development of the modern society. Such projects characterise social innovations as social goods or means for their creation. Plyukhina & Umnov [7, p. 155] emphasised that "in many developed countries the procedure for the registration of new social enterprises as well as some benefits and subsidies can be simplified".

Social partnership is one of the important areas in the development of social innovations. It is a special mechanism for the coordination of the interests of all participants of social reproduction based on the principles of equal relationships between them as well as equal cooperation. The subjects of social partnership include employed population, representatives of their employers, and state management structures in the form of executive authorities. The interests of all the involved parties in the field of social and labour relations and solution of other social issues are coordinated in the course of the implementation of social partnership.

The goal of social partnership is balancing the interests of each of the involved party of the existing labour relations. The state acts as the main guarantee of the performance of the accepted social agreements between the representatives of employed workers (trade union) and employers (unions and associations of entrepreneurs). The development of principles of social partnership is an important element of the process of increasing the business's responsibility to the society and enhancing its social orientation. In this case, the interests are coordinated through negotiations and the execution of agreements in the area of occupational safety management on the employer's side and adequate salary, observing the rights and freedoms of employees, providing them with social guarantees, etc. Today, social partnership is one of the innovative tools that allow combining the principles of economic efficiency and social justice are combined in the process of entrepreneurial activities.

Another form of social innovation is the fulfilment of various social contracts between state structures and households that found themselves in a difficult life situation and cannot solve their social issues on their own. They include, first of all, those households where the total income is less than the average subsistence wage per each family member due to the reasons beyond their control (loss of job due to staff reduction, having children, longterm incapacity for work, disability status, etc.).

Social contracts work as targeted social assistance from the government to those people who need help and support. In this case, an agreement is signed between them in order to improve the welfare of a certain household and the obtained funds must be used according to the designated purpose (for example, job search and further employment, job retraining and further education programmes, arrangement of one's own business, development of a subsistence farm, and so on). This type of social innovations allows some groups of citizens to overcome their difficult life situation that has developed due to certain conditions.

Therefore, the distribution of the experience of social innovations is the basis for the improvement of the population's welfare and life quality. It allows extending the economic possibilities, reducing social tension, and improving the relationships in the society.

Discussion

The conducted study of academic literature and periodicals dedicated to the existing forms of social innovations and their role in the economic development of Russia allows drawing a number of conclusions:

1) The study showed that social innovations have become a significant part of the system of social and economic relations and an integral component of the process of social reproduction in the developed world powers and developing countries as well. According to Terebov, Kuzmin, & Mukhachev [16, p. 61], "... innovations in the social sphere are a tool that helps to overcome economic, environmental, and social issues". At the same time, Pryazhnikova [9, p. 103] noted that the introduction of social innovations "... contribute to the development of inclusion and social justice, they become a guarantee of stability and adaptation of social systems to external influences and economic crises, that is to changing life conditions".

Meanwhile, Kondrashova & Kolontaevskaya [5, p. 85] believed that "social innovations can be implemented in non-commercial systems... commercial spheres... integrated structures". In other words, this tool is universal for all types of assets in organisations.

2) In Russia, state and municipal authorities are developing different programmes in order to support socially oriented entrepreneurs and implement an effective social policy aimed at the reduction of social inequality and improvement of the population's life quality and public welfare. Vasin & Gamidullayeva [1] stressed that "in today's Russia people start to understand that it is necessary to introduce social innovations"

3) The introduction of social innovations in Russian regions is only beginning and is now at the early stage of development. In our country there are also a number of problems that hinder the distribution of social innovations. Ivanovsky [3, p. 123] stated that "the main difficulties associated with the development of social innovations in Russia are limited financial opportunities and lowered activity of civil society aggravated by conservatism and wariness towards change". According to Tagirova, Kozlova, & Kopylova [14, p. 61], among the possible obstacles to the distribution of social innovations in Russia are "high risks ... the development from the idea to the final product takes a long time ... lack of comprehensive state support ... financial expenses...". Puzanov [10, p. 83] also noted that "The distribution of innovations in Russia is a pressing issue due to great distances in the country which become an obstacle for the spread of innovations".

At the same time, we agree with Sidorova & Petrova [12, p. 168] who believed that at the present stage in Russia "...public authorities, business structures, and public organisations... must actively participate in the development of the institution of social entrepreneurship".

4) Among the main issues that hinder the widespread distribution of innovative processes in the social sphere are the following:

- Firstly, the absence of a single regulatory framework in Russia for the distribution of practical experience associated with the implementation of social innovations and the development of innovative activities in the social sphere. In particular, people only started using "social contract" as a business term for targeted state help to those in need in 2012, while the interpretation of the "social entrepreneurship" category was legally established only in 2019.

- Secondly, there is still no system of state agencies which would be in charge of the overall management of the processes of social entrepreneurship, introduction of social innovations into practical activities of economic agents, and control of the timely performance of additional responsibilities to the society taken up by the country's business community. There are also no effective mechanisms for the conclusion of long-term contracts and agreements between the state and social entrepreneurship entities.

- Third, the current state policy of Russia has a more expressed economic component instead of social because the government focuses on the development of priority areas of the national economy. Under such conditions, the solution of social issues, including the distribution of the best practices for the introduction of social innovations, recedes into the background. There is also a lack of funds to ensure the proper operation and development of the entire social system in our country and the low level of support from socially oriented enterprises.

- Fourth, Russian regions are considerably different when it comes to the level of social development due to the absence of an efficient planning system and state management of the activities of the companies operating in the field of social entrepreneurship. There are also not enough own funds for these goals and financial aid to the regions of the Russian Federation provided from the federal centre is distributed unevenly. This leads to the fact that that in our country some regions have an excellent level of social development and improved life quality while others are stuck in a state of depression and stagnation.

- Fifth, external effects have a negative influence, which slows down the social and economic development of the country and of society as a whole. In particular, environmental factors and, most of all, the political situation in the world and the economic sanctions imposed against Russia have a negative impact not only on the activities of the state itself, but also on the development of the social sphere. The formation of state social policy can also be influenced by many non-institutional factors. For example, state structures or interested individuals who have considerable political and economic power can hinder the development of human capital, the redistribution of public welfare in favour of financially disadvantaged population, and a reduction in social inequality.

Comparing the obtained results with the experience of other countries (see, for example: Vercher et al. [22]), it should be noted that initiatives in the field of social security are changeable, and depending on the level of their resistance, they should be considered through the prism of radical or gradual innovations. According to Lee, Spanjol & Sun [21], social innovation are focused on knowledge redistribution as well as on the discovery and joint creation of social value. The study of the international experience on possible consequences for social innovations in the urban context conducted by Domanski, Howaldt, & Kaletka [20] showed that it is reasonable to study the ecosystem of social innovations as a heuristic model, which is especially relevant for social innovations of the municipal and regional levels.

Therefore, the path of development and improvement of state policy must be oriented towards the social sphere. For the social sector and social development to function effectively, the government needs to develop a successful innovative policy aimed at the provision of technological and socioeconomic development of the country based on the activation of innovative processes. Solovyova & Popov [13, p. 66] also stressed that "unlike traditional technical innovations, social innovations usually have a wider area of application, they emerge as a result of group creative work, and their effect is not expressed so quickly". At the same time, the innovative path of social development involves economic development and improvement of the population's life quality which is largely affected by the distribution of social innovations. The introduction of social innovations allows creating new social values and improving the social climate in a certain area or region of the country. According to Gersonskaya [2, p. 198], their introduction is also aimed at "... the solution of important socioeconomic issues and reduction of social tension, a decline in unemployment among citizens below the poverty line, and the improvement of life quality of all members of the society, which means that it has a positive impact on the improvement of social welfare".

Therefore, at the present stage, the state becomes the main initiator of social innovations, and state policy acts as the public and business space where the effective interaction between state institutions and business structures occurs. The application of innovative technologies in the social sphere contributes not only to the sustainable social development of the country but also to the increased efficiency of the management processes in the political, economic, environmental, and other important areas of society.

Conclusions

Social innovations are various new methods and practices primarily aimed at the improvement of people's welfare with less risks and losses as compared to existing methods. Explaining social innovations from the point of their influence on sustainable regional development, it is necessary to emphasise some of their specific features:

First of all, social innovations present a high level of novelty for a particular area.

Second, their formation and distribution involve the interaction between different subjects.

Third, they are implemented in the social space and are oriented towards the solution of many social issues.

Such innovations ensure the necessary conditions for a sustainable economic growth as people are at the same time a means and a factor of the modernisation of the national economy system on the whole and, correspondingly, of each territorial unit in particular. We also believe that the main entity that forms and implements social innovations is the state as it sets the "rules of the game" and basic social standards for all economic entities while the main goal for businesses is making a profit instead of solving social issues. As a result of the study which was aimed at the examination of the forms of social innovations from the perspective of the tools required for the implementation of the state policy of sustainable development of certain regions, we obtained the following results:

First of all, social innovations are among the most important modern tools for state regulation of the economy that is aimed at the development of human potential and improvement of life quality and social welfare through such forms as a social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, social corporations, social partnership, and social contract.

Second, among the issues associated with the distribution and propagation of social innovations at the regional level in Russia are the following: lack of a single regulatory framework for their introduction, lack of managerial state agencies in this field, differentiation of economic and social conditions in different regions, and a low level of social capital.

Third, the conducted theoretical analysis showed that at the current stage, state social and economic policy must include an innovative

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component. Only under these conditions will sustainable regional development be achieved.

The applied value of the study's results is that they can be used for the further analysis of the influence of social innovations on sustainable regional development. The study's results can be used for further research in the field of social innovations and the role of the state in sustainable regional development.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare the absence of obvious and potential conflicts of interest related to the publication of this article.

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Вестник Воронежского государственного университета Серия: Экономика и управление

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Социальные инновации: основные формы и проблемы реализации на современном этапе развития России

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Предмет. Для России в последние годы характерно обострение социальных проблем, таких как рост напряженности на рынке труда, ускорение темпов инфляции, падение доходов населения, снижение рождаемости и увеличение естественной убыли населения, недостаточное государственное социальное обслуживание, загрязнение окружающей среды и т. д. Одним из способов решения столь важных общественных проблем может стать внедрение социальных инноваций в практику функционирования хозяйствующих субъектов. В этой связи актуальность приобретают социальные инновации, формы которых зависят от целей, задач, потребностей и интересов субъектов экономики, а также общих условий и факторов их присутствия.

Цели. Целью статьи являются исследование основных форм социальных инноваций, выявление проблем их реализации и тиражирования в современных условиях функционирования хозяйствующих субъектов.

Методология. В процессе достижения поставленных целей использовались методы научного познания: диалектический, анализа и синтеза, обобщений, сравнения. Исследование построено на изучении актуальной научной и периодической экономической литературы.

Выводы. В результате исследования установлено, что основными формами социальных инноваций являются социальное предприятие, социальное предпринимательство, социальная кооперация, социальное партнерство, социальный контракт. Однако процесс тиражирования и масштабирования социальных инноваций в России происходит медленно вследствие влияния негативных объективных и субъективных факторов. Основными из них являются отсутствие единой нормативно-правовой базы в области социальных инноваций, неравномерность развития отдельных территорий страны, недостаток ресурсов, дефицит многих региональных бюджетов и др. Поэтому в таких условиях определяющей детерминантой диффузии социальных инноваций станет эффективных способов, методов и практик снизить напряженность в обществе, увеличить реальные доходы населения и повысить качество жизни, что в конечном счете должно привести к расширенному воспроизводству всех результатов и факторов экономического роста. Научная новизна работы заключается в обосновании содержания форм социальных инноваций, которые выступают эффективным инструментом государственной политики.

Ключевые слова: общественные проблемы, социально-экономическое развитие, формы социальных инноваций, социальная ответственность, общественное благосостояние.

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Конфликт интересов

Авторы декларируют отсутствие явных и потенциальных конфликтов интересов, связанных с публикацией настоящей статьи

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