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Social Order in the Russian Federation: A New Tool of Budgetary Policy in the Social Sphere

A.M. Lavrov^a, S.P. Solyannikova^b, A.G. Tyurikov^c^a National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia;^{b, c} Financial University, Moscow, Russia

ABSTRACT

In the article, the authors analyze the social results of the implementation of Federal Law No. 189 dated 07.13.2020 "On the State (Municipal) social order for the provision of state (municipal) services in the social sphere" in the pilot regions of the Russian Federation. One of the main social results is the satisfaction of citizens with the social services received within the framework of the pilot project. In this regard, the aim of the study was to assess the level of satisfaction of recipients for each tested social service in each pilot region. The index values of the satisfaction level are calculated based on the assessments of the recipients of these social services and are supported by the opinions expressed by citizens in focus group interviews. The article describes the specifics of the implementation of a social order depending on the region and the service being sold, the relationship between the level of satisfaction of service recipients and the quality of their provision, as well as the dependence of satisfaction on the justification of consumer expectations. According to the results of the conducted sociological research, the social order operating in the pilot regions showed a high social result – the satisfaction of service recipients is at a high level. The study revealed the advantages and bottlenecks of using social certificates in pilot regions. Based on the discussion of the research results with representatives of the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation and representatives of regional authorities, regional peculiarities and problems were identified and ways to solve them were proposed.

Keywords: social order; financial provision; budget policy; budget expenditures; social services; social sphere; social certificate; satisfaction; quality; efficiency of budget expenditures

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INTRODUCTION

Federal Law No. 189 of 13 July 2020, “On the State (municipal) social order for the provision of state (municipal) services in the social sphere” (hereinafter — Law No. 189) provides for the use of new competitive methods for determining the providers of state (municipal) services in the social sphere.¹ In accordance with the specified Law No. 189, the execution of the social order is carried out through an agreement on the financial provision for the fulfillment of the state (municipal) assignment within the framework of budgetary policy. Social services within the framework of implementing social orders are provided to individuals [1, 2]. The implementation of social order mechanisms is a pilot project, limited in time until 1 January 2025. To assess the social outcomes of implementing social orders in the pilot regions of the Russian Federation,² the Financial Research Institute of the Ministry of Finance of Russia developed a methodology for measuring the project’s effectiveness. Based on this methodology, the Financial University conducted a comprehensive sociological study to identify and evaluate the level of satisfaction among recipients of the tested social services in 37 pilot regions of the Russian Federation.

FEATURES OF IMPLEMENTING A SOCIAL ORDER

To ensure the proper quality of budget policy, its goals and objectives must align with the strategic development goals [3]. Providing high-quality social services to the population is one of the key strategic directions of the state’s social policy, and the social order is one of the tools for its implementation. The social order for the provision of state (municipal) services in the social sphere is carried out in

accordance with the budget legislation of the Russian Federation: the state (municipal) assignment within the framework of the social order is executed based on the budget estimate or through the conclusion of agreements on the provision of subsidies for financial support.

Regions are independent in making decisions regarding the implementation of the mechanisms of Law No. 189 on social procurement. In this regard, the policy of service testing may vary significantly depending on the subject of the Russian Federation [4, 5]. Nevertheless, the implementation of social order mechanisms occurs in two main variations: on a competitive basis or through the provision of social certificates. Social certificates allow citizens to independently choose any service provider included in the register of providers and guarantee the selected provider payment for the provision of budgetary services in accordance with the established normative costs. The main condition is that the service provider must submit an application to be included in the list formed by the authorized body [6].

If consumers start choosing the organization themselves to receive a service, then service providers, as a result of competition for consumers, will be motivated to improve the quality of the services they provide in order to attract consumers. Thus, client-centricity is achieved, as the service provider focuses on the specific needs of individual citizens when delivering services [7].

There is a direct correlation between the level of satisfaction of public service recipients and the quality of public service provision: as quality increases, satisfaction should also rise. According to the large psychological dictionary, satisfaction is a subjective assessment of the quality of various objects, living and working conditions, life in general, relationships with people, oneself, including self-esteem. A high degree of life satisfaction

¹ Federal Law No. 189 of 13 July 2020 “On the State (municipal) social order for the provision of state (municipal) services in the social sphere”. URL: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_357066/ (accessed on 11.11.2024).

² Pilot region — a region where the mechanisms defined by Law No. 189 were tested.

is evidently, what is referred to as happiness; a close construct is psychological (subjective) well-being.³ The dependence of service quality on the satisfaction of its recipients is not always confirmed; often, satisfaction depends on whether the expectations of the public service recipient were met or not.

Accordingly, the same service, even of the same quality, will be characterized by varying degrees of satisfaction of needs among different consumers. In turn, the degree of satisfaction of these needs depends not only on the quality of the service received but also on the quality of service, which is one of the factors in shaping consumer welfare, as well as on the established level of their living standards.

In combination, well-being and standard of living form the quality of life, determining its style and image. Moreover, this process is cyclical: not only does the quality of services determine the quality of life, but the quality of life, as it grows, also determines new consumer demands for service quality, shaping new needs for services [8].

The evaluation of these parameters, including the satisfaction with the quality of services received by citizens within the framework of social orders, requires the application of sociological methods, which are increasingly used in budget expenditure management. This is because the sociological data obtained (both quantitative and qualitative) perform several important functions both in the budgetary sphere and in the interaction between government bodies and society. Sociological research ensures the receipt of: (a) feedback directly from recipients of social services in regions and municipalities, i.e., they ensure accountability and responsibility for activities and their results; (b) objective assessments of citizens' satisfaction with the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of the provided social services.

³ Big psychological dictionary. URL: <https://psychological.slovaronline.com/1870-UDOVLETVORENNOST> (accessed on 11.11.2024).

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

From February to May 2024, the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation, in collaboration with the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation and the Scientific Research Financial Institute of the Ministry of Finance of Russia, conducted a sociological study titled "Effectiveness of the implementation of State (municipal) services in the social sphere" in 37 subjects of the Russian Federation as one of the key sources for making managerial decisions [9, 10]. To carry out the research, the following tasks were completed:

- 1) representative samples of service recipients have been calculated and a mass survey of respondents has been conducted ($n = 43\,000$);
- 2) databases have been created to collect primary information on citizens' satisfaction with the state (municipal) services provided in the social sphere;
- 3) focus group discussions were conducted with recipients of the pilot services ($n = 15$);
- 4) analysis and assessment of the level of citizen satisfaction with the state (municipal) services provided in the social sphere have been conducted.

The research methodology is based on an activity-phenomenological approach to studying the behavior and perceptions of Russians regarding state (municipal) services in the social sphere, as well as on general and special methods of scientific knowledge: empirical research methods (mass questionnaire survey, focus group discussions), current and prospective analysis of practical material, statistical analysis, and conclusion.

The research methodology included desk and field stages. The desk phase was implemented using the method of analyzing statistical data on the volumes and types of social services provided in the pilot regions. The informational basis of the study was primary sociological data. The collection of primary data during the field phase for

measuring service satisfaction was carried out using the following methods:

1) quantitative online survey of consumers of tested services in pilot regions and marker regions⁴;

2) conducting focus groups with consumers of trial services in pilot regions and marker regions.

The object of the study is Russians who have received state (municipal) services in the social sphere.

The subject of the study — citizen satisfaction with social services as a social outcome of the implementation of state (municipal) services by non-governmental organizations in the social sphere.

The purpose of the study is to assess citizens' satisfaction with the services provided in the social sphere as a social outcome of the implementation of state (municipal) services.

The scope of application of the research results is state policy in terms of providing social support measures to citizens of the Russian Federation, specifically within the framework of the implementation of Law No. 189.

In the quantitative online survey of consumers of the tested services in the pilot regions, more than 43 000 people (direct service recipients or their close relatives) participated, with a planned sample size of approximately 33 500 people.

The calculation of consumer satisfaction indicators and the effectiveness of the implementation of activities conducted within the framework of testing social order mechanisms was carried out based on the Methodological Recommendations of the Research Financial Institute.⁵

Participants in the focus group discussions included social service recipients from 7 subjects of the Russian Federation: Krasnoyarsk, Leningrad, Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk regions, Perm, the Republic of Bashkortostan, the Republic of Komi, and Tyumen. In each focus group, up to 8 service recipients were interviewed.

RESEARCH RESULTS

According to the results of the study, the average satisfaction rating of the population with the social services received across all areas and regions provided by non-governmental organizations is at 4.54 points,⁶ which is a high indicator on a 5-point scale. Considering the fact that from 2021 to 2023,⁷ social services were provided to 13 758 thous consumers with a total financial support volume of 233.5 billion rubles, one can assert the high efficiency of budget expenditures on social services [11].

The average ratings are also calculated by areas of social services (*Fig. 1*).

The highest average satisfaction ratings were received for:

- social services: 4.64 points;
- creating favorable conditions for the development of the tourism industry: 4.57 points;
- promoting employment: 4.56 points.

Conversely, a lower average satisfaction rating was received for providing palliative medical care: 4.38 points.

When measuring the satisfaction of social service recipients, several indicators were used, which were then aggregated into an overall average rating for the service in a weighted manner. The indicators include:

⁴“On the State (Municipal) Social Order for the Provision of State (Municipal) Services in the Social Sphere”. URL: https://www.nifi.ru/images/FILES/Docs/Методические_рекомендации_ИТОГ.pdf (accessed on 11.11.2024).

⁶ The results are presented on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means completely dissatisfied and 5 means completely satisfied.

⁷ Excluding data on the direction “Implementation of additional educational programs” (excluding additional pre-professional programs in the field of arts).

⁴ Marker region — a region where the mechanisms defined by Law No. 189 were not tested, but similar social state (municipal) services were provided, selected for comparison with the services of pilot regions.

⁵ Methodological recommendations for calculating the effectiveness indicators of the implementation of activities carried out within the framework of the pilot testing of mechanisms defined by Federal Law No. 189 of 13 July 2020,

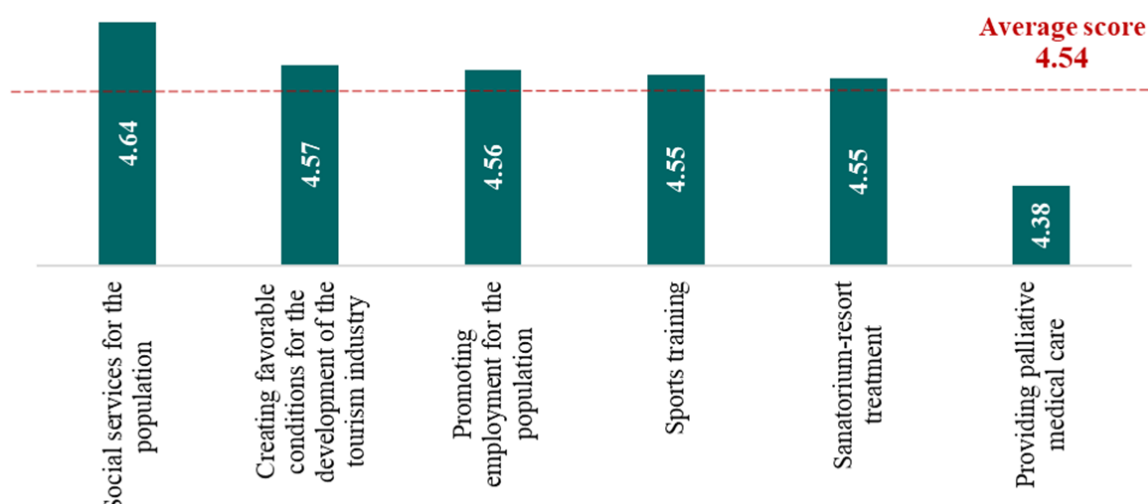


Fig. 1. Assessment of Satisfaction for the Tested Social Services

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the results of the study.

- satisfaction with the content of the service provided;
- satisfaction with the process of service delivery;
- satisfaction with the accessibility of the service;
- satisfaction with the results of receiving the service;
- satisfaction with the established fee for the service (in surveys for paid social services).

The average satisfaction ratings for individual indicators by areas of social services (Table 1) indicate that recipients are more satisfied with the results of receiving services (from 4.54 to 4.82 points depending on the service area). In second place is the satisfaction with the service delivery process (for four out of six social service areas):

- social services — 4.65 points;
- creating favorable conditions for the development of the tourism industry — 4.58 points;
- promoting employment — 4.54 points;
- sanatorium-resort treatment — 4.54 points.

In terms of sports training, in addition to satisfaction with the results, recipients are more satisfied with the accessibility of the service (4.53 points), while in palliative

medical care, they are more satisfied with the content of the service (4.36 points).

The highest average ratings for the indicators were received for social services (except for satisfaction with the established fee for the service), while the lowest were for palliative medical care.

Satisfaction ratings are differentiated not only by services but also by subjects of the Russian Federation. Among the highest-rated services in the regions, the leaders, for example, were: organization of accompaniment with the assistance of employment for people with disabilities — 4.93 points (Kostroma region), social services in the form of home care (free) — 4.86 points (Moscow region), services for the development of Olympic sports (swimming) — 4.76 points (Perm region), social assistance for tuberculosis diseases — 4.75 points (Stavropol region), and many other services in various pilot regions.

Satisfaction ratings are differentiated by specific areas of services in the social sphere (Table 2). The highest average satisfaction rating was calculated for the profile “Tuberculosis diseases” — sanatorium-resort treatment (4.75 points), “Sports training (swimming)” — 4.73 points, “Social services for the population in the form of home care

Table 1

Average Satisfaction Ratings for Individual Indicators in the Areas of Social Services

Indicator	Social services for the population	Creation of favorable conditions for the development of the tourism industry in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation	Promotion of employment	Sports training	Sanatorium and resort treatment	Providing palliative care
Satisfaction with the content (terms/form of service provision)	4.57	4.42	4.53	4.45	4.47	4.36
Satisfaction with the accessibility of the service	4.57	4.51	4.53	4.53	4.52	4.33
Satisfaction with the results of receiving the service	4.80	4.82	4.66	4.79	4.68	4.54
Satisfaction with the service provision process	4.65	4.58	4.54	4.49	4.54	4.34
Satisfaction with the established fee for the service	4.46					

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the results of the study.

(free of charge)” — 4.70 points. And the lower (but still positive) ratings were in the area of employment assistance Vocational training and additional vocational education for individuals aged 50 and older, as well as pre-retirement age individuals.

To understand how the implementation of social ordering has affected satisfaction with services in the social sphere, a comparative study was conducted:

1) several services were selected in marker regions or marker services in pilot regions that are not provided under Law 189;

2) satisfaction with the received services was measured (1738 people were surveyed across five areas of social services).

The results are presented in Fig. 2. Overall, in a number of service areas, the level of satisfaction among recipients is higher for the tested services provided within the framework of social orders:

- sanatorium-resort treatment (4.55 points vs. 4.22);

- employment assistance (4.56 points vs. 4.33);

- sports training (4.55 points vs. 4.43).

Social services for the population are rated approximately at the same level, both for social orders and for state programs/tasks. Only the provision of palliative medical care is rated completely differently: satisfaction is higher with services not provided under the social order (however, the assessment is based on the opinions of an insufficient number of respondents, which makes it invalid).

In a focus group study, service recipients in pilot regions noted that they are satisfied with the introduction of the social certificate, which allows them to receive services free of charge. The social certificate expands opportunities for receiving social services and improves their quality through competition.

The noted by the study participants are:

- difficulties in obtaining the social certificate due to technical problems [2];

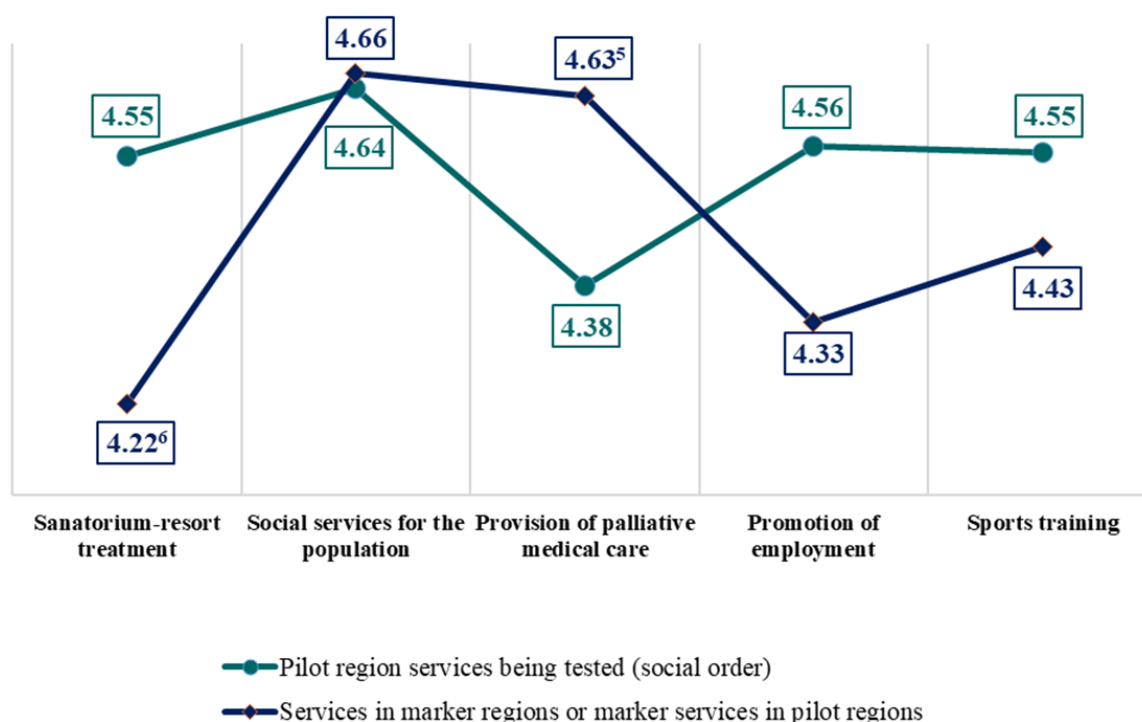


Fig. 2. Satisfaction Assessments of Tested Social Services in Pilot and Marker Regions

Source: Compiled by the authors on the results of the study.

- short duration of certificate use (currently six months);
- unclear regulations for its issuance;
- lack of a standard for interaction among all participants in the certificate service process [12].

As part of providing sports training services (basketball), the social certificate influences the choice of organization and increases the accessibility of training for citizens, and obtaining the certificate does not cause any difficulties.

Tourism service recipients noted a high level of organization; however, there are technical difficulties with certificate issuance and issues with technical support.

In the area of employment assistance, respondents highlighted the practical orientation of the classes, the competence of the instructors, and the high level of

organization, but at the same time, not all respondents were able to easily find employment in their field of study.

As part of the provision of social services in the form of home care, recipients are satisfied with the quality and process of service delivery, while noting the insufficient level of information about changes or alternative options for obtaining non-governmental services.

The social services provided in a semi-stationary form fully meet expectations, and requests for the purchase and delivery of medicines and products are fulfilled in a timely manner and according to needs.

Focus group participants in the context of providing palliative medical care services noted that it is delivered with the necessary regularity and in full, and they are satisfied with the service provider.

Table 2

Assessment of Satisfaction with Tested Social Services in the Context of Narrow Areas of Services

No.	The direction of the service	Satisfaction, points
1	2	3
1	Creating favorable conditions for the development of the tourism industry in the subjects of the Russian Federation	4.57
2	Sanatorium-resort treatment	4.55
	Central nervous system dysfunction	4.69
	Non-tuberculous respiratory organsepa	4.49
	Somatic diseases	4.55
	Circulatory system	4.34
	Tuberculosis diseases	4.75
3	Social services for the population	4.64
	In-home (free of charge)	4.70
	In-home service (paid)	4.68
	In a semi-stationary form (free of charge)	4.56
	In a semi-stationary form (paid)	4.44
4	Provision of palliative medical care	4.38
	Outpatient	4.37
	Outpatient at home by visiting nursing teams	4.36
	Inpatient	4.43
5	Promotion of employment	4.56
	Organization of vocational training and additional professional education for unemployed citizens, including training in other locations	4.58
	Organization of vocational training and additional professional education for women on maternity leave with children under three years old	4.52
	Organization of support for the employment of people with disabilities	4.69
	Vocational training and additional professional education for individuals aged 50 and older, as well as for pre-retirement age individuals	4.25
6	Sports training	4.55
	Chess	4.59
	Equestrian sports	4.56
	Skating	4.35
	Swimming	4.73
	Martial arts (judo, taekwondo, wrestling)	4.62
	Basketball	4.26
	Tennis	4.51
	Football	4.58
	Gymnastics (artistic, rhythmic)	4.57

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the results of the study.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive sociological study conducted allowed for the evaluation of the results of the implementation of Law No. 189 from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. In particular:

1. A satisfaction rating of citizens with social services across all areas has been obtained, which amounted to 4.54 out of a possible 5, indicating a high level of satisfaction. The highest ratings were received for social welfare services (4.64 points), while the lowest ratings were recorded for palliative medical care (4.38 points). The average satisfaction rating of the population with the social services received varies not only by the types of services provided but also by each specific service depending on the region.

2. The attitude of Russians towards the mechanism of the social electronic certificate has been studied, which allows using the service on a free-of-charge basis, significantly expanding the possibilities for receiving social services and improving their quality due to competition among organizations. However, the following weaknesses of the social certificate were noted: a short period of use, unclear registration procedures, the absence of a standardized regulation for the interaction of all participants in the process of obtaining services through the certificate, and the emergence of difficulties in registration due to technical features or insufficient website capacity.

3. At regional dialogue platforms, the Ministry of Finance of Russia organized a discussion of the research results, which

contributed to identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the new mechanism for providing public services and jointly developing solutions by representatives of regional ministries and departments, representatives of the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation, the Scientific Research Financial Institute of the Ministry of Finance of Russia, and researchers from the Financial University.

The data from the sociological study formed the basis for the discussion and development of the bill expanding the scope of Law No. 189 to the entire territory of the Russian Federation. 29 October 2024 the State Duma of the Russian Federation has passed a bill in the first reading, which proposes the nationwide implementation of social orders starting in 2025. The document extends the scope of the social order to six social spheres without restrictions: healthcare, social services, education, employment, physical culture and sports, tourism.

The results of the research confirmed the demand for the tool among executive authorities and service providers, and most importantly, demonstrated an increase in citizen satisfaction with the volume and quality of the services they receive through budgetary funds.

The results of the comprehensive study allow us to conclude the feasibility of conducting an annual sociological monitoring of consumer satisfaction levels in the social services sector, including it in the emerging budget monitoring system in the Russian Federation [13].

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Alexey M. Lavrov — Cand. Sci. (Geogr.), Prof., Head of the Department of Financial Management in the Public Sector, Faculty of Social Sciences, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia; Full State Advisor of the Russian Federation, 1st class
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2935-4588>
amlavrov@hse.ru



Svetlana P. Solyannikova — Cand. Sci. (Econ.), Vice-Rector for Research, Assoc. Prof., Prof. of the Department of Public Finance, Faculty of Finance, Financial University, Moscow, Russia
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4377-8878>
SSolyannikova@fa.ru



Alexander G. Tyurikov — Dr. Sci. (Soc.), Prof., Head of the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences and Mass Communications, Financial University, Moscow, Russia
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8388-9543>
Corresponding author:
agtyurikov@fa.ru

Authors' declared contribution:

A. M. Lavrov — formulation of the problem, development of the concept of the article, critical analysis of the literature.

S. P. Solyannikova — analysis of the research results, development of conclusions.

A. G. Tyurikov — conducting a sociological study, processing and analyzing the data obtained.

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