

PECULIARITIES OF STAFFING PROVISION OF RUSSIAN MUNICIPAL SERVICES' ACTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

The system of municipal management bodies formed at the present time in Russia aims at providing stable growth of the population's level of life, increasing social activity of citizens, as well as fuller implementation of the creative potential of self-governance and self-organization of all members of the local society. The key element and driving force for successful implementation of these goals is municipal service staff. The article reveals problems related to forming staff composition of officials working for the Russian municipal government bodies at the modern stage. It analyses the dynamism of the size and structural indicators related to the state of the municipal service staff. It sets issues about forming the staff reserve of the municipal service, staff provision and organization of the activity of municipal services in Russia. It analyzes methods related to the population's estimation of the quality of local government bodies' work. The analysis was made by using the data of foreign countries.

Keywords: staffing; personnel policy, local government, municipal management, municipal service, evaluation of the efficiency.

INTRODUCTION

At the present time subjects of the Russian Federation continue reforming the system of local government bodies including the formation of a new system of providing local government bodies with staff. Staff of the municipal management is an important component of the general mechanism of public management that intends to meet not only the interests of the local society but also to achieve strategic goals of the public management on the regional and general national levels as a whole.

The municipal service is a basis of the staff composition of local government bodies, and municipal staff makes up a specific social and professional group. It is peculiar of the legal status, as well as the requirements set to this category of employees to provide their efficient fulfillment of functional duties under conditions of a specific territorial formation.

The state of staff including the level of professionalism of municipal employees, their moral qualities directly define the nature of municipal administering practices, ability of municipal structures to implement local interests and their own decisions. Thus, it is actual for the modern activity of municipal services to select and complete the staff, taking into account professional requirements and competences specified in relation to municipal officials.

THEORY

It is in the middle of the previous century when issues related to the competence of the officials were widely considered in works of M. Weber, L. Gawthrop et al. (Weber, 1947; Greenwood, 1962; Gawthrop, 1969). In his works E. Greenwood developed so called ideal characteristics of the municipal officials' professionalism. It includes five basic elements (Greenwood, 1962), and is actual for Russia, especially within solving the issue related to increasing the qualification of the employees who occupy state (municipal) offices, assessing their activity, and taking decisions about their promotion (career growth), etc.

Foreign countries have accumulated great experience on studying theory and practice of solving problems related to the municipal service efficiency (Rosenberg 1985; Galup et al. 1997; Ashton, Kushner, Siegel 2007; Chen 2014; Marcinkevičiute and Žukovskis 2014). It is also of great interest for Russia.

Modern Russian researchers also pay much attention to employment issues in local government bodies including on the municipal level (Anosova 2014; Eroyan et al. 2015; Kolesova 2014; Malik, Melnikov 2015; Ogneva 2014; Uskova, Belous 2006).

METHODOLOGY

The research was made by using methods of statistical analysis, comparative analysis, references analysis, sociological polls, and questionnaire survey. The dynamics of data about the number, structure, length of municipal officials' employment, their age, education and other parameters was calculated on the basis of the Rosstat information (Rosstat 2015). This information was obtained in accordance with the methodologies on collecting data, calculating indicators of the total number of employees and persons who occupy state (municipal) offices and offices of the state civil (municipal) service, as well as calculating the dynamics of the number of employees who occupied state (municipal) offices and offices of the state civil (municipal) services approved by Rosstat. The specified data is collected on the basis of statistical observance that up to 2014 was carried out once per 2 years, and starting from 2015 – once in 3 years at the end of the relevant year.

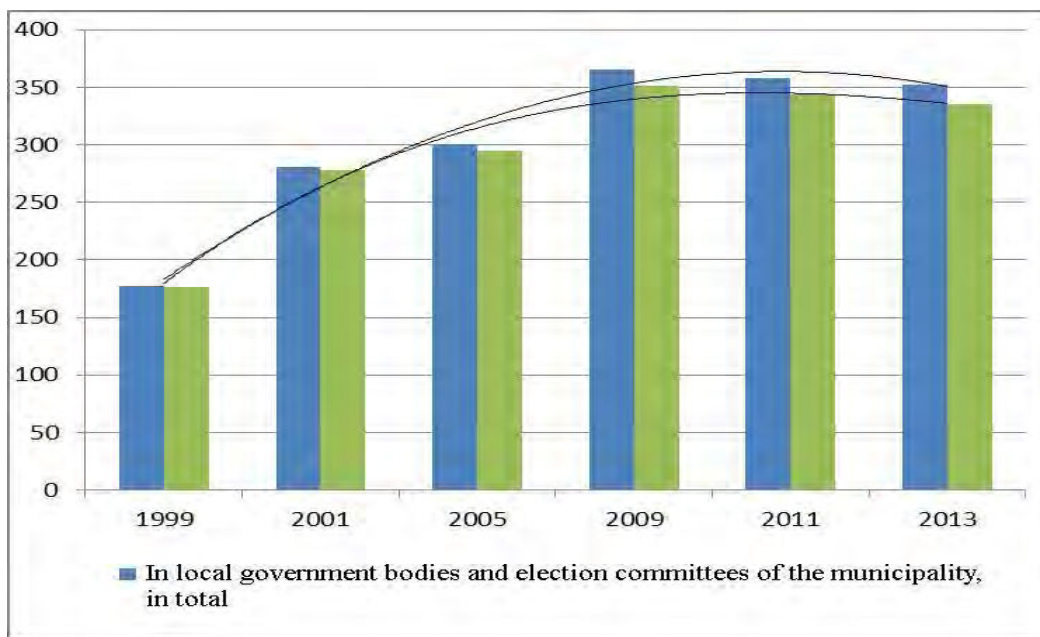
The state of specific parameters in relation to offices of municipal officials was estimated in accordance with the standards of Federal Law No. 25-FZ "On Municipal Service in the Russian Federation" dated March 2, 2007 (Federal Law, 2007).

In order to specify qualitative characteristics of statistical data and the conclusions that were made, the results of the sociological research "Staffing Potential of Local Government Bodies" of the All-Russian Council of Local Government were used (Staffing of Local Government, 2016), and the results of implementing the federal program on creating the staff reserve of the state and municipal service (Federal Program "Reform and Development, 2009), the project "Staff Reserve – Professional Team" (Staff Reserve - Professional Team 2016), and materials of the All-Russian Congress of Municipalities (All-Russian Congress of Municipalities, 2013) were analyzed.

RESEARCH

The analysis of the aggregated data of Rosstat for 1999-2013 showed that for the analyzed period the number of municipal officials in Russia had gradually increased. Herewith, it is possible to single out several prominent spates related to the quick growth of the number and a spate related to decreasing the number of municipal officials. The first spate of the growth is related to 1999-2001, and the second one - to 2005-2007. It is related to the fact that the country moved to the two-leveled model of local governance provided by Federal Law “On General Principles of Organizing Local Governance in the Russian Federation” No. 131-FZ adopted in 2003 (Federal Law N 131-FZ 2003). The most considerable decrease in the number of municipal officials in Russia is related to 2010-2013 as a result of the task on decreasing the public governable apparatus set in 2009 (The Federal Program “Reforming and Developing”, 2009). It caused a little decrease in the number of municipal officials that, nevertheless, considerably exceeds their number before the reforms: as on the beginning of the II half of 2016 the number of municipal officials in all local government bodies was 294.7 thous. Persons, while in 1999 the number of municipal officials was 177.6 thous.persons. Herewith, the staffing level is 96.3% (Federal Portal, 2016). Herewith, the largest number of persons involved in the municipal services in Russia was in 2008 – 367.6 thous.Persons (Rosstat, 2015).Figure 1 shows the changes of the number of persons who occupied offices in the russian municipal services in 1999-2013 (compiled according to rosstat, 2015).

Figure 1
CHANGES OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO OCCUPIED OFFICES IN THE RUSSIAN MUNICIPAL SERVICES IN 1999-2013



It is possible to see from Fig. 1 that for the period of reforms the gap between the number of persons occupying offices of the municipal service in the municipalities' representative and executive bodies considerably increased (the difference between two columns of the diagram in every year under consideration is most of all expressed in 2009, and shows the number of persons who occupied the offices of the municipal service in representative bodies of municipalities). The trend line of Fig. 1 shows the formation of the gap between these two structures.

The tendency related to changing the number of persons occupying offices of the municipal service in Russia is especially vividly observed in indicators related to the changes of the number of employees who occupied municipal offices and offices of the municipal service according to the branches of government. Table 1 shows analytical data [calculated by the authors according to (Rosstat, 2015, p. 48).

Table 1					
DYNAMICS OF THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES WHO OCCUPIED MUNICIPAL OFFICES AND OFFICES OF MUNICIPAL SERVICE IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN 2001-2013					
Government bodies	2001	2005	2009	2011	2013
In local government bodies and election committees of municipalities – in total	1	7.24	21.39	-1.81	-1.67
In representative bodies of municipalities	1	144.00	86.89	5.26	2.50
In local administrations (executive authorities of municipalities)	1	6.01	19.19	-2.14	-2.36

As Table 1 shows, as a whole the maximum growth of the number of employees who occupied municipal offices and offices of the municipal service in the Russian Federation (21.39%) was in the period of 2005-2009 (the highest value for the whole period under analysis), and after 2009 it is possible to observe its stable decrease. Herewith, the most intensive growth of the number of employees who occupied municipal offices and offices of the municipal service in the Russian Federation for the whole period under analysis was observed in the representative bodies of municipalities; thus, since 2001 to 2005 the total number of municipal employees in the Russian Federation increased almost 1.5 times, and by 86% for the period since 2005 to 2009. And even fulfillment of the task set in 2009 and related to decreasing the public management apparatus caused only the reduction of the tempos of growth of the number of employees who occupied state (municipal) offices and offices of the state civil (municipal) service in representative bodies of Russian municipalities but not to the absolute decrease in their number. In 2009-2011 the tempo of growth had been 5.26%, and in 2011 -2013 it decreased by 2.5% on average. However, it remained positive. Such considerable and quick growth of the number of persons who occupy offices of the municipal service in Russia in 2005-2009 caused the formation of specific tendencies and characteristics of municipal staff.

RESULTS

As a result of the research, the following tendencies and characteristics of the Russian municipal service staff have been revealed.

Firstly, the modern state of the Russian municipal service staff is characterized by a higher average age of the municipal official (43 years old) as compared to the average age of state civil employees in the state management apparatus as a whole (39 years old).

Secondly, a considerable disproportion in the structure of the number of municipal employees in Russia according to the term of employment in management bodies was formed and is maintained. The analysis shows the presence and deepening of the situation related to the polarization of indicators to the term of employment: the majority of municipal officials have a low or, on the contrary, a considerable experience of working for the government bodies (See Table 2) (compiled according to Rosstat, 2015).

As Table 2 shows, about $\frac{1}{3}$ of municipal officials have the employment term of above 15 years. Besides, almost $\frac{1}{3}$ of all staff of the Russian municipal management have the term of employment of up to 5 years, and 25% - from 5 to 10 years. As a result, totally above 50% of municipal employees in Russia have the term of employment of less than 10 years. In a number of cases the lack of the required experience affects the fulfillment of official duties by municipal officials. It is enhanced by the lack of the specialized professional education.

Thirdly, fast growth of municipalities caused the deficit of qualified staff of the municipal service. In Russia there is a difficult situation related to the level and quality of professional education in the municipal service and its sectoral specificity. According to the data of Rosstat, in 2013 5,084 municipal officials did not have even the secondary-level education, and only 85% of municipal officials had higher education (Rosstat, 2015). To compare, the share of employees who have the higher education related to the state civil service is 92.4% as a whole. Besides, the majority of staff of regional administrations have specialized higher education that does not comply with the relevant activity they currently perform (*Staffing of local government 2016*). The analysis has shown that for successful work at the office they occupy a lot of municipal officials need to obtain knowledge in Economy, Law, Computer Science, Social Management, Psychology and Records Management.

Term of employment	% in the total number of municipal employees
< 1 year	8.2%
1-5 years	22%
5-10 years	25%
10-15 years	16.2%
>15 years	28.6%

Unlike foreign countries where there are age-old traditions related to complying with professional qualification requirements to municipal officials (employees of local government and management bodies), in Russia there are no such stable tendencies.

Consequently, the system of professional preparation and re-training of the municipal service staff is carried out in various municipalities at the discretion of the local management. By contrast, in foreign countries there is considerable internal departmental preparation of municipal staff. Herewith, professional area of the basic education for accepting for the municipal service differs depending on the country. Thus, in the USA state officials who have technical and scientific education prevail, in Great Britain and Germany – those with legal education, and in France – those with economic education (Ogneva 2014). Moreover, many Russian municipalities (especially rural and small urban) still form the staff reserved for the municipal service formally, and qualification requirements to the individuals who occupy municipal offices are not complied with. Besides, the task related to the rotation of management staff between the government levels has still been solved weakly.

Fourthly, in terms of the age composition of the municipal service officials there is the following situation. As stated above, the average age of municipal officials is 35 - 45 years old. However, herewith, on the level of the top officials of regions the age group that is above 45 years old prevails, and the number of young people aged up to 25 and employees aged from 25 to 35 years old is low in municipalities (*Federal Portal 2016*).

Fifthly, in the Russian municipal service there are obvious gender disproportions. The analysis showed that at the present time mainly women work in Russian local government bodies (70% of the total number of employees). However, men occupy higher administrative offices: men occupy 69% of municipal offices of the representative government bodies and local administrations; this share is 51% of men in terms of top offices in local administrations (*Federal Portal, 2016*).

Sixthly, at the present time there are disadvantages in the legal provision of the process related to organizing additional professional education of municipal officials (Agibalov, Agibalova 2011; Bokov 2009; Bozhenov 2009). The current standardized legal basis must be improved. Municipal officials are still trained to the degree the subject head understands the importance of training. It is stipulated by the fact that qualification requirements to offices and principles of correlating qualification requirements according to the education level for municipal officials can be specified by regions themselves unlike state officials (*On Additional Professional Education, 2007*). It gives municipalities' room in issues related to the staff provision. However, in a number of cases it decreases qualification requirements to employees and criteria of their labor estimation.

The estimation of qualitative parameters allowed to reveal basic problems in the current state of staff on the municipal level in the modern Russia. The research showed that at the present time there was a complexity in forming the staff policy in the Russian municipal service. Among a diversity of problems in this area, it is necessary to especially single out the lack of the system approach to forming the staffing policy on all levels of the state government and management, the lack of the system on monitoring the state of the staff potential, and archaic character of methods related to the work with staff that are still based on the bureaucratic approach.

The main problem of the modern staff situation in Russia is the enhancement of contradictions between the current level of professionalism of municipal officials, its structure, stereotypes of the management activity, and modern requirements to managing the development of the society. In order to eliminate this complex of contradictions, it is necessary to put into the municipal management practice an essentially new system of requirements to the managers' professionalism on the basis of the innovational approach that is widely used by other subjects of society and economy (Danilina, Mingaleva 2013; Mingaleva, Danilina 2014). Table 3 shows the comparison of new and old approaches to professional competences of municipal officials.

Table 3 BUREAUCRATIC AND INNOVATIONAL APPROACHES TO DEVELOPING THE MODEL OF MANAGING WITHIN RUSSIAN MUNICIPAL SERVICE	
Bureaucratic approach	Innovational approach
Special attention is paid to the process of management	Basic emphasis is made on problems of the society
Basic emphasis is made on the functional part of the management process	Basic emphasis is made on the content of the management process
The official perceives himself as a principle and dominating subject	The official perceives himself as a part of the society
Officials passively perceive knowledge and information	Officials actively perceive knowledge and information and participate in their creation
Emphasis on the "know what" principle	Emphasis on "know how", "know what", "know why" and "know for whom" principles
Knowledge is transferred by experts	Knowledge is developed together with experts and specialists
Management goals are set by the top management and must be strictly complied with	Goals of management may be subject of agreements and are discussed
Faults are punished	Faults are allowed and perceived as a means of development, and serve to learn a lesson
Events are thoroughly planned, and their non-fulfillment is punished	Plan of events allows fluctuations from the demanding schedule due to objective circumstances

Insufficient professional preparation of municipal staff affects the fulfillment of many functions of municipalities and local management bodies, including the efficiency of organizing state purchases, whose function is acknowledged by foreign researchers as strategic in state and self-government establishments (*Patrucco, Luzzini, Ronchi, 2016*).

DISCUSSION

In the current context the ability of local government bodies to organize and coordinate functioning of all subsystems of the municipality, as well as to reveal objectively existing needs of the local society in obtaining the state support is crucial for ensuring high quality of life. It is possible to solve many problems related to providing the quality and efficiency of the municipal service on the basis of active purposeful work related to increasing professionalism in the activity of municipal staff. Positive foreign experience can be useful in this aspect (Laurinmyaki, Linkola, Pryatta 1996; Local government 1995; Baranova 2000).

For example, at the present time in Germany municipalities employees and citizens widely interrelate by using the Internet (*In Germany found 2012*). For this purpose websites of municipalities regularly organize online polls of citizens on various issues related to the activity of municipalities and estimation of the municipal environment quality: safety level issues, educational issues, problems on street noise level, air and basins pollution, problems on cleaning streets and utilizing everyday wastes, etc. Such form of work is called “digital consultation”. Besides, municipalities organize local conferences for citizens of the territories under interest. Their members include the employees of the municipalities’ administrations who are responsible for this block of issues (safety, medical services, etc.), burgomaster, and deputies. Municipalities use the data of pools and votes further to correct plans and programs related to developing the municipality according to the relevant area of activity.

In addition, to obtain information about the citizens’ opinion about the areas of municipalities’ work, special brochures are compiled. They intelligibly state basic areas and priorities of spending funds. These brochures are sent in advance to every house to collect notes and offers. It is typical to make up and distribute the municipality budget draft. Thus, German citizens can actively participate in taking decisions on many local issues, first of all, in terms of self-taxation, municipal improvement, defining the procedure of local holidays and competitions. They can also initiate the development of municipal strategies and programs.

Another area of wide use of Internet opportunities is related to polling citizens and voting about the quality of local government bodies’ work, revealing the opinion about the work of certain officials and employees of local government bodies, as well as municipal services. Such form allows citizens to rather actively and efficiently influence municipal officials in relation to all key issues of municipalities’ activity, although citizens cannot take decisions on completing the municipal staff.

Thus, for the efficient activity of management staff, it is necessary to estimate its abilities and potential possibilities, to create “transparent”, open and efficient system of staff estimation both by top bodies, and the society – a complex system that can reliably confirm professional competence and readiness of state officials to fulfill their functions. However, the current system of municipal order for preparing staff for the state civil and municipal service remains incomplete. Particularly, areas of professional preparation and higher educational establishments are often selected by top managers of local government bodies on the basis of their ideas, preferences, and interests, or it is done on the random basis according to the principle of the smallest expenses (the agreement is concluded with the

educational establishment where the fee is lower, herewith, the rating of the educational establishment is not taken into account). Besides, as it was stated above, the possibility of regional and local powers to define the criteria of professional level of municipal staff within general parameters of qualification requirements to offices established by the Federal Law "On Municipal Service in the Russian Federation", as well as to determine principles to correlate qualification requirements according to the level of education for state civil and municipal officials gives much room in this area. Unfortunately, it often causes negative consequences because the volume, composition and structure of professional knowledge of municipal officials must correlate with the list of obligations imposed on them. It is rarely complied with.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the research, it has been determined that in the context of reforming the local government in Russia it is possible to observe the deficit of qualified and competent employees. One of the basic areas related to improving the organization of local government must become solving the problem on insufficient number and quality of municipal staff, including on the basis of forming the staff reserve and rotation of management staff between the levels of public power. The formation of the highly professional and competent staff of the municipal service with the relevant staff potential, optimization of managing its development is an essentially important condition of successful implementation of the local government reform and solving local issues.

The staff of municipal bodies undergoes the impact of changes in the political and administrative system, and staff practices of the regional political and administrative elite. The strategy of forming and rational use of the staff potential have a special impact on the state of the staff provision of the municipal management system and level of management abilities of municipal government bodies. Besides, qualitative characteristics of municipalities themselves have a great impact on the staff policy. They can be relatively favorable, medium-levelled, dotation or depressive. In addition, municipalities differ according to such factors and criteria as natural resources, demographic, ethno-cultural peculiarities, and other. It also has an impact on forming the staff provision of the activity of municipal services in Russia.

During the research it has been revealed that at the present moment many municipalities (especially small urban and rural) form the staff reserve only formally.

Studying the foreign experience related to organizing the activity of local government bodies and municipal services (in particular in Germany) showed that such experience could be used in Russia.

However, successful experience must be taken into account and adapted by applying various paradigms of management in various countries, particularly differences of methods and approaches of management in the context of the federative system or higher centralization within the unitary state.

It is reasonable to use the approach to organizing the activity of municipals services via the category "process" but not on the basis of the indicator related to the municipal employees' qualification or a system of motivating municipal employees. Openness of the municipal government, contentment of citizens with the activity of local government bodies

and the work of their employees are core elements of organizing the system of municipal services functioning abroad, and it can be used in Russia. As a whole, regular polls of citizens can be used as a tool to estimate the quality of the municipalities and local government bodies' work.

In order to solve tasks in the area of providing municipal services and estimating the quality of the municipal service's work, the experience of using computer technologies can be applied most successfully. Herewith, the system of preparing and re-training staff can be comprehensive, perspective and obligatory for all local government employees.

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