SOCIAL SUPPORT OF LARGE FAMILIES IN MODERN KAZAKHSTAN AND IN POST-SOVIET COUNTRIES: SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract. The article examines the features and problematic aspects in the field of social support for large families in the post-Soviet space. The common features in these countries are highlighted, with more detailed consideration of the Kazakhstan case. In terms of basic measures of state support for large families, Kazakhstan is compared with such states as Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan. There carried out the analysis of comparative approaches to the definition of large families in post-Soviet countries. They are considered the conditions for submitting documents for social assistance, the amount of benefits and their ratio to the needs of the addressee, barriers and main trends in the field of social support in recent years. Attention is paid not only to material assistance, but also to the non-material side of support for large families.

Key words: large families, social support, targeted social assistance, poverty, living wage

Научная статья

СОЦИАЛЬНАЯ ПОДДЕРЖКА МНОГОДЕТНЫХ СЕМЕЙ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ КАЗАХСТАНЕ И ПОСТСОВЕТСКИХ СТРАНАХ: СОЦИОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена системе социальной поддержки семей с детьми в постсоветских странах. Особое внимание уделено содержанию семейной политики в Казахстане. По основным мерам государственной поддержки многодетных семей сравнивается государственная политика Казахстана, России, Беларуси, Армении, Азербайджана, Кыргызстана. Проведен анализ подходов к определению многодетности в постсоветских странах. Рассмотрены условия подачи документов на социальную помощь, размеры пособий и их соотношение с потребностями адресата, барьеры и основные тенденции в сфере социальной поддержки за последние годы. Уделяется внимание не только материальной помощи, но и нематериальной поддержке многодетных семей.

Ключевые слова: многодетные семьи, социальная поддержка, адресная социальная помощь, бедность, прожиточный минимум

Introduction

Kazakhstan builds its state policy taking into account the interests of all citizens and guarantees the implementation of basic rights, regardless of their socio-economic situation, status, demographic characteristics and other signs. Special attention is paid to protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, since it is usually more difficult for them to meet even basic needs. In recent years, in the republic, as in most post-Soviet countries, there has been an increase in government assistance measures to vulnerable segments of the population. There have also been significant changes in the support of large families. The size of social benefits increased. According to the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "About state benefits for families with children", there are

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provided several types of payments: allowance for the birth of a child, for caring for a child until they reach the age of one year, allowance for raising a disabled child [Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan…]. Over a 10-year period, there was an increase in the allowance for non-working women on the occasion of the birth of a fourth or more child from 30 to 63 monthly calculation indices (MCI). The mechanism of social payments for families depending on the number of children has been worked out.

Socio-economic context

In Kazakhstan, a large family is considered to have four or more minor children living together [Center for workforce…]. According to the Ministry of labor and social protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as of July 1, 2020, there are 389,053 large families in the country, which is 136,922 families more than in 2019. Most large families live in regions with a more traditional mentality: Turkestan (97,635), Almaty (46,798), Zhambyl (32,999) and Shymkent (32,206) [Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan… , 2011]. It is important to note that not all families are included in this list for any reason. One of the most common reasons is that not all children are registered with the family in the same living space. According to Kazakh legislation, a family is considered to have many children if at least four children live on the same housing area.

Large families make up the main category of poor households. Analysis of the distribution of households with children by decile group[1] shows that households with 4 or more children are mainly concentrated in the first four deciles, but a particularly large proportion is in the first decile (40.1 %). These are the poorest households. At the same time, in the 10 decile (the wealthiest households), the share of large families is only 0.7 % [Eurasian economic commission …].

If we consider formal indicators, such as Gross domestic product (GDP) and Gross domestic product per capita, then Kazakhstan occupies a fairly favorable position in the world ranking. GDP is an indicator of the quality of life and the level of economic activity of the population. For comparison, Kazakhstan occupies the 54th position in terms of GDP for 2020, Russia-11, Azerbaijan-89, Armenia-131, Kyrgyzstan-145, Belarus-77. In terms of GDP per capita, the Republic of Kazakhstan is also in second place after Russia, among the countries under consideration. In Kazakhstan in 2019, it amounted to 27444 USD, in Russia 29181 USD [Law of the Kyrgyz Republic… , 2001]. Despite the relatively high level of GDP and GDP per capita, many large families live in poverty. This is due to the fact that GDP is an average indicator calculated without taking into account social stratification (socio-economic inequality).

According to the data of the Eurasian Economic Commission, food expenditures in Kazakhstan (49.4 %) are higher than in all considered CIS countries: in Kyrgyzstan — 48.3 %, in Armenia — 39.5 %, in Belarus — 35.7 %, in Russia — 29.8 %. At the same time, a small share is spent on recreation and cultural leisure (4.7 %), as well as on healthcare and education (4.8 %) [Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan… , 2005]. The predominance of large families in the first decile groups, that is,

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[1] Decile groups — groups of the population (households) formed by dividing the entire population (households) into 10 numerically equal parts.

among the poorest households, and the largest expenditures on food among the CIS countries leads to the fact that they have almost no funds left for other items of expenditure: communication and Internet services, entertainment infrastructure, additional education and medical services. Lack of funds for these expenses can affect the level of education, cultural development and health of the younger generation.

Social support measures in the Republic of Kazakhstan

Sustainable state development is impossible without active social protection measures for large families, which guarantee basic social security for all those in need by establishing a legally fixed minimum level, and gradually expanding the coverage and amount of corresponding benefits. In Kazakhstan, large families belong to the category of socially vulnerable groups of the population, but since 2019, a special state allowance for large families with more than 4 children has been canceled. At the moment, only families that have received the status of a large family up to and including 2018 receive it.

For families whose monthly average per capita income is below the poverty line, targeted social assistance (TSA) is provided in the form of cash payments. According to the latest data, there are 129,152 families receiving TSA in Kazakhstan, 41 % of them are large families (53,175) [Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan… , 2011].

It should be noted that in general, the regional distribution of targeted social assistance corresponds to the number of large families in these regions. For example, most large families received TSA in Turkestan (12,536), Almaty (5,821), Zhambyl (4,663) regions and in Shymkent city (7,337), that is, where the need is highest. However, not all regions have an exact match between the number of large families and the targeted social assistance provided. This can be explained primarily by the lack of awareness of families about their rights and the presence of bureaucratic barriers that prevent the necessary documents from being processed (for example, not all documents are available to the applicant).

Each mother of many children who has been awarded the "Altyn alka" and "Kumis alka" pendants or who previously received the title of "mother heroine", awarded the orders of "maternal glory" I and II degrees, is paid a monthly state allowance, which is lifetime, and is assigned regardless of income. The amount of the benefit was 16,967 tenge in 2020. According to data for the first half of 2020, the number of mothers with many children awarded Altyn Alka and Kumis Alka pendants reached 233961 people. Most of the mothers who received these awards live in Turkestan (60,830), Almaty (28,274) and Zhambyl (19794) regions — regions with the largest number of large families [Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan… , 2011]. Every mother-heroine gets a free ride for herself and her children on public transport.

The size of the monthly calculation indicator from April 1, 2020 amounted to 2778 tenge. According to the Ministry of labor and social protection of the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan, from January to August 2020, 390 thousand families received state benefits for large families in the amount of 153.3 billion tenge ($ 1 — 425 tenge). In total, 191.1 billion tenge was allocated from the republican budget

for the payment of state benefits to large families in 2020 [Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan… , 2011].

Since January 1, 2020, Kazakhstan has introduced a separate allowance for large families. It was intended for families with four or more cohabiting minor children or full-time students under the age of 23, regardless of their income. The amount of payments depended on the number of children — from 44448 tenge, where there are four children, to 77784 tenge, where there are seven or more. About 392 thousand families have already received this benefit [Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan… , 2011]. These rules somewhat affected the interests of a certain category of benefit recipients — families with more than 7 children. After all, a family with 16 children gets the same amount as a family with seven children. To eliminate this shortcoming, the President in May of this year signed a law that established separate amounts of benefits for families with 8 children or more. For a family with 8 children, an allowance is established in the amount of 88896 tenge, with 9 children — 100008 tenge, with 10 111120 tenge, with 11 122232 tenge, with 12 133344 tenge, with 13 144456 tenge, with 14 155568 tenge, with 15 166680 tenge, with 16—177792 tenge [Ministry of labor and social affairs…].

The amount of the allowance was recalculated due to changes in the number of minor children, including children studying full-time in secondary, technical and professional organizations, after secondary, higher and (or) postgraduate education after they reach the age of majority until the time of graduation from educational organizations (but not more than until reaching the age of 23).

The allowance for large families with 4 children is 44532 tenge, in July 2020 the subsistence minimum was 33800 tenge, including a food basket — 18.5 thousand tenge, non-food products and services — 15.1 thousand tenge. Thus, the amount allocated is barely enough to cover basic needs.

For large families there is a preferential mortgage at 2 % per annum.

Another form of assistance is conditional cash (CCA) and unconditional (UCA) assistance. The UCA was assigned to 253.2 thousand people with an average size of 13464 tenge, and the CCA was assigned to 1924.4 thousand people with a size of 11964 tenge [Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan… , 2011]. Unconditional assistance is usually provided to mothers with young children who are unable to work, and conditional assistance is provided to mothers with many children. The Ministry of labor and social protection of the population does not publish a breakdown by category of recipients, nor does it provide estimates of the effectiveness of this assistance. But judging by the fact that the level of poverty increases every year, its effectiveness is called into question.

On average, as of January 1, 2020, unconditional cash assistance was assigned to 2,177,200 citizens for 12188 tenge per month [Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan… , 2011], as of January 1, 2019, it was assigned to 571,600 citizens for 4834 tenge on an average monthly basis. Thus, 2,177,2 thousand poor people in relation to 18,632,2 thousand of the total population of Kazakhstan make up 11.6 % of the poor population, which is almost 2.6 times higher than the estimates of the Bureau of national statistics of 4.5 %. State social assistance is distributed between rural and urban residents in the proportion of 53.7:46.3 (almost equally), while according to the Bureau of national statistics, the poverty rate in urban areas is 2.7 %, and in rural

areas it is 6.4 %, that is, it differs by 2.4 times [Ministry of labor and social protection…].

At the same time, it is more difficult for rural residents to get social support from the state, since the process of submitting documents is expensive and complex for them (primarily due to the fact that applicants have to get to the district center to submit a package of documents). In order to receive assistance, family members are forced to undergo training or work in jobs offered by employment centers, which is particularly difficult for single mothers if kindergartens or other child care options are unavailable or expensive [Ministry of labor … of the Republic of Belarus].

It should be noted that poverty is a multi-faceted and complex problem that cannot be solved only through the payment of benefits. This requires a whole package of measures that would include not only cash benefits, housing assistance (for example, in the form of providing free rental housing to vulnerable families with children), but also support for registration of documents, job search, assistance in child care, training in professional and entrepreneurial skills so that families can further improve their financial situation on their own.

Social support measures in the Post-Soviet space

Belarus has the most powerful support system for families with children among the countries reviewed:
— benefits for housing;
— family capital (maternity);
— subsidies for loan payments;
— benefits for education and upbringing of children;
— tax incentives;
— the right to a weekly paid day off for one of the parents;
— benefits for mothers with many children.

According to Article 62 of the Code on marriage and family of the Republic of Belarus, a family with three or more children is considered to be a large family.

Each mother is entitled to paid parental leave of 3 years and benefits, as well as benefits and payments. For the first-born almost $933 is paid at a time. For the second child and subsequent ones, the amount increases to 1300 US dollars. Monthly payments of 173 US dollars are required [Socio-demographic characteristics… , 2018].

Large families can count on family capital, which amounts to 22,500 Belarusian rubles ($8722). Plus, a subsidy or loan for the purchase, construction or reconstruction of housing. There are benefits for payment of services of housing and communal services and tax incentives. Large families do not pay for school meals and for children's education in art schools. Mothers raising five or more children have the right to retire early.

The state support program for large families in Russia includes increased payments, benefits in housing programs, and favorable loan processing. Large families are paid approximately 17000 rubles ($226) at a time for each child born. The amount of monthly payments is calculated individually. Since last year, there is a preferential mortgage program with a rate of 6 %. Families with three or more children can count on a housing subsidy — about a third of its cost. Large families are allocated a land

plot for rent or ownership. There are also many benefits for such families: a discount when paying for housing and communal services, tax breaks, and free travel [The official Internet portal…].

Conclusion

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, labor and health protection, state support for families, parenthood and childhood, and guarantees of social protection for families of survivors, low-income and large families are enshrined in law. Despite this, a large number of acute problems still need to be solved. The implementation of measures to eliminate them is carried out in stages, taking into account the opportunities and current economic situation in the context of the pandemic experience of Belarus. Public policy in this area should be aimed at creating conditions that would allow women to run a household and at the same time work or study. Today, the following issues remain extremely topical in post-Soviet countries, including Kazakhstan: reducing the level of poverty, especially for large families, increasing the level of employment of women mothers, ensuring information literacy of the population on current measures of social support for large families and ways to get them, removing bureaucratic barriers.

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