Citizens’ expectations on welfare

The popular views on the quality of the Russian welfare institutions and who should be responsible for organizing health-care or educational services have remained very stable. Levada –center has polled Russians almost every year about very large spectrum of issues and quality of health-care and educational services has been among the topics. According to poll, the situation of health care was clearly getting worse during the 1990’s and since 2000 the shares of those who think that situation has either deteriorated and those who think that it has remained the same have been practically similar – between 35-45 % of respondents. The share of those who think that the health-care has improved has remained clearly under 20 %, like the share of those who are satisfied with the health-care system. Close to 2/3 of respondents are either very or rather unsatisfied with the health-care system. Even bigger share – between 65 – 74 % say that they cannot get good medical service when they need it. According to ISSP-health survey only ¼ of Russians have confidence in the Russian health-care and 57 % think that health-care system is inefficient.

The figures concerning educational system are similar to those on welfare. Approximately half of the population thinks that the quality of educational system is mediocre and less than ¼ think it is excellent or good. The figures are same when evaluating the satisfaction with the educational system; around 50 % are very or rather unsatisfied with it and 22 % are very or rather satisfied. In ISSP-study one third of Russians had confidence in the Russian educational system and believed that it will improve in the future.

Levada-center asked also whether people would prefer to have free education and health-care or money to buy those services and in each year 60-76 % of respondents preferred to have free education and health-care. In Social Distinctions in Modern Russia-survey (SDMR) in 1999 and in 2007 we asked who should run services like health-care, elderly, taking care of children or leisure services. In both years the majority of Russians said that the state should run the medical care-services and taking care of the elderly. The ISSP-survey gave similar results, there 60 % of respondents disagreed with the statement that the government should provide only a limited number of health-care services.

According to SDMR the share favoring state-run services over others in the child-care services the declined from 66 % in 1999 to 43 % in 2007. There was a clear growth of support for services organized by the citizens themselves, while the private services got only a fraction of support in both years. Both in 1999 and 2007 30 - 40 % of Russians said that local administrations should organize leisure services them and between 18- 35 % said that it is the duty of the state. The share of those who favored private enterprises remained under 20 % in both years.

So, the picture is clear: most Russians are quite unsatisfied with the quality of services in health-care or education and most of them do not trust them very much but still most of them want state to be responsible for their organization, not private companies or citizens themselves. People believe that the state-organized welfare services guarantee social equality better than the private services, even if the quality of public services is mediocre to private. One indication for the valuation of more equal and universal welfare is the fact that 63 % of Russians think that it is rather or very unfair that people with higher incomes can get better education for their children or that 67 % of them see it unfair if more wealthy people can get better health-care services for themselves. On the other hand, 72 % of Russians were unwilling to pay more taxes for the improvement of health-care.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Are you satisfied with the health-care system in Russia?** | **2003** | | | **2004** | | **2005** | | **2006** | | **2007** | | **2008** | | **2009** | | **2010** | | **2011** | | **2012** | |
|  | **VIII** | | | **VIII** | | **VIII** | | **VIII** | | **VIII** | | **VIII** | | **VIII** | | **VIII** | | **VIII** | | **IX** | |
| Definitely yes | | 2 | 3 | | 2 | | 2 | | 3 | | 2 | | 3 | | 2 | | 1 | | 1 | | 2 |
| Yes, rather than no | | 9 | 11 | | 9 | | 10 | | 14 | | 13 | | 15 | | 13 | | 14 | | 15 | | 13 |
| Neither yes, nor no | | 23 | 20 | | 21 | | 19 | | 21 | | 20 | | 23 | | 22 | | 22 | | 22 | | 22 |
| No, rather than yes | | 39 | 36 | | 36 | | 36 | | 34 | | 36 | | 36 | | 35 | | 37 | | 33 | | 32 |
| Definitely no | | 23 | 29 | | 29 | | 32 | | 26 | | 27 | | 22 | | 25 | | 22 | | 24 | | 29 |
| Difficult to answer | | 4 | 2 | | 3 | | 2 | | 2 | | 3 | | 1 | | 4 | | 4 | | 4 | | 2 |

Source: Levada Center 2014

Table: Who should run the following services?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Child-care** | 1999 | 2007 | **Elderly** | 1999 | 2007 | **Medical care** | 1999 | 2007 |
| State | 66.4 | 42.8 |  | 77.4 | 55.7 |  | 76.4 | 60.5 |
| Regional authorities | 2.8 | 6.1 |  | 4.2 | 8.4 |  | 4.6 | 15.0 |
| Local authorities | 7.2 | 9.1 |  | 9.3 | 14.1 |  | 11.3 | 18.6 |
| Private enterprises | 0.3 | 0.5 |  | 0.8 | 0.6 |  | 2.2 | 0.9 |
| Citizens | 18.8 | 36.7 |  | 5.4 | 16.2 |  | 1.4 | 0.1 |
| Hard to say | 4.5 | 4.8 |  | 2.9 | 5.0 |  | 4.1 | 4.9 |
| TOTAL | 100.0 | 100.0 |  | 100.0 | 100.0 |  | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Distinctions in Modern Russia-surveys 1999/2007