

On the Issue of Enhancing the Social and Political Activity of Young Generation at The Present Stage

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Abstract: Purpose of the study: The article considers the scientific research and analysis of the current state of social and political activity of the young generation in the electoral process, as well as the possibilities to stimulate more active behaviour of the young in the current historical period. In this context, the primary importance belongs to higher educational institutions, which, besides preparing highly qualified professionals, must provide the students with good knowledge and skills in social and political life, develop their active public stance on the destiny of the city, region and the entire country. Solving the problems in this area would be impossible without accounting for both, historical and positive international experience. Empirical methods of comparison, description, interpretation; theoretical methods of formal and dialectical logic.

Main Findings: During the research, the authors identified the most remarkable trends typical for students in regard to political and electoral procedures, noted their strengths and weaknesses and defined the perspective areas for improving and increasing the role of young people in the election process.

Originality of this study: The society has indeed grown up to the urgent need to create conditions, incentives and alternatives for realizing the labour, socio-political, social and cultural needs of young people. To be able to do this in near future, the real, scientifically based methods are necessary to study the situation among youth and students.

Keywords: Constitution, youth, social and political activity, electoral process, rights and freedoms, perspectives, needs.

I. INTRODUCTION

Modern Russian society is just at the beginning of the road to build up a real democratic, law-based State. A quarter of a century that the Russian democracy past is still a short time in history of the mankind's development, compared to the well-known foreign democracies having a history of two centuries and more. It should be noted that the State is undergoing objective and subjective difficulties while achieving a goal set on the way of the State-building. In different periods of history, the personal rights of citizens were for a long time secondary, in comparison with the State interests. For example, in the Russian Empire, the serfdom was abolished only in the second half of the XIX century, more precisely – in 1861. The silence and submissiveness of ordinary people lasted in the XX century as well. Over

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seventy years of life under a totalitarian regime, human rights were only nominally represented in Soviet legislation and had their own specific features that were different from the other democratic states of the world.

Today, the enhancing of socio-political activity of all the population, including young people, is one of the most important tasks the society is facing at the current stage. If we analyse the regulatory framework of domestic legislation in this context, we can claim that for the most part the legal regulation for implementing the goals has been defined and provisioned. However, the reality shows that this alone is not enough, for, these legal norms must indeed be put in practice.

In this regard, we have to find out why the population (the youth) is not an active participant in the social-political and cultural life of the country. What are the reasons for their passive and indifferent behaviour, manifestations of legal infancy bordering on legal nihilism, as well as of certain apathy and political absenteeism?

II. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

Pursuing these aims, we have to apply a set of general scientific research methods, such as: methods of comparison, description, interpretation; theoretical methods of formal and dialectical logic. Detailed discovery of the subject would be impossible without the use of the special scientific methods, including questioning, interviewing, conversations, the documentary method, etc.

III. RESULT ANALYSIS

Student youth, as a vanguard of raising the public and political activity of the population.

In this regard, we would wish to draw attention to the issue of raising the legal culture and legal awareness of citizens to build a true legal democratic state. In this context, one of the main priorities has to be allotted to the role and importance of higher education institutions to increase the social and political activity of the younger generation. Social and political activity of younger people is not only an activity related to the election process, but first and foremost, the good knowledge and skills, as well as an active civic stance of an individual. A role and importance of law schools in achieving the goals are quite understandable and explicable, even if we assume that not all the law students are majoring in the state-legal (constitutional) topics. Law schools are responsible not only for training the competent

specialists for law enforcement and judicial authorities, but above all, for upbringing the citizens of their country.

In general, the current situation in education is linked to the ongoing reform, which undoubtedly affects the stability of the educational process itself. The trends in development of education at the beginning of the XXI century directly depend upon changes occurring in the life of the country, thus forcing to reconsider the problem of preparation of specialists in all the spheres. The general concept of preparation of bachelors as well as its individual parts, particularly, the training program for lawyers, must be revised from the standpoint of already established trends of democratization, humanization and specialization of the educational process. The Bologna educational system, as a two-level training of specialists, has been officially operating in Russia since 2009. The educational reform enacted during this transitional period is evaluated differently, both by the specialists and the public.

Many students choose a criminal law specialty to work at the law enforcement bodies later. Despite the specifics of the fight against crime, they should basically adhere to the citizen stance, but the rights and freedoms of a person and a citizen ought to stay a priority [1]. Departmental regulatory, legal acts of law enforcement agencies today determine the priority areas for combating crime based on the real operational situation. Problems of fighting corruption and organized crime; crimes related to terrorist threats and extremism; as well as migratory crime – rightly belong to the most dangerous types of unlawful manifestations and pose a real threat to the security of the society and the state.

To verify the level of students' expertise, there are various forms of assessment of the knowledge, from preliminary tests to exams, from testing works to various new methods of evaluation of residual knowledge. To test and analyse the state of social and political activity of young people, teachers often use various kinds of assessment works.

In the process of education, the opinions of students are taken into account and studied in various kinds of research, with the aim of identifying the positions, attitudes and mentality of the younger generation on topical and pressing issues of our time. During the survey, which is often anonymous, in the questionnaires the researchers have to find out the attitude of student youth to the political processes in the country, to the socioeconomic situation, the negative phenomena existing in their region, the shortcomings of the legislation, their assessment of law enforcement, etc.

Considering that the legal profession in the future will suggest lots of publicity, openness, communicating with a large number of people, it becomes imperative for students to develop their communication skills. Presenting of reports as well as summarising speeches in front of their fellow students, help to meet several goals: training the students in the art of rhetoric; for shy students – learning to overcome fear of the public; independent search and analysis of legal regulatory literature, etc.

In the current conditions of counteracting the criminality, the role of higher educational institutions, destined to prepare qualified lawyers in all spheres, is growing. This concept is confirmed by the life itself, by the real circumstances, when we are witnessing not only the rapid scientific and technological progress, development and modernization in all

spheres of human relationships, but also the qualitative changes in criminality and everything associated with it.

Priority of law schools nurturing the specialists who will then join the ranks of law enforcers in their combat against crime is quite understandable. Anyhow, we believe that the solid constitutional and legal knowledge ought to lay at the core of education for all the students, regardless of specialization.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Law students as an object of sociological study

During sociological survey, we engage not only full-time students in capacity of respondents, but also the extramural students, as well as practitioners from various bodies who regularly take advanced qualification courses at the University's Law Faculty.

It is to note that for several years, the answers of respondents were not particularly different from those observed in similar studies held by scientists in other regions [2]-[5]. Political apathy, passive attitude, unwillingness to actively participate in the electoral process, directly or indirectly, – these are the attributes characterizing the younger student generation. Despite solid theoretical knowledge about the electoral, constitutional, administrative law, about the essence of the procedure of elections at various levels, the respondents are reluctant to personally come into contact with these opportunities in the election process.

The surveys clearly prove the huge majority of respondents do not belong to any public associations, organizations or societies. The passivity of the youth is noted not only in the political field. Even the youth "fandom" movements of sports fans, which are customary in large cities of Russia with powerful sports facilities, are not typical for Buryatia. The only exception being those students who, hoping for further employment, work as social assistants in various departmental law enforcement structures.

The political preferences of students and trainees of advanced qualification courses lack much distinction; the answers are at best reciting the parties in power represented in the legislative bodies at the federal and regional levels. As a rule, "The United Russia", "The Communist Party of the Russian Federation", "The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia" are mentioned. More than half of the respondents do not name those parties not meeting their requirements, demonstrating the lack of commitment of young people in the activities of any parties.

According to I.V. Balynin, the elections are "an indicator of the civic position of young people, their attitude to democracy, to the future of the country, manifestation of trust in the Russian electoral system" [2]. Indeed, we would like to believe that the role and importance of the younger generation is decisive in any electoral process.

In our opinion, today one very important factor is not accounted for, namely: interrelation of youth and the entire election procedure. The mobility, creativity and passion of the young people are demanded only in the election campaign rather than in the elections themselves. One cannot do



without them, especially during large-scale volunteer and propaganda events. Any candidate would like to employ students, young people in general as assistants in the election campaign. After the election procedures are over, the young people usually get forgotten. Until the next elections.

Observations and studies show that the younger generation is left out of active political life in the period between elections and the next election process. The lack of the authorities' attention to the needs and interests of this category of electorate usually results in various forms of negative reaction, from taking part in protest actions forcing the country's leadership to reconsider the existing youth policy, to the banal manifestation of legal nihilism. It is not by mere chance that the issue of involving the young people in an active political sphere became one of the important topics in the last presidential and regional elections. The current situation in youth policy relates to a number of initiatives announced, including: the issues of the education quality, employment, first-time recruitment, credit programs, the digital economy, etc.

Young voters rightly believe it is sometimes difficult for them to grasp the peculiarities of political life and they are almost certain that the interests of politicians are often far from their specific student issues.

We would like to argue with A.P. Suntssov, who noted the insufficient level of legal culture is one of the conditions for low electoral activity of participants in the electoral process [6]. The statistical data effectively prove there is noticeable and sustained growth of participation of the rural areas' citizens in electoral campaigns versus the urban electorates. It is unlikely the legal culture of a rural voter is higher than the one of the residents of the townships and metropolitan centres.

The level of engagement of young people in public and political life of a region or a local administration proceeds from how well they are aware of who represent them in legislative authorities. The survey held among full-time law students has shown that practically no one could name the municipal level deputies representing their interests in the local self-administration and only a few could mention the deputies of the republican legislative assembly. The situation around the part-time students, as well as the employees trained in the advanced qualification courses at the faculty is slightly better, at least some of them could call the deputies-representatives of both, the city and republican levels.

In our opinion, the reasons for this situation are the following. Students are actively and massively employed in the elections at those electoral districts where they usually campaign in support of a particular candidate, and often it is not a place of their residence. As for the place of their residence (or registration), they sometimes are not aware of who is running, how many candidates competing and who, after all, won the elections. Thus, the real state of things gets distorted, – on one hand, the young people take active part in the election campaign, but on the other hand, the final results of the election process are unknown to them or simply ignored.

Regarding the attitude to the activities of law enforcement and judicial authorities, most of the respondents gives

positive assessment, while about a quarter of respondents treat the above-mentioned bodies neutrally. The results of the survey suggest the idea – if the law students are so indifferent to the electoral rules and political processes in society, then what is there to speak about the rest of the citizens? It is to emphasize that a high level of the voters' legal awareness does not always positively motivate them to take part in the election campaign.

B. Prioritized directions of work with the young people.

Proceeding from the analysis of the study held, as well as the practice of working with the law students over the years, some remarks should be made.

An important role in enhancing the political and legal culture belongs to the youth organizations, volunteer and other public associations and movements, as well as the higher education institutions. It is necessary to point out, in the XXI century not only the youth organizations of the leading parties represented in parliament are actively trying to earn a place in the political arena, but also the associations already "spotted" in public life, supported by various domestic governmental and non-governmental grants [4]. The positive aspect of such youth movements consists in the specifics of implementing their operations and promoting their actions both in practical and virtual spheres, thus becoming recognizable and attractive to wider audiences.

One of the promising areas of work to raise the legal culture of the population, along with the existing traditional forms, would be the launching of so-called legal clinics at higher educational institutions. This well-known and convenient mechanism to offer legal aid for the general population, especially for retirees, pursues several goals: firstly, the opportunity for students to gain real experience in communicating with the public on various legal aspects; Secondly, a promotion of an educational institution among other institutions providing legal services; Thirdly, combination of educational and practical activities in the process of educating the students.

The current practice of active involving young voters in various institutions of civil society significantly increases the effectiveness of legal education (awareness) of voters and contributes to their active life stance and awareness of the need to take part in the affairs of the state and society. The young people participating in the election campaign can really see that their age-mates elected to the legislative assemblies of different levels have much better opportunities and prospects for career growth and adaptation in public and political life.

The practice of election procedures revealed some necessary provisions to be adopted. For a full victory, one should build up an electoral work for the perspective. It is very important to work with voters constantly and not only during election campaigns. A well-defined plan of work with the voters and volunteer teams is a key to having the strong stand in the election district, precinct and region. To a large extent, the tactics and strategy of the election campaign depend on the district itself, the population composition, infrastructure, location area, etc. It is necessary to set up a durable system of public awareness activities to help create a sustainable motivation

On the Issue of Enhancing the Social and Political Activity of Young Generation at The Present Stage

of citizens to make an informed choice on Election Day. The political and legal culture of citizens has to characterise not only the fact of participation in elections, but also the degree of maturity, meaningfulness, in-depth understanding and inclusion of knowledge in real life [7].

The political activity of young people needs to be enhanced at the regional level by enhancing the legal education of parents and youth, creating regional targeted programs to increase the political and legal culture of the residents-voters, as well as keeping the youth better informed of the events held in their favour. Also, one need to involve the young people to take part in the work of the media – after all, the information they give is aired in a more accessible [7].

In conditions of the reforms, it is important not to lose the accumulated experience of organizing students' research work in the context of implementing the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens. Scientific seminars, "round tables", conferences, symposia and other scientific and practical activities is the main and important element of the academic teaching staff's work. If there is no serious scientific studies organized at the universities, then the students are left out of it. The effectiveness of research areas is ensured by its consistency, focusing on results, including high professionalism, supported by scientifically based strategic analysis of real situations, accounting for the effectiveness of previously taken measures.

Currently, the academic teaching staff is paying more and more attention to implementing the research results into operations of practicing bodies, which speaks of the applied importance of science. Scientific grants are the key support in implementing those provisions fixed in monographs, manuals and other scientific works, given the difficult economic conditions of the period we are living through. For instance, the RFBR grant implemented by the creative team of the Faculty of Law on the topic: "Protecting the rights and legitimate interests of citizens of Mongolia in the territory of the Russian Federation, citizens of Russia in Mongolia." This research combines both, experienced teachers and young scientists, postgraduate students and master's students [8], [9].

We believe, one of the ways to meet the challenge would be the large-scale use of new information and educational technologies to ensure high quality and effectiveness of training, including a remote one, which will eventually raise the level of knowledge and skills of students thus increasing the social and political activity of the youth.

The concept of continuous learning is one of the effective tools to solve the problem of adapting the employees' qualifications of any enterprise to rapidly growing level of knowledge and skills required for a specialist of today. This is particularly true for the social and legal spheres, given the dynamics of changes in Russian legislation. The issues of improving the system of training and further advancing qualification of legal staff, together with the increasing of the level of youth activity, are becoming strategically important today.

V. CONCLUSION

The difficult social and economic conditions in the country

certainly have an effect upon the most socially unprotected segments of the population, including young people. The dramatic income differentiation of the population, unemployment, alcohol abuse and other bad habits, plus the lack of prospects and social elevators. This is by no means an exhaustive list of the negative consequences the younger generation may expect in the future. The crisis manifestations in the education system, in the spiritual and moral spheres are clearly reflected in the younger generation. We agree with A.Z. Badmayev, who noted the young people are "placed in doubly extreme conditions – a revolution in political, socio-economic and cultural structures is accompanied by a landslide crisis of value consciousness" [10], yet we believe that the young student generation is the State's main hope for building more prosperous society.

The society has indeed grown to the real need of creating conditions, incentives and alternatives to satisfy the labour, social, political and cultural needs of the youth. To carry out these measures in the near future, we would need objective, scientifically based methods for studying the situation in the youth medium, including students.

We would only wish the young people acquired a high political and legal culture and actively expressed their civic position in the future. One of the main challenges of our society today remains the same – increasing the level of political and legal culture of young people and raising their electoral activity, as a guarantee for exercising the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens in the election process.

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