

Vinkov Sergey V.
Graduate student
Higher School of Economics
Faculty of Economics, Moscow, Russia
E-mail: vinkov@gmail.com

Exercise of Housing Guaranties of Orphans within the Social Security System¹

The following research project is urgent, because the number of orphans in Russian society is growing. Other contributing factors are the contradiction between orphans' constitutional rights and freedoms pertaining to social security assured by the state and the actual opportunities to exercise them by this socio-demographic group; the necessity to determine factors that impede the exercise of orphans' housing guaranties.

Objective – to analyze theoretical and practical implementation of housing guaranties of orphans in a contemporary Russia.

Subject of research: social policy of the state aimed at providing a dwelling space for orphans.

Focus of research: distinguishing aspects of orphans' housing guaranties exercise within the social security system of the Orel region.

Stages:

1. Theoretical and empirical (2004-2007). Investigating types and varieties of institutions that deal with children's social security on the basis of model situations; reviewing basic research papers on housing problems of orphans, interviewing people about orphans in the Russian society to develop statistical data; studying regulations and the legal foundation during practical training in different kinds of orphanages.

2. Projecting and ascertaining (2007-2008r.). Developing a research plan and selecting tools, analyzing documents (508 personal files of orphanages' inmates, indicator – information about their housing situation), making brief questionnaires among orphanage leavers from 2005-2008 (n1=39) and employees of the institution (n2=8) (N1≈350, N2≈400, sampling – targeted), individual conversations with social educators of the orphanage; using Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS); testing the results.

3. Summarizing (2008-2009r.). Systematizing and organizing the data collected during the previous research stages, developing conceptual statements by means of a deepened investigation of working experience that Mtsensk orphanage specialists in housing guaranties security have, a detailed analysis of "housing documents" of the orphanage inmates (re-

¹ The author appreciates great help of Kirsten I. Boutrup in carrying out the research.

search unit – a personal file; calculation unit – a document N=96, n=10), interviewing orphans who are being professionally educated in Orel (N1≈1500, n1=116, sampling – targeted, processing in SPSS), using legal system “Warrant”, interacting with the authorities; finishing paper work.

Concepts definition. In concordance with the research goals, the first step was to define basic important concepts through analysis of modern scientific literature for further operations:

Orphan – a person deprived of a parent (or both) due to various factors during childhood or youth, who has definite social safeguards assured by the national legislation.

Housing guaranties – a system of material and nonmaterial rights and freedoms of an individual including the right to have a dwelling, and means and ways of their implementation.

Social security system – objectified on the legal level systematical complex of legal and economic resources that are necessary for achieving specific goals in the social rights exercise of an individual in housing, financial, educational, and health care areas.

Results of the empirical research allow to say that orphans in a state of constant deprivation without any opportunity to satisfy basic requirement in housing become potential candidates for the marginal stratum; especially after they stop to receive financial support from the state.

These paramount goals left unachieved, an adult orphan is impeded to continue the further social adaptation, because firstly, absence of their own dwelling space entails, at least, no residence permit, secondly, they are in a state of social and psychological dissatisfaction with the low-quality resource at hand. This dissatisfaction may lead to such asocial behavior patterns as delinquency, alcoholism, drug addiction and so on.

Main reasons. Orphan students consider deficient state investments into building available and comfortable houses to be the main reason for the housing problem.

Besides, this problem is caused by the “state’s avarice”, as the orphans say, “its unwillingness to engage itself in orphans’ problems”, “its negligence in solving the problem”. Those quotations sound negative and somehow accusing towards the state.

Ironically, a lot of orphan students rely on the same state to provide them with a dwelling space free of charge – 72,4%, and 88% choose “officials” to be responsible for solving the housing problems. Obviously, such dependant position is formed due to their long-term living on financial support from the state: a lot of the interviewed had lost their parents more than 10 years before and were raised in orphanages.

Apart from the general dissatisfaction with the condition and location of the assigned dwelling, a great desire to have an appropriate dwelling space in the future with modern conven-

iences as the main condition is obvious. The most preferable kind of dwelling is an apartment and the most preferable location is urban area.

Means of improving the process of housing guaranties exercise for orphans. There is no doubt that the process of implementing housing guaranties of orphans is impossible without cultural modernization of social institutions and enhancement of the legal foundation.

Additionally, the following measures to improve housing situation of orphans can be considered:

1. Stepping up resources of state and nongovernmental organizations and people to make the above mentioned changes financially and economically possible.

2. Opening informational cyberspace for orphans to have an opportunity of unimpeded interaction with social security services; changing communication levels from object-subject to subject-subject, with housing guaranties to be the main point of communication, and dwelling, registration and so on to be the focus of it.