

Social innovations as a tool to implement state sustainable development policy

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Abstract. The article is intended to study social innovations as a tool of state sustainability strategy promoting development of human potential and improved quality of life. To achieve this goal, the methods of scientific cognition were used: dialectic, analysis and synthesis, generalization, comparisons. The research is based on studying relevant scientific and periodic economic literature. The research found out that the primary forms of social innovations are social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, social cooperation, social partnership, social contract. However, the process of replicating and scaling social innovations in Russia is slow due to negative objective and subjective factors. Most important of them include no single regulatory framework, irregular development of certain areas of the country, insufficient resources, deficient budgets of many Russian Federation constituents, etc. Therefore, the determinant of diffusion of social innovations must be efficient socio-innovative state policy that will use alternative means, methods and practices to reduce social tension in the society, increase real income of the population, which must finally result in expanded reproduction of all results and factors of economic growth as well as sustainable regional development. The novelty of the paper is justification of social innovation forms that act as an efficient tool of the state sustainable development strategy.

Keywords: social innovations, state strategy, human capital, quality of life, economic growth

1 Introduction

The differentiation of the level and quality of life is increasing every year in the regions, and this is one of the most important problems of regional sustainable development.

The term of regional sustainable development is a derivative of the sustainability category that means development meeting the current needs without menacing the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs [1].

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The authors note that the regional sustainable development is mediated by effects of various external and internal factors one of which is state policy. It "includes tools and methods applied by authorities to stimulate ... socio-economic processes of the region in order to achieve sustainability of its development" [2].

The common fact is that innovation is not only an economic mechanism and technical progress but also a social phenomenon [3], since the development of the human potential, its multiplication and continuous expanded reproduction is the primary source of regional sustainable development.

Therefore, it can be stated that social innovations are a tool of state policy in order to achieve regional sustainable development.

Social innovation is a newly emerged category in the scientific literature. It is debatable since there is a lot of options to interpret its essence and content. Therefore, key issues of the research are no single methodological approach to the essence and content of social innovations, classification of their forms and types, no empirical basis for practical studies of how the propagation level of social innovations affects the development of individual regions. By generalizing the results of researches in this area, it can be stated that social innovations are various new methods and practices mainly intended to improve the human well-being with fewer risks and losses as compared to existing methods. Such innovations are highly novel for development of a certain region and can be used to define factors and effect points that promote transformational changes [4]. The authors believe that the primary subject that forms or implements social innovations is the government: it sets game rules and primary social standards for all economic subjects; while business is aimed at making profit rather than solving social problems.

2 Materials and methods

The research is intended for comprehensive analysis of theoretical researches of social innovations to consider them from a perspective of a tool to implement the sustainable development state policy. The viability of using this approach is mainly defined by a sufficiently high number of social problems that negatively affect socio-economic development of each Russian region. The research objectives are to study the implementation forms of social innovations, identify problems of their scaling and replicating on the regional level, define the role of state policy in their distribution.

The research used general scientific approaches to cognition. In particular, the dialectical method identified primary attributes of social enterprises, social entrepreneurship, social cooperation, social partnership, social contract. Analysis and generalization of scientific literature and periodicals uncovered issues in implementation of social innovations and justified the role of state policy in their scaling and replicating. Comparative methods were used to formulate the primary scientific hypothesis and conclusions upon the research outcomes.

3 Results

Social innovations represent a structurally complicated category that is described by multiple forms and types that are constantly changed, modified and transformed depending on the state policy.

This is covered in researches of such authors as E. Ravazzoli, D.E. Valero [5], K. Joel [6], M. Rabadjieva, A. Butzin [7], T.D. Romaschenko [8] and others. The theoretical analysis helped the authors identifying primary forms of social innovations represented in Figure 1.

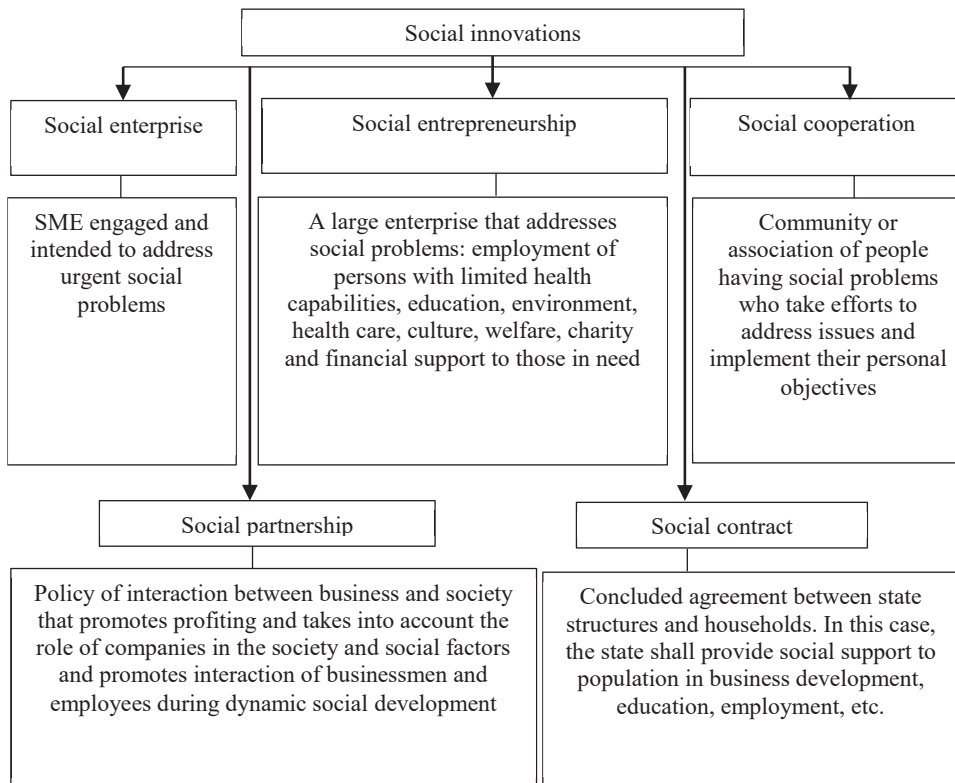


Fig. 1. Forms of social innovations *Source:* Compiled by authors.

The essence of entrepreneurship suggests that the business man should carry out activities intended not only for profiting but for addressing social issues as well as achieving goals of sustainable socio-economic development. It can be stated that such business is characterized by conventional entrepreneurship features and charity activity, which is “described by a combination of business and commercial means with social goals” [9].

The company may also develop programs of corporative social responsibility intended to solve important social issues and achievement of social development goals [10]. In this case, the business sector of economy voluntarily accepts additional social obligations intended to improve the quality of life of company employees and their family members and development of local community at the location of such company.

One of the most important development areas of social innovations is social partnership that represents a special mechanism for approval of interests of all participants of social reproduction based on equality principles of mutual relationships between them as well as equitable cooperation. The goal of social partnership is compliance with interests of each stakeholder of existing labor relations.

Another form of social innovations having a substantial effect on sustainable development of areas is conclusion of various contracts between state structures and households that found themselves in difficult life circumstances and not capable of solving the social problems of its own. In this case, an agreement is concluded between them to improve the welfare level of a certain household and the obtained funds are initial capital for business setup, re-qualification, homestead development, etc.

Let us state that implementation of social innovations in Russia has just started in regional areas and is at the initial stage of development. There are certain problems impeding innovative processes in social area, some of which are represented in Figure 2.

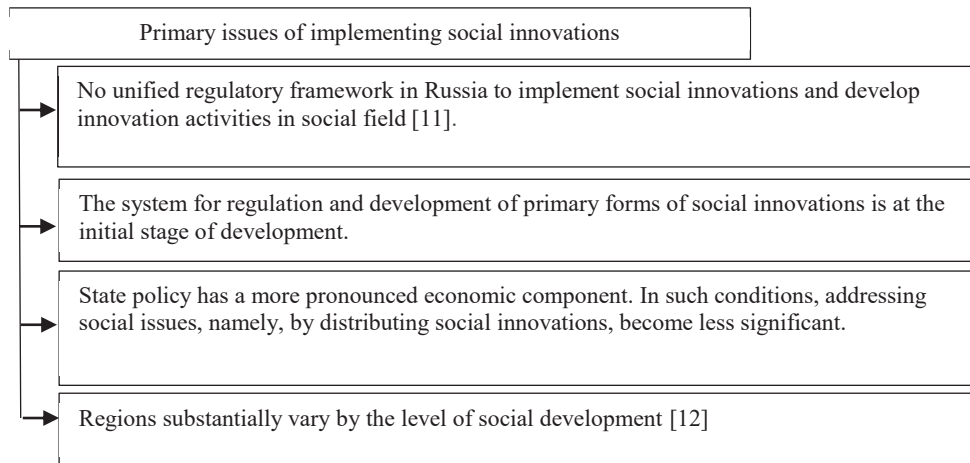


Fig. 2. Modern issues in implementing social innovations. *Source:* Compiled by authors.

In this manner, propagation of experience of social innovations is the basis for improving the welfare of population, its life quality, and expanding economic capabilities. Using tools of state policy, the state defines the occurrence vector of various forms of social innovations, which is finally one of the primary factors and conditions for achieving sustainable development of areas.

4 Discussion

The research results can be used for further scientific surveys in the field of social innovations and the role of state sector in sustainable development of the region. Implementing social innovations at the regional level in Russia promotes sustainable socio-economic development [13]. Therefore, innovative forms include organization of social enterprise, expanding the zone of social entrepreneurship and cooperation, development of social partnership and entering into social contracts.

Social innovations are closer related with natural development laws. In accordance with this, people achieve their goals in sustainable development by improving the labor process [14].

Stable economic development requires permanent state policy based on continuous socio-innovative development and implementation of human potential, improved population welfare, with minimal risks and losses [15].

Ubiquitous propagation of know-how of social innovations and successfully practical implementation of state projects in this area leads to a positive socio-economic effect in the society and sustainable development of regions. Implementing social innovations promotes reduced unemployment and social inequality, development of human capital, growing expenses of homesteads and ensuring comfortable conditions for life, improved social protection of population and creating an accessible habitat for each person, developed social infrastructure, improved environment, etc.

The practical significance of research results is that they can be used for further analysis of effects of social innovations on sustainable development in Russia, but today's reality of

their formation, implementation and scaling implies a number of significant problems and administrative barriers.

5 Conclusion

The research intended to consider the forms of social innovations from the perspective of state sustainability tools resulted in the following conclusions:

firstly, innovations in the social area are one of the most advanced tools of state economy regulation intended to achieve sustainable development of regions through such forms as social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, social cooperation, social partnership, social contract.

secondly, their propagation and replication problems in Russia are as follows: no unified regulatory base in the field of social innovations as well as management state authorities in this field, differentiation of economic and social conditions in various regions, low level of social capital;

thirdly, the theoretical analysis showed that the state policy must include an innovative component. Since the innovative way of social development suggests economic growth and improved quality of life, which is mainly defined by propagation of social innovations. Implementing social innovations creates new social values and improves social climate within a certain area or region. In these conditions, the regions will see their sustainable development.

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