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Assessment of the Work of Authorities in the Field of Social Security of Citizens Discharged from Military Service and their Family Members

Evaluación del trabajo de las autoridades en el campo de la seguridad social de los ciudadanos dados de baja del servicio militar y sus familiares

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RESUMEN

El artículo presenta la evaluación del trabajo de las autoridades federales y municipales en el campo de la seguridad social de los ciudadanos dados de baja del servicio militar y sus familiares. El análisis demuestra que, en general, la legislación actual garantiza un estado socioeconómico estable y la seguridad social de esta categoría de ciudadanos. Sin embargo, las medidas de apoyo estatal en el campo de la seguridad social de los ciudadanos dados de baja del servicio militar y los miembros de sus familias desplegados por las autoridades regionales dejan mucho que desear. El apoyo médico, el empleo y la educación presentan las áreas más problemáticas. Los resultados del estudio indican que una de las razones de la baja seguridad es el nivel de conciencia del antiguo personal militar y sus familiares.

Palabras clave: Ciudadanos dados de baja del servicio militar, hogar de ex soldados, jubilados militares, estatus socioeconómico.

ABSTRACT

The article presents the assessment of the work of federal and municipal authorities in the field of social security of citizens discharged from military service and their family members. The analysis demonstrates that in general, the current legislation ensures a stable socioeconomic status and social security of this category of citizens. However, the measures of state support in the field of social security of citizens discharged from military service and the members of their families deployed by the regional authorities leave much to be desired. Medical support, employment, and education present the most problematic areas. The results of the study indicate that one of the reasons for low security is the level of awareness of former military personnel and their family members.

Keywords: Citizens discharged from military service, former soldier's household, military pensioners, socioeconomic status.

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INTRODUCTION

Care for people who have dedicated their lives to defending the Motherland is inherent in any state and constitutes the moral, ethical, and legal basis of military service. Therefore, the issues of social security, the quality of life, and the social and legal protection of military personnel, persons discharged from military service, and their family members have always been an object of close attention of both the state and military authorities and the scientific community.

The problems of the socio-economic and legal aspects of the life of citizens discharged from military service are considered in the works of A.V. Korovnikov (1995), M.V. Kibakin (1995), N.Ia. Semenets (1998), V.N. Serebriannikov (1998), and others.

The analysis of scientific publications, reports, and sociological studies demonstrates a significant deterioration in the quality of life of citizens discharged from military service, i.e. at the end of military service, military pensioners and their families experience extreme difficulties in meeting their vital needs.

For the period of service, people who have dedicated the best years of their lives to military service consciously consent to several civil rights restrictions related to choosing the place of residence, freedom of movement, the ability to engage in entrepreneurship, personal security guarantees, and having much weaker starting conditions for starting a civilian life after military layoff compared to the those who have not served. Therefore, the well-being of labor collectives and society as a whole depends on the quality of inclusion of former military personnel in the labor activity and the system of social ties and relations. In these conditions, organizing a smooth integration into the new socio-cultural environment while maintaining all the positive qualities formed during the service presents a vital task for both the discharged military personnel and society as a whole (Baynova et al.: 2017).

The equipment of the army and navy with the latest technology and the continuous specialization of military labor has largely increased the level of general and professional competence of personnel in recent decades meaning that training costs have risen as well. If a way to adequately implement the knowledge and experience of former soldiers following their transition to civilian life is not found, the losses will be just as high as the expenses. However, this is only the economic side of the issue. It is necessary to account for the direct effect of the changing abilities of a person on their need for a certain type of work. The lack of adequate correspondence between the previous and new specialties not only leads to lower labor effectiveness but also generates a knot of social and personal contradictions inducing increased mental tension and dissatisfaction with the person's self, their activities, and life in general.

The striving towards improving the quality of life and meeting the vital material and spiritual needs of people who have dedicated the active years of their life to serving their Motherland and were discharged from military service due to the end of the contract, military injury, etc., is "the moral basis for the success of economic activity in the conditions of innovative development of our country [Russia]" (Gladysheva: 2017).

Sociological studies on the socioeconomic and legal status of military personnel discharged from military service indicate that this category of citizens experiences major difficulties after leaving the military service (Bondaletova: 2020).

This finding actualizes the need to conduct monitoring to analyze the indicators of social security of citizens discharged from military service and the decisions made by the authorities and military commanders to improve the legal system of the Russian Federation in this sphere (Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation: 1999). The results of monitoring studies are demonstrated in the publications of B.A. Adokhin (2009), V.V. Bondaletov (2019), A.V. Kirillov et al. (2019), A.V. Sablukov et al. (2017), and S.S. Solovov (2018).

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted as a part of a grant following the order of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation in June-November 2019 in accordance with the approved methodology and the system of indicators (Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation: 1999). The study used the data provided by the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) and departmental statistics, as well as the results of our sociological survey of 2018 and 2019 and the results of monitoring that has been conducted in the federal subjects of the Russian Federation since 2014.

The study involved a survey of over 2,000 citizens discharged from military service and their family members living in 25 federal subjects of the Russian Federation. Federal and regional legislative base regarding the socioeconomic, material, and legal support of citizens discharged from military service and their family members was also analysed.

RESULTS

Most state support measures (in the form of special benefits and guarantees) in the field of social support of citizens discharged from military service, combatants, and their family members concentrate on the federal level rather than regional.

The analysis of the federal and regional legislation in the field of social security of citizens discharged from military service, combatants, and their family members demonstrates that, overall, the existing legislation ensures a stable socioeconomic status and social security of this category of citizens.

The analysis demonstrates a significantly higher financial status of citizens discharged from military service with the right for long service pension compared to other pensioners. However, the conducted survey shows that the current legislation mostly ensures only partial observance of the rights and benefits of the examined category of citizens (62.1%). Moreover, 20.5% of the respondents answered that their rights and benefits were not provided, and only 15.8% of the study participants noted that their rights and benefits were fully ensured by the current legislation. The results of the survey conducted in 2019 differ from the results of 2018 insignificantly, the only observed difference in the "provided partially" option is 4.9 points (Fig. 1).

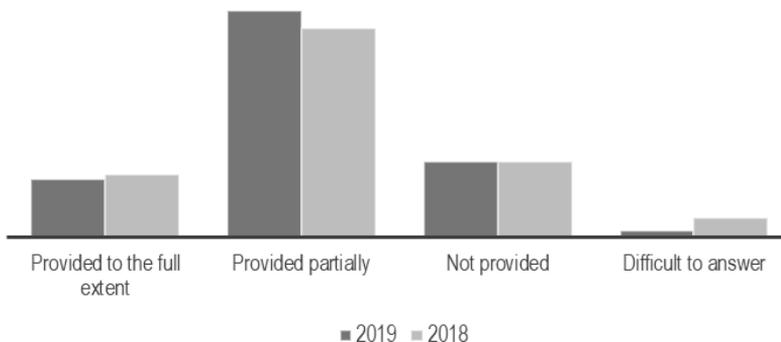


Figure 1. Assessment of the degree to which guarantees, rights, benefits, and the existing legislation are being implemented for the servicemen discharged from military service and their family members (October 2019, in % of the overall number of respondents)

The assessment of the degree of implementation of the guarantees, rights, benefits, and the existing legislation for military personnel discharged from military service and the members of their families by the fields of activity is presented in Fig. 2.

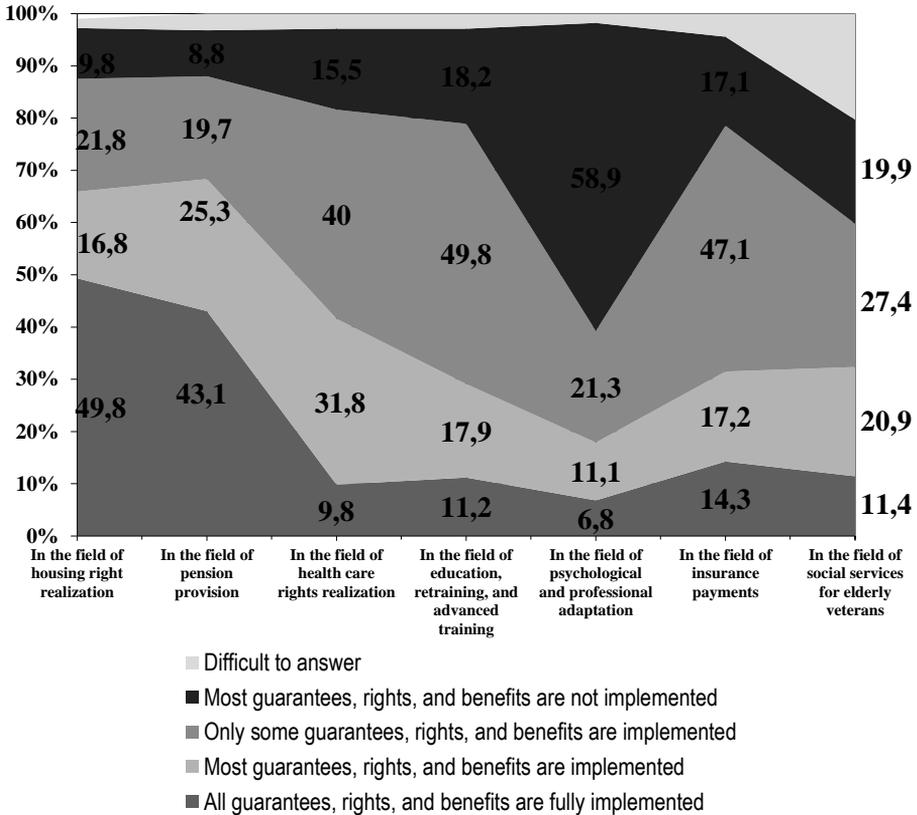


Figure 2. Assessment of the effectiveness of the norms regulating the social and legal status of personnel discharged from military service and their family members (according to the study conducted in 2019, in %)

As illustrated by the diagram, the respondents did not report complete satisfaction with the implementation of their guarantees, rights, and benefits in any field of social security. However, the spheres with the lesser degree of violations (where the guarantees, rights, and benefits were completely or mostly implemented) were:

- the field of pension provision with 68.4% of “most measures are not implemented” answers against 28.5% of “only some measures are implemented” answers;
- the field of housing right realization – 66.6% against 31.6%, accordingly.

As for other areas of security, the implementation of guarantees, rights, and benefits follows a negative tendency to a great extent:

- in the field of health care rights realization: 41.6% against 55.5%;
- in the field of social services for elderly veterans: 32.3% against 47.3%;
- in the field of social and cultural security: 32% against 61%;
- in the field of insurance payments: 31.6% against 64.2%;
- in the field of education, retraining, and advanced training: 29.1% against 68%;

- in the field of realization of the rights and opportunities for self-governing: 28% against 48,8%;
- in the field of psychological and professional adaptation: 17.9% against 80.2%.

A significant number of people who found it difficult to answer the questions on the field of realization of the rights and opportunities for self-governing (23.3%) and the field of social services for elderly veterans (20.3%) indicates either the low social and political activity or the low confidence of the respondents in their knowledge. It is also possible that the respondents have little knowledge of the guarantees and benefits they are entitled to. The same explanation can also be applied to the results in the field of psychological and professional adaptation. Therefore, the information and promotion support of the measures implemented by the state to support this category of citizens calls for a substantial review in these areas.

Moreover, the negative assessment of the degree of realization of the norms in the fields of insurance payments (64.2%) and education, retraining, and advanced training (68%) draws special attention.

These results indicate that health care, education, retraining, additional training, and insurance payments are the most vulnerable areas of benefits and guarantees provided to military personnel discharged from military service and their family members.

The assessment of the degree of measure implementation distributed by the key areas of security and the categories of former military personnel as follows.

The assessment of the degree of implementation of rights and benefits in the field of realization of the right for retirement benefits in the current legislation by the citizens discharged from military service with the right for pension and disabled military personnel is presented in Fig. 3.

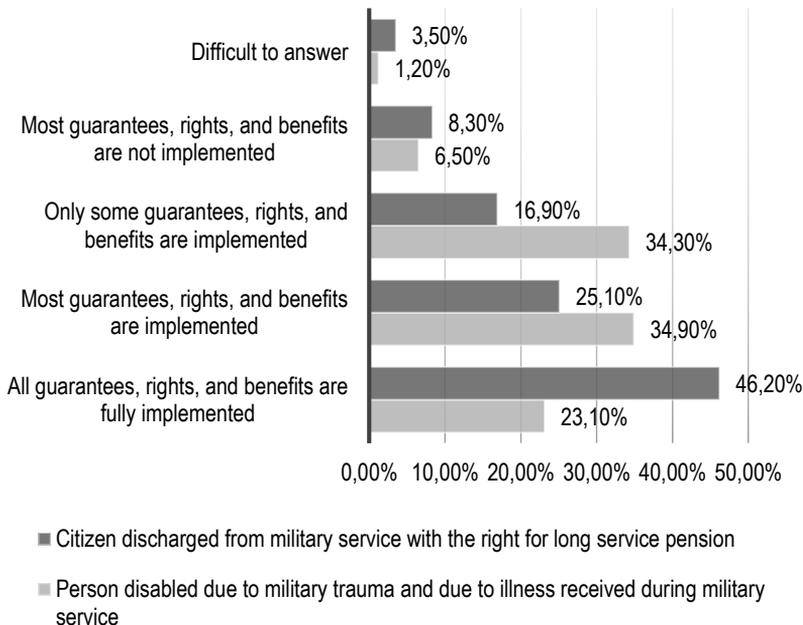


Figure 3. Evaluate the degree of implementation of your rights and benefits in the field of realization of the right for retirement benefits in the current legislation (according to the 2019 survey data)

Respondents with disabilities were satisfied with the implementation of their rights and benefits in the field of pension provision to the least extent. Only 23.1% of the surveyed people with disabilities noted that their rights were fully implemented; 34.9% of the respondents believed most guarantees, rights, and benefits to be

implemented; 34.3% of the respondents reported only some guarantees, rights, and benefits to be realized. These survey results allow us to assume that people with disabilities are not sufficiently informed in the field of pension provision or have problems with its legal registration.

The assessment of the degree of implementation of the rights and benefits in the field of realization of the right for housing in the current legislation by the citizens discharged from military service and disabled military personnel is presented in Fig. 4.

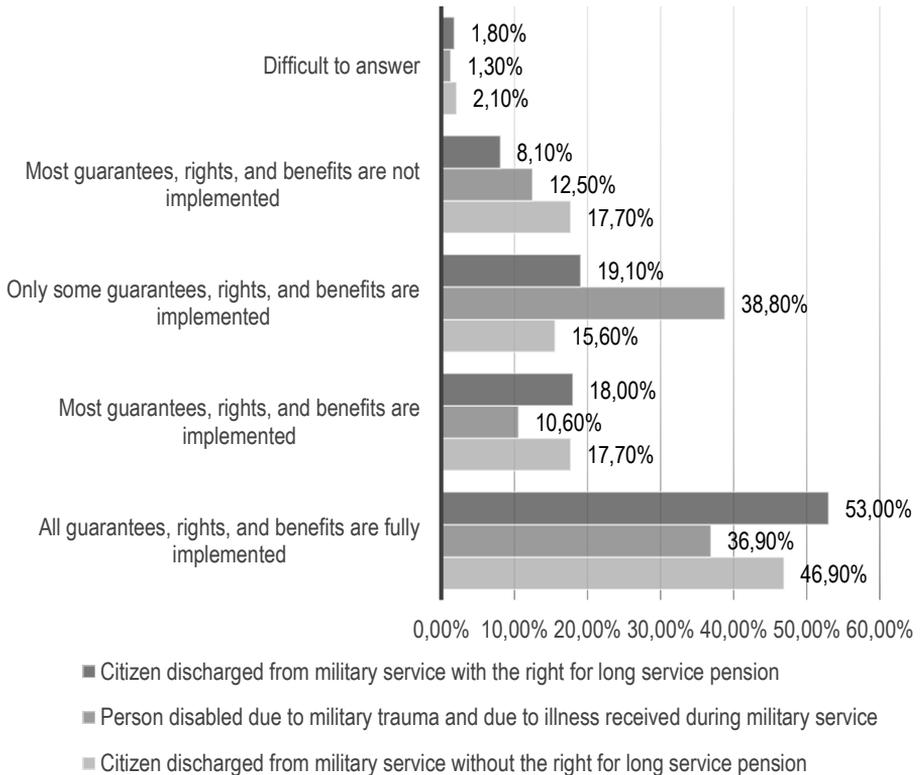


Figure 4. Evaluate the degree of implementation of your rights and benefits in the field of realization of the right for housing in the current legislation (according to the 2019 survey data)

In the field of realization of the right to housing, the greatest satisfaction was expressed by the citizens discharged from military service with the right for long service pension (53%). Disabled military personnel were least satisfied with the implementation of guarantees, rights, and benefits in this sphere, only 36.9% of this group were completely satisfied with the implementation of the norm in question. However, according to the survey conducted in 2018, only 20% of disabled respondents considered their guarantees, rights, and benefits to be implemented in full, which is 16.9% lower compared to 2019. Thus, we observe a tendency for the improvement in the provision of housing for disabled military personnel; although insignificantly, the degree of realization of their rights in this sphere is rising. Moreover, 46.9% of military personnel discharged from service without the right for long service pension noted that their rights in the field of housing were implemented to the fullest extent.

The assessment of the degree of implementation of the rights and benefits in the field of realization of the right for healthcare in the current legislation by the citizens discharged from military service and disabled military personnel is presented in Fig. 5.

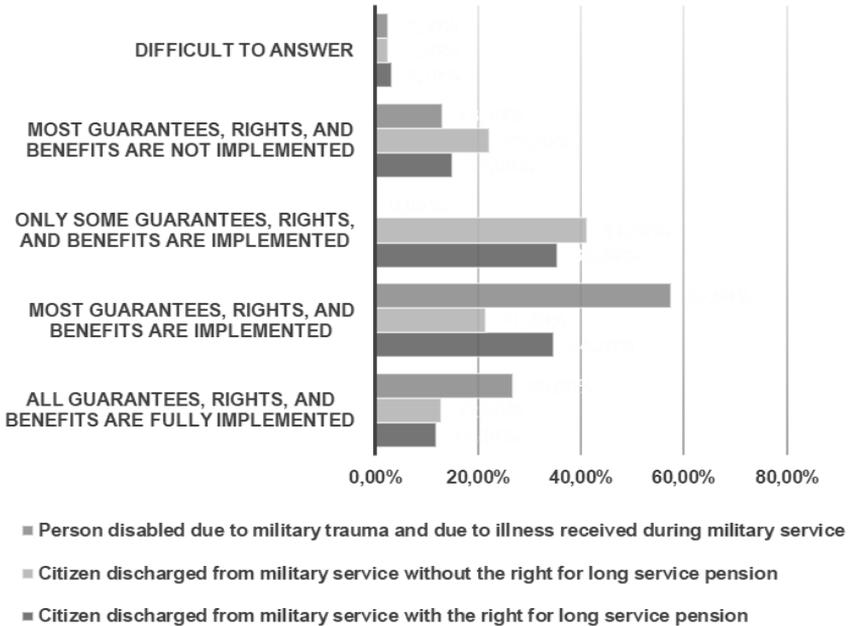


Figure 5. Evaluate the degree of implementation of your rights and benefits in the field of realization of the right for healthcare in the current legislation (according to the 2019 survey data)

It is possible that the low rate of military personnel's satisfaction with the realization of their guarantees, rights, and benefits in the field of medical care can be explained by the fact that over half of the respondents (46.53%) were registered with a civilian state medical organization (polyclinic, hospital) and only a third of them (32.15%) used the services of military medical organizations (Fig. 6).

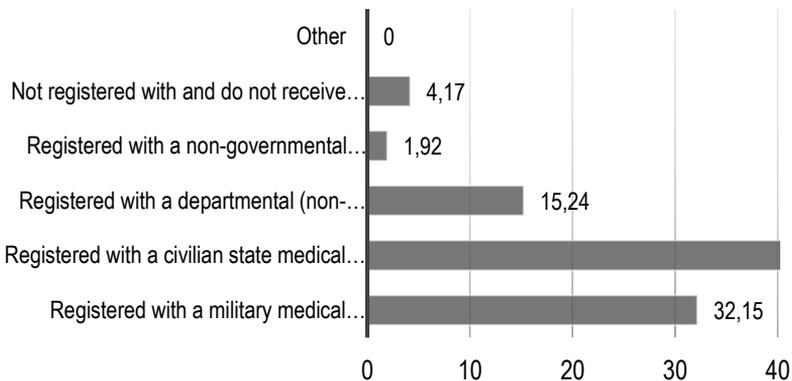


Figure 6. Information on the military personnel discharged from military service being registered with a medical organization (October 2019, in % of respondents)

Practice demonstrates that military medical organizations provide high-quality medical care accounting for the specific characteristics of occupational diseases of military personnel. Moreover, the respondents noted the need to wait for a long time to get an appointment with a medical specialist, get hospitalized, or be referred for treatment to a sanatorium at a convenient time (season) as the reason for dissatisfaction.

The assessment of the degree of implementation of the rights and benefits in the field of realization of the right for employment, education, retraining, and advanced training by the citizens discharged from military service.

The realization of the discharged military personnel's rights in the field of employment presents a vital aspect. This issue is primarily important for the categories of military personnel who have retired without a long service pension.

The decrease in the number of people registered in the employment service indicates that former military personnel least associate employment services with the job search mechanism and, therefore, have little confidence in them. This notion is supported by the ways of employment taken by former military personnel (Fig. 7).

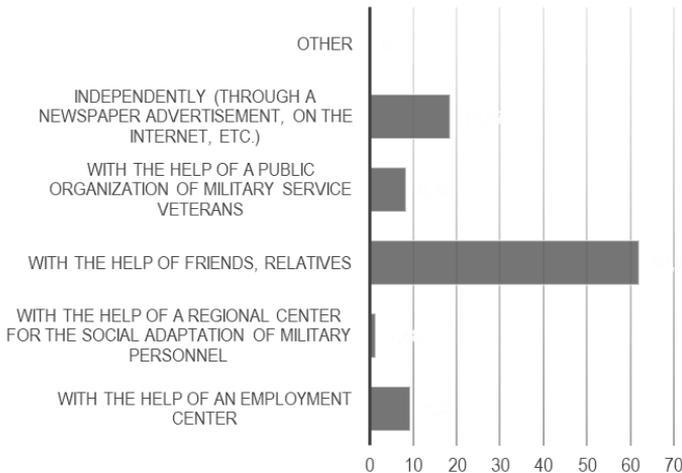


Figure 7. A characteristic of the methods of employment of the working military personnel discharged to the reserve (resignation) (in % of the respondents)

As demonstrated by the figure, 62.08% of the respondents got a job with the help of friends and relatives, 18.57% executed the job search themselves, and only 10.86% of the respondents sought the help of state institutions (9.38% – with the help of an employment center and 1.49% – with the help of regional adaptation centers).

Moreover, in relation to the employment centers, education, retraining, and advanced training, the respondents often note that most retraining proposals they receive concern manual labor specialties.

Following the analysis described above, we conclude that the former military personnel's assessment of the degree of realization of their rights and benefits by the current legislation is ambivalent, which is supported by the factual violations noted by the respondents. The greatest number of violations of rights and benefits that former military personnel faced in the past 2 years was detected in the field of medical care (33.9%); a lesser degree of violations was found in the fields of employment (20.2%) and receiving housing (17.8%) (Fig. 8).

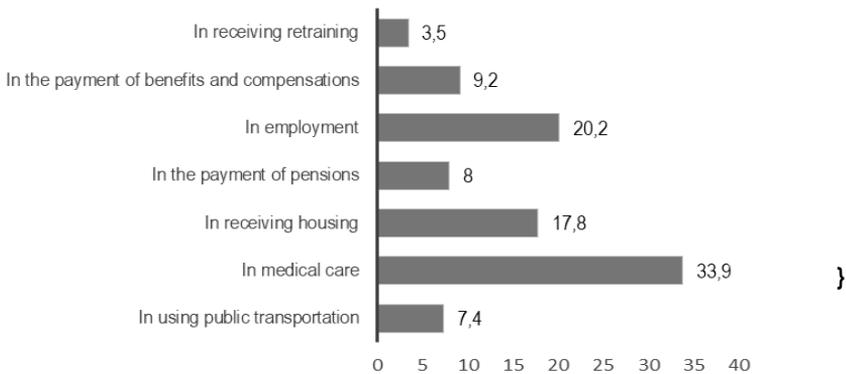


Figure 8. The violations of rights and benefits that citizens discharged from military service faced in the last 2 years (in % of respondents)

Concerning the quality of realization of the measures of state support in the field of social security by the regional authorities, the vast majority of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction as well (71.7%; 43.8% mostly unsatisfied and 27.9% completely dissatisfied). Satisfaction with the quality of social security was noted by 28.3% of the respondents (24.0% were mostly satisfied, 4.3% – completely satisfied) which is only slightly different from the results of the previous year (Fig. 9).

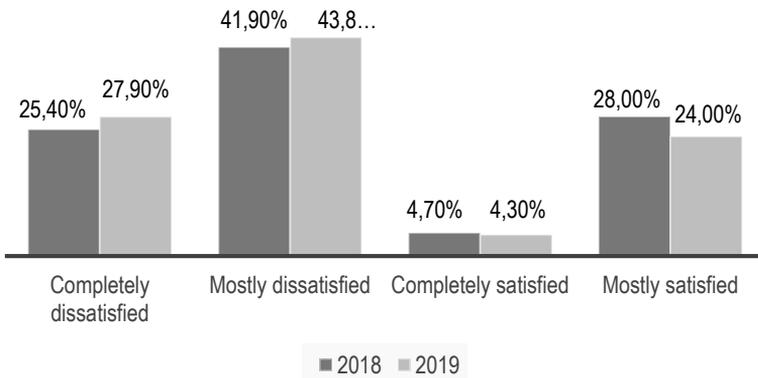


Figure 9. Satisfaction with the quality of implementation of the measures of state support in the field of social security for citizens discharged from military service, combatants, and their family members (in % of respondents in 2018 and 2019 surveys)

Concerning the satisfaction of citizens discharged from military service, combatants, and members of their families with the work of specific government authorities in the various areas of social security, the evaluations by the types of authorities and the fields of implementation of rights and benefits are distributed in the following way (Fig. 10).

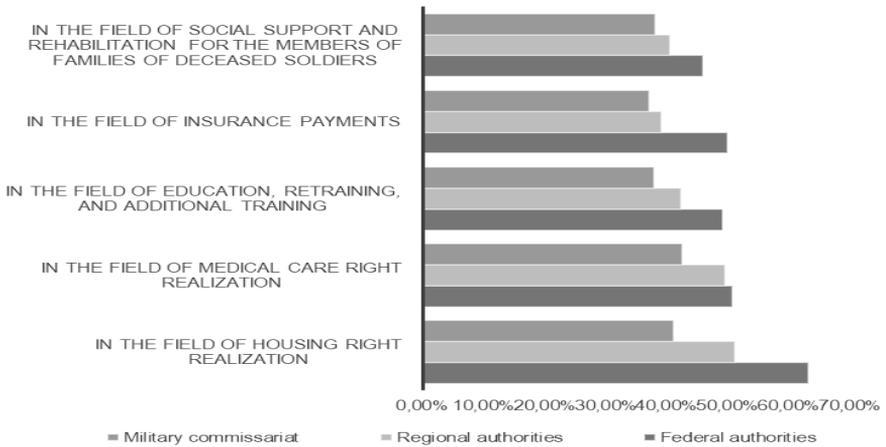


Figure 10. Evaluation of the activities of state authorities in the field of social security for citizens discharged from military service, combatants, and the members of their families (in % of respondents, 2019)

For the sake of fairness towards the assessment of the work of state authorities in the field of education, retraining, and advanced training, it should be noted that, according to the survey results, only 7% of the respondents were fully informed about the activities of regional (local) centers for social and professional adaptation and retraining, 19% had some information on it, and 70% did not have any information (Fig. 11).

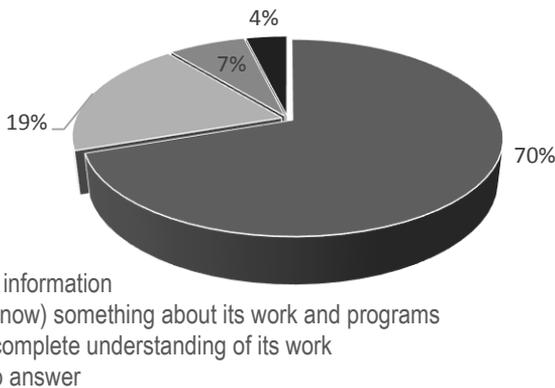


Figure 11. Awareness of citizens discharged from military service about the activities of a regional (local) center for social and professional adaptation and retraining

The assessment of the degree of implementation of specific benefits for people disabled due to reasons related to military service by the regional authorities is reflected in a diagram presented below (Fig. 12).

The histogram demonstrates that the regional authorities most thoroughly fulfill the benefits in compensating the costs of housing and communal services, electricity, and gas (81% on average). Local authorities have serious difficulties in implementing some of the benefits, such as soft loans for housing construction (13.9%) and providing free vehicles (19.47%) and free vouchers for resort treatment (22.86%). Analyzing the degree of implementation of benefits for disabled military personnel by the local authorities over the past 5 years, we can confidently state that local government increases the quantitative and qualitative indicators in this area of work.

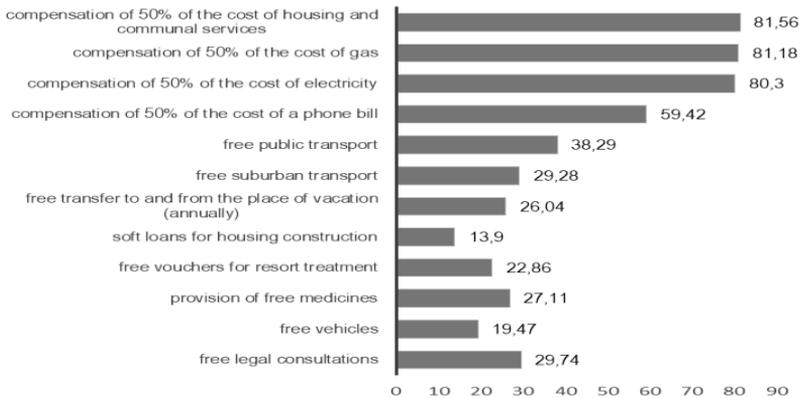


Figure 12. Evaluation of the degree of provision of specific benefits for the military personnel disabled due to service-related trauma and illness by the local authorities (according to a 2019 study, in % of the respondents)

Thus, the assessment of the work of federal and municipal authorities in the field of social security for citizens discharged from military service, combatants, and their family members allows concluding that at the local level, the norms of federal legislation are implemented to a greater extent compared to the norms of regional and local legislation. In the assessment of authorities' actions in the field of social security for citizens discharged from military service, combatants, and their family members the respondents expressed the greatest level of satisfaction with the work of federal authorities, lesser satisfaction with the regional authorities, and were satisfied to the least extent with the work of military commissariats.

The spheres of realization of the right for housing (66.6%) and pension provision (68.40%) were in the best state compared to other spheres of social security. According to the respondents, their guarantees, rights, and benefits were least fulfilled in the field of medical care where dissatisfaction was expressed by 55.5% of the respondents compared to 41.6% who were satisfied, in the field of social and cultural security – 61% against 32%, the field of insurance payments – 64.2% against 31.6%, in the sphere of education, retraining, and advanced training – 68% against 29.1%, in the field of realization of the rights and opportunities for self-governing – 48.8% against 28%, and in the field of psychological and professional adaptation – 80.2% against 17.9%.

While in the area of medical care the situation can be explained by the overall status of civilian medical organizations (queues, problems with receiving appointments to specialists, registration at sanatoriums, etc.) and the medical sector as a whole since 63.68% of the respondents were registered with non-military medical organizations, other areas of social support are mostly affected by the low awareness and activity of the recipients of benefits themselves.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the implemented measures promote the improvement of the socioeconomic status of citizens discharged from military service and their family members. The financial status of citizens discharged from military service with the right for a long service pension is higher than that of other pensioners. Pension provision and housing meet the least amount of negative feedback. However:

1. The measures of state support in the field of social security of citizens discharged from military service, combatants, and the members of their families implemented by the regional authorities leave much to be desired. Medical care, employment, and education present the most problematic areas. Monitoring suggests that one of the leading reasons for such a low fulfillment is the low awareness of former military personnel and their family members.

A range of spheres of realization of guarantees, benefits, and rights of military personnel discharged from service, combatants, and their family members call for the improvement of the informational and promotion support of the implemented measures of state support.

2. The division of military pensioners into the categories of beneficiaries of the federal and regional registry continues to cause dissatisfaction in citizens discharged from military service, which calls for the restoration of the unified legal and social status of military service veterans.

3. The insufficient amount of social payment provided at the expense of the federal budget for the purchase of residential premises continues to be indicated as the predominant reason for the poor housing of discharged military personnel. As a result, military pensioners and their family members are forced to either seek additional funds to purchase the cheapest housing or refuse the proposed social payment because of not being able to find an option suitable for purchase. According to the respondents from several subjects of the Russian Federation, increasing the average market price per 1 square meter of living space to be acquired, as well as the normative housing area established for the above-mentioned categories of citizens in part 3 of article 23.2 of the Federal Law "On Veterans" (currently 18 square meters) could become a solution to this problem.

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