



Social Work in Republic of Buryatia

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The Republic of Buryatia is situated in Eastern Siberia, the eastern coast of Baikal Lake. The total area of the republic is 351 thousand square kilometers. The capital of Republic is Ulan-Ude.

The modern social-economic situation in Russia is extremely paradoxical and multiaspectual – negative processes take place almost in all spheres of the society.

The introduction of market economy principles, the process of privatisation, and the last economic crises in the Federation of Russia have brought many social phenomena - among them increasing poverty, homelessness and still high rate of unemployment are the worst one. It makes the changes in the state social welfare programmes and functioning patterns be implemented. Social problems are especially very important in the so-called “depressive” regions of Russia (Buryatia Republic is among those regions). The most important is the staff supplement of social services and the level of professionalism of people who work there. This problem consists of two aspects: first, the number of specialists with professional education of social workers is not enough; second, the level of professionalism of the workers is very low.

The Buryat Republic municipality amounts to inhabitants and consist of 22 administration units and Ulan-Ude employing ca.1647 persons in the 72 centres of social assistance, of protection of children, and special agencies for helping children in the crises situations. Regarding the information of the chief of the statistic department of the Social Security and Labour Committee of Buryatia Republic, the number of persons working in social services, who have social work education or training is rather small. The experts estimate only 36,8% have got the professional education in social work. According report of the statistic department there is the great necessity in improving professional skills.

It's obvious that we should take into consideration the necessity of social services into long- and short term rates with the further perspectives. This necessity depends on social and economic development of the region, specialists' migration, social services development tempo, etc.

The transition of the Russian society requires the crucial reform of a existing system of a academic education in order to make it able to give a right response to new societal and cultural demands. The State University of Buryatia has recognised the necessity of reform of the whole system and of development of new courses and qualification-profiles of teaching staff as well, addressing to new societal needs.

The Buryat State University was founded in 1995 on the basis of Dorji Banzarov' Buryat State Teachers' Training Institute and Ulan-Ude Branch of Novosibirsk State University.

Today Buryat State University is one of the biggest educational, scientific and cultural centers in Eastern Siberia. More than 10 000 people work and study here.

In order to satisfy the Republic's and neighbouring regions' needs in qualified personnel there are some new specialities and faculties opened during last years (Faculty of Economics and Management, Law Faculty, Medicine Faculty and Faculty of Sociology and Psychology). The University has its branches in Ust-Orda Buryat Autonomous District and Ulan-Bator (Mongolia).

One of the basic principles of the university work is using the system of scientific personnel and teachers' continuous training which includes the following stages – school training, college training, university training, postgraduate and doctorate training. Today at 15 faculties and in 2 branches of the University there are 28 specialities according to which the students are trained. Apart from Buryat Republic citizens there are some students who come from neighbouring regions and from abroad to study here. For example, there are some Mongolian, Chinese, Turkish, Korean, Japan and American students, who study here.

The State University of Buryatia possesses great intellectual potential. 102 doctors of sciences and about 400 candidates of sciences are working here. The best scientists from Buryatia, Siberia and the main scientific centers of Russia and a number of foreign specialists participate in training the students. The university's students and postgraduate students work in laboratories of Buryat Scientific Centre. Every year about 200 teachers and future specialists of the university have practice and probation periods in the largest Russian and foreign higher educational institutions.

During the years of the Buryat State University's existence 11 leading scientific schools were organised. The centres of the university scientific and pedagogical work are: 3 scientific Institutes, 65 chairs, 4 Research laboratories, in which various scientific researches in 27 fields are carried out.

The University co-operate on the agreement base with 21 universities and research institutes in 11 countries and has gained a lot of experiences in the field of international co-operation and its administrative staff is good qualified in management of international programmes and projects. Additionally, the State University of Buryatia plays an important role in dissemination of new trends in academic education and research in the country.

The Faculty of Sociology and Psychology is the youngest faculty at the University, based on the Chair of psychology and the Chair of Social Work on 9th of June, 2000. The Faculty numbers 36 members of academic staff, among them there are 3 doctors of science, 14 candidates of science. The experts – representatives of other faculties and divisions of university, educational and, research and professional organisation of city, country and world are attracted to research work of faculty.

530 students study at the faculty. The main specializations are "Psychology" and "social Work". The faculty cooperates with the Ministry of Labour and Social Work, the State Committee of Youth, Tourism, Physical Culture and Sport, the City Administration, the Lutheran Social Service (USA), public organization. The saved experience of direct connections with western high schools and atmosphere of an openness of cooperation have ensured organizing the International Conference "International Experience and regional Features of Social Work", 11-14 September, 2002.

The Chair of Social Work was organized in 1995. The necessity of this Chair creation was caused by need for high qualified specialists in social area, which have skills of making solution in practical and theoretical question as well Graduates - specialists in social field - are managers in social work, who have experience of psychological diagnosis, able to held psychological, conflictological counselling.

For this time being there are prepared and included in curriculum such courses as "Theory of social work", "Management and Administration in social work", "Technology of social work", "Family science", "Conflictology", "History of social work" and special courses about the problems of communications psychology, problems of deviant behaviour.

In the field of scientific work Chair held investigations in theory, technology and methods of social work with children, family and elderly people, relying on the experience which concentrated in the special laboratories. Within special faculty for further education in the field of social work the Chair elaborated the special course (total hours 520) of further education practical workers in the social field. Since February 2002 was graduated the first group.

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