

# Features and Barriers of Information Interaction between Authorities and Citizens using E-democracy Technologies and Supply Chain Management at Municipal Level

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**Abstract-** The present paper discusses practical aspects of improving the efficiency of working with letters and appeals of citizens in local governments and supply chain management. The main difficulties of working with citizens' letters and appeals in local governments in the Russian Federation have been studied; working with letters and appeals of citizens in the Administration of Dmitrovsky District of the Moscow Region has been analyzed and possible mechanisms have been proposed for increasing the efficiency of working with letters and appeals of citizens. The best practices in dealing with citizens' appeals to an absolute degree illustrate the direct relationship between qualitative organization of the administrative-legal system for protection of the legal rights and freedoms of the population and executive branch. The timeliness and efficiency of decision-making regarding demands of the population undoubtedly characterizes any administrative apparatus to be the most competent and wealthy. As the level of trust in government, such an important aspect of modern society is mainly influenced by well-coordinated mechanisms for dealing with citizens' appeals and reflected in congruence of the decisions made. Thus, the existence of two important functions of the institution of citizens' appeal cannot be denied; the first of which is the ability of population to realize their rights, enshrined in the constitution; the second function is the direct participation of population in governing the state, also having a constitutional democratic basis.

**Keywords-** *Efficiency, supply chain management, Population, State, Local Authorities, Document Flow, Needs, Management.*

## 1. Introduction

In Russia, modern models of public administration are now characterized by the search for more efficient mechanisms and tools for development of the territory. In this connection, the development of successful and closest relationships between authorities and population of the country has been prioritized. Involvement of active population is based on the main directions of development of civil initiatives based on regular participation of population in work of the authorities. Distancing of government bodies from population is now one of the most acute problems in the interaction of state bodies with civil society. The population does not see significant results from their participation in the development of the country; therefore, manifestations of civic activism are declining.

A successful state and municipal government cannot be effective without participation of the population in their activities. The need to build an effective state apparatus and to improve the mechanism of work of state bodies has been repeatedly noted in the messages of the President to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation [1]. There is a combination of interests in the process of regular systemic interaction of citizens and administrative services, ensuring a stable strong relationship between the state and the public. The process of communication of government with the people is implemented in specific areas and in certain forms. At the present stage, citizens' appeals are from the traditional forms of interaction between citizens and authorities.

Qualitative legal study of citizens' appeals is, of course, a fundamental element in the mechanism for ensuring pre-trial settlement of situations classified as conflicting. Special attention in the modern system of working with the population is paid not only to the resolution of emerging contradictions, but also to control, as well as to a consistent analysis of the reasons for their appearance. The need for these measures is primarily related to the possibility of making changes and adjustments to the regulatory framework, if one or several of its points cause discontent, contradictions, thereby the quality of life of the population will be significantly reduced. Statistical data on social problems and the needs of population's certain segments are also based on an analysis of the flow of citizens. The activity on updating the methods of working with citizens' appeals is a priority carried out in accordance with the [24] "On the procedure for considering appeals of citizens in the Russian Federation" and it considers the trends of international law.

In these realities, the use of modern digital media, information and communication technologies plays a significant role in ensuring the efficiency of working with citizens' appeals. This functionality allows the heads of government to strengthen control over the implementation of decisions taken concerning citizens' appeals, to verify the facts set out in the appeal and to timely respond to the situations that have arisen.

The present paper is aimed at identifying the features and barriers of information interaction between the authorities and population in the process of citizens' appeals to local governments.

## 2. Analysis of Recent Publications on the Problem

Issues of government interaction with the public are the subject of studies in the works of the following authors: S. Black, R. Smith, J. Grunig, Childers H.L., Todts Hunt, Ivy Lee, L. Bernaise, and H. Kentrill.

Among the Russian scientists in the framework of the considered issues we can refer to [25]. In recent years, the process of improving the institution of citizens' appeals was an area of scientific interest for many Russian and foreign scientists, such as [2-21].

The question of the implementation of the constitutional right of citizens to appeal to the administrative instances was thoroughly analyzed in their work [22]. The empirical basis was provided by statistical materials of the municipal,

regional and federal level [23,24], normative legal acts of the Russian Federation, and sociological observations.

## 3. Materials and Methods

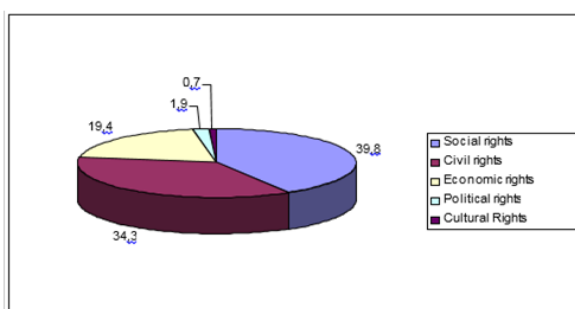
Regulatory legal acts, statistical data, and informational and analytical materials of the authorities form the information base of the research. Both general theoretical methods were used including analysis and synthesis, generalization, theoretical modeling, and empirical methods including document analysis, opinion polls. The main data collection method when studying the effectiveness of work with letters and appeals of citizens in the Administration of the Dmitrovsky urban district of the Moscow region was the analysis of documents in addition to an expert survey. The experts were the municipal employees of the Administration of the Dmitrovsky urban district of the Moscow region [25, 26].

## 4. Results

Related to the development of the information society at the present stage, new methods began to emerge in order to improve the system of relations between authorities and the public. The basis of the formation of this management system is usually made up of information and communication technologies, due to which working with letters and appeals of the population becomes more structured. Electronic resources, regardless of the widespread criticism of their work in the media and public organizations, contribute to the most productive approach in organizing two-way communication between the population and the authorities.

Modern management approaches require open access to information of an organizationally planned and socially everyday nature. In this regard, municipal authorities practice the creation of interactive portals and sites with feedback [23]. One example of such interaction is the Dobrodel regional portal (the Dobrodel official website - Access mode: <https://dobrodel.mosreg.ru/> (request date 05/27/2018). Sending information to the competent authorities responsible for resolving a particular issue, the Internet resource receives information from residents of the Moscow region, processes letters and complaints. According to the site's employees, more than half of a million people are registered on the portal, which is a very large indicator for the Moscow Region. Analysis of appeals of citizens received through the portal, allowed to draw the following conclusions. The Commissioner for Human Rights is one of the main instances to which citizens of the Russian

Federation most often appeal, in case of violation of their legal rights and freedoms. From the materials of the 2017 report, it follows that the overwhelming number of appeals to the Ombudsman's address comes in oral form (10,592); only 1,731 appeals were received in writing. In total, during the last year, residents of the Moscow Region received about 12,323 complaints. Among the main issues raised by the population, most often there are complaints and disagreements in the field of shared construction. The housing issue in the Moscow region, as one of the powerful economic regions of the country, is always quite acute. According to statistics, the most complaints and appeals of citizens are related to violations of their rights concerning health and social welfare. Therefore, in 2017, almost 40 percent (39.8%) applied to citizens sought support in this particular issue. According to the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Moscow Region, 34.3% of citizens appealed to the Ombudsman for the violation of civil rights: 19.4% of those who applied in the region challenged encroachment on their own economic rights. Appeals related to violation of environmental rights accounted for 3.9% of the total number of appeals. 1.9% of citizens defended their political rights. Cultural rights were defended by 0.7% of residents of the Moscow Region. One way or another, most of the complaints was related to the violation of social rights - 39.8% of those who applied (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** Statistics of appeals to the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Moscow Region (2017, beginning of 2018), rights' groups

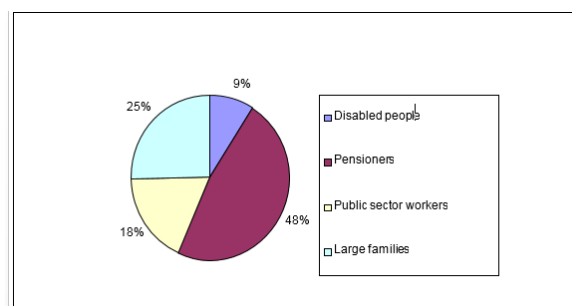
The statistics clearly demonstrate not only the existence of problems in the exercise by citizens of their legal rights, but also reveal the problems of the region in need of being reviewed and resolved as soon as possible by the administrative authorities.

## 5. Discussion

Analysis of working with citizens in the Administration of Dmitrovsky urban district of the

Moscow region for 2017 made it possible to identify the main areas where it is necessary to strengthen control and executive discipline in this most important activity of the executive authorities. In 2017, 14374 appeals were registered in the District Administration, which are 3083 appeals more than the number of appeals in 2016 (11291 - 2016) (Analytical report on the results of the activities of the department for working with citizens' letters and appeals of the Administration of the Dmitrovsky municipal district/Dmitrov,); 8992 of which came from the Dobrodel portal of the Moscow Region Government, which is more than half of all received requests. It should be noted that every year the statistics of citizens' appeals is increasing, which may indicate both an increase in civic activism and numerous problems that the population of the Moscow Region faces every year. In addition, the number of requests received using information technology is 62.5%. This indicator also demonstrates a positive trend; the level of information interaction between the authorities and citizens is becoming higher.

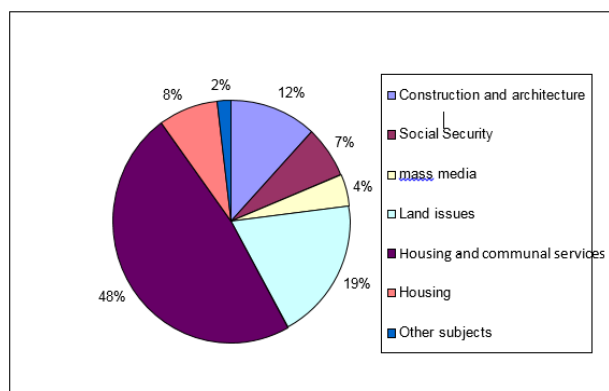
However, despite this, a large percentage of citizens still appeal to local governments in the traditional way - through written appeals. Most likely, this is due to the fact that the main category of citizens, who mostly apply to the authorities, are pensioners, who, as a rule, on the one hand, do not have access to the Internet and the necessary knowledge and skills when working with information technology. On the other hand, they are focused more on traditional forms of interaction with the authorities (written or oral communications). This thesis is confirmed by the results of the analysis of the social composition of citizens applied to the Administration of the Dmitrovsky Municipal District of the Moscow Region: 48% of the applicants are retired (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2.** Social composition of citizens applied to the Administration of the Dmitrovsky Municipal District of the Moscow Region

One of the most important activities of the authorities in dealing with the public is to identify

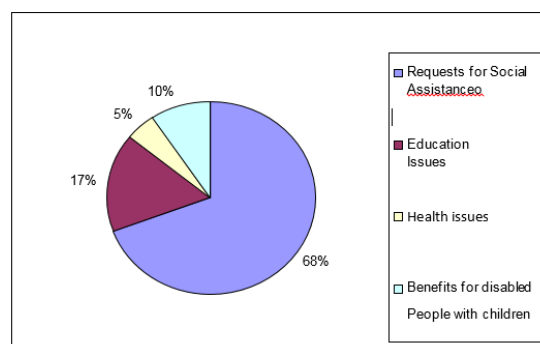
the key problems and difficulties faced by the local community. If we analyze the qualitative composition of complaints received from citizens, it should be noted that the main area of concern for the population is the sphere of economy and distribution of funds. The number of complaints on these issues increased by 30% per year. Among the main issues, most attention is paid to the road sector (repair and maintenance of roads, operation and maintenance of streets and road safety).



**Figure 3.** Subjects of appeals of citizens received by the Administration of the Dmitrovsky Municipal District for 2017

The sphere of land relations is vulnerable: 44% of applications contain requests for information on the procedure for registration of land in the property, rent, 13% for land disputes, 12% for issues of forestry, 12% for environmental pollution, 11% for issues of municipal control over compliance with land legislation, and 8% for issues of collective gardening. The number of requests for construction and architecture was 12% (issuing acts of construction work to obtain the second part of the maternity capital and the disagreement of citizens with the construction of various objects, problems of participants in shared construction, etc.), housing issues - 8%. Regardless of the registration of housing conditions, housing under a social contract for employees of public institutions, office housing, and citizens' appeals living in emergency houses in need of improvement for settlement periods, the largest number is in the provision of apartments. Issues of social services, education, culture, sports and health were the subject of 7% of the received complaints. The second place in terms of the number of appeals to the administration is occupied by issues of the housing and utilities sector, 48% in total. Appeals should be combined into such categories as services of inadequate quality, disruption of boiler rooms and sewage, modernization of living conditions. The population also raises issues related to the provision of housing

for veterans of the Great Patriotic War, and issues of providing the population with land resources necessary for running their own economy. In 2017, social issues were not the first priority; however, their number increased. These issues were raised by citizens by 21.7% more often than in the same period of 2016. By analyzing the thematic composition of the applications, the main categories of social issues were identified, according to which citizens applied to the authorities: requests for social assistance (68%), education (17%), health care (10%), benefits for disabled people and large families (5%) (Fig. 4).



**Figure 4.** Analysis of written appeals of citizens to the Administration of the Dmitrovsky Municipal District on issues related to the social sphere in 2017

The category of the state, society and politics also enjoyed the attention of residents of the Dmitrov district. In their appeals, they repeatedly raised questions touched upon the topic of resettlement of citizens of the Russian Federation, housing for victims of natural disasters, floods and fires. Among the appeals, there were also complaints about the work of the responsible authorities and individual officials. The population was also keenly interested in the issue of corruption. Thus, an analysis of the qualitative composition of appeals from citizens who have been received by the Administration of the Dmitrovsky District allows identifying priority problems concerning the population. The population has the greatest number of problems in the sphere of housing and communal services and land relations. An expert survey of municipal employees of the Administration of the Dmitrovsky District allowed identifying key barriers arisen in the process of working with letters and appeals of citizens:

- The speedy obsolescence of the mechanisms for working with letters and appeals of citizens, characteristics of the rapid development of technologies and society in the modern world;

- An increase in the number of critical citizens for the government, due to the complications of the social and economic conditions in the Russian Federation;
- An increase in the number of unscrupulous mass media disseminating false information about the social situation involved in the disinformation of the population;
- Disagreements arising between the population and representatives of the authorities in the field of reforming the system of local self-government; insufficient development of an automated data processing system concerning letters and appeals from citizens;
- Difficulties in being understood by the applicant of the written answers of the organs of administration made in a bureaucratic language;
- Incomplete use of analytical materials necessary for the development of specific and effective proposals and methodological tools to address issues raised by administrative bodies, individual citizens or groups of citizens;
- Insufficient control of the leadership of the authorities responsible for working on the implementation of the tasks voiced in the appeals of citizens;
- The lack of guarantees of timely addressing the tasks set in the appeal and answering questions regarding the observance of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens; and
- Low efficiency of the statistical and analytical side of clerical work on the appeals of citizens to local governments and other power structures.

The listed barriers hinder the development of the system of information interaction between the authorities and the population and do not allow the municipal authorities to carry out activities to work with citizens effectively. This is largely due to the fact that at present, information and communication technologies are not sufficiently used when working with the population, the existing information inequality of the population of different age groups in the ownership of IT services does not allow for full access of all categories of citizens to state and municipal information resources. In this regard, a more active involvement of the population in the information environment is

required. In order to build a feedback system and ensure the full participation of citizens in local self-government, it is essential to train the population (first of all, citizens of retirement age) in working with information portals of the authorities. This will help the authorities more quickly respond to requests from the public. In addition, increasing the level of public confidence in government requires an increase in the transparency and openness of the work on the treatment of citizens. To this end, the results of the authorities' activities to solve a particular problem and statistics of positive and negative responses of the authorities to citizens' appeals must be presented on the information portals. This will allow not only to monitor the effectiveness of working with citizens' appeals, but also to systematically build directions on solving urgent problems and the development strategy of the territory based on the demands of the population and feedback.

## 6. Conclusion

Improving the mechanisms of interaction between the authorities and citizens is a priority by using supply chain management, ensuring not only the observance of the constitutional right of citizens to participate in government, but also helps strengthen the position of the current government and improve its rating. An important step in solving the problems arisen in the course of working with citizens' appeals is the modernization and improvement of the efficiency of the work of the analytical sector. The analysis of the best practices suggests that it is possible to achieve good results in the implementation of the tasks by meeting the following requirements: Improving the systematic of appeals, using the distribution of incoming applications, according to the time of receipt, content, location of the settlement; Using new methods to significantly improve the efficiency of work with letters and appeals of the population;

Establishing interaction with representatives of the public council and other public organizations in order to receive timely and reliable information concerning social attitudes; and

Improving and developing ways of interaction with the media, through which the timely and extensive distribution of information relating to work with citizens' issues would occur;

In addition, in the existing legal documents, it is necessary to fix the duty of publicizing the results



of working with appeals, official statistics and analytical information. In analytical information, it is essential to classify data by the type and results of the work done. That is why the issue of developing a classifier, which would be absolutely used by all government bodies and local governments, remains relevant and open. It is necessary to develop e-democracy technologies as a new way of feedback from citizens to government bodies, ensuring more active integration of citizens into the information and communication environment as well as expanding opportunities for people to participate in local self-government. All this will help increase the efficiency of the government's work with citizens' requests, which will determine the social order, consider the opinion of the population when developing strategic guidelines and areas of municipal policy, as well as reducing social exclusion through well-established feedback between the authorities and the population.

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