

DPRK and Public Health: A Major Criterion of the Image of the Socialist System

In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea public health is regarded as a major criterion of the image of the socialist system, through which its people personally feel the advantages of their system.

In this country free medical care is an important state and social policy.

The benefits of the universal free medical care for the people are realized in practice through medical service for them.

There are several public health policies like district doctor system, whereby the doctors often visit the residential districts for the promotion of the health of the people under their charge, health protecting system for the children and women, social security system, telemedicine system and first-aid service.

In the societies where money is everything public health is the means for making money, whereas in the DPRK the public health policies serve entirely for the protection of the life of the people and promotion of their health without discrimination. In fact, the working people including workers, farmers, soldiers and intellectuals enjoy the benefits of free medical care irrespective of gender, age, residence, occupation and quantity and quality of work done, and this right is legally guaranteed by the Socialist Constitution and the Public Health Law.

Those who witnessed the reality of the DPRK say: The universal free medical care of the DPRK is indeed a great policy which could be found only in an ideal society of humankind; the public health system of the DPRK is an example for the whole world.

Another reason why the international community pay attention to the public health service in the DPRK is that the state protects and promotes people's health by preventing diseases.

Preventing diseases rather than treating them is regarded as a proactive means for protecting and promoting the health of the people.

The state invests a lot of money in preventing diseases and ensuring hygienic and cultural conditions and environment for living and working while paying close attention to the anti-epidemic work. Under the district doctor system doctors ensure that the working people participate in the medical check-up and inoculation voluntarily and conduct prevention and treatment in accordance with their individual characteristic and living conditions so as to detect diseases in time

and take medical measures. Once an epidemic disease breaks out, a thorough anti-epidemic line is created to prevent it from spreading. The Breast Tumour Institute under the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital, Okryu Children's Hospital and other medical service facilities contribute to protecting the health of the children and women.

It is not because this country is richer than other countries but because it values the life and health of its people more than anything else.

An iron production line which was essential for economic development was demolished when it was found harmful to environment and workers' health; an airplane was mobilized or rescheduled or even the departure time of a train was set again for the life of an ordinary citizen.

In the DPRK the investment for the sector of public health is increasing every year. In 2018 the state budget for public health increased by 6 per cent and in 2019 by 5.8 per cent over the previous years, respectively.