

1 INTRODUCTION

The population is heterogeneous, but certain indicators allow for its division into several categories, e.g., gender, ethnicity or nationality. Most stable are differences related to gender, or gender differences. For this reason gender approaches should be taken into account in crafting human development strategies.

Gender approaches presuppose evaluation of activities or processes with regard to their impact on men and women, but not on the «average» population.

The Millennium Declaration proclaimed by UN outlines eight development areas and eight goals in the social sphere, the third of them is achievement of gender equality:

1. Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Achievement of universal primary education
3. Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women
4. Reduction of child mortality
5. Improvement of maternal health
6. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensuring environmental sustainability
8. Development of a global partnership for development.

The report aims to analyse the situation in Russia with regard to different forms of gender inequality, and to identify key policy areas towards achievement of the third Millennium Goal with account to specific Russian context, namely:

- To identify Russian peculiarities with regard to attainment of gender equality.
- To identify primary trends and gender inequality mechanisms in economy.
- To analyse the impact of economic gender inequality on different status of men and women in social and political areas.
- To propose policy guidelines towards achieving gender equality and expansion of women's opportunities and rights.

This report relies on data provided by State Committee for Statistics of the Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as RF Goskomstat), Russian longitudinal monitoring survey (RLMS)¹ data and materials of other surveys available to the authors².

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2 MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND RUSSIAN CONTEXT

The Millennium Declaration outlines key development goals (hereinafter referred to as MDGs), but it is equally important to make these goals instrumental and link them with specific activities in order to measure the progress of various countries and world community on the whole in achieving these goals. Towards this, the Millennium Declaration defines specific tasks within each of the eight goals, as well as quantitative indicators measuring attainment thereof. MDG #3 relates to elimination of gender inequality in primary and secondary education by 2005, and eradication of inequality at all levels of education by 2015. The following parameters were selected as indicators of achievement of these goals: ratio of boys and girls in primary, secondary and high

school, ratio of literate young women and men aged 15–24; the share of women employed in non-agricultural sectors of the economy, and the share of women—members of national parliament.

In formulating these tasks and indicators the Millennium Declaration proceeded from the assumption that gender alignment of investments in the human capital creates prerequisites for equal access to economic and social resources, affects the levelling of gender employment structures and, subsequently, guarantees equal political representation of men and women. The Millennium Declaration was based on the situation typical for many countries of the world (including developed ones), where the level of education and investments in the human capital were much

¹ Monitoring survey of economic status and public health in Russia (RMEH) is a national representative panel survey of Russian households conducted with support from staff of Institute of Social Studies (Russian Academy of Sciences), North Caroline University and other research centers. 11 survey rounds were carried out between 1990–2002.

² Due to existence of the time gaps in collection and processing of statistical and research information, the report is based on available statistics for 2000–2004.

less pronounced for women than for men. But this situation does not exactly fit the Russian context.

Having walked along the socialist road for a number of years, Russia faced a completely different situation with gender equality in social and economic areas. At least five particular features make Russia different from many other countries.

1. Since 1960s, Russia has achieved an extremely high level of women's employment. The profile of women's labour activity in Russia is notable for the fact that it continues from youth to the elderly age, and during their life cycle women combine high labour activity with family responsibilities. Participation of able-bodied women in the labour force is comparable to that of men³. Contrary to other countries, Russia is notable for women's excess employment, inherited from the old times and compatible only with Scandinavian countries. Other developed countries are still to achieve such gender employment parameters.

2. Russia is a highly industrial country in the process of technological transition to post-industrial economy. The biggest share of women and men is employed in manufacturing and public services sectors, not in agriculture. Moreover, there are more men than women among those employed in agriculture. It makes Russia different from many developing countries, and calls for a deeper analysis of gender segregation in the labour market, not only of women's distribution between agrarian and other sectors of the national economy.

3. Equal access of men and women to education has been guaranteed in Russia for several decades and women's educational level is higher than that of men.

4. During the socialist development period Russia realised approaches oriented at men's and women's equality and based on existing ideological directives and values. In 1920s the equality of rights was stated in basic legal documents. Thus, from the formal and legal point of view, for a long time there was no inequality between men and women in Russia in economic, social and political life, and no outright discrimination in rights⁴. As far as this parameter, Russia is one of the leading countries of the world.

5. Concern for women's welfare and protection of their reproductive rights in Russia resulted in adoption during the socialist period of the 20th century of various positive discrimination norms and social benefits, quite generous as compared with other countries of the world.

During the post-socialist and transition periods Russia carried out a variety of legislative and practical activities in order to maintain formal equality of rights and achieve real equality of men and women. The relevant norm was formulated in the RF Constitution of 1993 (Article 19, part 3): «men and women

have equal rights and freedoms and equal opportunities for their implementation». A number of other legal documents appeared in 1990s as its follow-up, among them Decrees by RF President «On Priorities of State Policies Concerning Women» (1993) and «On Increasing Women's Role in Federal Power Bodies and Power Bodies of RF Subjects of the RF» (1996), as well as two government statements — «On Adopting the National Plan of Action towards Improvement of the Status of Women in the Russian Federation and Increase of their Role in Society by 2000», and «On adoption of the National Plan of Action towards Improvement of the Status of Women in the Russian Federation and Increase of their Role in Society by 2001–2005». The latter stipulates for improving women's status in the labour market, improving social service and strengthening family relationships.

Endorsement of the Family Code and the new Labour Code, as well as ratification of ILO Convention No. 156 «On equal treatment and equal opportunities for working men and women: workers with family responsibilities» aimed at overcoming the consequences of positive discrimination, were significant steps in the right direction.

With regard to the above specifics, in 1990s Russia held higher positions by the Gender-Related Development Index (GRDI) than by the Human Development Index (HDI). Currently, these indicators are equal⁵.

Three sets of parameters are used for assessing human development: levels of education, health and economic development. From the viewpoint of human development indicators the primary reason of existent gender inequality in Russia is men's and women's different economic opportunities. Education parameters do not contribute much to gender inequality; as far as the span of life, on the contrary, in Russia there exists considerable gender inequality in favour of women. In assessing gender dimensions of the human development, the biggest impact on gender inequality is attributed to different wages received by men and women.

Thus, taking into account Russia's peculiarities, one may conclude that:

1. In Russia, most acute problems relate to latent, but not open gender discrimination.

2. Gender alignment of investments into the human capital is not a burning issue; women's latent discrimination does not depend on their higher level of human capital. That is why tasks related to achievement of MDG #3 — promotion of gender equality — should be formulated in a different way than for the world community at large.

3. Gender equality issues should be considered not only in terms of ensuring women's rights, but also in terms of overcoming gender disparities, which aggravate the status of men (e.g. health).

³ S.Y.Roshchin. Women's employment in transition economy of Russia. M.: TEIS, 1996., Women in transition period. Regional monitoring report No.6, UNICEF, 1999.

⁴ S.V. Polenina. Women's rights in human rights system: international and national aspect. M.:2000.

⁵ Russia is in 56th place according to GRDI. Human Development Report, UNDP, 2003.

4. Key problems of gender equality are related to women's economic status and to securing not only equal rights for men and women, but equal returns from their economic activities.

In a way, Russia faces the following challenge: measures proposed by the international community and aimed at achieving gender equality were already

partially implemented at previous stages of the country's development, but were not successful, and gender inequality is preserved and reproduced. That is why new approaches are needed to identify and assess gender inequality aspects and to design relevant policies aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for men and women.

3 GENDER EQUALITY IN THE LABOUR MARKET: WHAT IS IT?

Majority of economically active population in Russia, both men and women, are hired workers (92.3% and 93.4% accordingly in 2002). The biggest part of their welfare is formed through employment and wages. That is why the status of men and women in the labour market predetermines gender economic equality or inequality.

Situation in the labour market is primarily determined by two groups of parameters: employment and unemployment (i.e. availability and type of jobs) and wage range. It is important to seek answers to two questions: «How do gender employment structures differ?» and «What are gender differences in economic returns from labour activities?», which will help reveal the underlying trends.

3.1. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Degree of women's participation in labour activity and their employment opportunities reflect the level of economic activity. In order to assess the level of economic activity, RF Goskomstat Labour Force Survey (LFS) data was used. Changed profiles of labour activity during 1990s as per LFS data (Fig. 2) testify to decreased labour activity rate both of men and women, primarily owing to marginal age groups, i.e. the young and the elderly. Overall dynamics of these changes is common for both genders. Among men these changes mostly affected older age groups, among women — younger age groups (between 25–29 and 30–34 y.o.).

RLMS data allows for alternative estimation of the level of economic activity, which provides different figures from the LFS data (Fig. 1). Overall, RLMS data reveals more synchronised fluctuations in the level of labour activity of men and women. However, participation of most able-bodied men in the labour force decreased to a greater extent than revealed by the LFS data.

On the other hand, according to RLMS data, during 1990s the average rate of participation in the labour force remained unchanged, which contradicts to the LFS data and does not comply with assumptions about the nature of adaptation to changing economic parameters in countries in transition⁶. Exclusion from economically active population was one of public means of adapting to new realities of the labour market and the economic crisis. In any case, both Goskomstat and RLMS data testify to insignificant decrease of economically active population in Russia, including women.

Thus, the overall level of women's economic activity is still high in Russia owing to the fact that their

continual participation in the labour force is as necessary for family budget as was during the socialist times. In majority of households, one worker cannot ensure the necessary level of consumption and prosperity. In addition, existent public traditions and women's high educational level contributes to their high rate of employment. Women's participation in income generating activities is a socially acceptable standard of behaviour. Women retain broad opportunities for employment and access to jobs.

Analysis of factors affecting the rate of labour activity reveals certain gender differences⁷. Thus, contrary to men, the number of children negatively affects women's economic activity. The simple explanation is that it is mostly women who carry the main load of bringing up children. The educational level positively and strongly affects women's participation in the labour force as compared to men, i.e. women receive more returns from their education in terms of improving their status in the labour market. Health parameters more strongly influence men's rate of participation in the labour force than women's. The influence of health status on labour activity is similar both for men and women, but when health deteriorates, men's labour activity drops more rapidly.

The rate of pensions, incomes of other family members, besides husbands, and regional unemployment rate affect negatively only men, while such factors as age, regional wage levels, the status of pensioner or student and husband's income affect positively both men and women. This testifies to the fact that determinants of participation in the labour force are similar for men and women. High rate of women's employment resulted in that women behave similar to men when taking deci-

⁶ More detailed analysis of participation in the labour force based on LFS and RLMS data is provided in: V.E.Gimpelson, Labour activity of Russian population in 1990–s. Preprint WP3/2002/01. M.: SU HSE, 2002; S.Y.Roshchin. Supply of labour force in Russia: microeconomic analysis of economic activity of the population: Preprint WP3/2003/02. M.: SU HSE, 2003.

⁷ S.Y. Roshchin. Supply of labour force in Russia: microeconomic analysis of economic activity of the population: Preprint WP3/2003/02. M.: SU HSE, 2003; S.Y.Roshchin. Women in employment and in the labour market in Russian economy (empirical studies of gender differences in labour behaviour based on RLMS data). // 15, Gender and economics: world experience and Russian practical expertise, Rossiyskaya Panorama, 2002. p. 212–234.

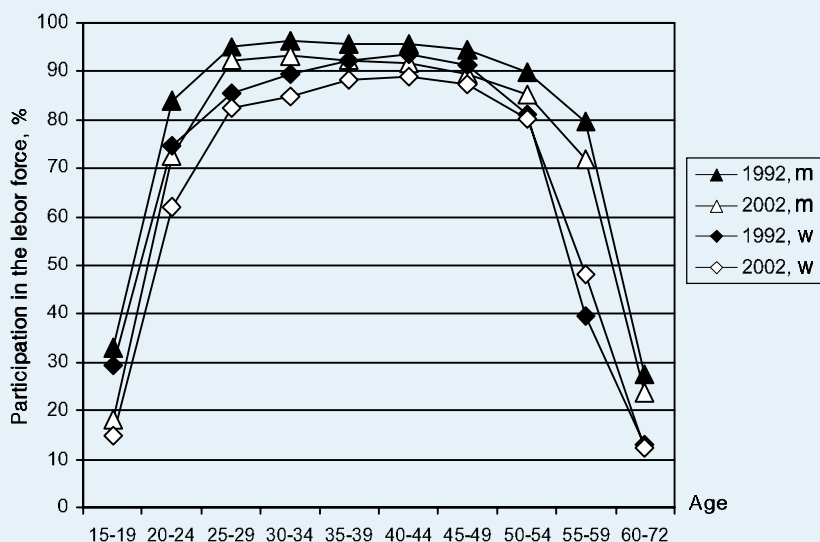


Fig. 1. Changes in the level of labour activity as per RLMS data (RF Goskomstat)

sions about participation in the labour force. Still, the phenomenon of «hopeless workers» and the income factor that decrease labour activity are more common for men than for women. Thus,

men's participation in the labour market depends to a greater degree on economic factors, while women's participation — on social and demographic factors.

3.2. UNEMPLOYMENT

In addition to the level of labour activity, unemployment rate is another important indicator of male and female economic status. Accounting and registration of unemployment was launched in Russia in 1992. Prevalence of women among registered unemployed in 1990s (70%) gave birth to the concept of «women's face» of unemployment in Russia. But analysis of unemployment structure carried out by Goskomstat as per ILO methods and based on LFS data reveals that men and women share the burden of unemployment equally, while unemployment rate is higher among men. Higher probability of women registering as unemployed (as compared to men) is

explained by women's passive approaches to search of jobs and by the fact that for some women the status of registered unemployed is a convenient way of joining economically passive population and leaving the labour market. Research demonstrates that the share of women among registered unemployed depends on the unemployment rate: it rises when unemployment rate is low and vice versa.

Thus, the range of unemployment does not reflect significant gender differences. Still, women spend more time on job search, and among women the share of «long-term» unemployed is higher than among men (Table 1,2).

Table 1. Unemployment in Russia by ILO methodology: rate and gender structure

	Unemployment rate, %		Share of women among unemployed, %
	Male	Female	
1992	5,2	5,2	47,74
1993	5,9	5,8	47,03
1994	8,3	7,9	46,09
1995	9,7	9,2	46,13
1996	10,0	9,3	45,60
1997	12,2	11,5	45,76
1998	13,5	12,9	46,16
1999	13,3	12,7	46,74
2000	10,8	10,1	46,37
2001	9,5	8,6	45,62
2002	9,0	8,1	46,01
2003	8,6	8,0	47,15