

## 10 **POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AND EQUALITY OF WOMEN'S AND MEN'S RIGHTS**

Unequal opportunities for men and women are often identified on the basis of gender asymmetry in political representation, and attainment of equality in this sphere is viewed as a necessary prerequisite of eliminating this inequality. For this reason, gender differences in politics are quite illustrative.

In public services women prevail in positions, which do not imply responsible decision-making. Women make up 71% of the total number of public employees, men — 29%. In Government of Russia — the highest echelon of state power — there are no women, and there is only one woman among heads of RF subjects — governors or heads of national autonomies (in St. Petersburg). The slogan «Governor is a male job», used by one of candidates at the recent elections of the governor of St. Petersburg reflects gender stereotypes in politics (Table 32).

Women's representation declines steadily in the lower chamber of the State Duma of the Russian Federation. Among deputies of the State Duma of the first convocation (1993–1995) there were 13,6% of women; of the second convocation (1995–1999) — 10 % of women, of the third convocation elected in December 1999 — only 7,7% of women.

In the upper chamber — Council of the Federation (178 members) there were 7 women in 2002 (in 2001 — 1 woman) (Table 33).

Women hold nearly 9% of seats in legislatures of RF subjects, i.e. in regional legislative assemblies, and this parameter varies significantly from region to region. In 2003, in legislatures of Novosibirskaya and Chelyabinskaya oblasts there were no women, while in the Republic of Karelia women made up 32% of deputies. In the Moscow Municipal Duma there are 23% of women.

Women head only 3 among 89 regional legislatures of Russia.

There are almost no women in top positions in political parties, which are represented by factions in RF parliament and which influence major political decisions.

At the latest parliamentary elections in 2003<sup>64</sup>, the list of candidates for deputies from Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) included 11% of women; «United Russia» — 8% of women; «Yabloko» (Apple) bloc — 15% of women; «Homeland» bloc — 9% of women; Union of Right Forces — 12% of women, and LDPR — 8% of women. On the whole, the deputies' mandates were received by:

- «United Russia» — 14 women (22 on the list);
- CPRF — 4 women (28 on the list);
- «Homeland» bloc — 4 women (16 on the list);
- LDPR — 2 women (16 on the list).

Women were not nominated in one-third of single seat districts, and in the remaining ones they succeeded in winning 20 mandates. Thus, there are 44 women-deputies in the RF State Duma.

Women's representation in governing bodies of RF State Duma of the fourth convocation is as follows: among heads of parliamentary factions there are no women; among vice Chairs there is one woman; among heads of 29 Committees there are four women — twice as many as in the State Duma of the previous convocation.

Comparison of results of 2003 and 1999 parliamentary elections helps outline several trends. First, the amount of women in RF State Duma slightly increased (from 7,7% to 10%). Second, the value of administrative resources in the victory of female candidates increased sharply, and, consequently, the value of party affiliation dropped. Third, opportunities for «social upgrading» of women unrelated to state nomenclature (representatives of business community and volunteers of women's NGOs) tightened.

**Table 32. Gender distribution of public employees in federal bodies of power, 2001, %**

|                         | Women | Men |
|-------------------------|-------|-----|
| Total                   | 71    | 29  |
| «A» Category            | 58    | 42  |
| «B» Category            | 61    | 39  |
| «C» Category            | 75    | 25  |
| Including by positions: |       |     |
| Top                     | 12    | 88  |
| High                    | 23    | 77  |
| Leading                 | 67    | 33  |
| Senior                  | 73    | 27  |
| Junior                  | 88    | 12  |

**Table 33. Gender distribution of public employees in RF subjects, 2001, %**

|                                   | Women | Men |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-----|
| Total                             | 69    | 31  |
| «A» Category                      | 45    | 55  |
| «B» Category                      | 48    | 52  |
| «C» Category                      | 71    | 29  |
| Including by groups of positions: |       |     |
| Top                               | 28    | 72  |
| High                              | 46    | 54  |
| Leading                           | 64    | 36  |
| Senior                            | 75    | 25  |
| Junior                            | 87    | 13  |

<sup>64</sup> For a more comprehensive gender analysis of the 2003–2004 elections, see: S.Aivazova, G.Kertman. Gender analysis of parliamentary and presidential elections of 2003–2004. M., 2004.

Thus, the gender structure of the acting RF State Duma demonstrates a distinct «male» profile of Russian legislative power.

These gender differences in political parties and bodies of state power are in many ways not the reason, but the result of other gender disparities, primarily economic. Political representation is just the top of the iceberg, which bases on inequalities in the labour market, access to economic resources and property ownership. Political process in modern Russia is organised in such a way that no decrees can help improve the gender structure of political representation, unless political and economic players, which control the electoral processes recognise women's capacity to express and protect their interests, or unless women's economic independence creates conditions for and demand in their political representation.

## 11 CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the status of two genders in Russia shows that gender inequality is based on unequal positions of men and women in economy (different returns on human capital, unequal access to economic resources) and traditional, instilled and progressing public division of gender roles (women's heavier work load at home). Evidently, such situation may be reversed only by comprehensive measures, which could provide long-term influence on society and public institutions. Cultural traditions or economic practices cannot change overnight, and for this reason activities directed at attainment of gender equality and expansion of women's rights and opportunities should have long-term prospects. Cultural traditions and economic practices do not change under the influence of political documents and programs, but political documents and programs help outline priorities and guidelines of the authorities and political forces, and thus influence the attitudes of economic entities and the people.

In spite of the fact that gender inequality in many ways predetermines economic processes, one of means of expanding women's rights and opportunities is provision of equal access for men and women to political and state power institutions. Women's low representation in state bodies of power restricts public understanding of the necessity of policies, which promote gender equality, constricts attention of the authorities to women's social problems, and instills the concept of «natural» distribution of gender roles in the mentality of male politicians.

Promotion of gender-equal political representation should be supported by other activities and should help improve not only the status of women, but also of men. Achievement of gender equality and the levelling of women's rights and opportunities should not be accompanied by deterioration of the status of men. Gender approaches mean not equality in poverty and social losses, but improved status of women and men.

The gender levelling of political representation should and can become a national priority. Positive discrimination methods (like quotas) aimed at increase of women's share in political institutions, may help develop guidelines for state policies aimed at achievement of gender equality. Thus, the changed legal provisions, which guarantee women's equal opportunities in political life should not be only declared, but corroborated by changes in women's economic status and by active state policies aimed at redressing the accumulated discrimination.

All the more so, prohibition of vertical segregation in public services should become a national policy issue. Programs of women's promotion to higher public positions should be based on real, not declared provisions and priorities of gender-oriented national strategies and policies.

Based on situational analysis and in order to promote equality between women and men and expand women's rights and opportunities Russia should set the following tasks by 2015:

- Task I. Equalise opportunities for women's and men's access to political institutions.
- Task II. Eliminate discrimination in labour and employment.
- Task III. Reduce women's high share among the poor.
- Task IV. Create effective machinery of preventing violence against women.
- Task V. Reduce the impact of negative factors on health and life span.

What should be done to successfully fulfil these tasks in Russia? The suggested program of actions is quite expansive. It stipulates certain measures directly related to these tasks as well as indirect measures to remove hidden barriers on the way to women's broader opportunities. Therefore, each of the indicated five tasks calls for several activities.

Task I. Equalisation of opportunities for women's and men's access to political institutions;

- Formation of the legal base of gender sensitive state policy, including endorsement of the law «On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Freedoms and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Russian Federation», which concretely defines relevant constitutional norms in different public spheres, as well as judicial and procedural aspects of their practical implementation.;

- Introduction and amendments and addenda to electoral legislation to encourage broader women's inclusion in lists of candidates from political parties and blocs.

- Design of government strategies aimed at gender equality.

- Introduction of amendments and addenda to the legislation on public service to encourage women's promotion to the upper echelons of the state power.

- Formation of the national roster of women professionals as a reserve for promotion to high public positions by means of regular and targeted training programs

Task II. Elimination of discriminative practices in labour and employment:

- Increase of labour remuneration in social spheres — public health, education, science and culture up to the level of average labour remuneration in the national economy;

- Introduction and enactment of amendments and addenda in the labour legislation to provide for anti-discriminative norms and guarantee equal opportunities for women and men in hire, labour activity, promotion and fire, including the right to part-time employment for women with children.

- Improvement of mechanisms of control over implementation of anti-discriminative norms of the labour legislation.

- Design of special government programs to support women's small and medium business, also in rural regions.

- Improvement of legislation on individual farms and small and medium business enterprises in agriculture.

- Formation of a special package of regional and federal programs to provide for measures aimed at training and retraining women in line with social development perspectives, structural economic adjustment and women's rights to full-fledged education.

- Development of government programs to develop accessible public services.

Task III. Reduction of women's high share among the poor population of the country

- Development and enhancement of the system of state and non-governmental social guarantees to families and socially unprotected lonely people (women released from prison, lonely women with children, lonely women-pensioners).

- Encouragement and support of women's entrepreneurial activities in rural regions.

- Expansion of the access of business women and beginning entrepreneurs to information, financial and material resources.

- Design and creation of a package of inter-related legal documents and acts regulating operations of small enterprises and individual farms (peasant farms).

- Formation of legislative base to develop non-governmental social service sphere.

Task IV. Creation of effective machinery of preventing violence against women:

- Development of a targeted federal program to provide for interdepartmental approaches to solution of this problem.

- Introduction of amendments and addenda to the acting legislation in order to develop tools of elimination of violence against women and prevention of trafficking on people, i.e. to enhance the legal base, including design and adoption of the law on domestic violence and the law on prevention of trafficking on people.

- Professional training and retraining of law enforcement officers, specialists in health care and social workers, also education and mass media workers on the issue of violence against women in private life and in society.

- Indusion of acting legal mechanisms into practical activities aimed at prevention of violence against women.

- Integration of indicators of violence against women (in various forms, such as domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment at work, etc.) into statistical reports.

- Development of social rehabilitation framework for victims of violence.

Task V. Reduction of the impact of unfavourable factors on health and life span.

- Development and implementation of programs aimed at reduction of jobs with harmful and hazardous labour conditions.

- Realisation of measures oriented at reduction of negative consequences of alcohol consumption (fiscal policy, administrative limitations, information and propaganda).

- Implementation of the programs of combating TB and other social diseases.

- Development and support of crisis centres for men and hot lines for suicide prevention.