

Employment of Women with Toddlers – Sustainable Development Resource within Staff Shortage

By an example of Yekaterinburg megacity, Russia

Inna A. Kulkova

Dept. of Labor Economy and HR-Management
Ural State University of Economics, USUE
Yekaterinburg, Russia
i.a.koukova@mail.ru

Mariia I. Plutova

Dept. of Labor Economy and HR-Management
Ural State University of Economics, USUE
Yekaterinburg, Russia
MPlutova@yandex.ru

Abstract—The article is devoted to the study of employment and employment problems of women with children under the age of 3 on the free labor market by the example of one of the Russian megacities. The reasons for the shortage of qualified personnel in the economy have been firstly studied and systematized, which are the demographic hole, the high mortality rate of the able-bodied population, less-effective migration policy and the shortcomings of vocational education. The structure of employment and gender-based employment problems in Yekaterinburg megacity is analyzed further. The professional structure of women's employment is described, and the indicators of female unemployment are analyzed. Then the methods used for conducting the author's research are justified. The study was conducted using the questionnaire in two stages. At the first stage, women with children younger than three years were surveyed in Yekaterinburg, at the second stage – a survey of employers' representatives was conducted. Directors of 10 companies in Yekaterinburg took part in the study. A women's survey revealed their attitudes toward work and women's employment; preferences for the end of maternity leave; the difficulties in the course of employment and the organization of childcare; the most effective assistance measures in hiring. In the process of interviewing employers, it was found out that there was gender discrimination in hiring. The discussion revealed the main stop-factors in the development of employment of women with children. In conclusion, a contradiction among such factors as the shortage of skilled labor resources, the desire of women with children to work and the reluctance of employers to employ them for discriminatory reasons was determined.

Keywords—*employment; women with toddlers; shortage of qualified personnel; gender discrimination in hiring.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The relevance of this study is due to the existence of a qualified personnel shortage in the Russian economy, on the one hand, and to the presence of discriminatory employment problems for certain population categories, on the other. Gender discrimination is inherent in all world economies in various degrees, and is often the research object for scientists in different countries of the world. Gender-based discrimination was identified in studies in the North [1] and Latin America [2]; Europe [3], both in countries with a traditional market

economy [4], and former socialist ones [5]; in China [6], Brazil [7]; Indonesia [8], South Africa [9], [10].

Gender discrimination in the sphere of labor and employment is the basis of such acute social phenomena as poverty in the families with children, low birth rate, skilled labor shortage and poverty feminization. The level and the structure of women's employment, the full usage of their labor is a kind of economic and social barometer that reflects the features of the social and economic development of any region and the country as a whole.

Supporting motherhood and childhood, improving the demographic situation are among the priorities facing modern Russia along with technological modernization of the economy and strengthening the national security. Despite this, the cares, associated with the children birth, create difficulties, which impede the women's full participation in social and labor relations.

The financial situation is the main reason that many mothers on parental leave would like to work in advanced. But it is extremely difficult to implement this for a number of reasons.

This research is aimed at studying the problems of finding employment for women with children under the age of three on the free labor market in one of the Russian megacities, and identifying areas to promote their employment, mechanisms to increase their inclusion in the work process.

II. THE MAIN REASONS FOR THE QUALIFIED PERSONNEL SHORTAGE IN RUSSIA AND YEKATERINBURG.

The innovative development of Russian economy requires a change in the quantity and / or quality of the main production factor – labor resources. However, the qualified workers are the scarcest resource in the current Russian situation [11]. This constitutes a threat of disrupting the economic growth processes.

The main deficit formation factors are:

First of all, the depopulation processes, which are especially evident in industrial regions, such as Yekaterinburg megacity. Russia has been faced with the catastrophic decline

consequences in the birth rate in the late 1980s and early 1990s. According to Yu.V. Bozhevov, the 1990s demographic hole is absolutely unprecedented in scale, which Russia has not yet had faced with. The demographic hole of the Second World War was somewhat deeper, but the hole of the 90s was larger – the number of the Russians who were not born as a result of the catastrophic decline in the birth rate in the late 80s – early 90s is several times higher than the number of Russian who were not born as a result of World War II [12]. Although the birth rate in Russia has significantly increased in previous few years period, a time lag of about 20 years is needed, as long as the additional population can become additional workers.

Secondly, demographic problems are aggravated by the high mortality rate of the working-age population. The number of deaths per 100,000 people in Russia is 2.2 times higher than that in developed countries. Herewith, the mortality among men in Russia is twice as high as among women. Despite the reduction in mortality in recent years (from 16.1 per thousand people in 2005 to 13.0 in 2016, according to State Russian statistical offices), this indicator is still too high in Russia. The main mortality reasons are the cardiovascular diseases; because of this, mortality rates in Russia are 4.6 times higher than in such countries as Canada and Japan. This is a consequence of insufficient prevention. The death rate from oncological diseases in Russia is 20% higher than in countries that are more prosperous. The death rate from infections in Russia is almost three times higher than in such country as Australia. An overwhelming number of cases are associated with pneumonia, tuberculosis and HIV / AIDS. The mortality from external causes in Russia is also 4.4 times higher than in the prosperous countries. The most common causes, especially among men, are suicides and road accidents.

Thirdly, migration policy is less effective. Migration policy in Russia is aimed to increase the quantitative attracted foreign labor indicators, but not qualitative. Currently, about 3.8 million people a year arrive in Russia in search of work. Migrants arrive in Yekaterinburg mainly from Central Asia, and the share of people with higher education among them is 10-15 percent.

Such migration policy does not solve the problem, but it leads to some negative consequences: the quality of the labor force of the territory is deteriorating, labor migration influences the criminal situation, and there is a threat of national-ethnic and religious problems.

And finally, the vocational education system is not up-to-date. Employers blame the education system for the fact that training is often conducted according to standards not meeting their requirements [13].

III. ANALYSIS OF THE EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE AND EMPLOYMENT GENDER PROBLEMS IN YEKATERINBURG MEGACITY

Yekaterinburg is the administrative center of Sverdlovsk region and the Ural Federal District. It is located 1657 km to the east from Moscow, on the border of Europe and Asia and covers an area of 490 square kilometers.

Yekaterinburg is the fourth populous city in Russia. According to the most social and economic development indicators, this megacity takes a leading position. There has been a steady increase in the birth rate in recent years, while the death rate in Yekaterinburg is the lowest among the cities with a population of over one million in Russia.

Yekaterinburg is the largest (after Moscow and St. Petersburg) transport hub in Russia: 6 federal highways, 7 main railways pass through the city, and the largest international airport located beyond the bounds of two capitals.

International cooperation is the most important component of the political life: therefore, Yekaterinburg ranks third in the country (after Moscow and St. Petersburg) in terms of the diplomatic missions number.

As of January 1, 2017, the population of the Urals capital is 1,501,000. Distribution of urban population by sex is: 56% - women and 44% - men. For the last three years, the population of the megacity has increased steadily, but the structure of the population by the sex has remained practically unchanged (Table 1).

TABLE I. SEX STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION IN YEKATERINBURG, 2014 – 2016

INDEX	2014	2015	2016	Relative deviation,%		
				2015 from 2014	2016 from 2015	2016 from 2014
Total population, thousand people	1445.7	1461.4	1477.8	101.1	101.1	102.2
Including: Men	648.5	655.4	663	101.1	101.2	102.2
Women	797.2	806	814.8	101.1	101.1	102.2
Share in total population,%						
Including: Men	44.86	44.85	44.88	100.0	100.1	100.0
Women	55.14	55.15	55.12	100.0	99.9	100.0

^a Compiled by the authors on the basis of statistical agency data

Most women work for hire. The professional structure of women's employment is characterized by the fact that women are mainly employed in the least paid professional groups, despite the fact that women can have the higher education level than that of the men. The proof of this situation is the tendency, when there is an immediate women's replacement by men if wages are raised in workplaces previously considered traditionally female. So, when the sharp increase in wages began in the banking sector and the increase in the social status of banking activity in general, the change in the structure of employment by sex began to increase in the proportion of men (Titarenko, 2002).

A number of factors cause disparities in the labor market between men and women. The female labor force is of less interest for the employer due to a number of factors: an existence of maternity leave, parental leave, time off for

dependents and so forth. Difficulties in finding employment are often associated with the loss of professional knowledge and skills due to prolonged period of involuntary unemployment (childbirth leave) or the women's absence in the workplace for social reasons.

For these reasons, women are more often unemployed than men are. Table 2 presents data on employment and unemployment by gender in megacity Yekaterinburg.

TABLE II. THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED IN YEKATERINBURG MEGACITY, PEOPLE

Index	2014	2015	2016	Relative deviation,%		
				2015 from 2014	2016 from 2015	2016 from 2014
Number of economically active population	735094	717831	720846	97.7	100.4	98.1
Number of employees, total	729136	710197	713978	97.4	100.5	97.9
Number of unemployed, total	5958	7634	6868	128.1	90.0	115.3
Including: Men	2724	3557	3256	130.6	91.5	119.5
Women	3234	4077	3612	126.1	88.6	111.7
Women with children 0-6 years old	377	554	351	146.9	63.4	93.1
Women with children 7-17 years old	244	436	353	178.7	81.0	144.7

^a Compiled by the authors on the basis of data from the statistical office and the state employment service

Women prefer to have a flexible work schedule with an incomplete working week, regardless of whether it will be a permanent job or a job for a certain period. Women's choice of temporary employment is conditioned by the congestion of household chores. Women at the age of 25 to 29 need mostly part-time employment, as they have small children at that age.

The authors conducted their own research of problems of employing women with children under the age of three years.

IV. METHODS OF AUTHORS' RESEARCH

The research was conducted using a questionnaire in two stages. The purpose of the study was to identify problems and real needs for employing women with children up to 3 years in Yekaterinburg.

An object of study was women with children under three years in megacity Yekaterinburg at the first stage of research.

The hypotheses of the study were:

1) Women are divided into groups: those who want to work and are waiting for appearance at work during the entire maternity leave (1); true housewives, negatively related to employment (2); and those who are simply forced to work due to certain circumstances (3).

2) Women with young children are one of the most poorly protected categories. Their low competitiveness in the labor market is due precisely to the fact of having a little child.

3) The decision on mothers' employment is influenced by such parameters as the state's social policy in the sphere of child protection, the existence and availability of children's institutions.

4) As a tool for labor capital managing, the change in the social allowance for childcare is more effective; however, the social support of women with children continues to be inadequate, despite the measures taken in recent years.

In total 236 women were interviewed. A method of quota sampling was used to form the structure of a sample population.

At the second stage of the research, the authors interviewed representatives of employers. Leaders of 10 companies in Yekaterinburg took part in the study.

The research hypothesis consisted in the fact that currently, employers in Yekaterinburg prefer male workers; it is especially difficult to find work for women with children under 3 years old.

The object of the survey – the directors of firms. The research time was from 10 am to 12 am. The subject of the study was the possibility of employment for women with children up to 3 years.

V. THE AUTHOR'S RESEARCH RESULTS

It was found out in the process of summing up the fact that among 50% of the respondents worked before, 30.1% of respondents are on parental leave for up to 1.5 years or up to 3 years (being sure of job security); 19.9% of respondents have not worked before.

The vast majority of female respondents (89.9%) agree that the main women's role in society is associated with family responsibilities, the children upbringing. This suggests that the main women's task is to bring up children, maintain order and harmony at home.

To the question "What do you think: should a woman work at all?", the respondents' answers were distributed as follows: yes, if she herself wants it – 78.9%, yes, but only because of material circumstances – 21.1%.

Then each woman was asked the question "What does work mean for you?" The answers to this question were more or less evenly distributed: work gives personal comfort to 19.9% of women; for 30.1% of respondents, the availability of work increases their social status; income is the main thing in the work for 39.3% of women; the possibility of career progress – for 9.7% (Figure 1).

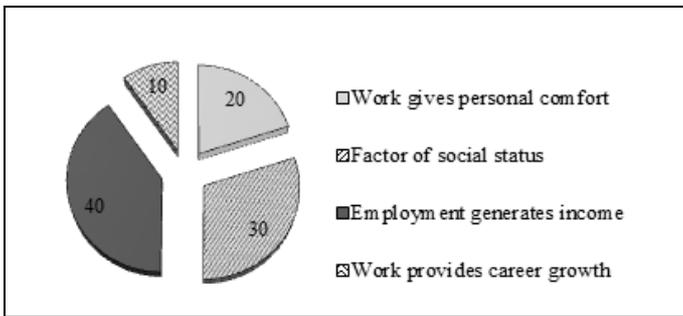


Fig. 1. Distribution of answers to the question "What does work mean for you?", %

Being asked about the desired length of parental leave, the respondents gave the following answers: 46.6% of women would like only to raise children before they reach the age of 1.5 years; 39.8% – until the child is 3 years old; and 13.6% of women would like to remain on maternity leave until the child reaches school age (7 years).

At the same time, most women (79.3%) have a need for early termination of maternity leave before their child will be three years old and 20.3% of interviewed women do not.

Before making a decision to start working, each mother who has a minor child decides the issue of looking after one. Traditionally, this function is performed by a network of pre-school educational institutions. However, almost 70% of the surveyed women already had problems with sending their children to pre-school institutions. The main reason for this situation is that most nursery groups stopped their functioning in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 559 of May 7, 2012, "On Measures to Implement the State Policy in Education and Science". First of all, kindergartens begin to receive children who have already turned three years old, and nursery groups begin to re-equip. In addition, private babysitting services are expensive, as a result, mothers stay at home; the gained qualifications are lost because of a long absence of work practice.

Thus, there is a contradiction between the young women's need to fulfill the reproductive function and their ability to continue work. There is the lack of the state social guarantees at all levels of government that would ensure their decent material well-being, or conditions that allow them to adapt easily on the labor market.

When a woman has solved the problem of looking after a child, she often faces discrimination during hiring. So, 80% of respondents noticed a prejudiced attitude towards themselves from employers.

When answering a question about the difficulties which women face more often in the process of finding employment, most respondents named the refusal to work because of the presence of a little child, then they called the inconvenient work schedule, low wages and lack of social guarantees (Figure 2).

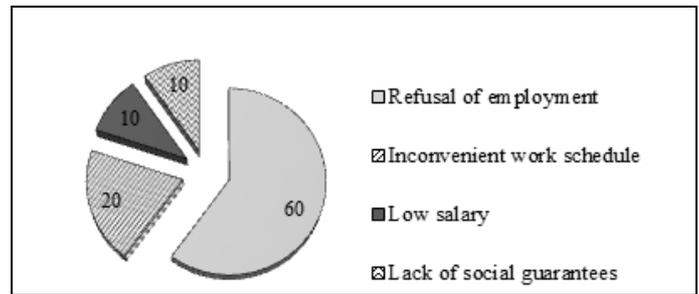


Fig. 2. Hiring problems among women with children under 3 years old which they often face up, %

After or during the maternity leave, women plan to start working at their former place of work (38.1%) or to find a new job (61.9%).

Afterwards, the authors asked to name the most important and effective measures to facilitate employment in women's opinion. Women with children under three years described the broader use of part-time work as the most important measure - 60.2% (1); wider use of home-based work - 19.9% (2); increasing the number of children's institutions (nurseries, kindergartens) - 10.2% (3); increase and extension of childcare allowance from 1.5 to 3 years - 9.7% (4).

At the second stage of the research, the authors interviewed representatives of employers. Heads of 10 companies were interviewed in Yekaterinburg: OOO «Agrospetstekhnika-Ural», OOO «Triada», OOO «Universal-sbyt», OAO «Teplo-Urala», OAO «Rosa», OAO «Veres», OAO «Vseslav», OOO «Ideal», OOO «Vektor», OOO «Lino». The answers were as follows.

Only 20% of the surveyed directors are interested in attracting a female labor force to their company collective. 80% answered that there is no such interest.

A direct question was asked in the survey process: "If there are several candidates for a vacant position in your company, what gender do you prefer?" The managers of the enterprises answered that they prefer men - 90%, women - 10%.

As the true reasons for the refusal to employ women candidates, employers named: the presence of a child under three years old - 70%, the lack of the required educational level - 20%, lack of work experience - 10%.

Thus, employers admitted the presence of gender discrimination in employment during a survey conducted in this study; and stated openly that if they had a vacancy and several competent women, they would prefer married women at the age of 30 to 35 who had children already older than 5 years.

VI. DISCUSSION ON GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Several types of women's discrimination in the employment sphere are singled out traditionally: in remuneration, in hiring, with staff reduction, in promotion, in further training:

1. Discrimination at the level of preferences (discrimination of women by the employer, the consumer, or colleagues).

2. Statistical discrimination (the employer evaluates a particular employee based on the criteria that were formed for the group of which one is a representative, regardless of one's individual professional and family characteristics).

3. Discrimination due to the monopolistic structure of the labor market. This approach focuses on the fact that discrimination against females and women with children of young age in particular, exists and persists because it brings profit to those who implement it.

It is very difficult to find a job by girls and young women with children under the age of three who do not have work experience and profession. Of course, the kinds of employment that are offered to girls on the informal labor market do not naturally attract everyone; most of this population groups become clients of employment service. It is also natural that work on vocation and in accordance with the abilities for this category of women is not available; their lot is low-paid activities that do not allow them to realize their personal creative potential.

Professional segregation is manifested in a stable division of professions and positions between different groups of workers. It is connected:

- (1) with unequal distribution of men and women by industries and occupations (horizontal segregation);
- (2) with low accessibility of prestigious professions and positions related to responsibility and decision-making for women with children under three years (vertical segregation).

Women with children under 3 years represent a special category of citizens whose position requires optimization in the current labor market in Yekaterinburg and the Russian Federation. The main problems of women's employment in modern situation are more often considered with the perspective of age, education and marital status. A working woman faces a number of problems; she is forced to combine work, motherhood, and housekeeping.

Special difficulties are experienced by women with children younger than 3 years, at the end of maternity leave. This is due to the loss of professional skills, on the one hand, and to the employers' reluctance to incur additional costs because of the decline in labor productivity, on the other hand, due to the discrepancy between the level of professional qualification and the employers' requirements.

According to the research, more and more women want to combine work and family; this is a common trend, both for Russia and for Yekaterinburg. At the same time, they are forced to overcome the following stop-factors:

1. The existence of patriarchal stereotypes, both at the level of the individual and at the level of society. In modern society, a policy of women's segregation in low-paid and secondary positions was carried out, not requiring their high professional level. Women who have access to education and

training do not have the opportunity to realize their potential [14].

So, for example, according to the latest All-Russian population census (2010), 2188 full-professors (the degree of not a candidate, but doctors of sciences in Russia) live in Sverdlovsk region, and among them only 654 are women, which is 29.9%. At the same time, heads of universities and research institutes prefer to appoint men to leadership positions, even if their academic degree is below. Such a policy in all sectors of the economy gave an impetus to the division of employment into the "male" and "female" occupations, and also formed a clear structure of the job hierarchy, in which women were given a secondary role.

In addition, "female" professions turned out to be the least competitive in a market economy. The structure of women's employment was equally irrational, in which women were concentrated in the budget sectors, which have suffered the greatest number of job cuts in recent years. Discrimination in the sphere of employment is manifested not only in the differences between the prestige of "female" and "male" professions, but also in the difference in wages. Female labor is paid lower.

2. Low demand for female labor. As the author's research has shown, the majority of Russian employers are more willing to deal with male cadres. Other studies have found that 54% of employers in Russia consider women to be less valuable workers, in comparison with men, with 40% of employers believing that the enterprise is not interested in attracting a female labor force [15, P.25]. At the same time, a woman with higher qualifications is less competitive on the labor market. The obvious discrepancy between the supply of labor and the demand for it on a gender basis is a characteristic condition for the modern labor market. This greatly complicates the women's employment.

VII. CONCLUSION

Economic inequality between men and women is most evident in the employment sphere.

Women discrimination on the labor market has concrete and most typical forms of manifestation: the special difficulty of finding a job in the specialty; difficulties in career growth; dismissal in the first place; a longer unemployment period than men; the offer of work with a lowered pay. [16, P.29-33]

The employment of women with young children is at the same time: the social status of women, their place and role in economic, political and cultural life (1), and the problem of discrimination (gender disparities, different pay, impossibility to realize their creative and professional opportunities) (2); and the Legal status definition, the women's gender role in society and the family (3); and upholding the right to equal status with men in society, equal social opportunities (4).

Demand for women's labor is currently declining very actively, despite the lack of qualified personnel in the economy. Enterprises which apply to the employment service and print ads on admission, give preference to men even if they do not specify the sex of the employee openly. There is a

clear tendency to the fact that the sex of an employee, and often the presence and number of children, becomes the determining factor in finding a job.

Based on the author's survey of women with children under the age of three in Yekaterinburg, the authors can conclude that most women want to work, build a career, and realize themselves.

Thus, there is a contradiction between the lack of skilled labor resources and the desire of women with children to work at a high level of their educational potential, on the one hand, and the reluctance of employers to employ them for discriminatory reasons, on the other. Therefore, now in Russia, it is necessary to conduct serious constant evangelism (explanatory work) with employers and their representatives through scientific researches, publications, conferences, seminars, round-table discussions.

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