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**STATE POLICY FORMATION VECTORS IN GENDER
DISCRIMINATION COUNTERING ACTIONS IN RUSSIA**

Natalia Kabeeva (a)*, Anna Kalinina (a)

*Corresponding author

(a) Industrial University of Tyumen, 625000, Volodarskogo St., 38, Tyumen, Russia, kabeeva@mail.ru,
+7(922)0085352

Abstract

The present article is focused on issues of state policy formation in gender discrimination countering actions in Russia. Current situation assessment in the country, concerning women and men equality, is made by international organizations, public figures, scientists, public organizations, and state structures. WEF data on the gender gap in the most important areas of society are analyzed. Problem issues were identified in these areas. The influence of gender equality on demography, growth of birth rate and GDP growth per capita is underlined. The Russian state had relied on strengthening traditional family values and financial encouragement on this issue. Thus, the state encourages the "reproducing function" of women. Research results relate to the relevance of problems concerning women discrimination to directions of the emerging national policy on gender discrimination countering actions. State achievements in the field of gender antidiscrimination have been revealed over the past ten years. They are prohibition at the state level of the vacancy announcements publication that contain requirements for sex, age and marital status; state support for socially oriented non-profit organizations whose activities are aimed at improving the status of women, family and children. The issue was considered whether there is the understanding of the existing gender discrimination problem in Russia, and importance of gender equality in life quality improvement and civil society development. Among the problems concerning citizens at the moment, the problem of women's inequality is not considered as significant. Possible actions to formulate an efficient policy to eliminate gender discrimination in Russia are presented.

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Keywords: Gender equality, gender discrimination, state policy.



1. Introduction

Gender equality is one of the important indicators among the 17 sustainable development goals adopted by the UN in 2015. The state policy concerning gender discrimination countering actions is emerging in Russia. Its formation is due to a number of factors that require comprehensive research.

The evaluation of gender discrimination is carried out by various international organizations, research centers, and public organizations.

The most comprehensive measure of gender inequality is the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), calculated by the non-governmental organization The World Economic Forum (WEF). The calculation methodology is based on taking into account fourteen different indicators, each of which enters one of four enlarged areas (subindex) with a certain weight. Critical areas are:

- Economic participation and opportunity;
- Educational attainment;
- Health and survival;
- Political empowerment.

WEF has been conducting research since 2006. For the duration, Russia ranks low in the rating. In general, the indicator fluctuates around the average value for all countries. The average gender gap index was 68% in 2016; its value in Russia is 69.1%. (100% or 1 means full equality). In 2016, Russia was on the 75th place out of 144 countries, following such states as Thailand, Macedonia and Venezuela. Such countries as Romania and Brazil are immediately after Russia in the ranking (World Economic Forum, 2016).

Recognizing the limited progress in achieving women's economic empowerment, the World Bank, for example, launched its Gender Action Plan "Gender equality as smart economics" to promote implementation of Millennium Development Goal 3.

It should be pointed out that the Russian Federation, as part of its work in the Group of Twenty (G20), has committed itself to take additional measures to increase the women's employment, as well as to create conditions for their career and professional growth. Russia declares adherence to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Cairo Action Program, Beijing Action Platform and the Agenda for Sustainable Development until 2030.

2. Problem Statement

Discrimination on the basis of gender takes place in various spheres of life. At the moment, the efforts of the Russian state are not sufficient to eliminate it.

According to some researchers, since 2008 there has been a disturbing pattern in the deterioration of state and society attitude towards the need to take effective measures to reduce the discriminatory status of women in the country. Moreover, often, the fact of discrimination existence is not recognized. As a result, in some regions of the country the degree of unequal attitude towards women on the basis of sex remains high enough and even worsened. Regional gender centers are closed in the regions, gender courses are disappearing from universities on the basis of this fact. The country began to turn into the direction of conservative gender values (Kosterina, 2015).

Proof of this is the discussions about the withdrawal of medical abortion beyond the compulsory medical insurance, which is an attempt to restrict women's rights for birth control, the discussion and introduction of separate education for boys and girls in some schools, and the decriminalization of beatings in the family. The United Nations in the alternative report of the Anti-Discrimination Center "Memorial" also notes the existence of open discrimination against women in the choice of profession, traditional practices of discrimination against girls and women in the Caucasus, the inaccessibility of education for Roma girls living in compact settlements, the violation of women's rights to express their opinions and self-identification (Anti-Discrimination Center "Memorial", 2015).

According to the results of the WEF studies for 11 years from 2006 to 2016, it is possible to note some of the shifts that have taken place in Russia in the field of the gender gap. General dynamics of change for the whole period of observation is positive, but it is not possible to call these results significant (Fig.01) (World Economic Forum, 2015).

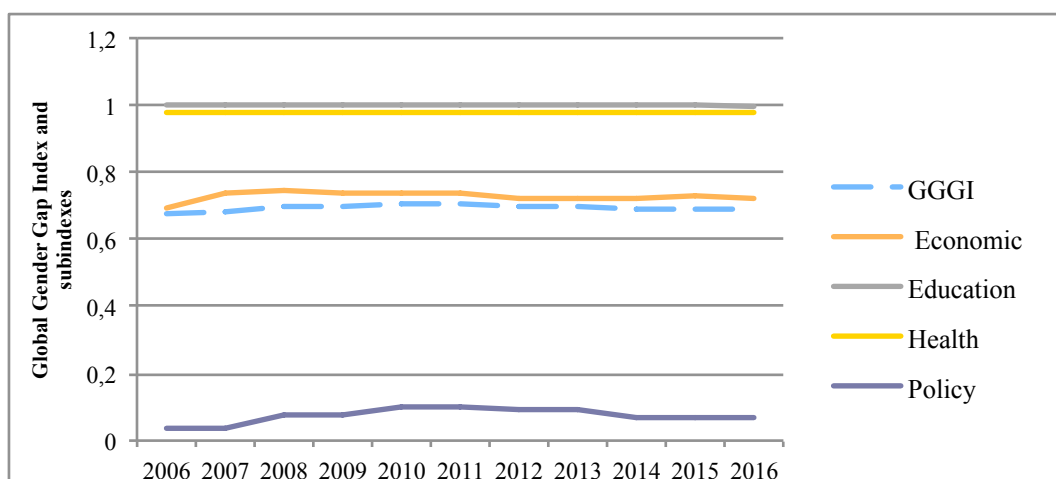


Figure 01. Global Gender Gap Index and subindexes evolution, 2006-2016, Russia.

In general, the gap between men and women has increased within eleven years, and, consequently, the gap has decreased by 0.014 points. (Its value was 0.677 in 2006, and in 2016, it was 0.691)

The lowest indices are in the sphere of political rights and opportunities. This result is due to the very small representation of women in the parliament and ministerial positions in the government - 14% and 6% respectively for the research period in 2016.

In 1990 the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) defined that there should be a minimum of 30% of women in national parliaments, so that they could exert a significant influence on politics. In 2003 Vladimir Putin stated: "Legislative authorities start working efficiently and solve social protection issues, if at least 20% of women work there" (Veselov, 2016).

It should be noted that starting from 2013, there is a negative dynamics in the sub-index decrease of Political empowerment (0.095 in 2013 and 0.066 in 2016), which requires attention from state authorities, but positive changes may not happen with such low participation of women in politics.

Russia needs to improve the quality of life as well as the quality of human capital asset. WEF specialists revealed an interesting relationship between GGGI and the human capital asset index. Most of

the countries that are leading in terms of the human capital asset index, as well as the level of GDP per capita, are those who managed to reduce gender gaps significantly. And only a few of the leading countries in the human capital asset index managed to maximize the development and talent deployment of their nation, bypassing the significant positive multiplier effects from using the full potential of all its citizens. (World Economic Forum, 2016).

The group of the International Monetary Fund researchers under the leadership of Romina Kazanzharyan, Lisa Kolovich, Kaplana Kolchar and Monica Nevyak (2016) published an article "Gender Equality and Economic Diversification" in the IMF Working Papers series. The article analyzes statistical correlations between the measured indicators of gender inequality and the diversification of economies, including the export one. The database for economic indicators is the internal estimates of the IMF, the relevant indices calculated by the UN are used as a basic assessment of the inequality level. A relatively new toolkit of the "method of matching moments" (IV-GMM analysis technique) is applied in the work. The authors state a strong negative correlation between the inequality level and diversification of production and export separately - and put forth hypotheses about the nature of such a correlation.

The connection between the level of GDP per capita and the gender inequality level has been studied quite well: the widest work of reference on this topic was the article of David Kuberes (2014) from the Clark University and Mark Tenier from the Barcelona University comparing gender inequality in entrepreneurship and its influence on business activity using materials of OECD countries. However, IMF researchers are discussing more subtle mechanisms for the possible relationship between economic diversification and gender inequality. In particular, it is expected that the structural reforms necessary for export diversification require reforms in school education – norms underlying the gender inequality are largely replicated in conservative structure of school programs. The development of service sectors in the economics, according to the IMF, reduces the relative demand for "tough manual power" associated with male employment.

IMF Economists emphasize the applicability of the work findings for developing and hard developing countries. As the authors state, usually economists examine the long-term relationship between inequality and economic growth, based inter alia on demographic data. At least one "short" channel of possible interconnection is supposed in the article: structural reforms imply a more optimal use of labor resources, which increases the chances of women to receive large salary and build a successful career. The article briefly examines the effectiveness of legal mechanisms in the fight against gender inequality. They usually do not have direct influence on the diversification of economics. However, problems with structural reforms and export diversification are shown in countries with a high level of gender inequality. (Kazandjian, Kolovich., Kochhar, Newiak, 2016)

A significant gap in the level of wages between men and women in Russia draws the attention of the public, media and state structures. The Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Olga Golodets said about the discrimination in terms of salaries giving interview to TASS during the Investforum in Sochi on February 27, 2017. According to Olga Golodets, 37% of women in Russia and 29% of men have higher education. However, the statistics shows that the availability of higher education diploma does not lead to a principal reduction in the gap in salary size of men and women. According to Rosstat estimates for 2016, on average Russian women earn 28% less than the male. The Vice Prime

Minister of the Russian Federation noted that this discrimination was almost always natural. “Because a woman always has to combine her professional duties with duties at home and child-rearing” (Golodets, 2017)

An actual problem for Russian society is the demographic situation, which is estimated by researchers as “depopulation”. The interrelationship of gender equality and birth rate is becoming the subject of gender studies.

The Russian state on this issue relied on strengthening traditional family values and financial stimulation. At the state level, the Federal Law "On Additional Measures of State Support for Families with Children" (the Law about maternity fund) was adopted in 2006, and two strategies - the development of family and demographic policies until 2025 were also adopted. Thus, the state encourages the "reproductive function" of women - the birth of children. The main gender role of the mother is assigned to woman. A set of measures to protect motherhood and childhood should contribute to the birth function as the main duty of women to society.

At the same time, various studies show that the average level of gender equality in each country shows a positive correlation with the number of children. Accordingly, women in countries where the level of gender equality is on average higher have more children than women in countries with a relatively low level of gender equality.

The ideology of gender equality is becoming an important aspect of social life and, despite the fears of traditionalists, can paradoxically affect the growth of birth rate. Gender relations, permeating all spheres of human life, become a significant factor in the context of reproductive behaviour. (Aimaletdinov, Igushkina, 2015)

3. Research Questions

The National Action Strategy for Women 2017-2022 was adopted in March 2017. It defines the main directions of the state policy for women and is aimed at implementing the principle of equal rights and freedoms of men and women and creating equal opportunities for their implementation by women in accordance with the provisions of the Russian Federation Constitution, generally recognized principles and norms of international law, international treaties of the Russian Federation (National Action Strategy In the interests of women for the period from 2017 to 2022, 2017).

The question is how much the declared goals correspond to the actions taken by the state at the moment. Are they able to save Russian society from performance of gender discrimination? A number of researchers (Polenina, 2016; Ilyaguyev, 2012; Shvets, Shepeleva, 2015) consider this issue from the institutional approach standpoint, Aivazova S.G. pays special attention to historical prerequisites and analysis of the “gender contract” between Russian society and the state (Aivazova, 2011).

Another important question - is there an understanding of the existing problem of gender discrimination in Russia, and the importance of gender equality in improving the quality of life and the development of civil society. Conceptually Bazueva E.V. is trying to comprehend this question, and the conclusions lie more in the economic sphere. An active scientific discussion on traditional and modern approaches to the upbringing and gender equality promotion raises the issue of scientific justification for these approaches (Kashina, 2016).

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the correlation between problems in the area of women's discrimination and state policy formation vectors in the field of gender discrimination countering actions in Russia.

Hypothesis 1: There is an asymmetry between the directions defined by the state as priorities in issues of achieving equality for women and men, and problem issues that require immediate decision.

Hypothesis 2: Russian society does not consider existing gender discrimination as a serious problem; it considers performance of inequality as a natural situation

5. Research Methods

The research is based on the system approach, the methodology of structural functionalism, the historical genetic method and the general scientific methods of deduction and induction.

The system analysis of the regulatory and legal sources, statistical primary and secondary data, sociological research data, analysis of search queries for Yandex browser for 2016-2017 were made. The conclusions are based on the results of a comparison of the authors' own research conducted on the basis of 36 a semi-structured interview of residents of Tyumen at the age of 18 - 65 on March 9-16, 2017 and the Levada-Center poll using a personal interview conducted on February 19-24, 2016, on the basis of representative all-Russian sampling of urban and rural population among 800 people aged 18 and over in 137 settlements of 48 country regions.

6. Findings

6.1. Vectors of state policy in the sphere of gender discrimination countering actions in Russia are actively formed in recent decades

Real achievements in the field of gender discrimination fight are banning of the publication of vacancy announcements that contain requirements for sex, age and marital status, state support for socially oriented non-profit organizations whose activities are aimed at improving the situation of women, families and children at the state level.

Starting from 2015, there has been a definite shift in the Russian Federation towards understanding gender inequality at the state level. The research was carried out, the UN recommendations were taken into account, the concept of strategic development in the field of women's support was developed. At present, the process of information-analytical, legal and personnel support of state policy in the interests of women is underway.

The vectors of the forming state policy are:

1. "Creating conditions for preserving the women health of all ages".
2. "Improving the economic status of women, ensuring their welfare"
3. "Prevention and prediction of social disadvantage of women and violence against women".
4. "Expanding the participation of women in social and political life."

(National Action Strategy In the interests of women for the period from 2017 to 2022, 2017).

6.2. There is a certain asymmetry between the movement directions in the interests of women identified in the strategy and the expected results, its inconsistency with the actions taken by the state

The actions taken by the state in the field of gender discrimination fighting do not fully cover the accumulated problems in this sphere. It is interesting that the mechanisms developed to improve the status of women, initially, do not declare the goal of eliminating gender inequality. Therefore, it can be said that there is no purposeful policy to counteract gender discrimination.

Political inequality is the most flagrant. Despite it, it is perceived by society and the state as a matter of course (politics is a man's business). Therefore, at this stage it is required to fix the legislative quota of women representation in government bodies reaching the level of 30 percent, as recommended by the UN.

In order to achieve reduction in economic inequality - to observe the equality of wages for men and women holding the same positions within the same organization, it is necessary to develop mechanisms of influence on economic entities in order to comply with this norm.

The norms of Russian legislation in the field of women's rights are not observed in some regions (the widespread practice of early marriage, marriage without the consent of women, the practice of uncivilized traditions of female genital mutilation). It is necessary to put obstacles to justifying women's discrimination with cultural and religious traditions. To oblige regional and local authorities to develop a consistent policy to overcome the abovementioned phenomena and to exercise control.

In most countries that have achieved results in gender equality, there are various structures at the government level. The gender coordination unit should be located at the highest governmental level; it should be under the responsibility of the president, prime minister or cabinet. This gives political power to the national mechanisms, the necessary powers to coordinate the process of gender integration in all ministries. In addition, the national mechanism should have subdivisions at the level of regions and municipalities. Financing of the national mechanism should be carried out through the national budget (Gnedash, 2016).

It is very important to change attitudes towards the women's movement, as an indispensable factor influencing the development of gender equality policies (Shtyleva, 2012). The opinion of the women's movement as a militant feminism pursuing the goal of domination over men (not as equality but as superiority) is established in the society. The authors' aim is to create an understanding in society: the women's movement is part of the "civil society", the civil movement, an important component in the formation of democratic society.

6.3. There is tension remaining in the field of gender inequality which is not realized by the majority of the population as significant.

As follows from a study conducted in February-March 2017, the problem of women's inequality is not considered as significant among the problems important for citizens at the moment. Without a suggestive question, the interviewers themselves did not mention this problem. And this problem was put on average at 13th place in the list of various 15 problems. The problem of gender discrimination was not

included into the list of the most severe problems within the country in the study conducted by WCIOM in December 2016. (WCIOM, 2016)

Therefore, the policy development in this sphere is strictly going top-down, and the influence of civil society on solving problems in the sphere of gender inequality is concentrated in a narrow area (the rights of sexual minorities, the infringement of civil rights of women in the Caucasus, the settlement of professional standards restricting women's rights, for example, "Aeroflot"). The severe problem raised by public organizations is the everyday inequality of women and men, the dominant position of a man, which is often exacerbated by domestic violence.

At the same time, according to Levada-Center research, 51% of men and 75% of women consider "important" and "very important" that women have "completely equal rights with men". They object that it is "unimportant" or "not too important", 40% of men and 21% of women. There is a clear wish of women to make this issue at least a matter of discussion, and possibly, a solution (Levada-Center, 2016).

It is necessary to work with various non-governmental organizations, women's organizations, to cover gender issues in the media at different levels as well as to form the understanding of the role and importance of gender equality in the life of each person and the country as a whole within the legal and economic culture of citizens.

7. Conclusion

The vectors of the state policy formation are four main directions for creating conditions for the implementation of women's interests. These directions are in line with the recommendations of the UN data on overcoming discrimination against women. However, the criteria for achieving the conditions for equal rights and freedoms of women go mainly to the level of medical indicators and half-measures in the economic and political spheres of inequality in the National Women Strategy.

Unfortunately, the lack of a systematic vision of the interrelationships between women's economic political freedoms to solve gender issues in the Russian Federation leads to a leveling of possible positive effects from its implementation.

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