

WOMEN'S CHANGING CONDITIONS IN THE POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

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ABSTRACT

WOMEN'S CHANGING CONDITIONS IN THE POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

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This thesis analyzes women's status in the Russian Federation in the period after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Yeltsin's reforms radically changed the quality of political, economical and social aspects of Russian life. Yeltsin's period together with the policies of the subsequent governments proved to be mostly detrimental to women's status in the country. Women have become the ones who suffered most from the instability and lawlessness of the transition period. This study discusses increasing gender inequality and gender asymmetry in economy, politics and in social realms in post-Soviet Russia and examines the transformation of women's role and status in this period.

Keywords: Women, Russian Women, Post-Soviet Russia, Gender Issues

ÖZ

SOVYET SONRASI RUSYA'DA KADINLARIN DEĞİŞEN ŞARTLARI

Sobyanina, Olga

Yüksek Lisans, Avrasya Çalışmaları

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Bu tez Sovyet sonrası dönemde Rusya Federasyonu'ndaki kadınların statüsünü analiz etmektedir. Yeltsin reformları, Rusya'da yaşamı siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal açılardan önemli bir ölçüde değiştirmiştir. Yeltsin dönemi ve bu dönemi takip eden hükümetlerin politikalarının sonuçları en çok ülkedeki kadın nüfusu olumsuz şekilde etkilemiştir. Kadınlar Sovyet sonrası dönemdeki istikrarsızlık ve yasa dışılıktan en çok etkilenen grup olmuştur. Bu çalışma, Sovyet sonrası Rusya'da artan cinsel eşitsizliği ekonomik, politik ve sosyal açılardan inceler ve Sovyet sonrası dönemde kadının rolü ve statüsünün dönüşümünü analiz eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadınlar, Rus Kadınlar, Sovyet Sonrası Rusya, Cinsel Eşitsizlik Sorunları

To My Mother, Nadezhda Sobyana
and My Father, Oleg Sobyana

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The urgency of the problem of difficult conditions which Russian women had to face after the dissolution of the Soviet Union is undeniable. The breakup of the Soviet system brought great changes that affected all spheres of life. In my thesis I aim to discuss the current status of women of Russia as affected by these massive changes. In order to analyze the process of transformation in women's lives I will discuss the issues in five chapters in this thesis, which discuss women's changing conditions in economic, political, human rights and social fields.

The second chapter explores the problems of gender inequality in the light of the fundamental Russian law – the Russian Constitution. The terms of “gender” and “gender equality” are explained from the point of view of Western and Russian scholars, as it is important to define them in a right way when describing the situation in the country concerning the gender issues. In the second chapter I aimed to analyze the text of the Russian Constitution from the perspective of gender balance. It is necessary to understand and compare which rights the Constitution gives to Russian citizens, men and women, in the spheres of economics, human rights, politics and social rights. In order to find out the source of gender misbalance in the country, it should start from the main legislation of the country if there is any such gender misbalance, this is why I have included an analysis of the Constitution.

The third chapter focused on the economic conditions of the changing regime and the changing position of the Russian women in the new economic system of the state. In the course of Yeltsin's reforms, the old economic order was turned upside down and the planned economy became a market-based one. But the process of transformation produced many problems for Russian women, among which are unemployment, the loss of social protection and increasing obstacles for creating their own business and such. In this chapter, first Yeltsin's economic reforms are discussed in order to provide a better understanding of the changing social conditions and their influence on women's status. Then the problem of discrimination of women in the professional field of activity is discussed, as it became the main initial reason for the further growing female unemployment. The unemployment in Russia of 1990-s has its own particular features, which are described in the third chapter and had many serious consequences of economical, as well as of social and psychological character. It left numerous traces on the lives of Russian women and changed their lifelines strongly. Of course, women did not remain inactive in such difficult times; they tried to find some ways of solution for the employment question. If government could not create the workplace for them, they started to create such places themselves by launching their own businesses. But it was not all that easy. In the cruel and criminal economic conditions of those years, women needed to be extremely strong to manage to survive. The obstacles and difficulties on their way are discussed in this same chapter. The next point is the problems of the women of retirement age, those who are not able to work anymore and are obliged to live on government's money. Again, unfortunately there are clear signs of gender inequality in the field of pension provision of the country. Putin's pension reforms are

discussed to find out and mark the visible defects, provoking the mentioned gender imbalance.

The fourth chapter analyzes the condition of Russian women in politics; their participation in the new multiparty election system and other political institutions. The democratization process of the country created new opportunities for women to be more actively involved in the politics and participate in the governing of the country. However, there are many obstacles and prejudices, concerning women's role and position in society, which hamper their activity in political domain. The chapter discusses the actual role of women in Russian politics in the post-Soviet period with an emphasis on the level of success they managed to attain in this realm.

In the fifth chapter of the thesis I aim to analyze the problems of women in the transition period. In this chapter the following problems will be touched and explored: domestic violence, woman trafficking and prostitution. All of the above-mentioned problems are urgent problems that seriously affect the lives of women in Russia therefore will be given particular attention. They possess a hidden character which is the result of psychological and social elements. Russian women usually prefer to hide the troubles that happen to them, whether it is a beating husband, or a cruel trafficker. That is why the above-mentioned problems are extremely important to be talked about, as they need to be considered seriously by the Russian society and government in order to be solved.

The sixth chapter includes an analysis of Russian women's movements and the phenomenon of "Russian feminism". The roots of the women's movement in Russia go back to the 19th century, and the movement has its interesting history and periods of development and stagnation according to the change of regime in the

country. The women's movement had many reasons to emerge and be active in every period of Russian history, especially in the period of transition after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It is in this period when the instability in all spheres of country's life forced women to show their reaction, create awareness and try to solve their problems or at least to gather and help each other. In the second part of the chapter the understanding of feminism in Russia is discussed. It is very difficult yet interesting to find answers to questions whether there is feminism in Russia, and how Russian women understand it, whether they can call themselves feminists or what is the sense of "feminism" for Russians.

As outlined in these six chapters, throughout the thesis I made an attempt to provide a full and detailed description and analysis of the changes that took place in the lives of Russian women during the transition period. Since these changes affected all spheres of life, economic, political and social fields were examined thoroughly.

In the process of writing this thesis both foreign and Russian literature sources were used. It can be marked that the major part of the used works were in Russian language, as it seems to be logical that Russian researchers can throw the light upon the examined problems more from inside, and thus more thoroughly and in detail. Also, the information coming from inside is usually more reliable. This is also proved by the fact that when the foreign authors write on the problems of Russian women, they first of all make reference to Russian sources.

Among the works in the Russian language the most important and valuable ones became the articles of such well-known Russian sociologists such as Svetlana Aivazova, Irina Tartakovskaya, Alla Chirikova, Svetlana Polenina, Nadezhda Shvedova and Lyudmila Zavadskaya.

Svetlana Aivazova is a prominent woman researcher, who conducted a great deal of research on the different topics and problems connected with women's life in Russia. Aivazova is also a political scientist, specializing in gender studies and is one of the founders of the gender policy in Russia. She is a member of the Council under the President of Russian Federation on promoting the development of civil society and human rights institutions. She is a deputy chairman of the Russian association for political sciences and is a head of the research committee on gender studies.¹ Her book "Russian Women in the Labyrinth of Equal Rights"², which is in fact the collection of versatile articles, was written for the anniversary of Russian women's movement and presents the history of this movement right from its roots and also other problems that women face. The spectrum of issues that Aivazova puts on agenda is very wide, and every issue is covered with substantiation by facts and numbers. The articles of Aivazova, concerning the political participation of women in the country, such as "Russian Women at a Randevu with Democracy"³, "Men and Women at the Elections: Gender Analysis of the Electoral Campaigns of 1999 and 2000 in Russia"⁴, "We elect them - they select us: Gender Analysis of Parliamentary

¹ Svetlana Aivazova, accessed on http://genderandsecurity.researchhub.ssrc.org/svetlana-aivazova/person_view

² Svetlana Aivazova "Russian Women in the Labyrinth of Equal Rights", accessed on http://www.owl.ru/win/books/rw/o3_1.htm

³ Svetlana Aivazova "Zhenshiny na Randevu s Rossiyskoy Demokratiyey" ("Women at a Randevu with Russian Democracy"), accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/democracy/part1.htm>

⁴ Svetlana Aivazova and Grigory Kertman "Men and Women at the Elections: Gender Analysis of the Electoral Campaigns of 1999 and 2000 in Russia", accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/eng/books/election/chapter1.htm#I3>

and Presidential Elections in Russia, 2003-2004”⁵ and others provide us with a proper analysis of the changes in the structure of the political administration of the country and the processes of elections from a gender perspective.

Irina Tartakovskaya⁶ is another well-known researcher, who examines most of the problems of female unemployment and conditions of women’s lives in the transition period. In her articles we see a systematic analysis of the problems and suggestions for their solution.

A substantive research on the topic of women-managers and female entrepreneurship in Russia was conducted by Alla Chirikova. Her articles, such as “Woman and Man as Top-Managers of Russian Companies: Understand Means Accept”⁷, “Woman – Top Manager in Russia: Waiting for the Crash of the Glass Ceiling”⁸, “Female Entrepreneurship in Russia: Conceptual Approaches and Directions in Researches”⁹, show the real situation and position of managing women, as Chirikova interviewed Russia’s top women-managers and got the information at first hand. She examines the different factors that influence the women’s success on the high managing positions. Alla Chirikova pays a great attention in her works to

⁵ Svetlana Aivazova “Mi Vybiryayem – Nas Vybiryayut: Genderniy Analiz Parlamentskih i Prezidentskih Vyborov v Rossii, 2003-2004” (“We elect them - they select us: Gender Analysis of Parliamentary and Presidential elections in Russia, 2003-2004”), accessed on <http://viperson.ru/wind.php?ID=403430>

⁶ Irina Tartakovskaya “Gender Aspects of the Strategy of Unemployed” Journal of Social Studies, Vol. 11, 2000, P. 72-96 and other articles

⁷ Alla Chirikova “Woman and Man as Top-Managers of Russian Companies: Understand Means Accept”, accessed on <http://www.isras.ru/files/File/Socis/2003-01/Chirikova.pdf>

⁸ Alla Chirikova “Woman – Top Manager in Russia: Waiting for the Crash of the Glass Ceiling”, accessed on <http://www.gender-cent.ryazan.ru/chirikova.htm>

⁹ Alla Chirikova “Female Entrepreneurship in Russia: Conceptual Approaches and Directions in Researches”/ “Gender and Economics: World Experience and Examination of Russian Practice”, 2002, P. 245-267

such phenomenon as a glass ceiling that is the limit up to which a woman can be promoted. She also discusses the factors that create the glass ceiling or the obstacles that make it more difficult for the work of those women who managed to overcome such obstacles to get a managing position. Chirikova classifies these factors and discusses the key problems of female entrepreneurship in Russia.

Svetlana Polenina is an academician of the International Academy of Informatization in the department of feminology; the chairman of the commission on the juridical status of women in the International Union of Jurists; expert of the State Duma on the questions of the systematization of the legislation and the issues of women, family and youth. The articles of Svetlana Polenina are mostly written on the juridical issues where she discusses the gender problems and gender inequality that exist in the Russian legislation. In some of her articles she also gives practical advices to women such as how to stand for their rights and fight against discrimination.¹⁰

Nadezhda Shvedova is a professor of political science, a leading scientific associate of Institute of USA and Canada of Russian Academy of Sciences, also a

¹⁰ Svetlana Polenina "Ispolzovaniye Mezhdunarodnogo Prava v Prodvizhenii Zhenshin v Hode Vyborov" ("Use of the International Legislation for Women's Promotion in Elections"), accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/library/022t.htm>;

Svetlana Polenina "Prava Zhenshin v Sisteme Prav Cheloveka: Mezhdunarodniy I Natsionalniy Aspekt" ("The Rights of Women in the Context of Human Rights: International and National Aspect"). Moscow, 2000, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/polenina/25.htm>;

Svetlana Polenina "Proekt Konstitutsii Rossiyskoy Federatsii Skvoz Prizmu o Mezhdunarodnyh Standartov o Pravah Cheloveka" ("The Project of the Constitution of Russian Federation in the Light of the International Standards on Human Rights")/ *Supreme Council of Russian Federation. Parliamentary Center of Russian Federation. Moscow, 1992*, accessed on <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/proektr.htm>;

Svetlana Polenina "Zakon i Kollektivniye Prava Zhenshin Kak Sotsialnogo Sloya Naseleniya" ("Law and Collective Rights of Women as Social Stratum"), accessed on <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/teoriar.htm#>;

member of the International Female Forum. The works of Shvedova are very diverse and predominantly concern the social problems and analyze the gender inequality in this sphere. Her article “Official Documents of the Russian Federation on Violence”¹¹ examines in detail all existing documents on violence in Russia, Shvedova criticizes them and proposes the possible ways of improvement of Russian legislation in order to provide gender equality and defending women from violence. In the article “About Some Contemporary Tendencies of the Women’s Movement in Russia”¹² Shvedova analyzes the contemporary situation, concerning the women’s movement and its characteristics on the modern stage. She points out important problems and defects of the movement that need to be eliminated for the movement’s further development and evolution.

Lyudmila Zavadskaya is another well-known woman sociologist, who together with some other authors realized a complex analysis of the existing Russian legislation from the perspectives of the gender symmetry and asymmetry. In the book “Gender Expertise of the Russian Legislation”¹³ the sectors of the law the most important from the gender view were examined (family and labor code, criminal law). Also the gender expertise of the laws, regulating the electoral process to the legislative and executive authorities of different level was implemented. One of the

¹¹ Nadezhda Shvedova “Ofitsialniye Dokumenty RF o Nasilii” (“Official Documents of Russian Federation on Violence”) / Dostizheniya i Nahodki: Krizisniye Tsentry Rossii (Achievements and Finds: Crisis Centers in Russia). Moscow, 1999, P. 20-34

¹² Nadezhda Shvedova “O Nekotoryh Sovremennyh Tendentsiyah Zhenskogo Dvizheniya v Rossii” (“About Some Contemporary Tendencies of the Women’s Movement in Russia”) / *Prosto o Slozhnom: Gendernoye Prosvesheniye (In Simple Words About Difficult Things: Gender Education)*, accessed on http://www.owl.ru/win/books/easygender/part4_3.html

¹³ Lyudmila Zavadskaya “Gendernaya Ekspertiza Rossiyskogo Zakonodatelstva” (“Gender Expertise of the Russian Legislation”). Moscow, 2001, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/zavadskaya/1.htm>

main problems which is marked by the authors, is the fact that Russian laws interpret the idea of the gender equality ambiguously; and very often the rights, which are established by law cannot be realized in practice. The authors also made practical recommendations for the Russian legislators.

There are also many foreign works and articles that come first while concerning the gender issues research. Although the majority of foreign authors rely on the Russian researchers' works, it is worth to mention here the most significant ones. One of the important contributions to the literature is the book "Feminism and Women's Movements in Contemporary Europe" edited by Anna Bull. The book presents many articles which explores feminism and similar movements in European countries and in Russia as part of Europe. The article of Rebecca Kay "It's About Helping Women to Believe in Themselves: Grassroots Women's Organizations in Contemporary Russian Society"¹⁴ discusses the reasons that lead Russian women to create women's organizations and movements that unite them against the state. By means of such organizations individually women get moral support and collectively they become more powerful and stronger for challenging the gender discrimination in the country. The details that author marks indicate that Rebecca Kay conducted an extensive fieldwork in Russia. As well as her article, the book of Rebecca Kay titled "Russian Women and Their Organizations"¹⁵ contributed much to the literature in the field.

¹⁴ Rebecca Kay "It's About Helping Women to Believe in Themselves: Grassroots Women's Organizations in Contemporary Russian Society"/ *Feminism and Women's Movements in Contemporary Europe*, New York, 2000. P.228-243

¹⁵ Rebecca Kay *Russian Women and Their Organizations: Gender, Discrimination and Grassroots Women's Organizations, 1991-1996*, New York, 2000

Another comprehensive work is “Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia” by Valerie Sperling¹⁶. This book covers all the aspects of female problems in the country, including feminism and women’s movements, women in politics and social movements, as well as in economics. It can be observed that Valerie Sperling conducted a comparative research as she always gives the examples of different aspects and situations in the following regions of Russia: Moscow, Ivanovo and Cheboksary. Thus, the author carried out an extensive work examining all the problems in three places.

The collected articles “Russian Women in Politics and Society”¹⁷ under the editorship of Wilma Rule provides important material on a wide range of problems. First of all, the problems of the female participation in the Russian politics are analyzed extensively in this book. Yeltsin’s presidency and his economic reforms and their effect on women are also discussed. The authors argue on the issue of women’s human rights in post-Soviet Russia and present various perspectives on the future of Russian women. The problem of human rights is also covered extensively in the work “Human Rights in Russia” by Jonathan Weiler.¹⁸

The following works can be very useful for researching the social part of problems, such as prostitution, women trafficking, gender and identity: “Gender and

¹⁶ Valerie Sperling *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia: Engendering Transition*, New York, 1999

¹⁷ *Russian Women in Politics and Society*/ edited by Wilma Rule and Norma C. Noonan. Westport, 1996

¹⁸ Jonathan Weiler *Human Rights in Russia: A Darker Side of Reform*, Boulder, Colo. : Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004

National Identity in 20th Century Russian Culture” by Helena Goscilo¹⁹; “Gender Violence in Russia, the Politics of Feminist Intervention” by Janet Elise Johnson²⁰; “Human Traffic and Transnational Crime” by Sally Stoecker²¹; “Sexuality and Gender in Post-Communist East Europe and Russia” by Theo Sandfort.²²

The book of collected articles under the editorship of Mary Buckley “Post-Soviet Women from Baltic Sea to Central Asia”²³ is another important contribution to the literature as it covers all the spheres that are being examined in my thesis. One of the most valuable parts of the book is the one on Russian society. It tells about the perceptions of the Russian womanhood, images of an ideal woman, how women do see themselves, and psychology of women.

The above-mentioned works and authors reflect the type of the source base that was used in the writing of this thesis. The main research question of the thesis is “How did the lives of Russian women change during the transition period after the dissolution of the Soviet Union?” In order to analyze this question, it is important to understand how the process of democratization and the related concepts of human rights as well as political rights for women have affected the position of Russian women since early 1990s. How did the transition period affect them? Did this period provide them with many opportunities to create better lives and better conditions to

¹⁹ *Gender and National Identity in 20th Century Russian Culture*/ edited by Helena Goscilo and Andrea Lanoux. Northern Illinois University Press, 2006

²⁰ Janet Elise Johnson *Gender Violence in Russia, the Politics of Feminist Intervention*, Indiana University Press, 2009

²¹ *Human Traffic and Transnational Crime: Eurasian and American Perspectives*/ edited by Sally Stoecker and Louise Shelley. Lanham, 2005

²² *Sexuality and Gender in Post-Communist East Europe and Russia*/ edited by Aleksandar Tulhofer and Theo Sandfort. New York, 2005

²³ *Post-Soviet Women from Baltic Sea to Central Asia*/ edited by Mary Buckley. New York, 1997

protect themselves socially and economically? In terms of the women's question, the period of transition has brought both advantages and disadvantages for women. Here it is important to understand whether the new regime and changed government can face the needs of the population and provide the necessary social, economic and other conditions. We need to understand and underline how Russian women are struggling for the betterment of their lives, while fighting against many problems and obstacles on their way as well as the necessary help and support from the side of the state. A regime in transition always creates difficulties for the society as people experience a radical transformation in all spheres of life and trying to adapt to the new conditions. In this thesis, I aim to describe the Russian women's situation in the transition period with all the above mentioned questions in mind.

CHAPTER 2
WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER PROBLEMS IN THE RUSSIAN
CONSTITUTION

The question of gender (socio-cultural) equality is very important and difficult to settle. This paradigm determines the conditions of the development of society, the process of which is related to the realization of ideas of gender equality together with the inclusion of women's potential in history and civilization. Russian legislation is on the way of establishment of gender rights, which would be responsible for the just distribution of freedoms for two subjects of society – men and women.

The problem of the equality of men and women is a special problem in the modern world which is examined in different fields of research. The gender equality is part of the general principle of equality which is the basis for construction of the modern democratic society. The terms “gender” and “gender equality” appeared not long ago but they already cannot be excluded from the process of the development of society as they allow remedying very important problems. It is important to define certain terms first in order to better able to understand the context. The prominent English sociologist Anthony Giddens explains that “gender” is not the physical differences between men and women, but socially formed peculiarities of masculinity and femininity. According to him gender means the social expectations

concerning the behavior, which is considered to be appropriate for a man or a woman.²⁴

Russian philologist Anna Kirilina explains how the term “gender” appeared in Russian philology and sciences:

The term “gender” itself came to linguistics by a very original way: English term “gender”, meaning grammatical category of gender, was transferred from the linguistic context to the research field of other sciences – social philosophy, history and also political discourse. The transfer of the term was made in order to escape another term “sexus” (biological sex), as this notion ties with the nature determinancy not only physical differences of men and women, but also the gender-role division of labor, different requirements and behavior of the society towards men and women, different social “value” of persons according to their gender. The term “gender” was called for high lightening not natural, but socio-cultural reason of difference between men and women.²⁵

Thus, besides the biological differences between people there exists also the division of their social roles, forms of activity, differences in their behavior and emotional characteristics. In modern society such terms as “typically masculine” or “typically feminine” exist that vary from one society to another, as people in different cultures determine their social roles differently. The biological sex cannot explain the differences in the social roles of men and women; that is why the term “gender” was introduced into modern sciences. This term reflects the whole range of social and cultural norms that society prescribes to be done for people according to

²⁴ Anthony Giddens “A Reply to My Critics”/ *Social Theory of Modern Societies. Anthony Giddens and His Critics*. Edited by David Held and John B. Thompson. Cambridge University Press, 1994. P. 284

²⁵ Anna Kirilina “O Primenenii Ponyatiya Gender v Russkoyazychnom Lingvisticheskom Opisanii” (“On Using the Term of Gender in Russian-Language Linguistic Description”), accessed on http://www.a-z.ru/women_cd1/html/filologich_nauki_3.htm

their biological sex. Not biological sex, but socio-cultural norms (gender) determine psychological qualities, models of behavior, types of activity and professions for men and women. In fact, men and women play the gender roles prescribed for them in society.²⁶

The second term which is important to understand is “gender equality”. According to the Russian sociologist Irina Kalabihina this term had four stages of transformation. First, there was an idea of absolute equality between people as an example of the socially just society; but the historical development showed that such a conception is utopia. Second stage of term’s transformation was the growing acceptance of understanding the necessity of the equality of rights of all citizens in the democratic society. The third stage was that the equality of rights began to be related to the equality of opportunities to realize these rights. This is where the discrimination emerges – when equal rights do not correspond to equal possibilities for their realization. The last and fourth stage in the development of the term should be the recognition of the equality of self-importance, self-sentiment, self-identification of men and women coming after the ensuring of the equality of rights of men and women.²⁷

The term “gender” and the related terms originated from it started being used in Russia widely while gender studies are established in academic institutions as of the 1990s. After the dissolution of the Soviets the “female question” became very important as the economic and social changes provoked the intensification of the

²⁶ Olga Voronina “Gender”/ *Slovar Gendernyh Terminov (The Dictionary of Gender Terms)*, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/gender/010.htm>

²⁷ Irina Kalabihina “Ravenstvo Polov” (“Gender Equality”)/ *Slovar Gendernyh Terminov (The Dictionary of Gender Terms)*, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/gender/270.htm>

gender asymmetry (the inequality of social positions of men and women). All these processes necessitated a new understanding of the reality and “gender” approaches ensured this.²⁸

The traditional patriarchal society, which has been existed for centuries in Russia, did not accept the ideas of gender equality. In the basis of such society the idea of domination of force and power of men lies. In such society the distribution of duties and social responsibilities was initially misbalanced according to gender belonging. The gender roles of both genders in history reflect the conception of social responsibilities of men and women in society which consolidated and became traditional. That is why still the gender misbalance in the sphere of human rights can be observed in Russia.

The post-Soviet era constitution of the Russian Federation is the successor to the Soviet constitution in terms of giving women equal rights with men in all spheres of life. According to the Soviet Constitution

Article 33. Uniform federal citizenship is established for the USSR. Every citizen of a Union Republic is a citizen of the USSR.

Article 34. Citizens of the USSR are equal before the law, without distinction of origin, social or property status, race or nationality, sex, education, language, attitude to religion, type and nature of occupation, domicile, or other status.

The equal rights of citizens of the USSR are guaranteed in all fields of economic, political, social, and cultural life.

Article 35. Women and men have equal rights in the USSR.

Exercise of these rights is ensured by according women equal access with men to education and vocational and professional training, equal opportunities in employment, remuneration, and promotion, and in

²⁸ Svetlana Aivazova “Gendernoye Ravenstvo v Kontekste Prav Cheloveka” (“Gender Equality in the Context of Human Rights”). Moscow, 2001, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/gender/1.htm>

social and political, and cultural activity, and by special labour and health protection measures for women; by providing conditions enabling mothers to work; by legal protection, and material and moral support for mothers and children, including paid leaves and other benefits for expectant mothers and mothers, and gradual reduction of working time for mothers with small children.²⁹

De jure everything looked bright and just, but what was the reality and did women really have equal rights with men in Soviet Russia? The answer to this question can be given by citing an extract from the interview with Irina Tartakovskaya, a prominent Russian researcher working on gender issues, who evaluated the situation concerning the gender equality in the Soviets from the part of Russian gender researches in whole:

- The Soviet Union was said to be the first country in which equality, including that between men and women, triumphed. But was that equality a reality?

Equality of the sexes was declared in the country. But in fact, if we look at Soviet history, we can detect different policies with respect to gender equality. The primary motive was not equality as such, but that of involving women in building of socialism. To that end, women had to be brought out of the traditional patriarchal family, be given the chance to become working mothers, buttressed in that context by the state. Was that equality? No, because women largely worked in economic sectors with low wages and low prestige. They earned less and were never allowed access to the reins of any power.

- But in Soviet times, there were the 30-percent quotas for the Supreme Soviet...

Yes, but the Supreme Soviet was a decorative body, where no important decisions were made. The decisions were taken at the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and at the Politburo. Over

²⁹ Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Adopted at the Seventh (Special) Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Ninth Convocation On October 7, 1977. Part 2. The State and the Individual. Chapter 6: Citizenship of the USSR/ Equality of the Citizens' Rights, accessed on <http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/77cons02.html#chap06>

the entire course of Soviet history, there was only one woman there, the minister of culture, Ekaterina Furtseva.³⁰

Among both Western and Russian scholars the discourse of “double burden”, concerning Soviet women’s role in society and economy, is very popular. In fact in the Soviet Union women were twenty-four-hours workers both at work and at home, but with the difference only that at work they had salary and at home their labour was unpaid. The double responsibility and the expectancies of society concerning the image of an ideal woman, who manages to be successful both at work and at home, were very oppressive for Soviet women.³¹ Regarding the electoral rights of all citizens of Soviets, it can be said that with the presence of totalitarian regime the articles on electoral system in the Soviet Constitution can be considered as a total fiction, as of course there was no freedom of political views and preferences not only for women, but also for men. In brief, this was the situation with gender equality in the Soviet Russia that promised ideal conditions for women on paper but was nowhere close to putting these into practice in the everyday lives of the Russian women. Throughout this thesis I will analyze whether a similar situation exists in the Russian Federation. In the sixth chapter, concerning Russian women’s movements and the perception of Russian feminism, the situation of Soviet women will be discussed more in detail.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation is a fundamental legislative document which contains the basic standards for gender equality. These standards

³⁰ Equality and Quotas in Russia – Interview with Irina Tartakovskaya, accessed on <http://www.gwi-boell.de/web/democracy-100-years-womens-day-tartakovskaya-russia-3122.html>

³¹ Jeni Harden “Beyond the Dual Burden: Theorising the Gender Inequality in Soviet Russia”, accessed on <demo.st-peter-files.digitalkombinat.net/.../Session 5 Theorising Gender in Soviet Union.pdf>

allow the construction of a system of equal rights and freedom for men and women in the Russian Federation. The most important and crucial principle with regard to gender equality is in the third part of clause 19 of Constitution:

Article 19. Part 3. Man and woman shall enjoy equal rights and freedoms and have equal possibilities to exercise them.³²

The following norms are also important in terms of establishing the equality of rights between men and women:

Article 7. Part 2. In the Russian Federation the labour and health of people shall be protected, a guaranteed minimum wages and salaries shall be established, state support ensured to the family, maternity, paternity and childhood, to disabled persons and the elderly, the system of social services developed, state pensions, allowances and other social security guarantees shall be established.³³

Article 37. Part 3. Everyone shall have the right to labor conditions meeting the safety and hygienic requirements, for labor remuneration without any discrimination whatsoever and not lower than minimum wages and salaries established by the federal law, as well as the right to protection against unemployment.³⁴

Article 38. Part 1. Maternity and childhood, and the family shall be protected by the State.³⁵

Article 38. Part 2. Care for children, their upbringing shall be equally the right and obligation of parents.³⁶

³² Konstitutsiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Glava 2 “Prava i Svobody Cheloveka i Grazhdanina”, Statya 19 (Constitution of Russian Federation, Chapter 2 “Rights and Freedoms of Man and Citizen”, Article 19), accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-03.htm>

³³ Konstitutsiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Glava 1 “Osnovy Konstitutsionnogo Stroya”, Statya 7 (Constitution of Russian Federation, Chapter 1 “The Fundamentals of the Constitutional System”, Article 7), accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-02.htm>

³⁴ Konstitutsiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Glava 2 “Prava i Svobody Cheloveka i Grazhdanina”, Statya 37 (Constitution of Russian Federation, Chapter 2 “Rights and Freedoms of Man and Citizen”, Article 37), accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-03.htm>

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Article 38, accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-03.htm>

³⁶ *Ibid.*, accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-03.htm>

The principle of equality and freedom play a fundamental role in most of the modern constitutions. Modern societies accept them as the basis for equal rights and states try to support them as the standards of equal relations within society. In the Chapter 2 of Russian Constitution the principles of freedom and equality of all citizens are secured. Article 17 establishes that

1. In the Russian Federation recognition and guarantees shall be provided for the rights and freedoms of man and citizen according to the universally recognized principles and norms of international law and according to the present Constitution.
2. Fundamental human rights and freedoms are inalienable and shall be enjoyed by everyone since the day of birth.³⁷

Article 19 says that everyone is equal before the law and court. The equality of all the citizens is claimed to be a general constitutional norm. Constitution guarantees the equality of rights and freedoms of an individual regardless of his/her sex, race, nationality, language, job position, place of residence, religion and other conditions. Any limitation of rights within the scope of the above-mentioned matters is unlawful on the basis of the constitution. Constitutional norms also emphasize the equality of genders.

It could be noted that the notions of women's rights and gender equality which are secured under the Russian Constitution, should be examined under human rights as the universal standard of equality. Human rights reflect the general and universal standards that are common for both genders. Basic notions of human rights are presented in the constitution which ensures the equality of political, civil,

³⁷*Ibid.*, Article 17, accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-03.htm>

economic and cultural rights and freedoms for men and women. Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation entitled “Rights and Freedoms of Man and Citizen” establishes the general norms which correspond to the international legal standards and reflects ideas enshrined in the doctrine of human rights based on the principles of freedom and equality.

Human rights are quite diverse and among them political rights are especially important. One of the basic political rights is the right to elect and to be elected. Such constitutional rights are also an indicator of the democratic structure of the state. Political rights as ensured in the Russian Constitution do not include any norms conflicting with gender inequality. Political rights as underlined in the Constitution clearly reflect the idea of political equality between men and women and set a constitutional standard that is generally recognized and unquestionable.³⁸

Article 32 of Constitution almost fully corresponds to Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

Article 25

Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions:

- (a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;
- (b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;

³⁸ Lyudmila Zavadskaya “Gendernaya Ekspertiza Rossiyskogo Zakonodatelstva” (“Gender Expertise of the Russian Legislation”). Moscow, 2001, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/zavadskaya/1.htm>

(c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country.³⁹

Concerning the constitutional right to elect this norm is secured in the fundamental legal document of the country and in the current legislation, therefore it is realized in practice and does not lead to gender inequality. However the right to be elected (for women) is accepted by the society only on juridical level, but in reality this right is denied for women. The proof of the actual situation can be verified by the statistics of small percentage of vote that women candidates can get in the elections. As a result there is only 7, 6 percent of female deputies in Duma and only one woman in the Council of Federation (0, 5 percent). Ideally the representation of men and women in the governmental authorities should be proportional to the ratio of men and women in total population. Political scientists also underline that a minimum number of people belonging to some authority or organization (33 percent) is required in order to really affect the work of this organization or authority. Considering the number of women and the ratio of the women that is represented in politics, it could be clearly concluded that women do not have any opportunity to affect the country's administration.⁴⁰

Elections are a practical indicator of the realization of the principle of equality. In fact, the right to be elected (for women) is denied and hardly realized in reality as the actual situation is that all power belongs to men. This comes from the

³⁹ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 25, accessed on <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>

⁴⁰ Svetlana Polenina "Prava Zhenshin v Sisteme Prav Cheloveka: Mezhdunarodniy I Natsionalniy Aspekt" ("The Rights of Women in the System of Human Rights: International and National Aspect"). Moscow, 2000, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/polenina/25.htm>

times of the Soviet nomenklatura, when the tradition and idea that a man embodies the power in society and a woman should obey him was put in the minds of people. In the process of democratization of the country, the government started applying another norm (gender equality), but the old established standards are not easy to break and still affect the system. But the fault lies within the hands of the government, since such norms should not remain on paper only yet it should be the government ensuring the mechanism for its realization. Taking into account the conditions of the transition period in the country, while such new principles and standards are very fragile, the development of the mechanisms of their realization is vital.⁴¹

The next category of rights and freedoms, which are reflected in the Constitution and universal for both genders – are economic rights. The right for labor is the most fundamental expression of all economic rights. The constitution contains the ideas of the Article 6 of the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which establishes the right for labor and right of an individual to have the opportunity to earn his/her living by labor which he/she chooses and accepts freely. This article also contains the list of measures to be taken for realization of this right:

The steps to be taken by a State Party to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include technical and vocational guidance and training programmes, policies and techniques to achieve steady economic, social and cultural development and full and productive employment under conditions safeguarding fundamental political and economic freedoms to the individual.⁴²

⁴¹ Lyudmila Zavadskaya, *op.cit.*, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/zavadskaya/1.htm>

⁴² International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Article 6, accessed on <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>

Article 7 of the same Covenant requires every state to recognize the rights for just and favorable conditions of labor, including:

- (a) Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:
 - (i) Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work;
 - (ii) A decent living for themselves and their families in accordance with the provisions of the present Covenant;
- (b) Safe and healthy working conditions;
- (c) Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;
- (d) Rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays⁴³

These standards are common for everyone and were included in the Russian Constitution, in which the list of economic rights does not have any difference on the basis of gender. Again at the juridical level norms provide equality for both men and women, but in reality in terms of the right of labor we can talk about the violation of the universal standards since the economic interests of the state and employer do not always coincide on the issue of equal access to labor for men and women. In short women practically do not take any part in the process of the formation of economical relations and politics. As the economic politics directly affects the access of men and women to the economic resources and their economic opportunities, this also has a great influence on the degree of equality between them on the individual level and at

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Article 7, accessed on <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>

the level of family and society. The position of women on the labor market and in the economic relations directly determines their position in the family and society.

The Convention of 1979 on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women pays a great attention to the equality of rights of both genders in the field of employment as indicated below:

Article 11

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:
 - (a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;
 - (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;
 - (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;
 - (d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;
 - (e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;
 - (f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Article 11, accessed on <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#article11>

Concerning the Convention of 1979 it is important to understand the term “discrimination” correctly. In order to avoid any misunderstanding the text of the Convention provides a universal definition of discrimination:

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.⁴⁵

It is well-known that the USSR ratified the above-mentioned Convention (after its dissolution the Russian Federation became its successor) and systematically has to provide reports on the situation of women and struggle against discrimination in the country. However in reality the Russian Constitution does not reflect fully the main provisions of the Convention of 1979. That forms one of the reasons that all forms of open and hidden discrimination against women exist in Russia. Discrimination often exists in the field of labor relations, including hiring; content of the tests which are obligatory to pass while hiring; redundancy pays and bonuses; promotion; condition of part-time work and lay off.⁴⁶ The real picture in the country concerning the women’s status in economic relations was described in details in the

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Article 1, accessed on <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#article11>

⁴⁶ Svetlana Polenina “Proekt Konstitutsii Rossiyskoy Federatsii Skvoz Prizmu o Mezhdunarodnyh Standartov o Pravah Cheloveka” (“The Project of the Constitution of Russian Federation in the Light of the International Standards on Human Rights”)/ *Supreme Council of Russian Federation. Parliamentary Center of Russian Federation. Moscow, 1992*, accessed on <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/proektr.htm>

first chapter of this thesis. So, it can be concluded again that the constitutional norms, which looks proper on paper and ensures gender equality only remains on paper unfortunately.

The third groups of rights – social human rights are included in the Constitution with taking into account the status of woman and her role as a mother while including the role of the father as well. Maternity is a special function which is included in the human rights. Article 38 of the Constitution particularly points that maternity is under protection of the state, and Article 7 contains the list of subjects which are to be protected and supported constitutionally – “family, maternity, paternity and childhood”.⁴⁷ The inclusion of functions of maternity and paternity in the Constitution is an indicator of the development of human rights in Russia which highlights the idea of gender symmetry and the perspective of respect for the principle of gender equality. The inclusion of the status of maternity in the Constitution also shows that Russian legislation accepts the conception of gender divisions and forms in the laws in order to achieve gender equality.

Article 39 provides citizens with social security:

1. Everyone shall be guaranteed social security at the expense of the State in old age, in case of an illness, disableness, loss of the bread-winner, for upbringing of children and in other cases established by law.
2. State pensions and social allowances shall be established by law.

⁴⁷ Constitution of Russian Federation, *op. cit.*, Chapter 1, Article 7, accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-02.htm> and Chapter 2, Article 38, accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-03.htm>

3. Promotion shall be given to voluntary social insurance and the creation of additional forms of social security and charity.⁴⁸

Article 41 gives everyone the right to health protection and medical aid and Article 43 fixes the right of everyone to education.⁴⁹ Thus, the most important social rights of people and women particularly are reflected in the Constitution. Here it is important to add that women are provided with different benefits related to their maternity status, but without the efficient mechanism of realization of such benefits, they become indeed a source of discrimination.⁵⁰

As it can be seen above, there are difficulties with regard to all groups of rights provided by the Constitution in terms of putting them into practice. This is mostly because Russia did not become yet a rule-of-law state in its full sense. Thereby it would be logical to look through the measures that could be taken or were taken by the state in order to improve the mechanisms of the full realization of human rights highlighted in the Constitution. The first initiative came first in 1993 with the decree of the president of the Russian Federation No 337 “On the Primary Tasks of State Policy Regarding Women” in which the necessity to improve the status of women in society is accepted. Accordingly the following main tasks are determined to be implemented by the local governors of the Russian Federation:

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Chapter 2, Article 39, accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-03.htm>

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Chapter 2, Article 41 and 43, accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-03.htm>

⁵⁰ Svetlana Polenina “Zakon i Kollektivniye Prava Zhenshin Kak Sotsialnogo Sloya Naseleniya” (“Law and Collective Rights of Women as Social Stratum”), accessed on <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/teoriar.htm#:>

Providing the conditions for real participation of women in the activity of state authorities and social organizations as well as in formation and realization of state policy on all levels;

Creating organizational, economic and legislative guarantees for the realization of the right to labor for women;

Ensuring the competitiveness of women on the labor market;

Gradual elimination of historically established low salaries in budget sectors with dominant female employment;

Ensuring the right of women to labor protection, protection of their life and health with consideration of their maternity function;

Establishing social guarantees for working women;

Organization and development of social services, allowing parents to combine their parental responsibilities with labor and social activity.⁵¹

In 1997 the State Duma ratified the “Concept of Legislative Activity for Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women”, which contains the main structural parts of the mechanism for realization of human rights in the Russian Federation: 1) activity of state authorities which are responsible for the problems of equal rights and opportunities for men and women; 2) different mechanisms of formation and division of resources (budget federalism, state programs, tax policy, social control and activity of social advocates); 3) activity of the authorized person for the human rights in the Russian Federation; 4) judicial and administrative mechanism of protection of rights of citizens in the case of violation of their rights on the basis of gender.⁵²

⁵¹ Ukaz Prezidenta RF “O Pervoocherednyh Zadachah Gosudarstvennoy Politiki v Otnoshenii Zhenshin” No 337 (The Decree of the President of Russian Federation No 337 “On the Primary Tasks of State Policy Regarding Women”), accessed on <http://law7.ru/base94/part7/d94ru7570.htm>

⁵² Kontsepsiya Zakonotvorcheskoy Deyatelnosti Po Obespecheniyu Ravnih Prav i Ravnih Vozmozhnostey Muzhshin i Zhenshin (Concept of Legislative Activity for Provision of Equal Rights

The next step was the creation of a gender strategy in the Russian Federation, prepared by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development in 2002. This gender strategy includes 1) providing the development of human potential; 2) achievement of political parity in realization of equal rights for men and women; 3) guaranteeing a basic level of quality of life for every citizen. The gender strategy also recognizes the necessity of introduction of gender education for the population and of the improvement of the role of gender statistics and gender culture in the state.⁵³

The most recent and important measure for achievement of the gender equality rights is the federal law in draft “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Freedoms and Equal Opportunities of Men and Women in the Russian Federation”. This draft contains the key points of state policy for providing gender equality and mechanisms for the realization of human rights in the Russian Federation.⁵⁴ The main question is when this draft will be ratified and come into effect.

The main landmarks on the way of ensuring the equality of rights in Russia were described above, yet unfortunately it can be seen that they are not very numerous. Despite the above mentioned efforts for the improvement of the situation, the steps taken by the state are still insufficient and discrimination against women still exists (in hidden and sometimes open form). It is noteworthy that Russian

and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women), accessed on <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/kontzr-1.htm>

⁵³ Ministerstvo Truda I Sotsialnogo Razvitiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii. Gendernaya Strategiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii (Ministry of Labor and Social Development of Russian Federation. Gender Strategy of Russian Federation). Moscow, 2002, accessed on <http://www.genderstudies.info/ravens/ravens1.php>

⁵⁴ Proekt Federalnogo Zakona O Gosudarstvennyh Garantiyah Ravnyh Prav i Svobod i Ravnyh Vozhmozhnostey Muzhshin i Zhenshin v Rossiyskoy Federatsii (The Federal Law in Draft “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Freedoms and Equal Opportunities of Men and Women in Russian Federation”), accessed on <http://www.genderstudies.info/ravens/ravens3.php>

legislation on paper reflects very well and in a proper way all the necessary provisions of equal rights. But in reality the realization of rights is problematic and exercising these rights is largely limited with the existing social stereotypes that are difficult to break. The low representation of women in the state administration is a disadvantage since only women could appropriately guarantee the realization of their own rights. Sadly this leads to a vicious circle since women need to be in power in order to ensure gender equality, yet they cannot hold such posts because of gender inequality and discrimination.

CHAPTER 3

CHANGING REGIME AND DIFFICULTIES OF THE NEW ECONOMIC SYSTEM FOR WOMEN IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

3.1. Problems of Transition from a Centrally Planned Economy to a Market Economy in the Russian Federation

The dissolution of the Soviet system and the emergence of a new state obliged the new government under the leadership of President Yeltsin to carry out a range of reforms in different spheres of life in the Russian Federation. The most important one seemed to be the economic field where by the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union the situation was clearly negative and not very promising. By that time Russia was in a very hard socio-economic crisis that had a systematic character. National income fell down more than 11 percent, GDP – for 13 percent, commodity circulation for 37 percent and import for 36 percent. The Russian currency rouble ceased to play the role of means of payment and there were more than 2 million of unemployed people in the country. In 1991 the budget deficit had reached to 296 billion roubles, or about 30 percent of the GDP.⁵⁵

Such indicators as high inflation, low living standards, huge debts and budget deficits indicated a strong necessity for economic reforms and transition from central-planning to a market-based economy. The course of Yeltsin consisted of

⁵⁵ Alexandr Bezborodov “Ekonomicheskiye Reformy na Fone Dvoevlastiya. Politicheskiy Krizis 1993 goda. Novaya Konstitutsiya Rossii”. (“Economic Reforms on the Background of the Dual Power. Political crisis of 1993. New Russian Constitution”), accessed on http://www.ru-90.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1832#_ftn2

three major points: liberalization, stabilization and privatization. Liberalization was supposed to provide free market-determined prices while stabilization would strengthen the rouble and set up a tight monetary and credit policy, despite the reforming of the tax and banking systems. Finally privatization would provide the emergence of a private sector that means a mixed economy.⁵⁶

The major problem for Yeltsin and his reformers was to decide how to implement the designated reforms – either in a gradual and successive way or through pushing the country into the stream of the market by one kick and let it develop as it would go naturally (the idea of the “shock therapy”). In the end the latter option was chosen. The hopes for a bright and better future were inspiring people to face the economic difficulties in the name of changes leading to prosperity.

As Padma Desai states:

The shock therapy policy framework as articulated by its prominent advocate Jeffrey Sachs (1994) included the following elements: prices are freed, while an abrupt tightening of the money supply accompanied by large cuts in government borrowing from the central bank serves as a shield against inflation, the exchange rate is pegged to the dollar or some other hard currency, and massive amounts of foreign aid are marshaled to support the stabilization effort.⁵⁷

The main expectation behind the shock therapy was that the goods of the newly emerged private sector would find their place on the shelves of the shops and although the prices would be market-established and very high, the queues would diminish and gradually the situation would be stabilized. However, the implemented economic policy did not lead to the expected results. It was obvious that the prices

⁵⁶ Richard Sakwa “Russian Politics and Society”. New York, 2008. P. 290

⁵⁷ Padma Desai “Russian Retrospectives on Reforms from Yeltsin to Putin”. Journal of Economic Perspectives. Vol. 19, No. 1, Winter 2005, P. 95

could not be stabilized and were controlled by the newly emerged, fragile and inexperienced private sector. As a result, hyperinflation became the new reality and millions of people became bankrupt and extremely poor while the corruption, crime and racketeering cases started to spread and flourish.⁵⁸

Russian journalist Andrei Ostalski describes the feeling of the people as following:

These reforms were painful. Very few people in Russia fully realised why the so called "shock therapy" had to be applied to society, destroying their meager savings in the process.⁵⁹

Padma Desai also cites the words of the politician Rogov, the proponent of Gorbachev-style reforms:

There were enormous expectations. People came out by the thousands in the streets of Moscow demanding immediate and fundamental changes. Later they felt that they were betrayed. They were manipulated by the government. There was frustration followed by societal fragmentation. Since the expectations were so high, the letdown was massive too.⁶⁰

After the mostly unsuccessful "shock therapy" the government decided to take corrective measures and shifted its course from liberalization towards stabilization. In order to restrain inflation and to strengthen the ruble, the proper fiscal and monetary policies were implemented. The government also reorganized the management through creating two new ministries, one being the Ministry of

⁵⁸ Kirill Rogov "Mejdu Demokratiiyey i Svobodoy. Ideyniye Paradoksy Russkoy Demokraticheskoy Revolyutsii". ("Between Democracy and Freedom. Ideological Paradoxes of the Russian Democratic Revolution") "Neprikosnovenniy Zapas", Vol. 5 (31), 2003, accessed on <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2003/5/rogov.html>

⁵⁹ Andrei Ostalski "The Russia That Yeltsin Left Behind". BBC Russian Service, accessed on <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6596343.stm>

⁶⁰ Padma Desai, *op. cit.*, p. 96

Economy and the other as the Ministry of Industry. However this led to the great deal of confusion among the factories that waited for the instructions from the ministries that did no longer exist. As a result a major part of the industry and economy became paralyzed. The new system of ministries did not work well, as the new managers cared mostly about their own interest, so that the corruption affected all the levels of new management. The budget deficit exceeded all the logical limits as the government behaved like a squanderer.⁶¹ At the same time the state debt was rising due to foreign financing, subsidies, credits and already existing Soviet Union debts that Russia took responsibility for.⁶² The problem of inflation was really crucial as of 1992. When the economic reforms started, the rate of inflation reached to 2520 percent.⁶³ This was the result of the independent, market-controlled prices. Although the inflation fell down to 224 percent in 1994, still it was rather a very high figure.⁶⁴ One of the measures that were taken in order to reduce the inflation rate was the frequent delays in wage payments in the state enterprises.

The next step Yeltsin took was the privatization of the state enterprises, the main purpose of which was to make them independent from the state budget. Two major goals of Yeltsin's privatization policy can be stated as follows: the first one

⁶¹ Richard Sakwa, *op. cit.*, p. 295

⁶² "Russia. Monetary and Fiscal Policies", accessed on http://www.russiansabroad.com/russian_history_195.html

⁶³ "Istoriya Razvitiya Inflyatsionnogo Protsessa v Rossii v 90-e gody". ("The History of The Development of Inflation Process in Russia in 90-es"), accessed on http://srinest.com/book_1247_chapter_3_2_Istoriya_razvitija_inflja%D1%81ionnogo_pro%D1%81esa_v_Rossii_v_90-e_gody.html

⁶⁴ "Rossiyskaya Ekonomika. Inflyatsiya". ("Russian Economy. Inflation"), accessed on <http://www.ereport.ru/articles/weconomy/russia2.htm>

was to create a capitalist market and new conditions for the private entrepreneurs;⁶⁵ the second one was to gain large amounts of money through the selling of state property to the private persons therefore aiming to save the state budget, which was in a big crisis.⁶⁶

The process of privatization consisted in giving every citizen privatization checks (voucher) for some share of state property. The main privatization advocate Anatoly Chubais announced that the true value of the voucher is the cost of two “Volga” cars. For that time this was a huge amount of money for people. The citizens could change their vouchers with some industrial enterprise stocks or rather to put their voucher into check funds which were in fact all created by fraudsters. During that time the finance pyramids were very popular, although it was a real swindle. Such pyramids managed to deceive near 10 million people, each for approximately 800 dollars. The mass did not get the promised two “Volga”.⁶⁷ As a result of privatization the state property was transferred to the fraudsters, gangsters and factory directors. The class of oligarchs was flourishing and becoming stronger and unpunished. The process was also accompanied with the birth of the organized criminal groups. Murders and shootings in the streets in broad daylight became something common.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Richard Sakwa, *op. cit.*, p. 29

⁶⁶ Padma Desai, *op. cit.*, p. 97

⁶⁷ Istoriya Rossii. “Boris Yeltsin. Privatizatsiya”. (History of Russia. “Boris Yeltsin. Privatization”), accessed on <http://bibliotekar.ru/boris-eltsin/6.htm>

⁶⁸ “Yeltsin i Putin 7 let spustya”. (“Yeltsin and Putin 7 years later”), accessed on <http://rossija.ca/topic.asp?id=6704>

In fact the idea of privatization could lead to a market economy in spite of all its disadvantages. But the main problem and the biggest mistake of the government was ignoring to create the regularizing mechanisms and certain control over the privatization process. There was no analysis of the results of the first months of privatizations which were also vital for understanding the situation.⁶⁹ The laws were unsteady and had so many gaps which gave some cunning people the opportunity to enrich themselves for account of others. That is why the process of privatization was given another name by people – “grabification”, which means that all the state property was grabbed and stolen by slyboots and fraudsters.⁷⁰

The shift of economy from a state-controlled one to a market one caused major negative developments such as unemployment and social vulnerability of such layers of society as pensioners, budget sphere workers as well as army personnel. Widespread criminal activities in the economic life of the country caused people to get scared and to be unsure of some hope for stability.⁷¹ For the first time people experienced things such as the non-payment of wages on time or at all which also contributed to the social problems. However, it was rather obvious that changing the economic and political course was impossible. The process of the shift towards the market economy started and it was not reversible. The emergence of many problems

⁶⁹ Vladimir Berman, Petr Philippov “Istoriya Privatizatsii v Rossii”. (“History of Privatization in Russia”), accessed on http://www.ru-90.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1848

⁷⁰ “Rossiyskaya Ekonomika. Privatizatsiya” (“Russian Economy. Privatization”), accessed on <http://www.ereport.ru/articles/weconomy/russia2.htm>

⁷¹ Yevgeniy Yasin “Rossiyskaya Privatizatsiya: Eshe Odin Vzglyad”. (“Russian Privatization: One More Look”), accessed on http://www.ru-90.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1850

was unavoidable, the most striking of which were the repetitive economic and financial crises of the 1990s.⁷²

The famous Russian sociologist Alexey Levinson conducted a research on the people's feelings and impressions about Yeltsin's reforms and the economic situation. He came to the following conclusions: the result of the market reforms was not only a change of economic character but also a change in the subjective perception of the time – past and future disappeared, and present lost its reliability and distinctness. The past disappeared with all the accumulated capitals – financial, social and cultural. Savings were lost and this became a huge trouble for old people who had no job and social protection. The future disappeared with the ideas about what was waiting for the people. While the perceptions on communism were destroyed and shaken, the belief in the market economy did not last long and left people disappointed. Besides, the disappointment in the government's actions brought the feeling of an unstable present.⁷³

3.1.1. Increasing Vulnerability of Russian Women in the New Economic Environment

As discussed in the previous part, the socio-economic atmosphere of the initial years of economic reform was a very difficult and depressive one; the economic position of people went through many changes; those who had stable work

⁷² “Boris Nikolaevich Yeltsin i Ego Rol v Demokraticeskikh Preobrazovaniyah v Rossii”. (“Boris Yeltsin and His Role in the Democratic Changes in Russia”), accessed on <http://www.abc-people.com/typework/history/hist-n-67.htm>

⁷³ Alexey Levinson “Obshestvennoye Mneniye o Reformah Nachala 1990-h Godov”. (“Public Opinion About the Reforms of 90-es”), accessed on http://www.ru-90.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1833

places and salaries lost everything, including their savings and job. Women formed an important part of the population who experienced major socio-economic problems and faced with the actual challenges of the Yeltsin's economic reforms. Major changes took place on the labor-market and the gender processes showed a great inconsistency of the equality of rights between men and women in the newly formed market economy. Economic and socio-labor position of women was changing rapidly and negatively.

For the period of 1991-1998 out of 12 million of people who lost their jobs, 8 million were women and this situation was particularly typical for the initial years of economic reforms.⁷⁴ First of all women were excluded from the spheres of the skilled labor – administration, instrument engineering and electronics. Even in such sectors of economy, which were traditionally female (e.g. finance, communications and trade), women started to be replaced by men. In the Soviet economy, although there was no such a problem as unemployment, women usually took the positions that did not require high skills. This tendency continued to exist in the post-Soviet Russian economy. In large factories women usually worked as punchers, packers and secretaries, while men took positions that required a high level of general and professional education, such as managers, masters and machine operators.⁷⁵

The discrimination against women in the economic sector became increasingly evident in this period. For example in the hiring practices such discrimination became obvious as of the moment of giving the job announcement by

⁷⁴ Olga Torlopova "Zhenshiny v Rossiyskoy Ekonomike v Epohu Perehodnyh Reform" ("Women in Russia's Economy During the Era of Transition Reforms"), accessed on http://elib.kkf.hu/edip/D_8759.pdf

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, accessed on http://elib.kkf.hu/edip/D_8759.pdf

the employer. The illustration for this can be seen in announcements published in the press that specified the gender and age of the potential worker, and sometimes even the requirements for his/her physical appearance. Such job announcements were published not only by certain enterprises and organizations, but almost by all the private agencies for the employment of population. Sometimes even women, having a higher education or certificate of the qualification courses cannot find jobs.⁷⁶

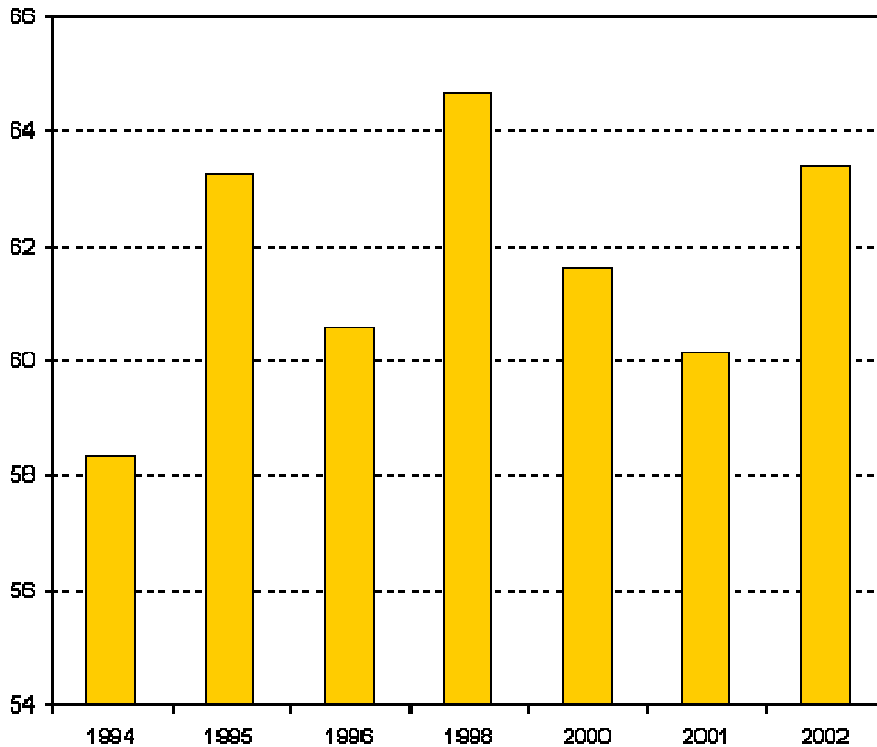
Being constantly under the pressure of unjust discrimination, women had to find some solution and this became possible with the development of information and market infrastructure that created new modern spheres of occupation. Thus, in organizations which secured the functioning of the market, 40-50 percent of the advertisement specialists and image-makers were women. There were professional groups of women who served for the electoral campaigns, but, 10 percent of the deputies in State Duma are women. Even army became a new professional sphere for women who served in the army as officers, warrant officers and soldiers, although only 3 percent of them have the military ranks of the officers.⁷⁷

One of the most negative effects of the new period was the gender difference in the salary payments. During the 1990s the fact that women had just 60 percent of men's salary became the norm.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Anton Danilets "Zhenshiny v Ekonomike" ("Women in Economics"), accessed on <http://otr.ru/Lekzii/womenineconomic.htm>

⁷⁷ Olga Torlopova, *op. cit.*, accessed on http://elib.kkf.hu/edip/D_8759.pdf

⁷⁸ Sergey Roshin "Ravny li Zhenshiny Muzhshinam?" ("Are Women and Men Equal?"). Demoscope Weekly, Vol. 219-220. November, 2005, accessed on <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2005/0219/tema03.php>



Source: Sergey Roshin “Ravny li Zhenshiny Muzhshinam?” (“Are Women and Men Equal?”). Demoscope Weekly, Vol. 219-220. November, 2005, accessed on <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2005/0219/tema03.php>

Figure 1. The proportions between male and female salaries

On the above figure it can be seen that women’s salary rate from 1994 to 2002 was fluctuating at the level of 60 percent of men’s salary. These figures were not surprising if we consider that most part of these women were employed in unskilled professions. According to the researches of Sergey Roshin the difference between male and female salaries is usually explained by the inequality in profession and sphere distribution (horizontal segregation), inequality in salary in frames of professions and kinds of activity (vertical segregation) and low assessment of the female work. If the main reason of the unequal payments was the differences in qualitative characteristics of the male and female labor force, it could be expected

that the equal economic activity and education level would lead to the equal payment. But this was not the case for Russia which indicated a clear discrimination against women.⁷⁹ The following table shows the situation in detail according to different sectors of labor market.

Table 1: Gender differences in salary payments (1999)

	Salary payment (roubles per month)	
	Men	Women
Industry	1456	1003
Transport:	1664	1286
naval as well	2489	1727
Communications	1804	1269
Construction	1583	1257
Commercial activity	3512	3092
Real estate transactions	2103	1605
Trade, public catering	1284	941
Geological prospecting	2043	1206
Health care	871	684
Education	752	642
Science	1192	882
Finance and credit	2565	1986
State administration	1828	1546
Public associations	1141	1021
Agriculture	474	429

Source: Torlopova Olga “Zhenshiny v Rossiyskoy Ekonomike v Epohu Perekhodnyh Reform” (“Women in Russia’s Economy During the Era of Transition Reforms”), accessed on http://elib.kkf.hu/edip/D_8759.pdf

For women to regain their place in the labor market as equal partners to men partly depends on their ability to preserve their educational level. However this did not guarantee the equality of labor rights for two genders. Indeed, in the 1990s 24 percent of the employed women had higher education while this rate was 19 percent

⁷⁹ Sergey Roshin, *op. cit.*, accessed on <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2005/0219/tema03.php>

for the men. The major paradox here is that according to the article 19 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the state guarantees the equality of rights and freedoms for all people regardless of their sex. Men and women have equal rights and freedoms, as well as equal opportunities for their realization.⁸⁰ The norms of the present Russian legislation on the equality of men and women are close to the European standards and are against any discrimination based on gender. However the written and ratified documents do not reflect the existing reality, especially in the socio-labor sphere.

Women were and still are subjected to evident or hidden discrimination. One third of the employers indicate that when hiring they give preference to men. During the reorganization of the enterprises and staff reduction, women are the first ones to be fired. Because of the stereotypes that employers have, women face plenty of difficulties when trying to find a job. The percentage of employed women decreases every year. Unemployed women have higher educational level than employed men; however women stay unemployed twice longer than men. Women are pushed to the spheres of unskilled and non-prestigious labor. Usually they work part-time and have only formal guarantees from the part of employer. Working part-time they cannot be members of the trade unions and benefit from unions' protection.⁸¹

Thus transition to the market economy did not bring Russian women the promised freedom and equal rights. Moreover, with the processes of the

⁸⁰ Konstitutsiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii. Glava 2. Prava i Svobody Cheloveka i Grazhdanina. Statya 19. Punkty 2,3. Constitution of Russian Federation. Chapter 2. Right and Freedoms of the Human and Citizen. Article 19. Clause 2, 3, accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/10003000/10003000-4.htm>

⁸¹ Tatyana Frolova "Profsoyuzy i Genderniye Problemy". ("Trade Unions and Gender Problems"). Journal "Profsoyuzy i Polozheniye Trudyashihsya Zhenshin". ("Trade Unions and Position of Employed Women"), Vol. 27, 2001. P. 4

transformation of the social relations, redistribution of the property, massive breaches of law and cynical attitude of the newly-emerged entrepreneurs and employers towards the employees, the above-mentioned problems of discrimination became sharper and more urgent.

3.2. Does unemployment have a female face?

The new Russian state made a choice in favor of economic liberalization. For women, this course meant the end of a former system of relations with the state that included constitutional provisions guaranteeing the protection of motherhood and childhood. On paper the situation remained the same yet the objective situation was changing: the new private sector which was more dynamic with high-paying jobs rejected women as disadvantageous labor force since the current system of law imposes on businesses all financial burdens related to providing benefits for motherhood and childhood.

Naturally businesses did not want to incur these costs. The women instantly became disadvantageous people on the labor market - a very expensive and less reliable worker. Therefore, in the new market economy the labor market was divided into two sectors: one - a new "masculine" market, a prestigious and highly paid one, the other - traditional "female" one with superficially high-status social works but with very low wages. As noted by sociologists, highest proportion of women works in health and social services (83 %), in education (79 %), in catering (76 %), in art and culture (72 %) and in telecommunications (71 %).⁸²

⁸² Svetlana Aivazova "Russkiye Zhenshiny v Labirinte Ravnopraviya" ("Russian Women in the Labyrinth of Equal Rights"), accessed on http://www.owl.ru/win/books/rw/o2_2.htm

The gap in skills development between women and men began to sharply affect the women's competitiveness on the labor market. This gap is paradoxical as the Russian working women still have higher levels of education than men. Sociologists give the following data: 47 percent of working women and 34 percent of male workers has higher education or secondary special and technical education. Women predominate those with higher and secondary special education. And yet, despite the higher levels of education and training, women make up about two third of all industrial workers which have minimum grades.⁸³

During the initial period of economic reforms the decline in the economic activity of the Russian population was quite natural. First of all, the abolition of obligatory and guaranteed employment in the public production sector by giving people the opportunity to choose whether to join it or not have led to a situation where some workers lost their job while some voluntarily left this area of economic activity. Secondly, raising tensions in the labor market and growth of unemployment have led to an inevitable exclusion of the least competitive groups from the labor forces.⁸⁴

⁸³ Olga Torlopova, *op. cit.*, accessed on http://elib.kkf.hu/edip/D_8759.pdf

⁸⁴ Manfred Binefeld "Rossiyskiye Reformy i Polozheniye Zhenshin na Rynke Truda i v Obshestve" ("Russian Reforms and Women's Position on the Labor Market and in Society"). *Zhurnal Issledovaniy Sotsialnoy Politiki* (The Journal of Social Policy Studies), Vol 5 (3), P. 392

Table 2: Unemployment in Russia in 1992-1998

Indicators	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
All the unemployed							
Millions of people	3,6	4,2	5,5	6,4	7,3	8,1	8,9
Their percentage in economically active population	4,7	5,5	7,4	8,8	10,0	11,3	12,4
From all unemployed those, who are registered in the employment agencies							
Thousands of people	572	835	1637	2327	2506	1999	1926
There percentage	0,7	1,1	2,2	3,2	3,4	3,0	2,6

Source: L. Gordon "Sotsialniye Effekty i Struktura Bezrobotitsy v Rossii" ("Social Effects and Structure of Unemployment in Russia"). Zhurnal Issledovaniy Sotsialnoy Politiki (Journal of Social Studies), Vol. 1, 2000, P. 25

From the table above it can be seen that unemployment for all segments of population increased steadily during the six year period of 1992-1998. The important thing is that unemployment was not high only in the first years of reforms but it was a major problem for many people during the whole Yeltsin period.

Unemployment is normal as long as it is defined by "natural" causes and does not go beyond certain limits. In the case of women unemployment throughout 1990s, Russian society was far from women's complete employment as there was high unemployment among women that was not only determined by "natural" causes but by some other "macroeconomic" and "special" factors.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ "Zhenskaya Zanyatost – Tendentsii" ("Female employment - tendencies"), accessed on <http://feminisnts.wordpress.com/2010/01/24/%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%8F%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D1%8C-%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%B8/>

"Natural" causes include the "mobility" of workers and employers. It is known that workers choose the best option for applying their skills to work and move from one enterprise to another. Due to changes in the organization of production, labor and management, employers come up with new demands from workers. If workers do not meet the requirements of the employer, they hire new ones with the required level of education and skills. "Macroeconomic" causes of unemployment can be defined as the decline in production volumes, restructuring of the economy, privatization and improving the system of compensation and benefits as a result of which surplus workers are gotten rid of. In the Russian case, women were the first ones to get fired. Their situation was compounded by the fact that they were employed mainly in crisis and financial-deficient areas. The "special" causes of unemployment of women are also important here which are connected with the specifics of the female labor force: the low mobility (not ready for action in the forced loss of employment), low flexibility (the inability to carry out various kinds of work, specialization) and weak stability (long-term breaks and layoffs due to family circumstances). The combined effect of these reasons constantly reproduces the high unemployment among women.⁸⁶

Unemployment had become a scourge, a source of constant fear and tension for both young men and women of pre-retirement age in Russia. By mid 1992 the proportion of women among all registered unemployed all over the country was 78 percent. In late 1997 the situation improved slightly but still unemployed women registered in the employment agencies constituted the majority – 62, 9 percent of the

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

total number of unemployed. That means the trend remained the same.⁸⁷ Moreover, these numbers could be even understated because in the process of registration only the data of job centers were used and it was not a secret that the majority of unregistered unemployed were women. Female unemployment has a two level structure; there is an open unemployment (registered) and a hidden one. The first level includes women who lost their job, are officially registered in the employment agency and gets the unemployment benefits. The second level is the more numerous one and includes women who lost their work place yet not registered in the employment agencies. Women in this group either aim to find a job through their own means or they are formally employed but only have part-time jobs.⁸⁸

The analysis of the structural characteristics of female unemployment indicates some of the negative trends for women. In particular, the increase in the duration of unemployment among women and their high proportion of long-term unemployment is worth mentioning. The threat of long-term unemployment is relevant for women older than 30 years. The probability to be among the long-term unemployed is directly proportional to the age of women. In addition, the proportion of women who found a job in the period of registered unemployment as well as the rate of employment for women who newly entered the labor market decreased. In 1993 the level of female employment was 65 percent, while by 2000 it was slightly more than 50 percent. In 1993, the proportion of women from the category of long-term unemployed who have found work was 63 percent while by 2000 this figure

⁸⁷ Svetlana Aivazova, *op. cit.*, accessed on http://www.owl.ru/win/books/rw/o3_1.htm

⁸⁸ Irina Tartakovskaya “Genderniye Aspekty Strategii Bezrabotnyh” (“Gender Aspects of the Strategy of Unemployed”) *Zhurnal Issledovaniy Sotsialnoy Politiki* (Journal of Social Studies), Vol. 11, 2000, P. 74

was dropped to 55 percent. Also the proportion of single mothers among the registered unemployed increased.⁸⁹

Female unemployment in Russia differs very much from the situation in Europe. In Europe the policies of social protection of different groups of unemployed, retraining of released labor resources and social adaptation to the conditions of unemployment are worked out well and implemented efficiently. But immediately after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia did not have the opportunity to build up such effective social policies since it takes years to organize such efficient systems of social protection. Without such measures of social protection many Russians faced the unemployment problem from a much serious manner therefore psychological and social consequences were much more dramatic. In Russia the unemployment situation of the 1990s was accompanied by mass depression and frustration as well as loss of confidence in the future and increase rate of suicides.⁹⁰

In the Soviet Union women were actively involved in the national economy. But after the collapse of the Soviet Union, millions of educated and professionally prepared female specialists were fired and lost their social and professional status. A very particular feature of female unemployment in Russia is that the ratio of highly educated ones is very high. In no other country this many women having diplomas of higher education are unemployed. In the early 1990s more than a half of the unemployed women had higher and secondary professional education (59, 9 %). In

⁸⁹ Manfred Binefeld, *op. cit.*, p. 394

⁹⁰ Leonid Gordon "Sotsialniye Effekty i Struktura Bezrabotitsy v Rossii" ("Social Effects and Structure of Unemployment in Russia"). *Zhurnal Issledovaniy Sotsialnoy Politiki* (Journal of Social Studies), Vol. 1, 2000, P. 24

1997 the situation got worse as 67 percent of unemployed women had the diplomas of higher education while 75 percent had secondary professional education and only 48 percent did not complete their education.⁹¹

Table 3: Distribution of unemployed according to the level of education (in %)

	Unempl oyed	Have education						
		Higher professio nal	Not complete d higher professio nal	Secondar y professio nal	Primary professio nal	General secondary	Basic general	Do not have basic general education
Total								
1995	100	9,2	2,3	28,7	...	41,8	16,7	1,3
2000	100	11,0	4,2	22,7	13,5	32,8	13,7	2,1
2001	100	11,1	3,2	25,2	13,1	33,5	12,8	1,1
2002	100	10,4	2,8	24,4	12,4	34,9	13,9	1,2
2003	100	11,2	2,7	20,7	16,2	33,7	14,1	1,4
2004	100	11,0	2,7	20,5	18,3	33,1	13,5	1,1
2005	100	10,1	2,9	18,8	18,3	32,4	16,4	1,1
2006	100	10,7	2,1	17,3	17,6	37,0	13,5	1,8
2007	100	11,5	2,5	18,8	18,6	34,9	12,6	1,1
2008	100	12,3	3,3	19,3	20,6	32,2	11,0	1,4
Men								
1995	100	8,0	2,6	23,4	...	44,4	20,0	1,6
2000	100	9,1	3,9	19,5	14,6	33,4	16,7	2,9
2001	100	10,2	2,3	21,5	15,2	34,6	14,9	1,5

⁹¹ Vasilii Usachev "Genderniye i Vozrastniye Osobennosti Zanyatosti Rossiyskogo Naseleniya" ("Gender and Age Peculiarities of Employment of Russian Population"). Journal "Narodonaseleniye" ("Human Population"), Vol. 1, 2008. P. 116

Table 3 (continued)

2002	100	10,5	2,1	20,8	13,6	35,0	16,7	1,4
2003	100	10,8	2,2	15,3	18,3	35,7	16,2	1,6
2004	100	10,0	2,5	15,3	22,3	32,4	16,2	1,4
2005	100	8,8	3,0	13,5	20,9	33,1	19,5	1,2
2006	100	8,7	1,9	13,0	20,0	39,8	14,8	1,9
2007	100	9,3	1,5	15,7	21,8	35,4	14,7	1,6
2008	100	9,5	3,0	15,6	23,9	33,5	13,0	1,6
Wom en								
1995	100	10,6	2,0	34,9	...	38,8	12,8	1,0
2000	100	13,3	4,5	26,3	12,3	32,1	10,4	1,1
2001	100	12,2	4,3	29,4	10,7	32,3	10,5	0,6
2002	100	10,4	3,6	28,4	11,0	34,9	10,7	1,0
2003	100	11,7	3,3	26,8	13,8	31,5	11,8	1,1
2004	100	11,9	2,9	25,8	14,3	33,8	10,7	0,7
2005	100	11,5	2,9	25,0	15,2	31,5	12,8	1,0
2006	100	13,0	2,3	22,1	14,9	33,8	12,1	1,8
2007	100	14,0	3,6	22,4	14,9	34,4	10,1	0,5
2008	100	15,7	3,8	23,7	16,6	30,6	8,5	1,1

Source: Russkiy Statisticheskiy Ezhegodnik (Russian Statistical Annual), 2009. P. 145

The above table shows that among the unemployed population there are more women than men who have diplomas of higher and secondary education, which is the true proof of the highly educated character of the female unemployment. It can be also seen that through the years the situation went even worse. Such circumstances

forced women to change their professional status to the lowest one and to move to another low-paid job. It was not surprising if women – e.g. an associate professor working as a postman, a woman engineer with 20 years of work experience, selling fruits on the market or if a professional female singer singing in metro stations to earn her living. Such situation was also provoked by the status change of many professions. With the emergence of a new market economy such professions as education, engineering, medicine became less prestigious; whereas the new professions of managers, psychologists, economists and bankers emerged.⁹²

In order to understand the situation of unemployment in the country as a whole, some distinctive features of female unemployment that distinguish it from the male unemployment should be pointed out. First of all, it is the fact that unemployed men can find a new job much more quickly and easily, while most part of the unemployed women stays unemployed for years. Secondly, in comparison with European countries, Russian government does not take any measures in order to solve the problems of female unemployment and provide the conditions of equal rights for men and women in the labor market. Moreover, such problems are suppressed by government which is not only passive but also involved in the process of gender discrimination itself.

During the period of Yeltsin's reforms the facts of overt gender discrimination were always related mainly to the questions of recruitment and discharge. Although in the public consciousness the idea of equality of men and women took roots a long time ago, this did not mean that there were no problems in

⁹² Yelena Karpova "Women and Higher Education In Russia: Preparation for Careers in the Apparel Industry". *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, Vol 27, 2009. P. 127

this sphere. One of the extremely important and urgent problems is to overcome traditional stereotype as women labor being less "profitable" and more costly for employer. Such a stereotype, in addition to the deep socio-cultural roots, is a consequence of the existing legal privileges and guarantees provided to working women. This naturally decreases the attractiveness of women as workers and leads to the preference over the use of male labor force. This stereotype is also supported by the fact that the main burden of maintaining household and child-rearing lies on a woman.

Another stereotype existing among Russian women themselves is their own low self-esteem and lower activity in the labor market despite their higher educational and professional backgrounds. The typical scenario for the women in Russia is to graduate from the university, to marry and to give birth to a child. Societal pressures dictate that it is not a high priority for women to work so that is why the majority of women feel themselves lagging behind in comparison with male workers and businessmen. Such stereotypes significantly impede the careers of these women and make it difficult and often impossible for them to use the benefits and guarantees provided by the law

Thirdly, the life style of housewives is highly propagated through the press, female magazines etc. Usually such life styles were encouraged by male politicians while government also supported this solution (may be not very openly but still), as it was the easiest way to solve the problems of female unemployment. But women who became housewives saw their position as forced and were not content of it at all, their economic behavior did not differ too much from those ones who persistently were trying to find any job. Also in the 191990s of Russia an ordinary family could

hardly survive without woman's earnings and therefore women did not want to become housewives. Both man and woman had to work in order to make the ends meet.⁹³

All the above mentioned factors contributed to the high rates of female unemployment. This coupled with the lack of state control over this situation led the forming of certain mechanisms of self-regulation. Thus, many families became involved in informal and shadow economy. Especially women who were kicked out to the street, as a result of severe competition went to open markets, stands, subways and became streetwalkers.

Informal employment is usually defined as economic activities which are not registered officially yet realized individually or on the small enterprises that do not pay taxes or pay them partially.⁹⁴ The most important characteristics of the informal employment are as such: orientation to surviving but not capital accumulation; aiming to create work places and not to maximize the average profit; flexibility and plenty of ways to earn money and payment by "black cash" (without paying taxes to the government).⁹⁵

According to sociological polls, people who are registered by the state as economically inactive often have jobs in the informal economic sphere and make

⁹³ Zhanna Kravchenko "Zhenshiny i Muzhshiny Doma i Na Rabote: Gendernoye Razdeleniye Truda v Rossii i Shvetsii" ("Women and Men at Home and at Work: Gender Division of Labor in Russia and Sweden"). Zhurnal Issledovaniy Sotsialnoy Politiki (The Journal of Social Policy Studies), Vol. 6 (2), P. 181

⁹⁴ Oksana Sinyavskaya "Neformalnaya Zanyatost v Sovremennoy Rossii: Izmereniye, Masshtaby, Dinamika" ("Informal Employment in Modern Russia: Measurement, Scales, Dynamics"). Nezavisimiy Institut Sotsialnoy Politiki (Independent Institute of Social Policy), 2005. P. 6

⁹⁵ Yevgeniy Kubishin "Neformalnaya Zanyatost Rossiyskogo Naseleniya" ("Informal employment of Russian Population"). Journal "EKO", Vol.2 , 2003, P. 16

good money. Measuring the informal employment is very difficult, but according to the estimates of a researcher between 2000 and 2002, the number of informally active population was 25-30 million people.⁹⁶ In 2009 more than 17 % of all employed population was engaged into informal sector of economy.⁹⁷ On average in Russia the distribution of employed in the informal sector according to the types of economic activity was the following: trade – 34, 3 %, agriculture – 24, 9 %, construction – 10, 1 %, transport and communications – 9, 2 %, manufacturing activity – 8, 9 %, public, social and personal services – 4, 6 %, real estate activity – 3, 2 %, hotels and restaurants – 2, 3 %.⁹⁸

Some research showed that the informal employment sector is very asymmetric and has two different poles: those who have very big and often criminal profits; and those who are illegal migrants and poor. Between these two poles there lies the main part of those employed in the informal sectors of economy. The most typical forms of the informal activity that such people are employed in are street and market trade, services in construction, cleaning flats and offices, taxi-driving, private lessons, cooking and looking after children or sick people. Men usually have higher paid jobs such as taxi-driving and construction services, while female services are in

⁹⁶ Yelena Varshavskaya “Chto Tam v Teni?” (“What is there in the Shadow?”) Journal “Chelovek i Trud” (“Human and labor”), accessed on http://www.chelt.ru/2001/11/varshavskaja_11.html

⁹⁷ Natalia Ustinova “Informal Economy in National Accounts of Russia”, accessed on www.iariw.org/papers/2009/2b%20Ustinova.pdf

⁹⁸ Yuriy Korchagin “Uhodim v Ten. Chislo Zanyatih v Neformalnom Sektore Ekonomiki Rastet” (“We are Going to Shadow. The Number of Employed in the Informal Sector of Economy Grows”)/ *Rossiyskaya Bizness-Gazeta (Russian Business-Paper)*, № 760 (27) from 27.07.2010

the category of low-paid jobs where payments are unstable and depend on level of worker's qualification and demand for particular type of services.⁹⁹

For understanding the problems of female unemployment great attention should be paid to those women who are involved in the informal economy. These women started to work informally not because of having a criminal nature or character but because they were forced to do that by economic conditions of that time. The most important aspect of this problem is not an economic one but a private one and the price that women had to pay for the criminalization of Russian economy – loss of health and sometimes even family, depreciation of education and professional skills, degradation, humiliation and sexual harassment. Some women working on the market by selling fruits, vegetables and other things, often fall down to slavery and become totally dependent on their master's will. The slavery here does not mean that word that everybody understands in general sense. In these conditions the slavery means that women have to work for even very little money with no guarantees that they can get this money every week or month stably, the masters manipulate those women and make them do everything they want. Such women have no social protection, rights or opportunities to defend their interests through legal means as they work illegally. The situation of these women is a dead-end one because they cannot leave their jobs since they depend on these jobs for their own survival and for their families, but on the other hand they are degraded to a state in which they are totally deprived of their basic rights as human beings.

⁹⁹ Yelena Sindiyashkina "Neformalnaya Zanyatost v Rossii" ("Informal Employment in Russia"), accessed on <http://www.irex.ru/press/pub/polemika/01/sin/>

All of the above-mentioned problems require governmental involvement and government's creating special instruments for female employment. These instruments should be oriented towards particular groups of women while providing the harmonization of the interests of female workers, employers and state (society); and giving women the right of freely choosing the type of employment that is the most appropriate for her. The biggest task is to reach the level of productive employment that would bring the worker certain profit which would provide him adequate conditions of life. The worker's labor should be economically reasonable for employers while ensuring maximum productive for the society. The worker should be the boss of his/her own labor force and voluntarily decide the question of employment or unemployment in the public production sector.

3.3. Strategies for survival: women and business

Women's social inequality with men forms the basis of social discrimination against them. An American sociologist Neil Smelzer defines this inequality as "the conditions under which people have unequal access to social goods such as money, power, and prestige."¹⁰⁰ In Russia, the difficulties of the transition period increased the already existing discriminatory tendencies. Today women are the most vulnerable and least competitive actors in the labor market. This situation has developed in Russia as a result of paternalistic policies implemented for many years which were based on all sorts of benefits, prohibitions and specific regulation. The special legislatively fixed status of women as a mother who is responsible for the birth, care

¹⁰⁰ Neil Smelzer "Sotsiologiya. Glava 9. Neravenstvo, Stratifikatsiya i Klass" ("Sociology. Chapter 9. Inequality, Stratification and Class"), accessed on http://krotov.info/lib_sec/18_s/sme/lzer_5.htm

and upbringing of children as well as other family services all contributed to this trend. Economically all these tasks of women have never been appreciated by the state contrary to the case in developed countries. The state and the major part of employers see women with children as a secondary labor force and demand them to engage in less status and low-paid work. Feminization of poverty became a normal phenomenon. The Russian labor legislation has provisions responsible for creating the conditions for discrimination against women such as ban on night shifts, on certain types of work or the limitation of working hours, etc.¹⁰¹ According to the official figures, about one third of heads of different enterprises admit that they prefer hiring men rather than women.¹⁰²

Exclusion of women from the labor market occurs not only through their more intense dismissal, but also through limiting their access to jobs. Among the unemployed college graduates, 21 percent is women, which is twice greater than men's unemployment rates.¹⁰³

Changes that occurred during the reform years fundamentally changed the balance of employment in the public and private sector of economy. The general and compulsory employment of the communist period was replaced with a transition model including the features of a both planned economy and features of an emerging

¹⁰¹ Trudovoy Kodeks Rossiyskoy Federatsii ot 30/12/2001 # 197-F3. Razdel 4. Rabochee Vremya. Glava 15. Obshnye Polozheniye. Statya 96 "Rabota v Nochnoye Vremya" (Labor Code of Russian Federation at 30/12/2001 # 197-F3. Part 4. Working hours. Chapter 15. General statements. Clause 96 "Work at night time"), accessed on http://www.consultant.ru/popular/tkrf/14_20.html#p1559

¹⁰² Ruslan Vagizov "Probemy Gendernogo Ravenstva v Sovremennom Rossiyskom Obshestve" ("Problems of Gender Equality in Modern Russian Society"), accessed on <http://www.femin.ru/ig/ig010.php>

¹⁰³ Yevgeniy Bruk "Poterya Raboty: Muzhshiny i Zhenshiny" ("Loss of Job: Men and Women"), accessed on <http://wsclan.narod.ru/manager/4/5t.html>

market economy. The new forms of economic activity such as self-employment and entrepreneurship developed. The share of employment in the private sector has increased from 18.3 percent to 38.2 percent over the period of 1992-1996.¹⁰⁴ Due to the above-mentioned reasons there emerged a large army of unemployed the majority of whom were women. The solution for this problem could be the help of the state in developing small businesses and self-employment for women. If women face so many obstacles for being employed, then they should find some ways to create work places for themselves which means self-employment.

Women's entrepreneurship in Russia has its own distinctive features. A well-known Russian sociologist Svetlana Demyanova argues that entrepreneurs can be divided into three groups on the basis of the origin of property and investment. The first group consists of people from the nomenklatura who use their official position for the assignment of government property. This group has the closest relationship with the state apparatus. Women are absent in this group. The second group consists of the followers of the shadow economy fused with the structures of organized crime and control of the officials of the state apparatus. The people in this group illegally redistribute the state property through the "hidden" channels of exchange of material resources. There are some women in this group but usually to cover up someone's name. Finally, the third group consists of engineers and technical intelligentsia or "commons", who began to engage in business in 1990-1991. The source of the property was the small businesses transformed by the state into the partnerships as well as loans. Women are well represented in this group and engage in entrepreneurial activities, notably in the production sector: the provision of services,

¹⁰⁴ Manfred Binefeld, *op. cit.*, p. 405

training, production and sale of various goods, journal-publishing industry and agriculture. Initial capital investment is either a loan or personal funds.¹⁰⁵

The influx of women into the business sector began in late 1991. According to the data of State Statistics Committee in the period of 1996-1998 women-managers consisted 18 percent of the total number of the entrepreneurs in 14 regions and 4400 small enterprises. It is possible to observe some progress in this sphere: by the year 2000 women consisted 40 percent of the number of self-employed people. For comparison, at the beginning of 1990s the number of female managers was only 6-7 percent. Women started to penetrate to the new segments of market economy – from the management of state enterprises to the management of private firms.¹⁰⁶ Women managers usually are in their most active age: 73 percent of women are 30-50 years old while 13, 7 percent are older than 50 years and 12 percent are younger than 30 years. The major part of women-managers are employed in such sectors as non-productive types of domestic services (60 %), light industry (45 %), catering (43 %), retail trade (40 %), education, medicine, culture, science (46 %).¹⁰⁷

According to sociological studies, women-entrepreneurs can be divided into three types. The first type is dedicated to business woman. The motivation for their choice is the inner desire to become an entrepreneur and interest in this type of activity. The second most numerous type of women entrepreneurs are those who

¹⁰⁵ Svetlana Demyanova “Predprinimatelstvo Kak Odná iz Form Preodoleniya Sotsialno-Ekonomicheskoy Diskriminatsii Zhenshin na Rynke Truda Rossii” (“Entrepreneurship as One of the Forms of Fighting the Socio-Economic Discrimination of Women in the Russian Labor Market”), accessed on <http://www.prof.msu.ru/publ/conf/conf27.htm>

¹⁰⁶ Olga Torlopova, *op. cit.*, accessed on http://elib.kkf.hu/edip/D_8759.pdf

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

became an entrepreneur “on occasion”, in other words, who appeared at the right time in the right place. Their decision was made spontaneously under the influence of accidental circumstances, due to the unexpected positive perspectives, following the advice of friends or for example, on the basis of newspaper information, etc. Finally, the third type is the unwilling entrepreneurs, women who were forced to open their own businesses due to various negative circumstances. This one is the smallest group. The motivation for their choice was the unemployment, or threat of unemployment and the lack of means of living as a result of divorce.

Psychological research revealed that success in business, according to the women entrepreneurs, primarily is determined by socio-psychological characteristics such as contact, sociability, persistence in achieving goals, intelligence, receptivity to innovation and diplomacy. Much weaker is the effect of status characteristics - among them are the vocational education coupled with years of previous work, absence of family affairs, the right age and good relations in the business world. In the third place was the impact of the factors associated with economic and political situation in the country: a favorable market situation and the support of public authorities.¹⁰⁸

Female approaches to management differ very much from the male ones, as women possess a totally different character and style of managing. In contrast to the male executives who are trying to build any structure in the form of a vertical power pyramid, women prefer more subtle management tools built on attention to the individual. In other words, in terms of sociology women administer with the aid of

¹⁰⁸ Alla Chirikova “Zhenshiny i Muzhshiny kak Top-Menedzhery Rossiyskih Kompaniy: Ponyat Znachit Prinyat” (“Woman and Man as Top-Managers of Russian Companies: Understand Means Accept”), accessed on <http://www.isras.ru/files/File/Socis/2003-01/Chirikova.pdf>

tools of influence based on horizontal relationships (belief and motivation), while men do this on the basis of the instruments of power (coercion and hierarchy).¹⁰⁹

Despite these positive trends which were marked not only in capital cities but also in the provinces, women's leadership in the enterprises of real sector of the economy did not become a mass phenomenon. On the one hand this was connected with the difficulties of managing enterprises in contemporary period, and on the other hand it was conditioned by the cultural inertia which constrained the displacement of patriarchal stereotypes. The slow process of the development of female entrepreneurship is constrained not only by the cultural inertia, but is often explained with the pressure of the authorities who continue to believe that their strategy of relationship with the economic actors in the region can only be built on the positions of strength.¹¹⁰

The problem of the development of women's entrepreneurship in Russia has many dimensions. The well-known Russian sociologist Alla Chirikova suggests that the major problems can be classified under six categories. The first group of problems that should be marked is the incompleteness and uncertainty of the existing system of relations between business and government in the regions. The behavior of the authorities in which the elements of paternalism are combined with an aggressive policy in respect of subjects that demonstrate "economic independence" is unpredictable and "selective" with lack of rational substantiations. At the same time

¹⁰⁹ Natalia Tesakova "Zhenshina-Rukovoditel. Mify i Realnost" ("Woman-manager. Myths and Reality"), accessed on <http://www.crn.ru/numbers/reg-numbers/detail.php?ID=12502>

¹¹⁰ Alla Chirikova "Zhenshina – Top – Menedzher v Rossii: V Ozhidanii Kraha "Steklyannogo Pitolka" ("Woman – Top Manager in Russia: Waiting for the Crash of the Glass Ceiling"), accessed on <http://www.gender-cent.ryazan.ru/chirikova.htm>

the pressure of authorities increases in the small towns especially, where women-managers feel all the tyranny of power and are extremely dependent on the personal aims of the first party of power. As a result women-managers try to distance themselves from the power authorities to feel freer in their actions.¹¹¹

The second group of problems is the problems of weak integration of entrepreneurship in general with women's entrepreneurship in particular. Reforms of the power structure, proposed by the Kremlin, led to an even greater isolation of the individual economic actors in the regions which contributed to rise of uncertainty, in conditions of which the regional business prefers "to survive alone".¹¹²

The third group of problems is the problems of criminalization and providing the security of regional entrepreneurship which is particularly important in the context of the development of women's entrepreneurship. Despite the fact that women entrepreneurs in the regions were able to develop adequate strategies for the security of their own business, it can be argued that the security issue of female entrepreneurship is still not solved completely, but growing rapidly.¹¹³

The fourth group of problems can be identified as the problem of professional competence of women entrepreneurs and the fifth group of problems is connected with the peculiarities of political consciousness and political behavior of women entrepreneurs in the regions. Attention is drawn to the phenomenon of polarization of

¹¹¹ Alla Chirikova "Zhenskoye Predprinimatelstvo v Rossii: Kontseptualniye Podhody i Napravleniya Issledovaniy" ("Female Entrepreneurship in Russia: Conceptual Approaches and Directions in Researches")/ "Gender i Ekonomika: Mirovoy Opyt i Ekspertiza Rossiyskoy Praktiki" ("Gender and Economics: World Experience and Examination of Russian Practice"), 2002, P. 251

¹¹² *Ibid.*, P. 252

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

political attitudes of women entrepreneurs; at the same time there is increasing awareness of the need to protect business by political means. For example, about 20 percent of women entrepreneurs identify themselves to the category of "forced politicians" because if they do not participate to the political life of their region they may not have an opportunity to create and maintain a strong business and to protect it with the support of other politicians.¹¹⁴ The sixth group of problems covers matters arising from the imperfection of the existing infrastructure for support of small and middle business in Russian regions.¹¹⁵

The following conclusion can be made about the status of female entrepreneurship in Russia: women's economic elite in Russia is poorly integrated, has little political influence and does not seek to unite. The process of involvement of women in entrepreneurial activity is complicated by a number of circumstances of economic and socio-cultural character. For the development of women's business, for overcoming social discrimination and for improving the economic status of women it is necessary to develop a number of measures. Among them are the creation of a special section of federal programs to support small business and employment with the participation of women in them; to establish an organization of training for women to teach the basics of entrepreneurship; transfer of technology, organization and support for new jobs and help in starting their own business; credits for large families and refugees; and to increase the interest of commercial banks in financing small business.¹¹⁶ The emerging process of the internationalization of business in

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 253

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 254

¹¹⁶ Svetlana Demyanova, *op. cit.*, accessed on <http://www.prof.msu.ru/publ/conf/conf27.htm>

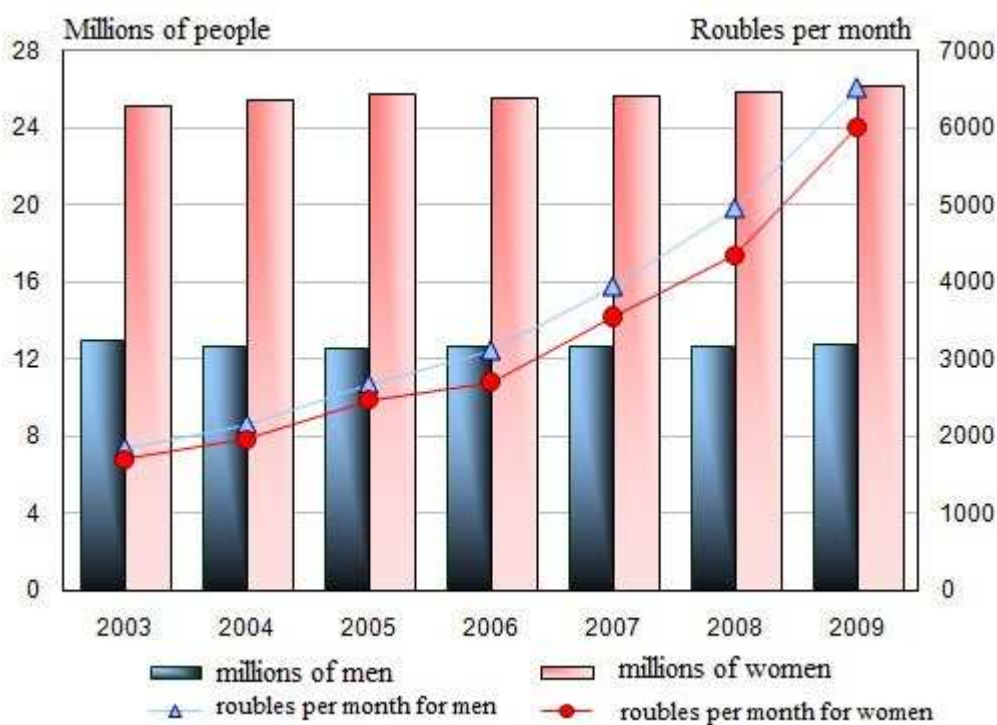
Russia can create a big demand for the potential of female entrepreneurship as the most effective in the sphere of an intuitive mastery of the business culture of other countries.

3.4. The problems of the pension system and its effects on the Russian women

When Putin came to power in 2000 he received the country in a state of mess, although he was a direct associate of Yeltsin. Putin started to work out and implement a range of reforms in different aspects of social and governmental life. As for the position of women, however, one can say that there was not much change during Putin's era. There were still plenty of problems such as widespread corruption, paternalistic features of power and so on. Such problems acted as obstacles on the way of fighting against gender discrimination and inequality of men and women. While it is true that it became relatively easier for women to survive, there is still much to improve in the sphere of female rights and freedoms.

Although the rate of female unemployment continued to be high during this period, the position of young women was much better as they still had some chance to find a job. But older women who were on retirement age and getting pension from the state were in a very difficult situation. In our times the problem of feminization of poverty among older women is a general phenomenon for all over the world but it has some peculiar characteristics in Russia. The existing pension system is oriented to the male worker who has a full-time work. But a woman does not only work but she also has reproductive functions; thereby she cannot have the same length of

service as a man (because of the maternity leave etc.). Usually female pension equals to only 60-90 percent of male pension, essentially because of the difference in wage rates and length of services.



Source: Yekaterina Sherbakova “Russian Demographic Barometer” Demoscope Weekly, Vol. 443-444, 2010, accessed on <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2010/0443/barom04.php>

Figure 2: The number of men and women getting pensions (millions of people), and the pension rate (rubles per month) for 2003-2009

On the above figure the left scale shows number of people while the right scale shows rubles per month. Below the figure, the years are indicated; the blue lines marking men and male pension rates (in rubles per month), the pink lines marking women and their pension rates. Through analyzing this figure it can be understood that the pension rates of men and women increased in the period between

2003 and 2009, but female pensions always stayed lower than the male ones. Through the years this difference became more evident and greater.

In modern Russia gender inequalities in pension provision are influenced by the national pension laws regulating different standards for men and women, which does not reflect actual differences in their life expectancy, as well as spheres of their employment, where the inequality between men and women is determined by features of the legislation, cultural traditions and gender roles in society.

The main gender inequality institutionalized by the Russian pension law is due to the difference between the age of retirement of men and women (respectively 60 and 55 years old). The formula for calculating the size of pension for men and women is the same, but it does not take into account the differences in their retirement age and life expectancy.¹¹⁷

In the field of employment the existing gender inequalities are associated with labor legislation (e.g. restrictions of women's employment in hazardous working conditions), discriminatory practices and stereotypes common in society. Because of the last factor, in Russia working career of women is often interrupted by unpaid / non-insurance periods (leave for caring for minor child, temporary incapacity to care for the sick, etc.). In addition, because of gender differences in payments, women deduct significantly smaller contributions than men to the Pension Fund, and,

¹¹⁷ Mariya Baskakova “Sodeystviye v Dostizhenii Ravenstva Muzhshin i Zhenshin i Rasshireniye Prav i Vozmozhnostey Zhenshin” (“Assistance to Reaching the Equality of Men and Women and Enlargement of Rights and Opportunities for Women”)/ “Rossiya v 2015 godu: Tseli i Prioritety Razvitiya. Doklad o Razviti Chelovecheskogo Potentsiala” (“Russia in 2015: Goals and Priorities of Development. Report on the Development of Human Potential”), 2005. P. 85

therefore, up to retirement age the amount of their retirement savings is also smaller.¹¹⁸

Thus, in Russia there are all reasons underlining the gender inequality in pension provision. But due to historical peculiarities of formation of the national pension system, ratio of the average pension age for men and women is still close to one. This is due to the fact that most of the current retirees receive a pension that were earned more in the old pension system in which pension was little dependent on the wage and length of service of the employee.¹¹⁹

The new pension system is more sensitive to the inequality in employment and to the law as the rate of future pension is strongly related to the rate of earnings during the working life and the duration of insurance. The further we move away from the initiation of the pension reform, the greater will be the effect of these factors. Calculations conducted under the assumption of invariance of the main provisions of the current pension law, labor market trends and dynamics of life expectancy (base scenario), show that in 2015 the ratio of pensions for women and men will be 87, and in 2050 - only 50 percent .¹²⁰

Estimates indicate that even the optimistic plans of the Russian government for the equalization of life expectancy and of the level of wages between men and women cannot solve the problem of gender inequality in pension provision by 2015.

¹¹⁸ Nikita Krichevskiy “K Slovu o Pensionnyh Delah” (“About Pension Affairs”)/ *Agentstvo Politicheskikh Novostey (Agency of Political News)*, accessed on <http://www.apn.ru/publications/article17185.htm>

¹¹⁹ Mariya Baskakova “Gendernaya Assimetriya Pensionnoy Sistemy” (“Gender Asymmetry of Pension System”)/ *Actuaries magazine*, accessed on <http://actuaries.ru/magazine/detail.php?ID=2053>

¹²⁰ “Genderniye Razlichiya Razmerov Pensiy v Sovremennoy Rossiyskoy Pensionnoy Sisteme” (“Gender Differences in Pension Rates in Modern Russian Pension System”)/ *Pensionniy Konsultant (Pension Consultant)*, accessed on <http://www.pension-npf.ru/index.php?src=250>

This is a very short period to have an effect in such an inertial system as pension. However, in the longer term, they can lead to positive results. Thus, the reduction of gender differences in life expectancy could increase the ratio of pensions for men and women in 2050 for 6 percent, and the equalization of wages for 13 percent.¹²¹

Gender differences in pensions are also determined by the difference in retirement age for men and women (it has a direct effect on the duration of insurance, and consequently the rate of pension contributions made). Increasing the retirement age for women in the future may lead to an increase in the rate of their pensions. Calculations show, for example, that an increase in pension age for women up to 60 years in 2015 can give a reduction in gender differences in pensions by 30 percent. Thus by 2050, pensions of women could reach 80 percent of the pension benefits of men.¹²² Further minimization of gender differences in pensions can also be managed through the compensations of employees for their pension contribution losses that occur during periods of unpaid community service / non-insurance periods by the state. This needs to be done also through the achievement of egalitarian gender division of labor in public and private spheres.

In connection with the radical changes that took place in Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the problem of women's status in the economic sphere emerged and became an urgent problem. The society was neither ready to cope with such problems nor to develop some strategies for its solution. Economic reforms of the 1990s worsened the process of marginalization of women's status.

¹²¹ Mariya Baskakova, *op. cit.*, p. 87

¹²² Yekaterina Sherbakova "Rossiyskiy Demograficheskiy Barometr" ("Russian Demographic Barometer") Demoscope Weekly, Vol. 443-444, 2010, accessed on <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2010/0443/barom04.php>

Many principles of equality of rights are violated in every realm, especially in the sphere of labor where professional discrimination and segregation of women are widespread. Almost in all fields of economic activity women are far from making decisions and face more difficulties in career improvement than men. For women usually there are only horizontal spaces meaning that it is almost impossible for them to go up by vertical stairs to higher positions. However when it comes to the issue of staff reduction, the principle of “lady’s first” works very well.

In Russia a process of feminization of poverty is developing which leads to the emergence of new risk groups: unemployed women; women who are in maternity leave; women working part-time and women who are engaged into informal sector of economy. As a result of professional segregation of women, the female work became second-rated and low-paid. This is where the huge difference in male and female wages comes from. Many stereotypes, which are widespread in the society, also work against women. For example, sometimes women are forced to become housewives, while they do not have any desire to do that or women are often seen as weak and less effective workers; as because of female reproductive functions many women cannot find jobs as the employers are afraid of losing money and time when women give birth to children and leave the workplace. Many women are doomed to lonely poverty in the elderly age, as together with the longer duration of life than men, women have only somewhere 70 percent of men’s pension rate.

The attempts of women to become self-employed and develop their businesses ended up with the presence of “glass ceiling” which limits the female careers. To conclude, the position of women in the Russian economy is unstable and needs to be improved. There are many ways to do that but first of all the government

should understand that Russia has a predominantly female population (46 % of men and 54 % of women).¹²³ Without solving women's problems it is impossible to solve general problems of the country, including economic, political and social ones.

¹²³ Russkiy Statisticheskiy Ezhegodnik (Russian Statistical Annual), 2010. P. 82

CHAPTER 4

WOMEN IN POLITICS

This chapter seeks to describe and analyze the position of women in Russian politics. Russia is a country with a predominantly female population, which does not have an appropriate political representation in the administration of the country. Such an order of things creates definite misbalance of the gender proportions in authorities. As a result the female questions cannot be solved and continue to be in stagnation. Many active Russian women politicians understand that the situation needs to be radically changed and try to fight for their place in politics. The participation of Russian women in the elections system and political institutions, the creation of women's political parties and movements will be discussed in this chapter.

4.1. Russian women in the new multiparty election system

In many countries of the world, women increasingly have taken part in professional politics and administration. This way they are also able to accomplish a radical progress in the solution of a variety of female problems in the fields of economics, social institutions, social psychology and gender equality.

One of the major benefits of women's participation in the power structures is that women's own involvement ensures some real changes in the women's status and

enables changes in the state policy on the questions of the family and women as well as working out and functioning of the mechanisms of social administration.¹²⁴

In this part I will analyze the changes in the Russian women's status with regard to their involvement in the politics. The changes of last two decades are very important, at least in the sense of female emancipation, the situation radically differs from what it was in the Soviet Russia. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, women in Russia became an active actor of mass social campaigns whilst created a wide range of movements and organizations for defending their rights and interests. A group of famous and powerful women politicians emerged around this time. But still women were not able to hold positions in the major positions of politics or state administration. Because while there is certain progress in the field, there are also plenty of difficulties and obstacles for women seeking to take an active part in politics.

After the events of autumn 1993, when president Yeltsin bombed the parliament with tanks and unleashed a minor civil war, as a result of which he subordinated the White House to his will, Russia entered into a new post-Soviet period of its development. During this time the reform of the elective system in Russia was implemented. The new Russian Constitution of 1993 established the new bicameral parliament, which was called the Federal Assembly consisting of the State

¹²⁴ Valeriy Tishkov "Zhenshina v Rossiyskoy Politike i Strukturah Vlasti" ("A Woman in Russian Politics and Power Structures"). "Zhenshina I Svoboda: Puti Vybora v Mire Traditsiy I Peremen. Materialy Mezhdunarodnoy Konferentsii" ("Woman and Freedom: the Ways of Choice in the World of Traditions and Changes. The Materials of the International Conference"), Moscow, 1994, P. 8

Duma and the Federal Council.¹²⁵ The State Duma included 450 deputies.¹²⁶ The provision on the election of the deputies of the State Duma of 1 October, 1993 provided the political parties with the most positive conditions for their participation in elections.¹²⁷

The new Russian Constitution of 1993 created relatively good conditions for the development of the elective system providing a mechanism for the constitutional elections of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly and that of the President. Taking into account all the advantages of the provisions of the Constitution, the changes could be considered insufficient for the construction of a clear and efficient working elective system. Indeed the new Constitution even lacked a separate chapter titled only the “Elective System” as opposed to the old Constitution. The new one includes rather a small number of provisions concerning the regulation of elections. Clause 3 states that the direct form of the people’s power is realized through referendum and free elections;¹²⁸ clause 19 assumes that a man and a woman have equal rights and freedoms as well as equal opportunities for their realization;¹²⁹ clause 32 secures the right of the citizens of Russian Federation to elect and to be

¹²⁵ Konstitutsiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Glava 5 “Federalnoye Sobraniye”, Statya 95 (Constitution of Russian Federation, Chapter 5 “Federal Assembly”, Article 95), accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/10003000/10003000-7.htm>

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Polozheniye O Vyborah Deputatov Gosudarstvennoy Dumy 1993 (The Provision on the Elections of the Deputies of the State Duma of 1993), accessed on <http://constitution.garant.ru/history/active/172701/chapter/1/>

¹²⁸ Konstitutsiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Glava 1 “Osnovy Konstitutsionalnogo Stroya”, Statya 3 (Constitution of Russian Federation, Chapter 1 “The Bases of the Constitutional System”, Article 3), accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/10003000/10003000-3.htm>

¹²⁹ Konstitutsiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Glava 2 “Prava I Svobody Cheloveka I Grazhdanina”, Statya 19 (Constitution of Russian Federation, Chapter 2 “Rights and Freedoms of Man and Citizen”, Article 19), accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/10003000/10003000-4.htm>

elected for the institutions of state power and local government;¹³⁰ clause 81 defines the principles of the election right (concerning the elections of the President of the Russian Federation): the President is elected for four years by the citizens of Russia on the basis of a general, equal and direct election along with the secret ballot.¹³¹

So it is obvious that there is the brevity and the insufficiency of the constitutional regulation on the principles of the elective rights and questions, concerning the implementation of the elections. Such insufficiency creates specific difficulties for the construction of a new system for Russian elective legislation. Also, the combination of majoritarian and proportional systems of elections for the State Duma became the reason for long-lasting disputes and unstable situations before each election.¹³²

One more insufficient aspect of the system is that the gender aspect is considered neither in the elective legislation nor in the regulations of the political parties. The attempts to raise this question appear only in the regulations of the female political associations. Thus an all-Russian socio - political association “Movement of Women for the National Health” advances the following goal in their official regulations:

¹³⁰ Constitution of Russian Federation, *op. cit.*, Chapter 2, Article 32, accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/10003000/10003000-4.htm>

¹³¹ Konstitutsiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Glava 4 “President Rossiyskoy Federatsii”, Statya 81 (Constitution of Russian Federation, Chapter 4 “President of Russian Federation”, Article 81), accessed on <http://www.constitution.ru/10003000/10003000-6.htm>

¹³² Valentina Lapayeva “Razvitiye Mnogopartiynosti v Rossii v 1992-2000-ye gody” (“The Development of the Pluralism in Russia in 1990-2000-s”). Analiticheskiy Zhurnal “Politicheskoye Obrazovaniye” (Analytical Journal “Political Education”), accessed on <http://www.lawinrussia.ru/statii-publikatsii/2010-05-17/razvitiye-mnogopartiynosti-v-rossii-v-1990-2000-e-godi.html>

consolidation and coordination of the activity of the female public associations, aiming to improve the status of women and to realize the equality of constitutional rights and freedoms between men and women.¹³³

Another all-Russian socio – political movement “Female Joint Association” comes out for:

the creation of necessary conditions for the equitable participation of women in the activity of the state authorities and local administration.¹³⁴

The political public organization “Russian Party for the Defense of Women” claimed its aspiration to be a more full and just representation for women in the institutions of the legislative and executive powers of all levels in all regions of the Russian Federation.¹³⁵

In the above-mentioned regulations the general desire for a more just representation of women in the power structures of the country is expressed. It is also underlined that the idea of political equality of men and women is defended generally by women. This is also part of the reason that female political movements cannot provide a real progress. The international practice shows that the solution of this problem needs a complex approach that would be based on the representatives of both sexes equally sharing the responsibility of correcting the social inequalities.¹³⁶

¹³³ “Dvizheniye Zhenshin za Zdorovye Natsii” (“Movement of Women for the National Health”). Osnovniye Tseli (Main goals), accessed on <http://nhealth.ru/target/>

¹³⁴ “Zhenskiy Obyedinenny Soyuz” (“Female Joint Association”), accessed on <http://state.rin.ru/cgi-bin/main.pl?r=297>

¹³⁵ “Rossiyskaya Partiya Zashity Zhenshin” (“Russian Party for the Defense of Women”), accessed on <http://state.rin.ru/cgi-bin/main.pl?r=278>

¹³⁶ Lyudmila Zavadskaya, *op. cit.*, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/zavadskaya/3.htm>

In this context it can be suggested that the all-Russian public political movement “Women of Russia” has become the most influential and active actor in the field of struggling for rights of women through the 1990s. “Women of Russia” was established in 1993 by the “Association of Women of Russia”, “Association of Women-Entrepreneurs of Russia” and “Association of Women of Navy”. The movement was headed by three cofounders – Alevtina Fedulova, Tatyana Maljutina and Marina Dovrobolskaya who were respectively the chairs of the above-mentioned organizations. According to the election program of the movement its main goal is to stand for the rights and interests of the Russian citizens irrespective of their sex, nationality, social status, religious faith and political perspectives.¹³⁷

The basic objective of the movement is to ensure the participation of women in the political life of Russia, to increase their representation in the bodies of authority at all levels of decision-making process. The movement's basic directions of activity are as follows:

- maintaining the equal participation of men and women in the political life of Russia, establishing equality at all levels of decision-making;
- the realization of the constitutional clause on the equality of rights, freedoms and opportunities for women and men in all spheres of public life;
- the observance of the UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination concerning women; observance of other international legal acts directed on the improvement of position of women, family and children;
- encouraging the broader involvement of women into administrative offices concerning the society and state;
- the establishment of civil consent and peace in the Russian Federation and its steady development.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ “Zhenshiny Rossii” (“Women of Russia”), accessed on <http://state.rin.ru/cgi-bin/main.pl?r=287>

¹³⁸ “The all-Russian Political Movement of Women of Russia”, accessed on http://state.rin.ru/cgi-bin/main_e.pl?r=248&id=309

In the State Duma of 1993-1995 the movement “Women of Russia” was represented by a group of 24 persons. The head of the group Yekaterina Lahova became the advisor of Yeltsin on affairs of women, family and children.¹³⁹ Later, in April 1996 Lahova left the movement and created her own association “Women of Russia - 2”. At the same time she joined the Socialist Party of Russia but later with the founding of the party “United Russia,” she began to represent this party in Duma. It can be argued that Yekaterina Lahova was the most important person within the “Women of Russia” as she managed to hold high positions and actively participate in Duma more active than someone else belonging to this movement. After the State Duma of the first convocation of 1993-1995, neither “Women of Russia -1”, nor “Women of Russia - 2” managed to create their factions in the following State Dumas until now following their failure in the elections of 1995. In 1995 the movement received only 4, 61 percent of votes and could not pass the 5 percent barrier which was necessary for representation in Duma. Only three deputies who belonged to the movement were elected in the single-seat electoral districts to the State Duma – Lahova, Lozinskaya and Orlova.¹⁴⁰ The same situation was repeated in the elections of 1999, when “Women of Russia - 1” tried again to participate in the elections as an independent movement. There was an option to choose for them - to join the political bloc “Fatherland – All Russia”, but the male leaders of this bloc did

¹³⁹ Vladimir Belonuchkin “Fraktsiya Zhenshin Rossii” (“Faction of Women of Russia”), Spravochnik Online “Federalnoye Sobraniye: Sovet Federatsii i Gosudarstvennaya Duma” (Reference book online “Federal Assembly: Federal Council and State Duma”), accessed on <http://www.politika.su/fs/gd1fzh.html>

¹⁴⁰ “Sostav Gosudarstvennoy Dumy Vtorogo Sozyva” (Membership of the State Duma of the Second Convocation), the Official Site of State Duma, accessed on <http://www.duma.gov.ru/about/history/convocations/2/>

not keep their promise to include at least 30 percent of the female candidates in their lists. And again “Women of Russia -1” did not manage to pass the 5 percent barrier.

What can be the reasons of the failures of “Women of Russia”? According to the well-known gender analysts Yelena Kudryashova and Natalia Kukarenko the factors resulting in the failure of the movement are as follows:

Absence of a concrete program; unconvincing attempt of the representation of “all” women of Russia without taking into account age-related, regional, national peculiarities; absence of the necessary means for the election campaign (for comparison: “Unity” used 40.072.175 rubles, and the “Women of Russia” only 885 thousand rubles); insufficient work with mass-media; absence of strong regional departments etc.¹⁴¹

Another point of view concerning this question is presented by sociologist Yelena Kochkina. In her article “The power is in 0, 39 percent from women” she expresses extreme dissatisfaction with the results of the elections in the State Duma in 1995. She insists that the political commentators of 1990s tried to change the political movement of “Women of Russia” into an unnoticeable episode of Russian politics by discrediting it with the accusations of communist orientation and creating a particular image of the movement in press. Author also talks about the absence of the gender approach in the Russian political science while for all Western political scientists the gender analyses of the social relations is essential. That is why the question of female participation in the Russian politics makes not much sense for people, especially for the male politicians. Kochkina also argues that during the

¹⁴¹ Yelena Kudryashova, Natalia Kukarenko “Politicheskoye Uchastiye Zhenshin v Arkhangelskoy Oblasti” (“Political Participation of Women in Arkhangelsk Region”), accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/genderpolicy/arkhangelsk.htm>

elections of 1995 the leaders of political parties tried to demonopolize the female electorate as well as the sympathies of electors towards the women-politicians. The political parties started to attract women into their electoral associations and blocs. Yet these parties did not include women in the first lines of their electoral lists, but in some places having secondary importance creating just fictitious appearance of female participation. As a result of such moves the “Women of Russia” ceased to exist as the unique and the only one political movement which could represent the interests of women in Duma. The result was the decline of electoral votes in favor of “Women of Russia” and the failure of the movement.¹⁴²

Thus, the truth is that the elections to the State Duma of the women-deputies become less and less numerous. In the Duma of the first term the number of women-deputies was 13,6 percent of the total number of deputies, in the second Duma – 10 percent and in the third – 7,9 percent (which is equal to the level of Latin-American and Muslim countries). There is only one woman holding a major governing position in the Russian Federation, Valentina Matviyenko who is the governor of Saint-Petersburg.¹⁴³ These facts show that on the state level Russian women are being gradually removed from the process of making important political decisions, and that means that they cannot influence their life and life of their children. Together with the disappearance of the faction of “Women of Russia” in the State Duma, women lost their opportunity to form the basis of the transition policies concerning women.

¹⁴² Yelena Kochkina “Vlast v 0,39 Protsentah ot Zhenshin” (“Power is in 0,39 Percent From Women”), accessed on <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/attqt&df.htm>

¹⁴³ Yelena Kudryashova, Natalia Kukarenko, *op. cit.*, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/genderpolicy/arkhangelsk.htm>

The tendency for the decreasing representation of women in politics adds to the already existing gender inequality as well as making it worse.

The problems of gender equality in Russia, especially in the political sphere, are very difficult to solve because of the conservative elements of the social consciousness, lack of unity in the Russian female movement, and also strong opposition of male politicians against the female participation.

4.2. The representation of women in the political institutions

In the last decade the increase of civil political activity of women in Russia is observed. The types, methods, levels and forms of women's participation in politics and its intensity could show the specifics and peculiarities of the gender aspect of the political culture in Russia. The opportunities for the political participation of women depend also on their resources of participation – free time, money and other material resources, education, information, knowledge and skills, access to mass media, membership in political parties and participation in other social organizations and so on.¹⁴⁴ Political participation of women and its orientation mainly depend on women's interest in politics, their involvement into the political processes and their confidence in the political system.

Women actively joined the process of party construction in modern Russia. In total women make up about 20 percent of the whole membership of the political parties. However the representation of women in the ruling party system is not quite adequate in terms of their numerical composition – from 2 to 15 percent only. Only

¹⁴⁴ Lyudmila Zavadskaya, *op. cit.*, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/zavadskaya/3.htm>

16 percent out of 139 political social associations which have right to participate in elections are headed by women.¹⁴⁵

Despite their low representation in the ruling party system, the process of the establishment of mass female organizations is dynamically developing. Women actively work in the party and social organization of different orientations; they also take part in a variety of political actions, rallies, manifestations and strikes. Democratic reforms ensured the emergence of new female names in the politics and also activated the participation of the former women politicians. It is quite natural that women bring to the political activity their own vision of problems, psychology, and style of working which are noticeably different from that of the male ones. But the truth is that politics needs both male and female qualities. Unfortunately, the existing organization of the political administration is mostly oriented towards men and does not give women the opportunity to have an influence on the problems of the society, state and family and does not ensure the right of social orientation for the society's development and its democratization. The balance of social forces and roles between men and women in Russia is tilting towards men. In the election laws there are new clauses which would imply the direct discrimination of women while at the same time they do not include the measures which would stimulate and support women's advancement in the political life.¹⁴⁶

There exists an equality of the standards in the Russian political legislation for both men and women yet the equality of opportunities is quite questionable. On paper the political rights of Russian women are full and rich, but in fact there are

¹⁴⁵ "Zhenshiny I Politicheskiye Partii" ("Women and Political Parties"), accessed on <http://polit-hub.spb.ru/p-wom1.html>

¹⁴⁶ Lyudmila Zavadskaya, *op. cit.*, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/zavadskaya/3.htm>

very unfavorable tendencies in this realm. In real life women maintain to be a discriminated social group. In the sphere of political rights, this discrimination is especially relevant concerning the formation of political structures and authorities.

The analyses of the female representation in the political authorities would present us with the main contours of situation. It was already mentioned above that the representation of women deputies in the State Duma had a tendency to diminish through the years. As mentioned above the first three terms of Duma had only 13, 6, 10 and 7, 9 percent of women respectively in their composition.¹⁴⁷ The percentage of female representation in the Federal Council fell down from 5 percent in 1993 to 0, 5 percent in 1995 and stayed at this last level.¹⁴⁸

The situation in the representative bodies of the Russian Federation is not any better. In June 1997 in Russia there were 3600 deputies among which there were only 337 women (9 percent). In four regions of the Russian Federation – Ryazan, Kursk, Omsk and Tomsk regions, there was no single female deputy, but in other 74 regions the male deputies made up the quantity from 80 to 99 percent. Out of 5 women who were running for chief executive posts, only one Valentina Bronevich was elected as the governor of Koryak autonomous area. More favorable proportion of men and women appears in the field of local bodies of self-government; there are 30 women and 69 men. 20, 26 percent of women are heads of the municipal bodies.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Yelena Kudryashova, Natalia Kukarenko, *op. cit.*, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/genderpolicy/arkhangelsk.htm>

¹⁴⁸ Yelena Kochkina “Predstavlennost Zhenshin v Rossiyskih Organah Vlasti” (“Representation of Women in the Russian Authorities”), accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/policy/kochkina.htm>

¹⁴⁹ Lyudmila Zavadskaya, *op. cit.*, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/zavadskaya/3.htm>

The activity of women in the local bodies of self-government is an indicator that women are closer to real life problems of people and a major part of people's interest is realized at the local level. This may be due to the fact that women managed to persuade the people to elect them into local bodies of self-government and as such they are better at convincing the electorate to promote their interests and solve their urgent problems.

The low representation of women in the political structures is even more disappointing since Russia is a country with a predominantly female population. As it was mentioned above according to the official data of 2009, the total population of Russia is 141, 9 million people out of which 46 percent is men and 54 percent is women.¹⁵⁰ So, if we compare these figures with the results of political representation presented above, we can see clearly that the majority of the country's population is not properly represented in the administrative system. Therefore this segment of the society cannot stand for its rights and interests in a proper way. How would one expect democracy to develop in such a country?

The problem of gender asymmetry is not only a question of equal political rights but signifies a very crucial point. Since male deputies do not really possess all the information about the real situation in the regions, they do not know the real problems of the women electors (the major part of the electorate). Just to cite one example:

the average wage of the female worker in the so-called women's industries (light and textile industry) during the last several years has been only about 40 percent of the average wage level in the country; whereas the average in such exclusively "men's" industry as oil

¹⁵⁰ Rossiyskiy Statisticheskiy Yezhegodnik 2009 (Russian Statistical Annual 2009), p. 82

production has been 360 percent. In other words, all economic legislation developed by the Russian parliament (tax, customs, credit, and finance legislation) objectively contributes to the preservation and aggravation of gender inequality, because it is aimed at creating more favorable conditions for "men's", rather than "women's", industries.¹⁵¹

Thus the disproportion of the women's representation in the power authorities leads to a situation where the interest of the major part of Russian population is not appropriately represented in political administration.

The obvious manifestation of the gender asymmetry is the decline of the level of the representation of women in the executive and legislative power structures. Among the factors that form obstacles against women's participation into politics, those created by men are not the only ones; indeed there are also those that are related to women's own conditions. For instance it is clear that the representation of women in the superior power authorities is related directly to the quality of their background which would allow them to work with dignity in this field. While women have the same level education and sometimes even higher levels of education than their male counterparts; they do not possess in full all the electoral technologies (methods for being elected), special qualifications in political science, state building, law, psychology and such fields. Moreover, the research shows that women in general possess the less political awareness than men, for example:

women usually demonstrate limited awareness – about any notions: starting with quite “traditional” ones that were widely spread in Soviet times (patriotism, internationalism, nuclear deterrence, extremism, prestige of country) and with those notions coming into the lexicon of

¹⁵¹ Svetlana Aivazova and Grigory Kertman “Men and Women at the Elections: Gender Analysis of the Electoral Campaigns of 1999 and 2000 in Russia”, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/eng/books/election/chapter1.htm#I3>

mass-media recently (compromising, deputy's inviolability, rating, inauguration, totalitarian state).¹⁵²

Also the disunity of the female movement should be included as one of the factors contributing to the low representation of Russian women in politics. The elections in the State Duma in 1995 clearly show that all female movements tried to represent themselves separately in Duma and therefore none of them managed to pass the 5 percent limit.

What can be the other reasons for gender asymmetry which is not related with women directly but interfere with their political activity? A prominent Russian researcher Lyudmila Zavadskaya proposes an extremely interesting and useful analysis of the guarantees of equality of rights of men and women in the electoral process that helps to understand the external reasons of gender asymmetry. Under the term "guarantee" Zavadskaya means:

the conditions and the means that provide women with the possibility to use their political rights claimed in the Constitution and in laws. Conditions are the political regime in which the elections are realized, and the level of correspondence of the official constitutional and legislative declarations to the political reality. Means are the mechanism and material resources that provide women with the equal rights and possibilities in the electoral process.¹⁵³

According to Zavadskaya the system of guarantees contains political, organizational, material, socio-ethical and legislative means which give women equality in the process of elections. Then the scholar gives examples of different sets of guarantees. Political guarantees can be listed as the democratic quality of the

¹⁵² Svetlana Aivazova "Zhenshiny na Randevu s Rossiyskoy Demokratiyey" ("Women at a Randevu with Russian Democracy"), accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/democracy/part1.htm>

¹⁵³ Lyudmila Zavadskaya, *op. cit.*, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/zavadskaya/3.htm>

process of nominating one's candidature for the deputy's post, the freedom of the pre-election campaigning; organizational guarantees can be listed as assistance to the candidate in organizing the meetings with electors and accessing the necessary information depending on the organizations and institutions that are situated on the territory of the electoral district; material guarantees are establishing an electoral fund for the candidate; and finally socio-ethical guarantees are social justice and conscience.¹⁵⁴

Now, having defined all these guarantees, the following logical question emerges: so what kinds of obstacles exist for the women of Russia on the way to become a deputy? Generally, women are being excluded from the number of successful candidates, because they possess fewer resources than men – financial, organizational, and informational. In terms of financing, women possess fewer opportunities than men. This can be proved through a simple analysis of how much money female candidates can spend for advertisement on TV and mass-media (as these two means are accepted to be the most influential way of propaganda). According to the research of Zavadskaya, the “Women of Russia” spent for advertisement the smallest sum (only 145 thousand dollars) while their time on the air was the shortest (55 minutes) in comparison with other political parties. Some of the candidates even had to confine themselves to using the free time on air, which is prescribed by the law.¹⁵⁵

The informational possibilities of women are also lower than that of the other parties and movements. Besides women are always faced with many difficulties

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

while trying to organize meetings with their constituency, as enterprises and institutions refuse to provide them even a venue for the meetings. Such cases turn out to be a real abuse of the right of female candidates since according to the electoral laws the subjects of the electoral district are obliged to provide them help in organizing meetings with their constituency.

The most important and difficult problem for female candidates is financing, as it is a central point in an electoral campaign. But unfortunately women are deprived of any support from financial and commercial enterprises. In the 1990s the expenses for elections were not so high and women could manage using their own savings, money given by the state and small support from the private firms. But nowadays it is not possible to take part in the elections if a candidate does not possess a considerable sum of money; and the resources of women in this case are very limited.

Another negative factor influencing women's participation in the elections is the existence of certain stereotypes about the women's main responsibility before the society (to be a mother and care about home and the family). Such stereotypes have formed in the minds of people through ages; this is why they are not easy to discredit and they hamper women's social self-realization in a visible way. The evolutionary theory of sex of one Russian biologist Vigen Geodakyan reflects another stereotype which is about the gender problems. Geodakyan worked out a theory in which he tried to show that in the world of biology the female animal units are always attached to their traditions, which they conserve and try to not develop, while the male animal

units usually bring progress and mutate easily.¹⁵⁶ In a parallel manner people in Russia (especially male ones) sometimes intend to think that only men are active, bring some new ideas and are capable to change the reality. As others this is just another stereotype that forms an obstacle on the way of women.

Another point is the absence of actually effective and authoritative female organizations and movements in the country which could act in unity and harmony while capturing the attention of society and politicians as well as of the state to gender problems. A long history of discrimination against women does not disappear quickly and still affects the way that people think and act. But still the politics is the first element which plays a major role in organizing the conditions of people's lives, so if the term "gender" is accepted in politics and the gender problems would be solved at this level, this could give hope for the improvement of women's status in society in whole.

According to an opinion poll conducted in Russia in 2004 inquiring on the question "What do you think, is it possible that in the nearest 10-20 years the post of president will be taken by a woman?" the majority of Russians answered positively. Women gave a positive answer more often than men did (58 percent against 51 percent). However the same poll also reveals that about one third of Russians think that is it impossible for a woman to become a president.¹⁵⁷ The majority of Russians

¹⁵⁶ Vigen Geodakyan "Evolutsionnaya Teoriya Pola" ("Evolutionary Theory of Sex") Journal "Priroda" ("Nature"), Vol. 8, 1991, accessed on http://vivovoco.rsl.ru/VV/PAPERS/NATURE/VV_SC30W.HTM

¹⁵⁷ "Mneniye Rossiyskikh Izbirateley v Voprose o Vozmozhnosti Izbraniya na Post Prezidenta Zhenshiny" ("The Opinion of the Russian Electors on the Question of the Possibility of Election of a Woman to the Post of President") Online Journal About Elections, accessed on <http://izbiratel.ru/personalii/2006/09/25/jenshina.html>

found it reasonable to vote for a woman who becomes a candidate for the post of presidency. Another striking result of the poll reveals that it is often those women with a higher education who answered the question positively. The respondents have two main arguments – it is not the gender of a candidate, but his/her qualities, political views and ability of management that are important. In this case a woman who has special merits like wisdom, responsibility, practicality, intuition and proper management skills can bring more stability and can be more attentive to the problems of the society. Moreover such respondents rely on the principle of the gender equality. Some of them are also interested to see what would happen with a woman ruling the country. Despite those favoring a woman’s rule, more than a quarter of Russians do not believe in a woman’s ability to rule over the country. According to such respondents politics is not women’s business since women are not capable to do this job. They also think that Russia needs a strong ruling hand of a man. Some of them do not see any strong candidates among female politicians and they doubt if such candidates can appear in the nearest future.¹⁵⁸

As it can be concluded from the above-mentioned opinion poll, it is still possible for women to be elected to the ruling posts in politics, but for the real success of women many things should be done for the improvement of the electoral system. Among those measures that could help improving the system are the following: improvement of the existing electoral legislation; creation of an effective mechanism of promoting women to the power authorities on all levels; gender education for men and women; formation of a positive social climate for female

¹⁵⁸ Fond Obshestvennoye Mneniye (Fund of Public Opinion). Opros Naseleniya “Mozhet li Zhenshina Stat Presidentom Rossii?” (Opinion Poll “Can a Woman Become a President of Russia?”), accessed on <http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/pres/dof040501>

candidates; special training for women in the power authorities; changing the role of women in family; promoting women to responsible posts from where they can start their political career.¹⁵⁹

Another reason for the proportional representation of men and women in politics is the difference of the hierarchy of interests of both genders. For men the hierarchy of interests is approximately the following: first business, then trade and finances, then national security. For women it is totally different: it starts with the social security of the population, then public health, children, ecology, and then peace on earth. As it can be seen the categories of interest of both genders are totally different, so it could be logical to suppose that the representation of both genders in politics could provide an environment that satisfies all these interests that are important regardless of the gender they belong to.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Lyudmila Zavadskaya, *op. cit.*, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/zavadskaya/3.htm>

¹⁶⁰ Svetlana Polenina “Ispolzovaniye Mezhdunarodnogo Prava v Prodvizhenii Zhenshin v Hode Vyborov” (“Use of the International Legislation for Women’s Promotion in Elections”), accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/library/022t.htm>

CHAPTER 5

WOMEN'S SOCIAL PROBLEMS: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND WOMEN TRAFFICKING IN RUSSIA

The social problems are always very hard and difficult issues for Russian women. The sharpest ones are the problems of domestic violence and women trafficking, that is why this chapter is dedicated to an analysis of the real scales of these massive problems. In order to fight against any problem, the most important point is to analyze it thoroughly in order not to underestimate the situation.

5.1. Domestic violence: a social or a private problem?

One of the most urgent problems that women face in Russia is violence, both at home and on the streets. In the mass consciousness the violence usually is represented as a stereotype – only physical outrage upon personality. But this is a narrow approach. Actually, violence always exists and is everywhere and it appears as a social phenomenon which means the discrimination of personality and family, infringement of their rights and freedoms. Violence exists in open and hidden forms in all spheres of social life – political, economic, spiritual and domestic. It has a universal character and any human or any family can become its object, regardless of their social status, level of life and place of residence.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Galina Sillaste “Nasiliye v Obshestve I Bezopasnost Semyi” (“Violence in Society and Security of Family”)/ Klub “Realisty”. Informatsionno-analiticheskiy Bulleten (Club “Realists”, Informational Analytical Bulletin). Moscow, 1997. P. 21

The most serious part of the problem connected to violence in Russia is that the domestic violence has very large scales. That is why it is regarded as the initial factor which provokes violence in other spheres of social life as well (rape, murders etc.). Hence, it is very important to bring some light on the problem of domestic violence from which millions of women suffer.

The victims of domestic violence are usually children, women and aged people. There are four main types of domestic violence: 1) physical (beating, damage of domestic property and other); 2) sexual (rape, cruel sexual acts, refuse to have sex and other); 3) emotional (permanent critics, humiliation, insults, manipulation, threat and other); 4) economic (economic pressure to another member of family, attempts to deprive wife or husband of economic means and to use them, or to manipulate by the use of money).¹⁶²

In Russia there are no concrete statistics which would record the data concerning the women victims of domestic violence. But there are general statistics on victims of crimes from which it can be concluded that it is the women who suffer from violence most. There is also some general data concerning domestic violence. It is seen once in every four Russian family. In 1995 one in every ten crime was committed for the reasons of jealousy, as result of quarrels and psychological compulsion. 20-30 percent of murders occur in families. Every year about 14.000 of women are murdered by their husbands, about 2000 children commit suicide.¹⁶³

¹⁶² "Vidy Nasiliya" ("Types of Violence"), accessed on <http://www.harmony.baikal.ru/center/types.htm>

¹⁶³ "Statistika Svidetelstvuet" ("Statistics Witnesses"), accessed on http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/str_6r.htm

Psychologists describe the classical cycle of the interrelations of partners, when a woman is subjected to violence and insults, in three phases:

Tension – some separate flashes of insults. Women usually react calmly; try to clear the air and to defend their status in the family. Both partners can justify the behavior of a man by his reaction to stress at his work etc. With the growth of tension the abilities of a woman to balance become weaker and weaker. At this stage it is extremely important for a woman to find support and help.

Strong violence – tension in its most negative form. The feelings of anger are so strong that a woman cannot deny that they deeply affect her. Woman feels the approaching of such situation beforehand and her fear and depression grow. This phase exists because a man chooses the violent type of relations. After the commitment of violence men usually deny the seriousness of the act of violence, and women go to police and seek for medical help. At this stage woman should realize that she should hide away from the expected violence, she should call for help.

“Honey moon” – during this phase man can be kind, loving, and guilty and promises not to repeat the violence, or to accuse woman of provocation of violence. At this stage the woman is happy and believes that the man will change. This is the time when it is very difficult to go away and leave this man, but it is necessary to remember that if violence occurred once, it is likely to continue.¹⁶⁴

Russian sociologists mark out the following main characteristics of the phenomenon of domestic violence in Russia:

¹⁶⁴ Martynova O.S. “Nasiliye v Semye” (“Domestic Violence”), accessed on <http://www.psyonline.ru/books/author/dictionary/73701/>

1. The level of the physical violence against women in family decreases with the increase of the family's incomes.
2. The lower the level of women's education, the more they become the victims of the physical violence from their husbands/partners.
3. The lower is the prestige of the women's profession, the more they become subject to violence: women-workers and employees without special education, unemployed people and pensioners are more often violated than women having prestigious white-collar professions.
4. Taking into account the high level of economic activity of Russian women, the level of physical violence is higher in the families with traditional lifestyle (woman is a housewife and man earns the living), and the level is lower in the families where man and woman distribute the responsibilities evenly.
5. The more the scandals in the family (such as verbal aggressiveness), are higher the possibility of physical violence towards women.¹⁶⁵

The worst side of the problem is that in Russia it is not widely appropriate to go to a psychologist for help. Women hardly can overcome the problem of violence. The Russian society also does not favor the solving of this problem. The society does not regard the manhandling of husbands as the violence against the personality of women.¹⁶⁶ Besides the well-known Russian proverb "Beating means love", there also exists a widespread and popular point of view that the wives of the husband-violators are guilty themselves, because they could not find a good way to approach their husbands. The man is regarded to be some marionette which is provoked by a woman. Such an attitude of society convinces the woman that the only person who is

¹⁶⁵ Aleksandr Lysova "Fizicheskoye Nasiliye nad Zhenami v Rossiyskih Semyah" ("Physical Violence against Wives in Russian Families")/ *Sotsialniye Issledovaniya (Social Researches)*. Moscow, 2008, # 9, p. 124

¹⁶⁶ Svetlana Geger "Nasiliye v Semye: Byet - Znachit Lyubit?" ("Domestic Violence: Beats Means Loves?"), accessed on <http://www.myjane.ru/articles/text/?id=1550>

guilty is herself. Sometimes a husband beats his wife in front of his friends or relatives, and nobody tries to stop him as people consider it to be a normal process of punishing her for some faults.¹⁶⁷

The other negative aspect is the belief that the problems within families should not be shown out to the society and kept within the family. Another Russian proverb says: “Do not wash your dirty linen in public”. This is why the majority of the victims of domestic violence do not even apply to the police. There are two other difficulties which stand as obstacles for women applying to law-enforcement agencies. The first is that to prove the guilt of the husband a woman should go to the clinic of her district in the company of two witnesses to register the beats. But at the clinic the doctors require passport and usually when woman escapes from her enraged husband she does not think about taking her passport but rather tries to save her life. So the next day the bruises and broken bones are not there anymore for the registration of the beating, as the extremities are bandaged and the bruises pass. There was a case when a very popular Russian singer Valeria was beaten by her husband, she ran away from home and went to a clinic to register the beating, but did not have her passport with her. The doctors refused to register the incident despite the fact they recognized her.¹⁶⁸ The scaring reality is that even a very successful and well-known woman is beaten and treated indifferently concerning the problem of

¹⁶⁷ Lina Rozovskaya “Za Zakrytoy Dveryu: Nasiliye Protiv Zhen v Rossii” (“Behind the Closed Door: Violence Against Women in Russia”), accessed on http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/talking_point/newsid_7097000/7097276.stm

¹⁶⁸ “Zvezd Tozhe Byut” (“Stars are Also Beat”), accessed on http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/avconsole/bb_wm_fs.shtml?redirect=fs.shtml&lang=ru&nbram=1&nbwm=1&bbwm=1&bbram=1&ws_pathstory=http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/avnews/avfile/2007/10/&bbcws=1&ws_storyid=071031_wv_valeria

violence. The second difficulty is that in the Russian legislation there is no special law for the prevention or punishment of domestic violence. So even if woman applies to the police, there is no appropriate article for the beating husband, and usually the policemen refuse to take such cases and the application gets lost in the pile of similar ones.

Ludmila, the mother of two children, the employer of the law-enforcement agency, tells how police treats such applications. She stayed for a month in the hospital after being beaten by her husband. “During all that time the district police officer, investigator and my ex-husband were trying to explain me, that I am lying here, but there is no need to open the case. And I should not be preoccupied with it or publish it”.¹⁶⁹

The law on the prevention of domestic violence already exists not only in the countries of Europe, but also in some of the post-Soviet Republics such as Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. But Russian government does not even plan to pass such a law. In 1996 and 1999 in the State Duma there was a bill brought to the attention titled “On the prevention of the domestic violence”.

The bill of the law defines the basis of the juridical regulation in the sphere of socio-juridical defense from domestic violence: preventive activity of social services on the elimination of the threat of domestic violence by means of social services, prevention of the repeated domestic violence, solution of the difficult lifelike situation, which created the threat of domestic violence.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ “Istoriya Lyudi” (“The History of Lyuda”), accessed on http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/avconsole/bb_wm_fs.shtml?redirect=fs.shtml&lang=ru&nbram=1&nbwm=1&bbwm=1&bbram=1&ws_pathstory=http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/avnews/avfile/2007/11/&bbcws=1&ws_storyid=071116_st_pete_1_redo

¹⁷⁰ “Ob Osnovah Sotsialno-Pravovoy Zashity ot Nasiliya v Semye (Zakonoproekt)” (“On the Basis of Socio-Juridical Defense from Domestic Violence (Law in Draft)”), accessed on http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/str_44r.htm

However, it could not pass the first reading. As the initiators of the bill explained, the deputies were scared to interfere in the private life of Russians.¹⁷¹ But the main reason for the refusal to pass the law is the denial of the problem of violence as a serious problem by the State Duma and other governmental authorities. They proceed from the official statistics, but as there is no statistics on domestic violence and women do not leave their applications in police as they know it is useless, the government comes to a completely wrong conclusion that the law is unnecessary. The law on violence is vital, but the above mentioned law was a little weak, because it considered only physical violence, while there is also psychological one; the law did not declare the defense of the personality rights but only help in a difficult situation. The bill had some kind of pretentious character, as it was too general, but in fact it needed to describe all the process of defending women and prevention of violence against them in detail.¹⁷²

So what can a female victim of domestic violence do to get any help in her difficult situation? There exist crisis centers in Russia where women can go and ask for help, or even stay for some time while the things get better in her family. Such centers provide victims with juridical and psychological help. But the problem is that the number of such centers is extremely small – only ten crisis centers for the victims of domestic violence existed in whole Russia in 1997. In 2007 this number increased

¹⁷¹ Aleksandra Sheveleva “Zashiti Sebya Sama: Zakon o Domashnem Nasilii ne Nuzhen?” (“Defend Yourself: Is the Law on the Domestic Violence Unnecessary?”), accessed on http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/russia/newsid_7086000/7086482.stm

¹⁷² Nadezhda Shvedova “Ofitsialniye Dokumenty RF o Nasilii” (“Official Documents of Russian Federation on Violence”) / Dostiheniya i Nahodki: Krizisniye Tsentry Rossii (Achievements and Finds: Crisis Centers in Russia). Moscow, 1999, P. 33

to 22 governmental crisis centers¹⁷³, but taking into account the scales of the problems, such number is negligibly small but still at least the women in the big cities can escape. There are also some non-governmental crisis centers which try to help women to overcome the difficult stage in their lives. It is interesting that the policies of governmental and non-governmental centers on the maintenance of families in which there is domestic violence is completely different. The governmental centers, having the Soviet legacy of consciousness about the family as a social unit and the necessity of preserving it, try to save families by all means, usually organizing psychological consultations with both wife and husband. But the point of view of non-governmental centers is that if there is domestic violence, such family cannot be healthy and happy so there is no family to save.¹⁷⁴

There are also hot-line services where women can call in a crisis situation. The main goals of the hot-line services are the prevention of crisis situations and their reduction. The hot-line gives psychological consulting and urgent psychological help; it also gives references to other services which can help the people in need in a more qualified and full way.¹⁷⁵

The problem of violence is very deep, and the result of this problem not only affects the women exposed to domestic violence but also creates psychologically invalid children and society in whole. The process of criminalization of family is

¹⁷³ Lina Rozovskaya “Za Zakrytoy Dveryu: Nasiliye Protiv Zhen v Rossii” (“Behind the Closed Door: Violence Against Women in Russia”), accessed on http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/talking_point/newsid_7097000/7097276.stm

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Marina Dubrovskaya “Telefon Doveriya: Sovety Spetsialista” (“Hot-line Service: Advices of Specialist”)/ *Kak Sozdat Krizisniy Tsentr Dlya Zhenshin* (How to Create a Crisis Center for Women). Moscow, 1995. P. 42

going on; there is an increasing emergence of such style of life which accepts violence, alcoholism, drug addiction as norms of behavior which passes from one generation to another.¹⁷⁶ The reaction of the government to the violence against women at home, as well as outside, is tolerance to such “methods” of male behavior. The government’s inactivity indicates a refusal of the humanistic beginning in the personality and leads to the degradation and total destruction.¹⁷⁷

Domestic violence becomes a tragedy for many people and destroys the fundamental basis of the society’s security. This problem should be solved to save the Russian society from degradation and stress. And these two processes are a reality right now:

“This is not life, this is constant stress. Now even if you don’t want to, you are going to hurt somebody, and you won’t be able to understand how this occurs. Life became so difficult; it was not like this before. There is an overall hopelessness, what can we say. Our mood is always very low now.” (51 years old man, engineer)¹⁷⁸

5.2. Women trafficking and prostitution as a new labor market

Today the problem of human trafficking provokes a big anxiety as thousands of women and children are being taken abroad for sexual exploitation and forced labor.

¹⁷⁶ Tatyana Sidorenkova “Nasiliye v Semye: Chastnoye Delo ili Sotsialnyaya Problema?” (“Domestic Violence: Private Business or Social Problem?”), accessed on http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/str_12r.htm

¹⁷⁷ Nadezhda Shvedova “O Nekotorykh Sovremennykh Tendentsiyah Zhenskogo Dvizheniya v Rossii” (“About Some Contemporary Tendencies of the Women’s Movement in Russia”)/ *Prosto o Slozhnom: Gendernoye Prosvesheniye (In Simple Words About Difficult Things: Gender Education)*, accessed on http://www.owl.ru/win/books/easygender/part4_3.html

¹⁷⁸ Tatyana Klimenkova “Realizatsiya Prava Grazhdan na Svobodu ot Nasiliya” (“Realization of Citizens’ Rights for Freedom from Violence”), accessed on <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/klimenr.htm#>

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, defines the human trafficking in the following way:

“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.¹⁷⁹

For specifying more of the forms of human trafficking, the following ones could be marked:

- Human trafficking especially of women and children, with the aim of their sexual exploitation;
- Human trafficking with the aim of exploitation of slave labor;
- Human trafficking, especially of children and invalids, with the aim of begging;
- Marriages with the aim of exploitation;
- Human trafficking with the aim of compulsion to surrogate motherhood, reproductive functions;
- Human trafficking with the aim of transplantation of organs and tissues;
- Human trafficking with the aim of illegal adoption;
- Human trafficking with the aim of using in armed formations;
- Using the soldiers and prisoners for forced labor.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Article 3. Use of Terms/ United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto. New York, 2004. P. 42

¹⁸⁰ Torgovlya Lyudmi v Rossiyskoy Federatsii. Obzor i Analiz Tekushey Situatsii po Probleme (Human Trafficking in Russian Federation. Observation and Analysis of the Current Situation Concerning the Problem). Moscow, 2006. P. 25-26

According to the data as presented on the site of Civil 8¹⁸¹ the overall number of women and children taken away from home and sold to slavery every year in the whole world reaches to a million people. The following factors influence the increase in this phenomenon: globalization of economics and increase of the labor mobility and migration, increase of demand for so called “private services” in the developed countries, increasing level of unemployment among women, increasing number of users of Internet which is not practically controlled by the law and easy to be used for criminal purposes.¹⁸²

The phenomenon of sex trafficking in Russia appeared about 17 years ago, this was a time when criminal activities in the country increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union. During these years a whole network of structures working for the recruitment of citizens with the aim of their sexual exploitation abroad emerged in the country. The organized crime took the business under control. According to the data of law enforcement authorities, the criminal groups operate in Russian big cities – first of all in Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Kaliningrad, Khabarovsk and Vladivostok.¹⁸³

The Central and Eastern European countries, including the territory of the former Soviet Union, rank second after South-East Asia in regards to the scale of trafficking in human beings: 175,000 women are taken out of this area a year for the purpose of human trafficking. One third

¹⁸¹ A project, which was launched under the chairmanship of Russia and uniting Russia, USA, Great Britain, France, Japan, Germany, Canada and Italy; the aim of the project is to discuss the urgent problems of world development, work out recommendations and proposals for summits

¹⁸² Borba Protiv Torgovli Lyudmi (Fight Against the Human Trafficking), accessed on <http://www.civilg8.ru/5931.php>

¹⁸³ Aleksandr Danilkin “Seks Traffik Otdyha ne Znayet” (“Sex Trafficking Does not Rest”), accessed on http://www.trud.ru/article/10-09-2005/93438_seks-trafik_otdyxa_ne_znaet.html

to one-fifth of this figure comprises of women from the Russian Federation, i.e. roughly 57,750 to 35,000 women a year.¹⁸⁴

Russia has become not only a big supplier of women and children to the slavery market, but also a region where the internal human trafficking is very developed. According to the official data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Russia about 150 thousand women are involved in sexual labor.¹⁸⁵ Even though this number could be underestimated as sexual labor, it is difficult to have concrete statistics. The characteristics of women involved in sexual labor vary according to regions. In Kazan the major part of sex-workers are unemployed or single mothers, in Tomsk – students of regional universities, in Novosibirsk and Barnaul – drug addicts. Usually the majority of women, working as sex workers in big cities are migrants from other countries or little towns and villages of Russia.¹⁸⁶

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union women's status became unstable in the social stratum so the criminals succeeded in taking the situation in their hands. Russian women were obliged to migrate to other cities or countries with the hope that they could find a job there. The most important factors influencing the female emigration from Russia and spreading of human trafficking are difficult socio-economic situation (34,7 percent of country's population is behind the poverty

¹⁸⁴ Human Trafficking in the Russian Federation. Inventory and Analysis of the Current Situation and Responses. UN Report. Moscow, 2006, P. 12

¹⁸⁵ V MVD Rossii Proshla Press-Konferentsiya "Protivodeystviye Torgovle Lyudmi na Sovremennom Etape. Problemy Viyavleniya i Rassledovaniya Prestupleniy v Sfere Torgovli Lyudmi" (The Press Conference "The Opposition to the Human Trafficking on the Modern Stage. The Problems of Revelation and Investigation of the Crimes in the domain of Human Trafficking" passed in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia), accessed on http://www.mvd.ru/mvd/structure/unit/komitet/publications/show_47655/

¹⁸⁶ Torgovlya Lyudmi v Rossii i VICH/SPID (Human Trafficking in Russia and HIV/AIDS), accessed on <http://www.aids.ru/aids/trade.html>

line)¹⁸⁷; low level of salary; impossibility to find a job; difficulties of professional self-fulfillment; discrimination by employers; misbalance on the Russian marriage market (impossibility to find a good husband in the homeland);¹⁸⁸ general demoralization of the Russian population (during the process of social and economic reforms in the mass media the atmosphere of cynicism and lack of discipline, the youth accepted the style of permissiveness and derision of traditional values); the presence of strong economic base for shady business; corruption and absence of professionalism among authorities who are supposed to resist to the crimes of human trafficking; absence of law-enforcement structures which would fight with trafficking; latent character of the problem of trafficking (when victims do not apply to the police).¹⁸⁹

Women who emigrate from Russia could be divided into four groups according to their motivation and aims of emigration:

The first group is composed of women who emigrate with predominantly economic motives, aiming to find an employment according to their specialization. However, there are many obstacles for them; in many countries it is very difficult to find a job without possessing the language of that country, sometimes it is necessary to get a supplementary education or confirm the Russian diploma. Thus, Russian women emigrating this way are usually employed in the sphere of social services,

¹⁸⁷ Prichiny Rassprostraneniya Treffika v Rossii (Reasons of Trafficking's Spreading in Russia)/ *Treffiking v Rossii. Resheniye Problemy (Trafficking in Russia. Solvation of the Problem)*. Chelyabinsk, 2002. P. 11

¹⁸⁸ Sergey Ryazantsev "Emigratsiya Zhenshin iz Rossii" ("Emigration of Women from Russia"), accessed on http://www.demographia.ru/articles_N/index.html?idR=20&idArt=1785

¹⁸⁹ Prichiny Rassprostraneniya Treffika v Rossii (Reasons of Trafficking's Spreading in Russia), *op. cit.*, p. 12

domestic services, public health, entertainment industry and sexual services. Women-migrants are the most discriminated participants of labor relations. They usually find jobs in informal, shadowy and criminalized segments of employment and this is why female labor migration became a zone of increased risk and mass violation of human rights.¹⁹⁰

The second group is women who are eager to marry a foreigner. As research show, nearly the half of all emigrating women wants to stay abroad for a long time, and 20 percent of them hope to do that by marrying a foreigner. The marriage emigration became a mass flow of women from Russia. According to some unproved but possible data, Russian brides bring up to 4, 5 billions of US dollars of annual benefit. According to the data of American Ministry of Justice, for the last decade 75.000 brides emigrated from Russia to USA and this flow is increasing. In Internet there are 600 American and 200 Russian dating agencies that are operating. Among other popular directions of marriage emigration there are Germany, Italy, France and Turkey. Russian women seeking for a foreign husband, fighting for their social welfare, and foreigners use them to improve their status in society (white women are always in fashion) or to exploit them as they wish.¹⁹¹

The third group is women who desire to see the world and get possible “easy money”. Such women are usually guided by emotions, but not by rational motives. They focus on advertisements and information from acquaintances about “big

¹⁹⁰ Yelena Tyuryukanova “Seks-Ekspluatatsiya Zhenshin-Migrantov: Legitimizatsiya Nasilstvennyh Praktik” (“Sexual Exploitation of Women-Migrants: Legitimization of Violence Practices”), accessed on http://owl.ru/win/womplus/2004/01_07.htm

¹⁹¹ Olga Mahovskaya “Braki s Inostrantsami: Iгры bez Pravil” (“Marriages with Foreigners: Games with No Rules”), accessed on http://owl.ru/win/womplus/2003/01_10.htm

possibilities of easy money abroad”. These women apply for work as waiters, strippers, dancers, with the hope to earn money quickly and return home.¹⁹²

The last and fourth is the group of women who are initially oriented to a job in the sex services sector. According to the data of the Prosecutor’s Office in Russia there is a stable increase of the number of women who are involved in prostitution. For example in 2004 the number of factors for involvement in prostitution was five times greater than the number of cases in 2003. In many countries about a million women from the CIS countries work in the sphere of entertainment and sexual services, among them there are 300-400 thousands of Russian girls. Russian women work as prostitutes in more than 50 different countries of Europe, East Asia, Middle East and North America. According to BBC in 2001 about 50 thousand of Russian women were involved in prostitution in the countries of Western Europe and about 50 thousand in China and South-East Asia.¹⁹³

The overall rush for the material welfare and strong desire of Russian women to live and work abroad left thousands of trustful and naïve women in an extremely difficult and awful situation where they became the victims of human trafficking. Of course, a certain number of women accepting suspicious job offers understand that they are likely to be involved in the sex industry. But there are young girls who are naïve and may not be smart or educated enough to feel the trick in all that deal. The trafficking dealers use the naivety of girls to trap them by different means and by sophisticated lies. One of the methods of recruitment, which is used by the dealers, is

¹⁹² Sergey Ryazantsev “Nashi Zhenshiny Pokidayut Stranu” (“Our Women Leave the Country”), accessed on http://archive.russia-today.ru/2008/no_06/06_demography.htm

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

the advertisement in newspapers or on the internet as proposing a good job not requiring high qualifications. Recruiters promise good salaries to young and beautiful women, who are ready to work abroad as waiters, dancers, babysitters or housewives. Often the criminals use the firms of employment or model agencies for cover. The girls are sometimes recruited on the beauty competitions and even during “the career days” in universities. The process of recruitment is difficult, the lies are thoroughly thought as it is necessary to convince the girls that the opportunity of employment is real.¹⁹⁴

Another method of recruitment goes through the dating agencies, which are sometimes called “bride by mail”, or international dating services. Many of these agencies work through the Internet. The recruiters use the international dating services for the search of women who want to travel or emigrate. This way the sex industry exists in several forms. The recruiters can be dealers themselves or they can work for the dealers. A woman meets a man who promises to marry her, but this man uses her for some time and then sells her to the sex industry.¹⁹⁵

And finally, the most cynical method of recruitment of girls – through friends and acquaintances. Many women become the victims of trafficking with the consent of their husbands, partners and relatives who get money for this. The phenomenon of “second wave” is also widespread when trafficked women return home for the recruitment of other women – friends, sisters, nieces.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Prodannaya Nevesta. Fond Nezavisimogo Radioveshaniya (Sold Bride. Fund of Independent Broadcasting), accessed on http://owl.ru/win/womplus/2003/01_11.htm

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

The attitude in society towards the victims of trafficking is shocking – people usually think that these women are guilty themselves, as they were not careful enough, although this can happen to anyone.

As one victim had indicated:

“This night I felt for the first time what it means to be a prostitute. I had to serve to 8 men. I was racked by fear and shame. After each date I was taking a shower, but I couldn’t clean the mud from my soul. During the next four months I was forced to have sex with hundreds and hundreds of Israeli men. Young, old, fat, disgusting... Soldiers, husbands, clergy... Nobody was interested if I was sick or had menstruation. I was forced to work to escape the punishment... The clients called us Natasha. They never asked our real name. For them we are all Natashas. This is their sexual fantasy. These jerks came into living room and cried with stupid smile: “Natasha!” – as we were some Russian dolls. We were supposed to meet them with smile”.¹⁹⁷

There are thousands of similar stories and it is impossible to remain indifferent towards this problem. But what could be done to save the victims of human trafficking and prevent other girls from thoughtless decisions? Unfortunately, although there is a law which specifies the criminal responsibility for human trafficking, it is still very difficult to find the guilty persons, as the criminal authorities and mafia stand for their business, the most profitable after drug and arms trafficking. The victims also continue to keep their silence, as they are usually threatened to be killed in the case of revelation. There remains hope that new generations can learn a lesson from the sad stories of their compatriots.

The above mentioned problems of violence and trafficking lead to the general changing of the character of social environment, which is serious and dangerous, as

¹⁹⁷ Prodayutsya Natashi. Nedorogo (“Natashas sold. Cheap”), accessed on <http://criminalnaya.ru/publ/74-1-0-846>

the high risk level and aggressiveness provoke the emergence of the destructive tendencies in the life of society. The people react to such changes by different forms of deviations; the most dangerous of them is the extreme way of self-destruction – suicide. The number and the level of suicides serve one of the most important indicators of the social, economic, political and emotional condition of society. According to the data of the World Organization of Health Care, 20 suicides per 100 thousand people per year are considered to be the critical point. Russian statistics show that every year Russians commit up to 55 thousand suicides, 40 per 100 thousand people. The interesting fact is that in the Tsarist Russia the number of proportion was 2, 7 suicides per 100 thousand people, but the number started to increase during Soviet era and in 1995-2003 500 thousand people committed suicide in Russia.¹⁹⁸ Numbers are deterrent and need to be taken seriously; these statistics show that Russian society has very destructive and negative characteristics and moods, people cannot be happy in such conditions, moreover they do not want to live. It is necessary that Russian government takes measures for amelioration of the social environment and security, as well as for fighting against really existing and pressing social problems.

¹⁹⁸ Yekaterina Ushakova “Suitsidalniye Riski” (“Suicide Risks”)/ *Sotsialniye Issledovaniya (Social Researches)*. Moscow, 2008, # 9, p. 107

CHAPTER 6

WOMEN RESISTING THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS

In the previous chapters the problems that women are frequently faced with in Russia were described. The rate of female unemployment, low female political representation, violence and women trafficking are really serious and menacing. All these “female questions” provoked the emergence of women’s movement and women’s reaction against the overall discrimination. In this chapter I will try to show how women find ways to protect their social rights, to stand for their social and political status and the obstacles they encounter in Russia for creating women’s and feminist movements.

6.1. Russian women’s movements

It would be logical to start with the women’s movements as it is the direct social behavior and reaction of women to their problems. The dictionary of the gender terms defines women’s movements as:

A group of s women’s organizations with fixed and non-fixed membership, which operate actively in the society with the goal to serve the interests of women from different social stratum, and which aim for influencing the state policy for the achievement of gender equality in different spheres of social life.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ Zhenskoye Dvizheniye (Women’s Movement)/ *Slovar’ Gendernyh Terminov (Gender Terms Dictionary)*, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/gender/080.htm>

What is the women's movement in modern Russia, does it exist and does it correspond to the definition above? To answer these questions it is necessary to refer to the movements' history as it better shows the roots and reasons of its emergence, as well as the historical legacy of modern movements in the country.

The women's movement in Russia appeared in 1860s and was directly related to the process of reformation in the state, to the changes in all spheres of social life. The main sources of the movement were the reorganization of the society; socio-economic changes, concerning the reform of 1861 which eliminated the serfdom; and the collapse of the patriarchal style of life. The reforms of Alexander II assisted to the processes of social mobility in society – the new social classes emerged (proletariat and bourgeoisie) and the process of spiritual renaissance of society. All these processes initiated the increase of social mobility of women, as they were discontented with their low social status; also the female emancipation was seen as an opportunity for women to realize their personality in society. The ideological sources of the women's movement of that time were the influence of the western European thought and events on Russian society (European revolutions, ideas of Enlightenment). The wives of Decembrists can be taken as an example of the most emancipated female personalities of Russia of that period.²⁰⁰ “The Russian Female Reciprocally Charitable Society”, created in 1895, was the first and the oldest association of women in Russia which united the intellectual women of that time. The activity of this society was devoted to uniting all women, supporting of the working people, improvement of the conditions of the poor, providing self-education

²⁰⁰ “Istoki Zhenskogo Dvizheniya v Rossii” (“The Sources of Women's Movement in Russia”)/ *Vse Lyudi Sestry (All People Are Sisters)*, Saint-Petersburg, 1993. P. 43

and seeking solutions for cultural questions. Firstly the work of this society was quite limited and society itself was closed and did not have many members. But after some years it started to widen its sphere of activity and even tried to enter the political domain.²⁰¹ Together with another prominent female association “Russian Female League of Equal Rights”, “The Russian Female Reciprocally Charitable Society” put their aim to achieve the female electoral right to give their votes in elections to the State Duma. After many years of joint struggle for electoral rights of women, these rights were granted to the women on 19 March 1917 by the Provisional Government. This was a great turn for the better in the history of women’s movement.²⁰² Together with their electoral right women got their right to become a lawyer, the right to receive an academic degree and also to work in the Academy of Sciences together with men.²⁰³

Despite the granting of the rights to the women with the beginning of the Soviet era, after 1917-1918 all the women’s movements and feminist organizations were shut down as according to the government they could provoke chaos in the female part of population. In the Soviets the female question was regarded not as a gender problem, but as the conception of two main duties of women before the state: 1) a toiler, working for the team; 2) a mother, who produces new toilers. The propaganda of the ideas of maternity was very popular in the Soviets, women did not have the right to command their own bodies, and they had a duty to give birth to new

²⁰¹ Anna Shabanova “Ocherk Zhenskogo Dvizheniya v Rossii” (“The Essay on The Women’s Movement in Russia”), accessed on <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/shabanr-1.htm>

²⁰² Irina Yukina “Kak Mi Poluchili Izbiratelniye Prava” (“How We Got Electoral Rights”)/ *Posidelki. Informatsionny Listok (Gathering. Informational List)*, Saint-Petersburg, 1997. P. 1-2

²⁰³ Anna Shabanova, *op. cit.*, accessed on <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/shabanr-1.htm>

Soviet people without any exceptions. The policy of the government led to the situation where women were oppressed, in which the majority of them even did not know the word “feminism” and the struggle for their rights and independence was regarded as bourgeois ideas and something awful.²⁰⁴

The first women’s organizations during the Soviet period appeared at the end of the 1980s when the civil and political activity in the country increased. It was related to the sharp competition in all spheres of life which led to the exclusion of women from the domain of politics, and the increase of labor discrimination. During this time the idea of a man as the “head of family” started to return in the minds of people after long years of Soviet rule. The most active women’s organization of the period was “Women of Russia”, but as they had predominately political goals, after their failure in the elections to the State Duma in 1995, the other women’s organizations started to orientate themselves to solve the concrete social problems and the violation of human rights.²⁰⁵ But still the role of “The Women of Russia” was really immense in the struggle for equality of rights of men and women. As they fairly claimed in their “Declaration of equal rights and equal possibilities of women:”

The establishment of democracy in Russia is impossible without equal participation of men and women in all spheres of social life, on all levels of decision-making – state, regional, local!²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Yelena Maksimova “Zhenskoye Dvizheniye v Rossii? Da, Zhenskoye Dvizheniye v Rossii!” (“Women’s Movement in Russia? Yes, Women’s Movement in Russia!”), accessed on <http://www.ikd.ru/node/12174>

²⁰⁵ Yekaterina Lahova “Zhenskoye Dvizheniye v Gody Reform: Problemy i Perspektivy” (“Women’s Movement in Reform Years: Problems and Perspectives”), Moscow, 1995. P. 12

²⁰⁶ Deklaratsiya Ravnih Prav i Ravnih Vozmozhnostey Zhenshin (The Declaration of Equal Rights and Equal Possibilities of Women)/ *Vserossiyskiy Zhenskiy Kongress “Trud. Zanyatost. Bezrabotitsa” 29-30 Noyabrya 1994 (The All-Russian Women’s Congress “Labor. Employment. Unemployment” 29-30 November of 1994), Moscow, 1995. P. 160*

Until the end of the 20th century there were more than 600 of women's organizations in Russia which means that in every federal region about 20 or 30 organizations were active. Nowadays the total number of organizations can exceed 2000, but this is even not too much compared to the 240 thousands of female Soviet councils in the Soviet Russia.²⁰⁷

There exist many classifications of the Russian women's organization according to the type of their activities in contemporary Russia. The most classical one is the division into three groups: 1) human rights organizations; 2) organizations conducting gender researches; 3) charitable organizations.²⁰⁸

The first group contains the organizations which are occupied with the defense of the rights of servicemen and their families (e.g. "Soldier Mothers of Saint-Petersburg"); organizations working with the problems of violence and organizations, fighting against the discrimination on the labor market (e.g. "Institute of Nondiscriminatory Gender Relations"). The second group consists of the research organizations which conduct fundamental gender researches, develop gender methodology and introduce it into the educational programs of the country, conduct gender expertise of the Russian legislation etc. (e.g. "Moscow Center of Gender Researches" and many other regional centers). The last group, charitable

²⁰⁷ Nadezhda Abubikirova, Tatyana Klimenkova "Zhenskiye Organizatsii v Rossii Segodnya" ("Women's Organizations in Russia Today")/ *Spravochnik "Zhenskiye Nepravitelstvenniye Organizatsii Rossii i SNG" (Referance Book "Women's Non-Governmental Organizations of Russia and CIS")*, Moscow, 1998, accessed on http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/wom_org_today.htm#.)

²⁰⁸ Yelena Maksimova, *op. cit.*, accessed on <http://www.ikd.ru/node/12174>

organizations work with the problems of children, especially invalids and orphans, as well as low-income families.²⁰⁹

There are however some other directions of activity of women's organizations, which play a very important role in social life. First of all it is education, as such organizations arrange many educational talks, seminars and trainings, conferences, schools of leadership for women, summer schools for students. The next direction is informational work. Many organizations have their own journalists or publish newspapers, release broadcasts; others spread the information on the Internet; some groups save the information in their archives and then give access to their libraries. Such organizations actively work as the informational centers and created an informational field around themselves. Some organizations are oriented to support the female entrepreneurship, and others work with ecological problems. So, it is clear that the range of fields of activities of women's organizations is very wide and nearly concerns every important part of social life.²¹⁰ As different regions of Russia had their own specific features, character and orientation of female problems according to the socio-cultural peculiarities, level of economic development and urbanization, professional qualification of women; all these factors left their stamp on the directions of women's movement in different regions – in capital and Volga region, Central region and Siberia.²¹¹ However there

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, accessed on <http://www.ikd.ru/node/12174>

²¹⁰ Tatyana Klimenkova “Zhenskiye Organizatsii. Missiya i Povsednevnyaya Rabota” (“Women's Organizations. Mission and Everyday Work”)/ *Zhenshina Kak Fenomen Kultury. Vzglyad iz Rossii (Woman as a Phenomenon of Culture. View from Russia)*, Moscow, 1996. P. 143

²¹¹ Lada Milovanova “Mezhdunarodnoye I Otechestvennoye Zhenskoye Dvizheniye: Opyt Vzaimodeystviya I Tendentsii Razvitiya na Sovremennom Etape” (“International and National Women's Movement: Experience of Cooperation and Tendencies of The Present Development”)/

are many non-governmental organizations unite women from different regions of Russia and become interregional organizations. Among them there are such organizations as “Conference of Business and Professional Women of Russia”, “Association of Women of Defense Industry”, “Conversion and Women”, “International Institute of Woman and Management”, “Association of Russian Women with Higher Education” and “Consortium of Women’s Nongovernmental Associations”.²¹²

In 1991-1993 in Dubna city, two large women’s forums were organized: the first and second Independent Women’s Forums which gathered the representatives of women’s organizations in many cities of Russia and the CIS. The slogans of these forums were “Democracy minus woman is not democracy” and “From problems to strategies”. Especially after these forums, Russian women started to believe in women’s movement and gender researches and began perceiving them as the means for improving their lives. That is why in nowadays Russia the range of reasons for women to be united and the range of interests and activities of women’s organizations are increasingly widened. Also the important point is that all these numerous organizations seek for ways of unity and cooperation among themselves, as well as with the state level and international women’s movement.²¹³

Zhenskoye Dvizheniye: Istoriya i Sovremennost (Women’s Movement: History and The Present). Voronezh, 1998. P. 69

²¹² Olga Samarina “Informatsiya o Deyatelnosti Zhenskih Obshestvennyh Organizatsiy” (“Information on the Activity of Women’s Social Organizations”), accessed on <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/informrd-e.htm>

²¹³ Lyudmila Federova “Problemy Zhenskih Nepravitelstvennyh Organizatsiy Rossii v Transformiruyushemsya Obshestve” (“Problems of Women’s Organizations in Russia in the Transforming Society”)/ *Preobrajeniyе (“Transformation” – Russian Feminist Journal), 1996, № 4, P. 40*

What are the main factors for the emergence of the contemporary Russian national women's movement and what peculiarities do such organizations have? The transition period in the country created both many obstacles and opportunities for women. Economic and political transformation gave opportunity for women's movements to be born. The political freedoms furthered by emerging democracy gave women a chance to struggle publicly against the discrimination and sexism. The economic crisis and unemployment stimulated the activities for advocating women's employment rights. Another factor is the international cooperation and financing of the nongovernmental women's organizations which was caused by the absence of governmental support within Russia. It is obvious that without financial support, it is impossible to develop and launch any social project. Another factor could be the newly established political culture in the country, and also fully corrupt political elite which repelled women and urged them to act energetically.²¹⁴

Among the features of the women's movement the most visible one is globalization. The globalization of the women's movement is part of the worldwide process of globalization, as by the end of the 20th century almost in all countries of the world women's movements appeared. The role and importance of internet is also undeniable, as it is the greatest source of information and communication. Another common feature for all women's movements is that their tasks are extremely difficult to fulfill, as the changes in women's status in society require a complicated process of changes at the individual level, as well as at all-state structures of society. Another feature of such movements in Russia is the contradictories involved in the

²¹⁴ Nadezhda Shvedova "O Nekotoryh Sovremennyh Tendentsiyah Zhenskogo Dvizheniya v Rossii" ("About Some Contemporary Tendencies of the Women's Movement in Russia")/ *Prosto o Slozhnom: Gendernoye Prosvesheniye (In Simple Words About Difficult Things: Gender Education)*, accessed on http://www.owl.ru/win/books/easygender/part3_9.html

movement which is directly related to the international financing. The international connections sometimes influence the national activists negatively as they usually try to impose their own international problems on them. The Russian women's problems may differ from those of the American or European women. However, Russian organizations can receive financing from international sources only if they are oriented to solving the objective and internationally accepted problems. Such situation leads to some kind of stagnation of the movement. Another negative feature of the movement is its disunity. There are plenty of nongovernmental women's organizations in Russia, but there is no strong unity of aims or cooperation between them. This also can be regarded as a factor complicating the process of opposition of the movement to the government.²¹⁵

Among the problems of the Russian women's movement the following ones can be listed: the absence of civil society; difficulties encountered while creating the networks of nongovernmental organizations; economic crisis; absence of infrastructure appropriate for development of the nongovernmental organizations; absence of cooperation and solidarity between women's organizations; lack of consciousness on the necessity of political activity of women and on the struggle for their equal rights; decline of social services that were the main support for women before; lack of connection between feminist theory and practice for women's movement; widespread discrimination and sexist behavior against women;²¹⁶ lack of

²¹⁵ Svetlana Aivazova "Nezavisimoye Zhenskoye Dvizheniye: Popytka Tipologicheskoy Harakteristiki" ("Independent Women's Movement: Attempt of the Typological Characteristics")/ *Russian Women in the Labyrinth of Equal Rights*, accessed on <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/aivazova2nr-e.htm>

²¹⁶ Nadezhda Shvedova, *op. cit.*, accessed on http://www.owl.ru/win/books/easygender/part3_9.html

mass media's attention to the movement and lack of propaganda; absence of governmental support and even governmental opposition to the movement.²¹⁷

Despite all these problems, one positive element is that Russian women's movement can adequately understand its defects and problems; so that it is easier to fight against the enemy you know. Despite such obstacles, women's movements in Russia is very active and tries to find ways for its consolidation while taking into account the lack of unity. The activists of the Russian movement work on the improvement of the status of Russian women, on the education of their own leaders and they understand the necessity to educate the members of the movement on how to work with different political forces and encourage educational activity for youngsters. And the most important is that Russian movement organizations are oriented to help morally and judicially to their members. As it is indicated by Rebecca Kay

For the most part, the advantages which members felt they gained from their involvement in a grassroots women's organizations were in line with the main aims of the organizations themselves: help and support in the face of the crisis, empathy and understanding from other women like themselves, a forum for discussion, a sense of collective strength and a sphere of interest and activity outside the constraints of the private sphere.²¹⁸

The development of women's civil initiatives and women's movement is also a sign of democratization for the Russian society. But this is only the beginning and the development of such movements is complicated by a series of factors, as stereotypes and traditional prejudices which cannot be eliminated by laws and

²¹⁷ Svetlana Aivazova, *op. cit.*, accessed on <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/aivazova2nr-e.htm>

²¹⁸ Rebecca Kay "It's About Helping Women to Believe in Themselves: Grassroots Women's Organizations in Contemporary Russian Society"/ *Feminism and Women's Movements in Contemporary Europe*, New York, 2000. P. 242

decrees, but could only change through the practice in social life through the encouragement by women's movement.

6.2. The understanding of feminism in Russia

The historical encyclopedia "*Krugosvet*", which is accepted to be competent by all Russian professors, gives the following definition of the term "feminism" in the context of Russian history:

Feminism in Russia – (1) Socio-political theory, analyzing the reasons of oppression of women and superiority of men in the historical past and present, and suggesting variants of overcoming the men's superiority over women. (2) Wide social movement in Russia in 19th-20th centuries for the equality of rights and opportunities for women, resisting the social system, in which the status of different genders was not equal.²¹⁹

From the above definition it can be concluded that feminism in Russia is a complex phenomenon which shows itself in two qualities – as a theory and as a movement. Feminism appeared when women recognized that there is something unjust in the social evaluation of women. Whether in the form of a movement or as a theory feminism seeks to find the reasons for women's discrimination and oppression and to eliminate them and release women. There have been three waves of feminism: the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th centuries, the middle of 20th century, and the end of 20th century.²²⁰ The purpose of this subchapter is to find out the main features

²¹⁹ Natalia Pushkareva "Feminizm v Rossii" (Feminism in Russia), accessed on http://www.krugosvet.ru/enc/istoriya/FEMINIZM_V_ROSSII.html

²²⁰ Tatyana Klimenkova "Feminizm"/ *Slovar Gendernyh Terminov (Gender Terms Dictionary)*, accessed on <http://www.owl.ru/gender/192.htm>

of Russian feminism only, and emphasize its difference from the western feminist movements and to underline its place in modern social life.

It is interesting that since the beginning of time there existed automatic division of labor and duties between men and women according to their sex characteristics. Even in tribal history of human beings patriarchy was already a well-established system which has not been transformed to another form until our times. Women struggled to convince the world in the injustice of patriarchy, but still the confrontation between two genders is going on. During many centuries people believed that the patriarchy is the only one possible way to organize the society and divide the duties between two genders. Svetlana Aivazova explains as follows:

Mythology of the historical time fixed the strict hierarchy in the relations between sexes (genders): man is a human being of full value; woman is the wife of her husband, the object of his power – power of the patriarchal kind. Ideal principle of such order of things: “The wife should fear of her husband”. According to this principle, male and female are two opposite beginnings: the first is basic, positive, active; the second is secondary, passive.

The Greek Pithagor claimed with confidence: “There exists a positive principle, which created the order, light, men, and negative principle, which created chaos, twilight and woman.” Aristotle added: “Woman is a bitch because of definite lack of qualities... female character suffers from natural impairment... woman is only a substance, principle of movement is provided by other, male beginning, which is better and divine”.²²¹

For a very long period of time women not only in Russia, but in the whole world were treated mostly like slaves and were obliged to obey their husbands. Russian feminism appeared in the 18th century which means that Russian women silently suffered from oppression during at least nine centuries (if we count from the

²²¹ Svetlana Aivazova “K Istorii Feminizma” (“Towards the History of Feminism”)/ *Obshchestvennye Nauki i Sovremennost (Social Sciences and Modernity)*, 1992, #6, P. 154

9th century when Kiev Russian state was established). As it was already mentioned in the first part of the chapter, in the 18th century the ideas of Enlightenment and French revolution had a great influence on the Russian social life. Especially at that time the attitude towards women started to change. A very big role played by the empress Yekaterina II and other noble women (countesses Razumovskaya, Vorontsova, Naryshkina), who were ready to take an active part in the life of the Russian state. At the same time the phenomenon of female literature appeared and many female-authors and poetesses gave birth to their writings which show the emergence of a social female self-consciousness.²²² Women started to be accepted in the Russian advanced society. An important example of the fact that the Russian intelligentsia of that time was reflecting the women's status in society is in the words of Pushkin which are especially marked by Svetlana Aivazova:

Particularly, such a perfect expert of his times as Pushkin, talks about this in his notes "Table talk": "Isn't it ridiculous to think that women, which amaze us with their quickness of understanding and subtlety of sense and mind, are the creatures lower than us! This is especially strange in Russia, where Yekaterina II reigned and where women are more educated, read more, follow the European course of things more, than us, who are proud, God only knows why".²²³

The 19th century passed with the process of making up of a woman's personality. The wives of Decembrists showed that Russian women were going forward towards emancipation. In the second half of the 19th century feminists

²²² Natalia Pushkareva, *op. cit.*, accessed on http://www.krugosvet.ru/enc/istoriya/FEMINIZM_V_ROSSII.html

²²³ Svetlana Aivazova "Ideyniye Istoki Zhenskogo Dvizheniya v Rossii" ("Ideological Resources of Women's Movement in Russia")/ *Obshchestvenniye Nauki i Sovremennost (Social Sciences and Modernity)*, 1991, #4, P. 128

became to stand for women's rights for education and professional employment that is economic independence.

The first half of the 20th century and the accession of Bolsheviks to power were marked by granting the women the political electoral and other important rights. But this was the highest point of success for Russian feminists of that period, because after the Soviet state was established, the policy towards women was something shocking in the sense of substitution of conceptions. At that time the conceptions of "emancipation" and "woman's personality" were substituted by "female question" and "female mass". The famous Soviet feminists Kollontay and Krupskaya saw the problem of women in the unequal division of labor, but not rights or problems of oppressed women's personality. According to them, the release of women from the domestic life and their devotion to Soviet industry would provide total equality between men and women. The aim was to create the army of female workers and peasant women. As a result women got the double workload – at home and at workplace. Yes, there was already no oppression from the side of men, because there were no men – all the work was on the shoulders of women. May be that is why now Russian women still feel uncomfortable and sometimes disgust the words "emancipation" and "feminism". Because upon hearing these words the enormous tiredness and deception of light on women's ideals comes to mind immediately.

The mysterious disappearance of personality, disappearance of a human being – man and woman – is the main result of the salvation of the great historical task of the provision of the female equality of rights in our society.²²⁴

²²⁴ Svetlana Aivazova, *op. cit.*, p. 13

At the end of the 20th century when numerous women's movements and organizations emerged, such organizations preferred also to use the word "women's" but not "feminist" or "emancipation", because of the legacy of Soviet times since these words were associated with something strange, negative and ideological, brought from the West and alien to Soviet minds:

Russian women, gathering into professional organizations, do not know what feminism is. When they are asked if they are feminists or not, they answer: "Of course not, that is impossible!" They answer in that way, because think that feminism is some swearword.²²⁵

The third wave of Russian feminism is even more politicized than previous two waves. But still the main question is the reasons of oppression of women and variants of overcoming men's superiority over women. The modern Russian feminism can be characterized with its strong focus on the gender researches and theoretical problems of feminism; it started to be understood not only as women's movement and concrete actions but also as a special orientation of consciousness.²²⁶ Today women understand that they are not only the object of men's domination, but women themselves can be a subject of history, they can create history and influence the events in the world. The main goal of modern Russian feminism is to transform the social relations between two genders in the way that "women's questions" would

²²⁵ Yelena Zdravomyslova "Kollektivnaya Biographiya Sovremennyh Feministok" ("Collective Biography of Modern Feminists")/ *Gendernoye Izmereniye Sotsialnoy i Politicheskoy Aktivnosti v Perekhodniy Period (sbornik nauchnyh statey) (Gender Dimension of Social and Political Activity in the Transition Period (collected articles))*. Saint- Petersburg, 1996. P. 35

²²⁶ Natalia Pushkareva, *op. cit.*, accessed on http://www.krugosvet.ru/enc/istoriya/FEMINIZM_V_ROSSII.html

interest not only women, but everybody as well. If we accept that Russia is a country where the female population predominates, and where almost all women work and are more educated than men, the above-mentioned social relations must exist in this country. The best variant of such relation is the extensive partnership, including the sphere of family, as well as cooperation and correlations of men and women in the process of democracy's construction.²²⁷

It is important to explain that what we call here Russian feminism is in fact the Russian women's movement, but not feminism in its Western interpretation. Actually, the presence of feminism in Russia is strongly argued by Russian social scientists. The concept of "feminism" has not been fully understood and accepted by Russian women. There are plenty of articles and information on feminism in Russia, but almost all of them identify feminism only as a struggle for juridical and economical rights, for equal rights in social and domestic life and for sexual egalitarianism. As all new movements in the country disturb the public opinion, especially on the first stages of their development, such discomfort also played a negative role in the formation of the image of feminist movement. Generally, in the major part of Russian mind the image of a feminist woman is the one of aggressive, hysterical intellectual or an old maid.²²⁸ Automatically the following situation occurred:

²²⁷ Svetlana Aivazova "Zhenskoye Dvizheniye v Rossii: Traditsii I Sovremennost'" ("Women's Movement in Russia: Traditions and Modernity")/ *Obshestvenniye Nauki i Sovremennost* (Social Sciences and Modernity), 1995, #2, P. 122

²²⁸ Yelena Trofimova "Feminizm I Zhenskaya Literatura v Rossii" ("Feminism and Women's Literature in Russia"), accessed on <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/trofimrdd.htm>

If you call Russian woman a feminist, she is likely to be offended or at least to start to justify herself. What we can do – the feminism in its Western conception could not put down its roots into Russian soil. Those women, who openly call themselves feminists, at the best provoke the population's pity – means that her personal life was not successful and here she tries to revenge herself upon men for her offences.²²⁹

The well-known sociologist Anna Temkina conducted a field research and an opinion poll to find out what “feminism” means for the Russian people. She questioned the people from different social groups and professions; here are some interesting results of her research:

“I know little about feminism. They (in Russia) work for the narrow audience. Maybe, mass educational activity is too difficult for them, but their main mistake is that they do not take part into political activity. What can be more important than struggle for women's status, what else they are busy with?” (Professional politician, 40 years old)

“I heard that in America women actively take part into movement, and this always annoyed and revolted me. It means that initially there was some inequality, that woman needs support. If woman does something successfully, this amazes people, like a bear learnt to drive a bike. This annoyed me, provoked the sense of humiliation. Woman, equally with man, can achieve everything without attracting great attention like a woman. But recently, when I started to advance on my way, I faced more and more difficulties, and understood that I was not right. Although it is humiliating, but a woman is obliged to need support in business, in politics, because men strive to jostle and their solidarity is very developed. Of course, I control them, but this requires more forces, than if it would be done by a man. And this is unjust, I could use this energy more wisely.” (Businesswoman, about 40 years old)

“For me feminism is an opportunity of choice. I choose, I am responsible for my choice... we should say especially to women: “There is also such model of life, you could live in another way; if you choose patriarchy, it is you choice. But you know, that you have another choice...” And many people say: “Wow, I have been thinking

²²⁹ Svetlana Smetanina “Ne Nazyvayte Ee Feministkoy” (“Don't Call Her Feminist”), accessed on <http://www.rg.ru/2010/04/30/rbth-feministki.html>

about that my whole life, it means I am a feminist??" (a feminist after 30 years old)

"Feminism is consequence of complexes, of prohibition to show femininity. They (feminists) worry not about the women's rights, but about the aspiration for being in group and competing with each other. I do not consider this movement to be progressive, especially in our country. We need to not give a woman more right, but to give her a right to be a woman, a good mother". (psychoanalyst, a man of 30 years old)²³⁰

Thus, the respondents gave rather contradictory answers to the question how they understand feminism. But one can emphasize that totally negative perception of feminism was given only by men. One woman being a feminist of course gave a positive response but the interesting point is that another respondent understood feminism negatively before she faced problems and discrimination in the male environment. For the major part of Russians "feminism" is something exotic, challenging the way of life that has being formed during millenniums. For the post-Soviet people it is extremely difficult to accept new ideas, new conceptions or movements. But this is not the only reason, why feminism in its western understanding could not settle down in Russia. The point is that the environments in which western and Russian women's movements developed are totally different. Hence, the aims of western and Russian feminists differ very much. Also, the difference in aims could be caused by mentality. While American women begin the legal action against the men for sexual abuse, Russian women can regard the same thing as a nice attention towards their personality. The virtue of patience is engraved in the minds of Russian women by centuries of Russian history. Maybe this is why

²³⁰ Anna Temkina "Feminizm: Zapad i Rossiya" (Feminism: West and Russia)/ *Preobrajениye (Ruskiy Feministicheskiy Jurnal) (Transformation (Russian Feminist Journal))*. 1995, #3. P. 9

they do not protest much against the domestic and general violence but prefer to suffer silently.

Concerning the professional life, the truth is that there is discrimination of women in this domain, but not every Russian woman is eager to work and to make a career, that is why some women do not regard their low salary or bad workplace as discrimination, even though it really is. After seventy years of Soviet supremacy and double workload, modern Russian women dream only about an extremely rich husband, who can provide her with all goods. Even in the time of Perestroika there was a boom of female beauty, and it was very popular to hunt for rich foreigners. During the transition period, the total mess of the traditional way of life, obliged Russian women to work for surviving, and did not leave them enough time to think about their rights, discrimination and similar problems.²³¹ Only in the last decade, women's movement became more numerous and active, but still it is difficult to answer to the question "what is Russian feminism?" "Russian feminism" is a complex idea and changes its quality according to how people understand it. There is no exact definition of feminism in Russia, as people still cannot accept it. It can be estimated that there is no feminism in Russia in its common understanding, but there is an original women's movement.

Thus, it can be concluded that Russia is a totally contradictory country, where there exist patriarchal society and discrimination of women in many spheres of life. On the one hand, women in this country have a very difficult life, so they try to fight for their place under the sun, that is to for their right to participate in the politics of

²³¹ Beyrle "For Russian Women, Survival Trumps Rights", accessed on <http://rusrep.ru/article/2011/03/09/march/>

the country in order to ameliorate their status and position in society. Such women organize women's movement, create a whole network of similar organizations, actively work with people, try to educate them and open their eyes on the women's bad conditions, to activate the population and provoke it for changes. On the other hand, after long years of Soviet drudgery, when women were obliged to charge with all possible social and professional responsibilities, many Russian women have such psychology, that they do not want to fight, struggle or prove something to somebody, they just want to relax, find easy ways for welfare, as for instance, marriage with a foreigner.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In this thesis the question of how the lives of Russian women changed during the transition period after the dissolution of the Soviet Union was analyzed.

In the first chapter of the thesis the actuality of the topic and the relevant literature were discussed. The second chapter concerned the problems of gender inequality in the light of the Russian Constitution. It was important to introduce a little terminological discourse for the explanation of the terms “gender” and “gender equality” as they have been used throughout this thesis. In the second part of the chapter the analysis of the Russian Constitution from the perspective of the gender balance was conducted.

The third chapter examined the changing position of the Russian women under the new economic conditions of the new Russian state. Yeltsin’s reforms and changing economic conditions led to the growing discrimination of women and unemployment. As a result, women turned to management for creating workplaces for themselves. The discriminatory features of pension reforms of Putin’s era were also discussed in order to show the absence of changes in the policy lines of government towards gender issues.

The fourth chapter discusses women’s participation in the Russian politics. The emergence of the new multiparty election system provoked the women’s

involvement in the politics, but women's representation in the political institution faced many obstacles on its way.

The fifth chapter analyzed the social problems of the transition period. Despite the fact that there are plenty of social problems concerning women in Russia, only two of the most urgent ones were chosen to be examined: domestic violence and women trafficking together with prostitution.

The sixth chapter discusses the women's reaction to the existing problems and the emergence of Russian women's movements. "Russian feminism" is discussed as an original phenomenon, which is very difficult to understand not only by the western scholars, but by Russian women themselves as well.

The transition from one regime to another brought strong changes into all aspects of Russian life. These changes affected predominantly women, who form the major part of the country's population. After the Yeltsin's reforms the position of women became very unstable and the outrageous injustice was that they were unable to protect their rights through the means of legislation. In fact, the Russian Constitution and other laws respond quite well to the requirements of gender equality, but despite this the discrimination of women and the violation of their rights continued to grow with the time. The problem was that there was no efficient mechanism of working laws which could be used in the case of the abuse of women's rights. Thus, the principles of gender equality are reflected well on paper, but in practice there are still many measures to be taken in order to prevent discrimination and gender inequality. This situation is not only a result of the policies of the new Russian state indeed it has its roots in the Soviet system where women were claimed to be totally equal with men, but in fact they were double burdened by

responsibilities at work and at home, and did not have opportunity to realize themselves in other spheres of life. The systems of social protection in post-Soviet Russia were ineffective, so that women were left to their own resources and intelligence to invent some way to survive in the new system of injustice and lawlessness.²³²

Concerning the economic reforms, Russian state made the final choice in favor of economic liberalization. For women, this course meant the end of the whole former system of relations with the state. But state did not speak openly about this problem; no one encroached on the constitutional provisions guaranteeing the protection of motherhood and childhood. Only the objective situation was changing: the new private sector emerged which was more dynamic with high-paying jobs and which rejected women as the disadvantageous labor force. The reason for this is that the current system of law imposes on businesses all financial burdens related to providing "benefits" for motherhood and childhood that women get. Entrepreneur, of course, does not want to incur these costs. The woman instantly becomes a disadvantageous person on the labor market - too expensive and a less reliable worker. Therefore, in the new market economy the labor market was divided into two sectors: one - a new "masculine" market, a prestigious and highly paid one, the other - traditional "female" one with superficially high-status social works but with very low wages. At the same time the gap in skills development between women and men began to sharply affect the women's competitiveness on the labor market. In 1990s the phenomenon of unemployment was general for Russian people in whole,

²³² Svetlana Aivazova "Russian Women in the Labyrinth of Equal Rights", accessed on http://www.owl.ru/win/books/rw/o3_1.htm

but women were the most to suffer from it.²³³ The difficulties of the transition period increased the discriminatory tendencies. Today, women are the most vulnerable and the least competitive actors in the labor market. This situation has developed in Russia as a result of paternalistic policies being implemented for many years which are based on all sorts of benefits, prohibitions and specific regulation emphasizing the special legislatively fixed status of a woman as a mother who is responsible for the birth, care and upbringing of children and family services. In other words, women with children became to be seen as a secondary labor force.²³⁴

In order to find solution to the above mentioned problems, women started to create working places by themselves. New forms of economic activity, such as self-employment and entrepreneurship appeared. But despite the positive trends which were marked not only in capital cities but also in the provinces, women's leadership in the enterprises of real sector economy did not become a mass phenomenon. On the one hand, this was connected with the difficulties of management of enterprises in modern conditions, and on the other hand it was conditioned by the cultural inertia, which constrains the displacement of patriarchal stereotypes. The slow process of the development of female entrepreneurship is constrained not only by such cultural inertia, but is often explained as a result of the pressure of the authorities which continue to believe that their strategy of relationship with the economic actors can

²³³ Olga Torlopova "Women in Russia's Economy During the Era of Transition Reforms", accessed on http://elib.kkf.hu/edip/D_8759.pdf

²³⁴ Ruslan Vagizov "Problems of Gender Equality in Modern Russian Society", accessed on <http://www.femin.ru/ig/ig010.php>

only be built on positions of strength.²³⁵ Thus, the attempts of women to become self-employed and develop their businesses ended up with the presence of “glass ceiling”, which limits the female careers. In whole the position of women in Russian economy is unstable and needs to be improved.

Coming to another aspect of life – politics, it is important to emphasize that women are consist the major part of the Russian population, so it is logical to suppose that the proportional participation of women in politics is vital for the appropriate administration of the country. However, the situation is not reflecting this reality and women need to fight and struggle to represent their interests in the Russian power authorities. There are many reasons, why the representation of women in politics is problematic, among which the most important ones are the conservation of the patriarchal consciousness and prejudices about women in the minds of population; the disunity and absence of cooperation between different women’s political movements and organizations; and male-politicians resisting to women’s participation in politics and administration. However the appropriate proportional representation of the male and female population of the country in the authorities and administrative institutions would provide the amelioration of the national social policies as well as other policies concerning women and family issues.

The lack of women’s participation in politics lead to a situation where many important and urgent problems concerning female part of population become latent and underestimated, as for example, the problems of domestic violence and women

²³⁵ Alla Chirikova “Woman – Top Manager in Russia: Waiting for the Crash of the Glass Ceiling”, accessed on <http://www.gender-cent.ryazan.ru/chirikova.htm>

trafficking. The scale of violence in Russia is scary; however Russian government does not hurry to take any measures for solving the problem. While in all self-respecting European countries there are already laws prescribing the criminal responsibility for the acts of domestic violence against women; Russia does not have such a law and even rejected the draft of a similar law aiming at reduction of violence. Almost the same situation exists with regard to the women trafficking as only in the last decade this problem started to be regarded as a really important one. When government does not see the real social troubles from which women suffer, this results in women's silence and a weak legislation for protecting women's rights. On one hand women should declare about their problems and apply to the police for support. But on the other hand, very often without appropriate legislation, police refuses to help the victims of domestic violence and human trafficking, under the pretext of the absence of special departments for the solution of these problems. The unsolved social problems lead to the demoralization in society and deterioration of the quality of life in the country.

The problem of Russian women who suffer from domestic violence is an urgent one that needs to be solved by the governmental authorities, because if the government does not interfere nobody is going to protect these women. But women should also not give up, they should declare about their situation and submit their applications to the police and inform the society that there is such a big problem. Otherwise as women do not talk about their problem and fight for its solution, the government thinks that the silence is the sign of the absence of problem and this in turn leads to a vicious circle. Thus it can be clearly seen that the passing of the law on the prevention of domestic violence is extremely important and necessary. First of

all every self-respecting democratic country seeks to construct a law-based state, in which there is a strong social policy, putting the human at the center of the system and giving him/her real opportunities for social help. There is need for such organizations of social help which would realize the real involvement of the social forces (non-governmental organizations) in the process of social services for the society. Another point indicating the necessity of such law is that the global experience shows that the orientation on the punitive function of the legislation does not provide security in the family, so more complex measures are necessary – prevention and education; programs of urgent and long-lasting help to the victims of violence and their families; special programs of education, consulting and psychological correction for the violator, victim and other family members, including children; the joining of the efforts of law enforcement authorities, courts, social services, crisis centers, psycho neurological clinics, social human rights organization, educational establishments. There is a need for the coordination of the forces of different organizations and a complex approach towards the solving of the problem.

The inactivity of the government concerning the “female questions” leads to the emergence of women’s movements who try to protect women, their rights, as well as their social and economic status. However, Russian women’s movement did not become very effective for a variety of reasons such as their disunity, lack of means and many other obstacles on their ways. But the positive point is that women’s movements understand their defects and mistakes, and try to improve them, as it is obvious that without any reaction from women’s side the situation of women is going to get worse and worse.

Briefly the transition period brought many difficulties to the women's situation in Russia. Women became economically, socially and politically unstable; discrimination against women and the violation of women's rights became a wide spread phenomenon. The Russian government, taking into account the weak position of women, did not aim to achieve gender symmetry in the society through a series of reforms. On the contrary, the reforms of the transition period did not include many of the principals of equal rights and opportunities; and they caused more serious inequality. There are many ways that the government can choose to overcome women's problems and to change their situation for better. It is very important at this juncture that the government should understand that Russia has a predominantly female population, and without solving female problems it will be impossible to solve the general problems of the country, including economic, political and social ones.

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