

Women's Employment in Railway Transport: Gender Equality or Discrimination?

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Abstract: The article considers the gender aspects of employment at modern enterprises of transport dispatch, first of all, the main attention is paid to the employment of women at the enterprises of Russian Railways; it reveals that the gender of an employee has a significant impact on the employer's decision when hiring. Both negative and positive trends in the influence of the gender factor on the employment of modern women at Russian Railways enterprises are characterized. Based on the analysis of statistical data and the results of secondary sociological research, it is determined that despite the fixation of gender equality in employment at the legislative level, in real practice of working with personnel at the enterprises of Russian Railways there is an influence of gender stereotypes in favor of men in hiring for specific positions.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the Labor Code of the Russian Federation there are certain provisions that prohibit the restriction of rights on the basis of gender in the labor sphere. Despite this, it is very often women who face discrimination in employment, career advancement, wages, accrual of benefits. This is especially relevant when analyzing female employment in the enterprises of Russian Railways.

The development of the economy and market relations on the basis of the rapid introduction of digital technology makes new demands on the competencies of workers, prompting them to make efforts to actively adapt to the conditions of production. In turn, employers are forced to abandon many of the stereotypes associated with the division of professions into male and female, which are characteristic of the enterprises of the transport complex. As some theoretical analysis shows, the influence of gender stereotypes on personnel management decision making in transport enterprises has all the characteristics that are characteristic of enterprises in other sectors of the economic complex.

2 ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

The mechanism of self-regulation of the labor market includes such elements as demand, which is the total demand for labor resources, regardless of the price for them, and supply in the labor market, which can be defined as the total supply of the owners of labor resources in the country at any set prices (Solovova, 2016).

The size of wages, competition among workers and among employers are the main indicators of the mechanism of self-regulation of the labor market. The level of employment of the population, the size of wages, the structure of unemployment are set under the influence of this mechanism. At the same time, work at Russian Railways enterprises has been and remains prestigious because employees receive a good salary, social issues, and subsequent pension security. This gives the employer the right to select those employees who will work with maximum efficiency, and these are usually men.

Long-term and mass unemployment are characteristic features of female unemployment. Let us consider these features in more detail. (Tskhadadze, 2015).

The mass characteristic is explained by the fact that in the socio-demographic group of women there

are such social categories of women where the share of the unemployed is much higher than among other subgroups. Most often this category includes women who are raising children alone, single women of retirement age, families with disabled children, widows and divorced women. (Hartmann, 2013) They are defined as a socially vulnerable subgroup in need of social support and protection, an important component of which is employment.

Long-termism as a sign of female unemployment is characterized by the fact that employers are not willing to provide optimal working conditions for a number of categories of women, which, along with the generally accepted ones, include: an unstable working schedule, short working hours, going on "sick leave" in connection with illnesses of children, the opportunity to provide women with maternity leave, meeting the conditions of the Labor Code of the Russian Federation.

Analysis of statistical data on women's employment and unemployment shows the significant role of women in the functioning and development of Russian society. Thus, as of 2018-2020. 48% of all workers in the national economy are women. At the same time the share of workers with higher education among women is higher than among men - 62% and 50% respectively. But despite the downward trend in unemployment that the country has shown over the past few years, a large proportion of women are unable to find decent jobs. The majority of the unemployed in our country are women, they are in the region of 60% (of all the unemployed). Moreover, 8 out of 10 unemployed women have ever been to the labor exchange. It is much more than the number of applications from men (Laikam, 2020). It should be noted that even after employment many women, especially those with 2 or more children, cannot count on a salary that fully supported the family. Thus, according to Rosstat of the Russian Federation, the gender gap in wages between men and women in 2019 was 27.9%, which is an expression of gender asymmetry, which has adverse effects:

- average per capita income is falling, which in turn impoverishes families;
- negative impact on the pace of development of the national economy, because there is an underutilization of the motivated, educated, highly qualified labor force represented by women;
- the development of the informal sector of the economy, which absorbs part of the female population;

- the negative impact on women's physical and psychological health, which can have negative social consequences (criminal behavior, parental neglect, drug and alcohol abuse, vagrancy).

A number of studies have been conducted on female unemployment in Russia. It turned out that the level of female unemployment is interconnected with two factors - the number of marriages and the birth rate. The results of the study showed that marriage and childbirth have an equal effect on the change in the level of female unemployment, but in a different direction. That is, with an increase in the number of marriages by 1%, unemployment among women on average will increase by 6%, which can be explained by patriarchal attitudes (man is the breadwinner in the family, earns money, a woman should be engaged in housekeeping, raising children, taking care of the sick and the elderly, etc.) (Zuikova, 2017).

However, the increase in the birth rate contributes to a decrease in female unemployment by about 6%, which can be explained by a woman's desire to provide a decent life for her child, which is impossible without a stable job and a steady wage. It turns out that the emergence of children entails an increase in consumer spending with a simultaneous reduction in savings and reduction in investment activity, which can also manifest itself in the restructuring of personal (family) budget.

3 GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Today in the Russian Federation there is a discrepancy between the conceptual foundations and institutional mechanisms developed at the state level to support women in their employment - and the practice of implementing the adopted provisions and norms. It is important to note here that women make up the majority of the country's population - about 54%. Legislative acts of our country prohibit gender discrimination in the sphere of labor. At the initiative of the Russian government, various measures are applied to support women in order to increase their competitiveness in the labor sphere of the Russian Federation. For example, wages are increased in spheres where women often hold positions (social, cultural, educational and health care spheres). (Dadashev, 2015)

There is also a negative trend in the employment of women. According to statistics, managerial

positions more often belong to men. At the same time, the level of education is higher among women (55% of employees who have higher education are women).

Also, there are fewer women than men in managerial positions at all levels of government. It is extremely rare to find a woman in the position of the rector of a higher educational institution; in fast-growing industries the positions are more often occupied by men.

According to the results of various sociological studies of female labor - there are more women working in unfavorable conditions. (Popov, 2020). Also, there are many cases when social guarantees for working women (related to maternity leave, labor protection), which are stipulated by the Russian legislation, are not observed. However, it should be noted that there are positive trends. According to the opinion poll published by the Research Center of portal Superjob.ru on 9.09.2021 (The Research Center of portal Superjob.ru "Women more often than men face discrimination by gender and marital status at employment...". Sociological survey 2021.), the presence of gender discrimination was noted by 42% of respondents. At the same time one in five (21%) personally felt gender inequality - more often women than men (25% vs. 18%). Every third respondent (33%) thinks that the reason of discrimination is the presence (or absence) of children, and every fifth respondent (20%) has faced it - again more often women (45% vs. 24% among men). A quarter of respondents (26%) believe that discrimination based on marital status is not excluded in employment, while only 18% have encountered this phenomenon personally (20% of women and 16% of men). Thus, comparing with 2018, when a similar study was conducted, we can see a positive trend: there are fewer people who believe that there is discrimination based on marital status, age, the presence of children in the workplace. There are also fewer people who have personally experienced situations of discrimination in employment. The noted trends fully apply to the enterprises of Russian Railways as well. Moreover, while previously women were employed as conductors in the vast majority, today they are increasingly being forced out of this segment of employment by men. On the one hand, this can be perceived as a benefit, as women are not torn from the family. On the other hand. This benefit has a downside: women are losing their jobs, and consequently their standard of living and quality of life are decreasing.

We can assume that this positive trend is due to the pandemic coronavirus, when many employers have changed the mode of work to a remote format. Now the result of a specialist's work has become more important than his or her marital status, gender, age group. But for all that, employment discrimination based on gender is still a noticeable phenomenon, and gender stereotypes are a contributing factor.

In 2020 HeadHunter Research Service published the results of the research on the topic of gender preferences in the labor market surveying 117 employers (HeadHunter Research Service "Can gender equality be achieved in the labor market?", March 2, 2020). According to the results of the study it was found that almost all (96%) of the surveyed employers had to select candidates of a certain gender for the position.

It is interesting that the smaller the company (less than 500 employees), the more developed this practice of preference.

Candidates of a particular gender are most often sought for positions of administrative nature - secretaries, administrators, for positions of workers. About a third of the employers surveyed do it all the time - for the positions of unskilled specialists they look for a candidate of a certain gender. (Bocharova, 2015).

Among the reasons for the selection of candidates by gender, most often refer to the characteristics of job duties and the requirements of the future leader of the employee (63%).

In other words, these are either the manager's personal internal attitudes or gender stereotypes about the fact that representatives of a particular gender cope better with certain tasks. (Ostapenko, 2015)

According to the same recruitment portal HeadHunter, over the past five years women have applied less frequently for jobs in banking, raw material production, and administrative positions. Women are gradually losing jobs in the arts, entertainment, and media. So, while in 2016 they held 65% of positions, in 2020 there are fewer - 63%.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Women entering the labor market often face the choice of starting a family or building a career. Combining family and professional life is a difficult task for both women and their employers, especially at Russian Railways enterprises due to the

continuous work cycle. At these enterprises, employers cannot in actual practice provide women with all the benefits and preferences provided by national projects and social development programs. Women, in turn, are very active and eager to get a job at Russian Railways, competing with men. This is where gender stereotypes come into play.

The main reasons that justify gender discrimination in the workplace include entrenched stereotypes, prejudices of employers and employees themselves. (Vigelina, 2018).

Gender pay parity is proving difficult to achieve. The gender pay gap is a persistent form of gender inequality in the workplace, and the Global Gender Gap Index 2020 shows that progress in closing the gender gap in this aspect has stalled. No country has yet achieved gender pay parity.

Despite the numerical superiority of women worldwide, only 37% of global GDP is accounted for by the female working population. This figure reveals a serious problem: gender inequality in the labor market. With women's full participation in the workforce, on an equal footing with men, global GDP could increase substantially. Empowerment of women in the labor sphere and their active involvement in the work of the Russian transport complex is a modern social and economic trend.

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