

GENDER EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT: SOCIAL POLICIES OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

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Abstract

The specific of gender equality regulation models and its implementation in the social policies of different countries is analysed in this scientific work. The gender policies in different countries are include the individual features. The theoretical models of the welfare state were described. The much attention is put on the social assistant of employed women in EU's countries. The following research methods were used in this work: logical, monographic, synthesis, comparative analysis.

Key words: *gender equality, social policy, gender stereotypes, employment, unpaid domestic work, institutional structures*

JEL Classification: *J08, J16, J18*

Introduction

Analysis of gender equality in employment in the European Union countries confirmed that the level of women's participation in labor activity is lower in comparison with men; women work in part time regime more often than men; the biggest number of women in comparison with men is informally occupied; women's wages are lower than men's, etc. The work in part time regime confirms a classical pattern in gender role distribution where women still incur execution of house responsibilities, and care of children and aged members of family. The main cause of actual disparity of women in payment consists in that women take less paid workplaces and lower-level posts [6].

Gender equality in employment assumes equal possibilities for men and women in recruitment to work, equal access to all kinds of activity, posts and professions, and also equal payment for equal work, i.e. assumes absence of gender imbalance in payment.

2. Research methodology

The following research methods were used in this work: logical, monographic, synthesis, comparative analysis.

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3. The analysis of gender equality regulation models and its implementation in social policy of different countries

Scientific researchers, such as: T. Larsen [15], S. Gal and G. Kligman [10], K. Fofanova [18], G. Esping-Andersen [1], etc., suppose the existing of two methods in the state policy for creation *the state of welfare and equality*.

In the first method, the social policy is constructed on the principle of compensations and is called *paternalism*. The state regulating function consists in the accordance of the minimum guaranteed income and certain privileges to each member of society independent of gender. This method leads to optimum allocating of incomes existing in the country.

In the second method, the state policy is *egalitarian*. It assumes the creation of such conditions, in which women are in the maximum degree exempted from routine homework; they get privileges bound to care of children and aged relatives. The purpose is to create equal rights and equal possibilities to men and women for employment. This policy is directed on overcoming the stereotypes saving in society, linked to traditional submission about gender roles allocation and on creation the public opinion of social gender equality. The state ensures an optimum level of life for worthy existence to each citizen is the principle of assessment the worker not on gender base, but by his educational level, experience of work, capabilities and skills, lies in the basis of the *egalitarian* policy.

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Thus, “the welfare state executes regulating and redistributive functions, aspires to ensure the guaranteed social safety and equality” [18, p. 56].

The measures for social assistance creating and institutional structures are strongly varied in the different countries “... depending on cultural and national, economic features, from degree of "friendliness to woman” [18, p. 66-67]. Common for all social assistance structures are: the guarantee in minimum income reception, granting the social services and rights to social allowance reception.

In 1990 G. Esping-Andersen in his publication “The three worlds of welfare capitalism” presented three models of social policy in welfare states: *liberal*, *conservative*, and *social-democratic* [1]. Numerous researchers tried to precise and expand these models. As a result, the typology of four models has been offered: *liberal* or *market-oriented type*, *conservative* or *corporative type*, *social-democratic*, and *left corporative type* [1, p. 35-36].

The Western researchers characterize the left corporative and conservative types of social policy model in the countries of Continental and Southern Europe as family-oriented, but liberal and social democratic “types of modes are classified as out of family, because the work in the household and care of the members of the household can be done not only by members of the family and relatives, but also by workers of the state institutions or the commercial organizations” [15, p. 161].

On the basis of the selected approach, the foreign researchers forecast new models, something average between conservative-corporative type and is given the characteristic of the social policy for the group of the countries, include the Republic of Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and some post-Soviet countries [11, p. 196-197].

Many researchers had a critically view to the G. Esping-Andersen's work because they considered it as "gender blind". Practically, the stereotypes saved in public perception: "family and woman", "man and career". “The researches of G. Esping-Andersen and his colleagues had ignored the description of methods with the help of which the state can facilitate realization of female reproductive and house responsibilities. In the frameworks as a whole useful, the theoretical scheme of these authors, the special attention attending to pensions and programs of the income level supporting, the social benefits using in the majority by the male worker, as

the final receiver. In turn, the problems with the child rearing leave and parents support are remained unlit” [10, p. 350].

“As a result, in the developing West countries the formation of the welfare state models happened with allowancing of essentially new theoretical approaches to analysis of the situation in the households, gender division of labor, men and women payment, etc.” [9, p. 93].

“The political policy change is possible only in the case of transformation of traditional values inherent in given society in the allocating of responsibilities: "man is a breadwinner" and "women is a housewife". “About similar transformation testify the politicians’ rejection from ideal type of "man is a breadwinner" to family where both partners are worked, and the policy promotes equal participation of men and women in paid employment and in housework” [15, p. 163].

For the achievement of real gender equality in employment many developing countries had accepted the antidiscrimination legislation which is provided the ensuring of equal payment for equal work and non-admission the discrimination in any spheres of employment. “In the Western European countries, without speaking about the Scandinavian successful countries, for a long time the gender policy issues were integrated into the large part of the state policy” [14]. “In Europe, as the example of good legislation about equality more often look at Sweden where there are the considerable quantity of programs in the field of gender equality and welfare of family increase” [18, p. 66-67].

“It is necessary to notice that the economic role of men and women not always estimates according to market value and non-paid women’s house work actually is not considered” [18, p. 60]. Nowadays, the tendency of the recognition of the economic significance of non-paid house work has appeared in society. All this is change the attitude to female work from the society view, increase its social recognition and social status of employed in this kind of work, including housewives. For example, “the research executed in the Scandinavian countries, has shown that the state assistance policy which has allowed to express in the monetary equivalent the cost of the homework and care of children (thus, liberating many women for active participating in a labor market), has made the big contribution to overcoming the gender professional segregation” [5, p. 97] that has led to increase of the labor market efficacy [3, p. 54].

Today, the new step in the achievement of equal possibilities became the introduction the parental allowances instead of the earlier allowance granted only to mothers. For example, in Sweden on each child till 18 years is paid the allowance of 800 Swedish kronas per month (\$80 US), for students in high schools - the grant of 2000 Swedish kronas and the soft loan of 5000 Swedish kronas per month with a deferred payment for 20 years. Sweden has achieved great success in the field of gender equality. Swedish dads have the right to maternity leave, and almost half of the Swedish parliamentarians are women.

The decision about the granting of child rearing leave became another measure. For example, in Sweden, the essential number of places in preschool institutions for working parents is ensured. Working parents have the right to child rearing leave before the child achieving one year age, and from 01.01.2002 - for 13 months, including 2 months are the "daddy's" months. It is provided for the purpose of attraction the father to education of children from early age [17].

In Finland there is a comprehensive system of "mother's" vocations (105 days), "daddy's" vocations (from 6 till 18 days) and parental vocations (158 days - using either mother or father). Actually, Finland is the first country in the world which has introduced - in 1978 - vocation for fathers to care of the neonatal child. The allowance given to parents during parental vocation is linked with their incomes. As a rule, people receive approximately 66% from the sum of her/his usual income. The state also pays allowances on home care of children to mother or father if one of them wishes to remain the house until the child will not attain three years old. Parents of juvenile children also have a possibility to reduce the working hours for the terminating first school semester by the child. All aforesaid illustrates the society attempts to emphasize a role of man/father in the family and to make gender edge fuzziness between public and private, in order to women did not more associate automatically with private, and men - with public spheres [2].

According to the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities: "Increasing of children's allowances and term of vocations on care of them, improving the system of children's public health services and equality in a payment of adults - all this, is capable to make positive impact on the level of birthrate and employment growth among women".

The more number of states introduces laws, basing on the standards of gender equality elaborated by ILO. All the European Union member countries are oriented on the resolving of the strategic problem for gender equality achievement. The bases documents of the EU consist the regulations about ensuring the equal treatment concerning men and women.

Thus, “the idea of equality of men and women, based on concept about the universal human nature and the natural rights of the person, has opened the possibilities for society reforming aside the most democracy” [13, p. 177].

“From the point of view the realization of a gender equality policy, in the European Union member states are distinguished countries-leaders and countries-outsiders. However, present elaborations even in the countries-leaders, represent in a hole the fragmentary researches and decisions, instead of the *comprehensive approach*. It is require their further understanding and developing” [18, p. 52]. The gradual assertion in a public perception the principle of gender equality which is sustained legislatively at the recruitment of work, training, promoting in the career, in payment for the equal work, contribute to gender disparity reduction in the sphere of employment.

Nowadays, development countries in the field of gender equality is realized four approaches to the state social policy (see Table 1):

- *formally egalitarian approach*, corresponds to the liberal type of the state social policy oriented on the free market in which the concept of equality included the competitive equality. Within the frameworks of the given approach, the current legislation proclaims obligations of gender equality ensuring, however actually, the projects concerning promoting of women’s interests are realized only in the circumscribed degree. The examples are: USA, Canada, Australia, Great Britain and Ireland.

- *really egalitarian approach*, bases on socially-democratic principles of the welfare states which are characterized by universality of the social rights offered to all independently of sex, age, professional status when the state really promotes activity of the respective institutes. The example is Sweden which represents the universal state. In the recognition of equality between men and women this country has outrun all.

Table 1. Gender equality regulation models and its implementation in social policy of different countries

| <i>The social policy models</i> | "Individual earner-carer or dual earner" | "Separate Gender Roles or Market Oriented" | "Male bread-winner or General Family Support" | "Gathering bread-crumbs" |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <i>Political tendency</i> | Social-democratic | Liberal | Corporatist/conservative | Corporatist-left |
| <i>Location</i> | Scandinavian countries | Anglo-Saxon countries: USA, Canada, Australia, Great Britain and Ireland | Continental Europe: Germany, Austria, France, Italy | Mediterranean Europe: Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece |
| <i>Conciliation model</i> | Combination | Choice | Continuity | Choice without support |
| <i>Ideology</i> | Shared tasks. Father=carer-earner. Mother=carer-earner. | "Flexible" division of labour. Husband=earner. Wife=0.5 earner/carerearner. | Husband=earner. Wife=carer | "Blurred" division of labour. Father=earner. Mother=carer/earner |
| <i>Entitlement</i> | Equal | Differentiated by gender role | Unequal among spouses | Unequal among spouses and among workers |
| <i>Recipient of benefits</i> | Individual | Men as family providers; Women as care givers | Head of household+supplements for dependants | Individual |
| <i>Employment policies</i> | Aimed at both sexes. Full time/part-time. Public/private sector. | Segmented. Full time/Part-time. | Priority to the main income provider; Flexibility for secondary earners. | Dualistic. Core/periphery. No flexible arrangements. |
| <i>Female labour force participation</i> | High. High continuity. Long part-time work. | Middle/high. High discontinuity. Short/medium and part-time work. | Middle/low. High discontinuity. Short-time work. | Low. High continuity. Full-time. |
| <i>Sphere of care</i> | Strong state involvement. | Weak state involvement. | Partial state involvement. | Weak state involvement. |
| <i>Caring work</i> | Paid component to care givers in the home and outside the home. | Paid component to care givers in the home. | Paid component to care givers in the home. | Unpaid. |
| <i>The realization of social policy in the domain of gender equality</i> | Really egalitarian approach | Formally egalitarian approach | Approach of traditional family values | |

Source: developed by the author using [1, p.34-35]; [15, p.161]; [12, p.112]; [18, p.59]

“The state, in this case, to take upon oneself not only reimbursement of costs linked with failures of market system, but also the services which are necessary for forming and support of the household removes beyond the bounds of the market principles actions” [1, p. 112]. In the Scandinavian countries “the prevailing number of women has work (often it’s the part time work), and public care of children is in accessible overflow” [4, p. 164].

- *approach of traditional family values* corresponds to conservative or corporative type, not providing assistance service for working women (ex.: Japan). Germany is a good example of the “corporative welfare states which saving the status distinctions bank on traditional family; if necessary, however, the state was ready to change by itself the market for rendering assistance requiring” [1, p. 107].

- *approach of economic developing*, including some countries of the former socialist camp of the Eastern Europe, assuming availability of a great number of help services for working women which, however, are not attaching yet legislatively. The example is Hungary [12].

In the state policy of the increasing number of civilized countries, one of the priority directions becomes the strategy of real egalitarian approach. It seems, that the reasonable combination aforesaid strategies link to the help to working women - protective and egalitarian will allow to form the most flexible policy of society in overcoming of gender differences, will correct arising acute problems in process of achievement of equal social possibilities of men and women.

Civilized countries admit that the society transformation (its legal, political, economic institutes) is the longer process. “Political parties, educational system, NGO’s, trade unions, church - all should bear responsibility within the frameworks of their organizations for regular assistance of women’s participating, from top to bottom. It will require time. It does not happen for a night, or in a year or five years; it will require one or two generations for realization of existing change” [8, p. 93].

Conclusion

The conclusion is that although slowly, but transformation of society perceptions and views concerning division of functions between men and women is going on. The social conditions which have generated habitual traditions, stereotypes of the patriarchal attitude to woman are destroyed.

The society moves in the direction from patriarchal to egalitarian type of gender relations which assumes the gender equality, equality of social possibilities, equality of results, harmonization of relations between men and women. The American prolific author, journalist and historian - Garry Wills claims: “For last 40 years the status of women has changed so, as did not change for last four centuries. Any changes has not mentioned so deeply social sphere. Attitudes of wife to husband, mother to child, women to women have changed. That’s enough to consider the given period as revolutionary period in which half of humanity resources has been liberated” [7, p. 134].

The searching of methodological criteria for realization of optimum model of the sensitive gender policy remains actual and for the Republic of Moldova. Many researches from the countries with transitive economy consider that “the task of the moment is the working on creation of the national mechanism”.

Obviously, for its realization at the state level the accurate national policy, availability corresponding institutional structures, and also coordinating efforts of the government and the international organizations are required. For realization of such policy it is necessary to study deeply and critically to comprehend foreign experience in the employment sphere and to take into account not only its advantages, but also disadvantages. The consequences of the accepted decisions are necessary foresee. It is necessary to take into account that “much success in developing of social life is achieve societies, which think strategic, on prospect, take care of the future generations, guided by national interests looked through far in time” [16, p. 13].

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