

GENDER PROFILE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

(based on domestic publications, 1993-2003)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In the spirit of the World Bank Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming (2002) this study examines the gender profile of the Russian Federation through a comprehensive review of the current literature on the conditions of women and men and on the gender disparities in a number of indicators (health, education, employment and the labor market, legislation, and political participation). It is intended as an input into the implementation of the Gender Strategy of the Russian Federation by providing a roadmap to major gender inequalities in the country. The report does not provide answers or suggest actions to be taken to reduce gender inequality. Rather, it pinpoints the areas in which such inequality exists and attempts to estimate its consequences.

2. The evolution of the Russian Federation's economy and political system over the last decade was associated with structural changes in all spheres of social, economic and political life. This process opened up new development prospects but at the same time generated a variety of new problems including growing gender inequality ³/₄ despite the principle of gender equality proclaimed in the Russian Federation Constitution of 1993. In the Russian Federation, the gender issues that became especially acute over the decade, as the deterioration of women's social and economic position, the reduced possibility of women's participation in decision making, and the feminization of poverty, were accompanied by some striking issues affecting men. A dramatic decline in men's average life expectancy, a tendency to men's disadvantage in educational attainment, worsening in working conditions, the frequent breaches of men's paternal rights and other negative trends with respect to men's position ³/₄ all make up a strong factor affecting women's position as well and determining the overall gender situation in Russia.

3. The present report reviews 1,248 publications on gender issues produced in the Russian Federation throughout the transition decade ³/₄ a decade of reforms and new social order formation. The report focuses on the analysis of the distribution of gender roles in the socio-economic sphere, the gender differentiation of human development indicators, the gender aspect of legislation and law-enforcement practice, and gender aspects of political representation. It is established that there are very few publications on macro-level gender analysis, on the gender aspects of law enforcement, or on the assessment of Russian law and public policy from a gender perspective. Another finding was the lack of statistical data and information on, among other subjects, gender differentiation in wages and salaries, and in the division of household labor, and occupational segregation.

4. The Russian Federation's gender profile may be used to identify the risk groups among the female and male population cohorts that are especially vulnerable in the socioeconomic sense and that consequently require particular attention from the government. Moreover, the gender profile identifies key sectors in which gender asymmetry is particularly relevant for development

and poverty reduction in the Russian Federation. The effective inclusion of both women and men in the social and economic development processes would make it possible to put the country on a more sustainable path of development and to address major social concerns. In the chapters presented here, access to resources and opportunities as well as socioeconomic and cultural background factors are identified and discussed.

The Legislation and Enforcement of Gender

1.5 Despite the relatively few analysis of the Russian legislation from a gender perspective, the report provides a thorough description of the existing legal framework. The principle of gender equality is established in the constitution of the Russian Federation, Article 19 (part 3), which states: “Men and Women shall enjoy equal rights and freedom and shall have equal possibilities to exercise them.” In addition to the Constitution, the statutory principle of equality without distinction of gender is reinforced by the constitutions and charters of 34 out of the 89 subjects of the Russian Federation. Moreover, the impact of international legal standards, such as the UN Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on equal pay to men and women for equal labor, and the European Convention on Human Rights and Basic Freedoms on the Russian Federation’s legal system, is reviewed with a view to identifying and analyzing the legal framework of any gender discrimination and inequality in the country. The Russian Federation is a signatory of the international treaties relating to the prevention and elimination of any form of discrimination by gender ³/₄ the Civil Code (1994) guarantees general equality to all individuals entering into civil relations, and the Labor Code (2001) prohibits all forms of discrimination at any stage of labor relations and provides preventive mechanisms.

1.6 The legislative system, however is incomplete in some parts ³/₄ the electoral legislation does not ensure equality and does not promote an active participation for women in the political system. Furthermore, none of the political parties, have proposals for promoting the advancement of women in the power structures. The Family Legislation includes a number of regulations that do not evenly enforce formal or actual equality between spouses. All of these factors testify to a lack of consistency in pursuing gender sensitive policies. Most of the legislation on privatization, housing and ownership is formally gender neutral and does not contain provisions establishing direct or indirect limitations of rights by gender or direct or indirect privileges by gender. There are no data showing the relative participation of men and women in privatization, for example, or confirming any violations of the regulations during privatization. However, some studies have shown that privatization has led to an uneven distribution of property between the sexes. Women are not represented among the owners of private or privatized companies.

1.7 Several phenomena may contribute to the existing gender inequality: (i) the persistence of social factors and stereotypes; (ii) the low level of awareness among the population about their rights and the tools of legal protection; (iii) the low priority attached by the population to the principle of gender equality; and (iv) the low level of women’s participation in political campaigns and in decision making at different levels.

Gender Issues in Education

1.8 The educational achievements of Russian women match or exceed those of men. In recent years there is a trend toward feminization in higher education, as females account for 56 percent of the students. Enrollment rates for higher education testify to a steady upward trend in the female share of the total number of first-year students. The same pattern is present among post-graduate students, although women are still in the minority in this sphere. The educational attainment of women has been increasing continually, compared to that of men and this gap is likely to widen in the future.

1.9 Nevertheless, a particular problem affects the realization of women's human potential. The study finds that gender insensitivity, gender bias and stereotyping are still prevalent in the educational programs. Despite the egalitarian ideology that formally guarantees equal rights for men and women in educational attainment, a number of studies show that there is gender discrimination in access to education at all levels, from pre-school to university, affecting both rural and urban women. However, there are a very few studies on this issue. The impact of the "feminization" of school education on the development of "adequate masculinity" has, instead, been the focus of numerous studies. Some researchers affirm that, although women seek skills enhancement opportunities more frequently than men, women do not have the access that men have to programs for continuous education and professional skills enhancement.

1.10 Again, as in the case of the Russian legislative framework, the general population seems to be unaware of the existence of gender-based disparities in education and does not consider these disparities a real problem. Gender asymmetry and the corresponding unequal access to education are based on gender stereotypes. However, gender inequality may increase as more programs are offered for a fee. A potential threat to this plan is the segregation implicit in the distribution of public funds allocated for education: increases in enrollment rates are achieved by extending paid instruction in areas such as the humanities and the social sciences, and these areas are for the most part feminized. Currently, illiteracy is not an issue in the Russian Federation.

Health Issues

1.11 An overall evaluation of gender health issues for both women and men reveals that the large gaps in mortality and life expectancy between Russian women and men are prominent. Women's life expectancy exceeds that of men by 12 to 14 years. Male mortality is also greatest among the economically active age cohort. Some of the differences between male and female life expectancy and mortality can be accounted for by biological factors. However, socioeconomic factors are the greatest determinant in the disparate rates of male and female life expectancy and mortality. In the Russian Federation the factors which, in large part, account for these differences are: (i) differences in self preservation behaviors (men's behaviors differ from those of women); (ii) abuse of alcohol by men; (iii) shifts in the traditional gender roles; and (iv) external causes, such as the hygienic and sanitary conditions of employment.

1.12 Another factor in the measurement and analysis of gender asymmetry in public health is the cost to the population at large. The Russian Federation ranks extremely low, ninety-eighth, internationally, in terms of per capita spending on public health. In the Russian Federation the volume of public expenditures is more cumbersome for women than for men. Several factors help to account for this difference. One is that, women, owing to their reproductive functions, make more use of the health care structures: one of the top areas of expenditure is paid

pregnancy consultation and childbirth assistance. Also, as in many countries, the demands for medical services are higher among the older segment of the population, and in the Russian Federation, the higher life expectancy and lower mortality rate among women has meant that women are represented in much larger numbers among the older cohorts. In addition, as a result of the feminization of poverty, women have a reduced capacity to pay for medical services.

1.13 The reduction in public health expenditures has resulted in the closing of a many health clinics, primarily in small towns and rural areas. Consequently, there has been an increase in the distance between health institutions and place of residence. Survey data show clearly that women spend more time traveling to reach a health care center than men. Moreover, women living in rural areas make the lowest number of visits to health care centers. As a result, this group of women accounts for a relatively higher number of unassisted births and experiences a higher rate of mortality. The excessive pricing of medication has a gender asymmetry component as well. According to survey data, more and more men and women cannot afford to buy prescriptions medicines.

1.14 Although the life expectancy of women is longer than that of men, the health status of women has been found to be below that of men. Recent data support the finding that the individual health potential is lower for women in almost all age groups owing to high social and biological pressures in the family and in the workplace. Some studies have also shown that the indicators of psychological health are worse across the female cohorts.

1.15 An analysis of the indicators of the reproductive behavior of Russians presents a dramatic picture. The Russian Federation has always monitored some basic human development indicators such as maternal and infant mortality rates, abortion rates, and the health status of pregnant women. According to these data, Russia is among the countries with the highest maternal mortality rates (15 times higher than the rates in developed countries). According to some data, 84 percent of all cases of maternal mortality could have been averted. Infant mortality is also quite high. The study points out that the health standard for pregnant women has worsened over the past ten years.

1.16 Despite a gradual decrease in the abortion rate, abortion is still the most popular and most widely used method of contraception. The reasons given by experts to explain the persistence of such behavior are: (i) a lower value attributed to individual health; (ii) the lack of knowledge and education on family planning and contraception alternatives; and (iii) the consideration that abortion is a cheap birth control method.

1.17 Moreover, both women and men suffer reproductive health problems. Throughout the 1990s, the Russian Federation experienced a remarkable decline in fertility rates, to the point where Russia's fertility rate dropped from 1.73 to 1.17. Besides the health factors, the demographic process and the reproduction behavior in Russia have resulted in a single-child family model. Some research papers, that have been studied reproductive behaviors have shown that the prevailing factors influencing such decisions are not only socioeconomic factors but are mostly extra-economic factors – ethic, spiritual, national, and socio-psychological priorities (a sense of uncertainty about the future).

1.18 A review of the literature shows that there is a gender inequality and asymmetry process in the reproductive behavior of the Russian population that contributes to the trend, mentioned above, toward an increase in single-parent families and women are becoming solely responsible for child rearing. Among the main factors contributing to the high incidence of single-parent families are: an increase in the number of divorces; a decline in the number of re-marriages; out of wedlock births; and an increasing number of widows.

1.19 The legislation provides legal guidelines regarding the financial responsibility of the fathers in the case of divorce; however, it leaves the question of participation in childcare activities devoid of any regulation. Upon the parents' divorce, the child is usually placed in the custody of the mother and the father's responsibility is reduced to the alimony payment. According to some studies, men rarely contribute financially and emotionally to the children's upbringing when they live in different households.

Gender Issues in Employment and Labour Market Participation and Gender Roles in Households

1.20 Detailed analyses of the labour force participation levels among women and men, of the gender differentials in earning power, work conditions and benefits and of the differential impact of the gender division of labor at home in women's and men's labor market choices are included in the report.

1.21 The transition years have seen important changes in employment and labor market participation resulting in a greater gender asymmetry: the number of working age women has been reduced dramatically (from 82 percent in 1992 to 74 percent in 2001); there is a more apparent, sectoral, vertical, and professional segregation; there is a wider wage gap, and there is more frequent discrimination against women seeking employment, and this is especially present in the private sector.

1.22 The decline in the number of employed men and women has been uneven by sector. In the more traditionally female-dominated sectors, the loss of female employment is significant.

1.23 The gender structure of employment by sector has also changed dramatically. However, according to official statistics, female-dominated sectors, such as education, health, and finance, remain feminized. The number of women employed in trade and catering has increased even more in the last decade, while the construction and manufacturing sectors face increasing "masculinization." Growth in the industrial sector is expected to favour and open new prospects for male employment, while the expected demographic decline will reduce the demand for female labor in female-dominated sectors such as primary education.

1.24 The persistence of horizontal and vertical segregation and the fact that women tend to fill vacancies of lower status and that require lesser skills, are reviewed. Women occupy fewer managerial jobs and more unskilled jobs throughout the market sectors. Women prefer to be employed by larger enterprises that guarantee stability but pay lower salaries, rather than working in smaller business associated with higher pay, but with less stability.

1.25 Discrimination against women increases when employers are unwilling to hire women. Many employers still believe that the burden of family responsibilities reduces the value of female labor.

1.26 Severe gender inequality exists in the exposure to adverse labor conditions. Though there are no exact data on the exposure of women and men to adverse working conditions, studies made available show negative trends with regard to female employment in harmful, hazardous and physically strenuous occupations in male-dominated fields. There are 600 different jobs and occupations that are legally restricted to women (defined as “socially handicapped”), thus limiting the access of women to more strenuous occupations. In 2001, men occupied 71 percent of the hazardous jobs in the manufacturing industries and 86 percent of the hazardous jobs in construction. Asymmetric employment leads to gender asymmetry in the incidence of on-the-job related injuries. The high rate of work-related deaths greatly affects the already high rate of male mortality.

1.27 Although, women reach a higher level of education than men, women are employed in lower-level positions and their career choices are still constrained by gender stereotypes. In addition, there is a substantial gender gap in wages: women, on average, earn 60-70 percent of what men earn. This gap is associated with several factors: (i) there is horizontal (sectoral) and vertical (intra-sectoral) segregation; (ii) there are higher wages in the primary industries (oil extraction, metals, etc.), predominantly male sectors; and (iii) in those sectors where working women prevail in numbers, men earn more than twice as much as women.

1.28 Women and men have similar unemployment rates. In almost every type of unemployment – official, hidden, forced, partial, or structural – women and men are represented equally; however, unemployment lasts longer for women than for men. This phenomenon is more acute in rural areas and in economically more depressed areas.

1.29 Gender roles in the Russian Federation are divided in a very traditional way: household work remains the domain of women, while paid employment is predominantly a male domain. As in many other countries, many women are becoming more involved in professional activities. Nevertheless, housework is still predominantly a women’s burden.

Poverty and Gender

1.30 The prevalent social and economic conditions in the Russian Federation give rise to poverty and deprivation for large groups and are the main exacerbating cause of gender asymmetry. Research clearly shows that the last decade has disproportionately affected men and women, which has resulted in an increasing trend toward the feminization of poverty. Some studies reported found that women accounted for 43.3 percent of the poor while men account for 29.4 percent. The feminization of poverty manifests itself not only in terms of female income poverty but also in the existence of extreme forms of poverty (the poorest of the poor).

1.31 The feminization of poverty is determined, according to experts, by a complex set of socio-demographic factors: (i) women are more vulnerable to poverty because of the low pay for their labor; (ii) women in 97 percent of cases are the sole earner in single-parent households; (iii)

women receive lower retirement benefits than men; and (iv) women receive lower wages in the feminized social sectors. The feminized sectors have traditionally offered lower salaries.

1.32 Analysts emphasize that a significant factor contributing to poverty is the existence of dependents in the household. Findings from current research suggest that, although a child's needs represent a priority for both parents, women are more willing to reduce their own consumption to provide for the needs of the child (and other household members) which leads to an increase in gender inequality in the distribution of the poverty burden.

1.33 The share of unpaid work performed by women in caring for sick family members or for pre-school children tends upward, putting working age women in a more vulnerable position. The financial unavailability of social services (i.e. childcare) makes children, disabled relatives and elderly people dependent on women's care, which reduces therefore, women's professional mobility. Women in the poorest households constitute the most vulnerable group.

1.34 The socio-demographic groups most at risk for poverty are: women heading one-parent households; women in large families; disabled women or women with children with disabilities; unemployed women; homeless women and men; criminal men; individuals affected by tuberculosis; alcoholics and drug addicts; vagrant boys; and rural men.

Women in Politics, Female-Sensitive Politics

1.35 The transitional phase has affected women's political status in two ways. On the one hand, the process of democratization, known as perestroika, caused researchers to re-examine the role of women and their position in society. On the other hand, however, in the process of the reform, women tended to be omitted from consideration for political participation and political power. International pressure, however, is pressing Russia to become a more open state, more sensitive to gender issues.

1.36 Even though the historical experience and examples from other countries have pointed out the high correlation between women's active participation in political life and the implementation of better social protection policies, in Russia women are still excluded from political and state authority. In the 1993 parliamentary elections, for example, women won 13.5 percent of the seats in the Duma but in the 1999 and the 2003 convocations of the Duma, the number of female deputies had decreased.

1.37 Research has identified numerous political and psychological obstacles that women encounter which mould their interests in the political arena, such as: (i) the dominant masculine model of political life; (ii) the limited access to political networks; (iii) the lack of leadership training; (iv) gender ideology and stereotypes (imposed models of behaviour assigned to men and women); (v) lack of self-confidence on the part of women, (vi) women's image as presented in the mass media; (vii) women's perception of politics as a "dirty business"; and (viii) the cultural tradition that portrays women as "keepers and spirits of the family heart."

1.38 One of the main hindrances to political careers for women is their low social and economic status and their lack of access to campaign funds. Another barrier comes from the poor role and lack of power of women NGOs and the ineffective cooperation of such organizations

with the broader civil society. Some experts point to the need to raise the level of awareness among young cohorts and to reach out and involve more women in these activities.

1.39 Although the Russian Federation proclaims gender equality, the lack of participation of women in the political process undermines the embedding of the principles of democracy in the society and raises obstacles to the attainment of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. An important conclusion is that while men in Russia, in guiding the political process, have passed laws with the intent of benefiting women, these new laws, do not, in fact, always reflect the real interest of women.

1.40 As research shows, women are the primary subjects in initiating laws to protect themselves, their children's and their families' interests in such areas as social security, childcare, health and education. The government policy is formally aimed at strengthening women's social and economic status. Between 1993 and 1996 the government issued a number of presidential edicts and resolutions intended to improve the position of women as a key priority of the government's social and economic policy. Over the same period, a Conceptual Document aimed at improving the status of women in Russia and a National Action Plan for the Improvement of Women's Position and the Enhancement of their Role in the Society were issued. In 1996 numerous agencies and committees were set up to deal with women's issues.

1.41 But such agencies and documents, have two main drawbacks: first, they are mostly declarative in nature and are not supported by sufficient financial means, and second, they are aimed at "improving the position of women" rather than at achieving true gender equality.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The evolution of Russia's economy and political system over the last decade was associated with structural changes in all spheres of life, which opened up new development prospects but at the same time generated a variety of new problems -- a major problem being the growth of gender inequality. This latter process is taking place despite the principle of gender equality in the Russian Federation Constitution of 1993.¹ All countries are facing a certain degree of gender asymmetry in employment and in the labor market, as well as unequal access to resources, including property, education, and health services and gender disparity in the enjoyment of rights and the expression of political interests. The Russian situation is to some extent unique because the gender issues that became especially acute over the decade, such as the deterioration of women's social and economic position, the reduced possibility of participating in decision making, and the feminization of poverty, were accompanied by pronounced "male" problems. These male gender issues include a very low life expectancy, an increasing gap in educational attainment; the high prevalence of asocial behavior, the frequent violation of fathers' rights, particularly in a divorce situation, and a general devaluation of fatherhood.

1.2 As recent development history clearly demonstrates, gender issues create serious obstacles to sustainable economic, social and political development, and frustrate efforts to eliminate poverty. This is why any further reform in Russia must comprise a gender component, reflecting the fact that men and women are not exposed to new social and economic risks in the same way. The effective inclusion of both men and women in the social and economic development processes, taking gender specifics into account, would make it possible to put the country on a more sustainable development path and to address major social concerns.

1.3 The main purpose of this report is to review the gender issues presently facing Russian society. The report will also serve as background information for identifying the most severe problems affecting men and women and for developing gender policy solutions that focus on gender equality and poverty reduction in the Russian Federation. No attempt is made to provide answers regarding the kind of action that must be taken to reduce gender inequality. Rather, the report pinpoints the areas where such inequality exists and attempts to estimate its consequences. This report is intended for senior officials and staff members of Russian Federation government bodies at all levels, and for scholars, civil society representatives, experts, journalists, and officials representing international organizations concerned with gender issues.

1.4 The study addressed gender issues in legislation and enforcement, reviewed gender roles in the socioeconomic area, focused on gender-related differences in human development

¹ "Men and women have equal rights and freedoms and equal opportunities for their realization" (Article 19, Part 3).

indicators, and assessed women's representation in the country's political system. The study is based on an analysis of local research literature and publications in the Russian mass media over the past ten years (1993-2003). In the course of the study, consultants used 1,248 sources, the bulk of which are research papers on gender issues.

1.5 Analysis of Russian gender literature has shown that many of the reviewed publications are focused on the participation of men and women in paid employment, the gender aspects of unemployment, family studies, household dynamics, marital relationships and gender roles. Other issues that received sufficient coverage include gender specifics in health standards, the health and demographic aspects of national development, poverty, and the measurement of poverty feminization. The review found that there are very few publications based on macro-level gender research, the gender income gap (including wage differentials), and the status of fatherhood. In addition, issues such as the gender aspects of law enforcement, the assessment of Russian law and public policy from a gender perspective, and the policies of different parties with respect to men and women are insufficiently covered. The overall inattention to gender research, inadequate funding and the limited number of scholars specializing in this thematic area account for a pronounced shortage of fundamental studies. The literature review also shows that the most lively debate is focused on the way women's reproductive and housekeeping burdens affect their labor market competitiveness and equal opportunities, and also on the practice of equal versus special treatment of working women.

1.6 Lack of statistical information on the constraints and difficulties faced by Russian men and women is one of the reasons why many gender issues are not sufficiently studied. This lack of statistical information primarily concerns gender differentiations in wages and salaries, access to key resources, division of household labor, and occupational segregation. Generally, Russian academic literature tends to give good coverage of gender issues that are reflected in official gender statistics and Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS) data — which means that the scope of national gender statistics should be expanded.

1.7 In terms of gender issues in legislation and enforcement, the study has demonstrated that the principle of gender equality is promoted by the Constitution of the Russian Federation as well as by many federal laws. In reality, however, deviations from this principle are widespread, and women suffer more than men from violations of their rights. Discrimination is prohibited by law, but no single legislative act contains a definition of this concept, procedural guarantees against discrimination are not sufficient, and there is no anti-discrimination legislation. The existing judicial, criminal and administrative remedies for the prevention of gender discrimination cannot be applied in practice. Gender stereotypes propagated through the mass media contribute to the persistence of discrimination.

1.8 Russian labor law generally conforms with international norms and does not contain discriminating provisions. But ensuring gender equality in the labor market is difficult in practice. The number and severity of violations affecting women (in the public sector as well as the private sector) is indicative of a major social problem. The constitutional right of men and women to engage in legal economic activity is endorsed by laws of the Russian Federation. Men and women have equal rights in the inheritance, ownership, use and disposition of property. Although privatization laws are gender neutral, multiple deviations from privatization rules have been found to adversely affect women. Privatization has led to the uneven distribution of

property between the sexes. Most of the provisions of the Russian Federation Family Code are based on the presumption of equal rights for spouses; certain provisions are gender-asymmetric, as they take into account the different physiology of men and women, as well as the related social consequences. Spouses enjoy equal proprietary rights, but in a number of cases married women are deprived of those rights, while marriage contracts have not become common practice in Russia.

1.9 The study's review of gender roles in the socioeconomic area found the following issues to be of primary importance:

- Substantial changes that contributed to gender asymmetry took place in the spheres of employment and the labor market during the reform period, and the degree of horizontal and vertical segregation has increased.
- There remains a large gender pay gap (30-40 percent).
- Discrimination against women in employment has become increasingly widespread. The almost equal male and female unemployment rates (as estimated according to ILO standards) give the impression that the situation is neutral. However, women tend to be out of work for longer periods; in addition, there are gender-specific ways of moving in and out of unemployment.
- As before, the single major "male" problem in this area is gender asymmetry in employment in occupations that do not meet health and sanitary standards.

1.10 Gender roles in Russia are distributed in a traditional way: housework remains a predominantly female occupation, while paid employment is dominated by men. Reforms in the previous years were accompanied by "naturalization of the household," which resulted in increasingly heavy domestic and overall burdens falling on women. Women work more than three times as much as men in their households. Given the fact that women account for 48.5 percent of economy-wide employment, this means that they actually work double time. In rural and low-income families that depend on subsidiary plots or farms, women can face a "triple" working day. As the value of housework (reproductive work) is not recognized by the society, women suffer losses in employment and pension entitlements. The deterioration in living standards and human development potential that took place during the reform decade led to the feminization of poverty.

1.11 In terms of human development indicators, Russian women's achievements match or even exceed those of men. The major problems are associated with the realization of women's human potential. On average, women have a higher educational attainment than men. However, there is evidence of persistent and increasing hidden discrimination against women as regards access to education at all levels. The "male" problem here is that men continue to fall behind women in educational outcomes.

1.12 Gender inequalities in the area of public health are usually studied within the context of an overall crisis in the national health care system, with medical services and pharmaceuticals becoming too expensive for large population groups. For a number of reasons, the size of public health spending has more important consequences for women than for men. Federal programs presently cover only 20 percent of the expenditures necessary to protect women's health. The

reproductive health of the Russian population has fallen to a critical level. Russia ranks among the countries with the highest infant and maternal mortality. The health of pregnant women is deteriorating, which negatively affects child health. Today, one out of three men and every other woman suffers from reproductive system disorders, and abortion is still the most popular method of birth control.

1.13 One of the major male gender problems in Russia is the low life expectancy level of men (59 years) and the huge gender gap (13 years) in life expectancy. This situation results primarily from social and economic factors. But the ongoing public health reform does not include measures to ensure the health protection of men as a gender group. The relative longevity of women correlates with their lower individual health potential (by 10 percent, compared with men), an outcome of an excessive overall burden. Women increasingly assume childbirth and parenting responsibilities, a tendency associated with the marginalization of men's social status. This tendency gives rise to new reproductive behavior patterns. In the case of divorce the child is normally placed in the custody of the mother. The father's role is often reduced to the payment of child support, and fatherhood is becoming devalued.

1.14 In terms of women's representation in the political system of the country, the study found that in the years of radical reform women tended to be estranged from political and state power. Attempts to smooth the gender asymmetry in decision making have been frustrated by political, socioeconomic, and socio-cultural obstacles. Experts warn that in a situation in which women are under-represented in areas of decision making, public policy will lack a gender component and social policies in general will be weakened. The exclusion of women from participation in government and in elected bodies of power will not serve the goal of balancing the interests of the male and female populations.

1.15 Improving the social and economic status of women is a formal goal of Russian Federation government policy; however, official policy is not yet aimed at achieving gender equality, is not backed by sufficient resources, and, for the most part, remains declarative. The Ministry of Labor and Social Development has designed a Gender Strategy for the Russian Federation which defines the goals and objectives of the government's gender policy — a major step toward resolving the issues in question.

2. LEGISLATION AND THE ENFORCEMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY

2.1 This chapter provides an overview of the legal underpinnings for gender equality provided in the national legislation of the Russian Federation. The chapter is divided into three parts: (i) gender equality in the legislation of the Russian Federation; (ii) the legal and administrative mechanisms for preventing and eliminating gender discrimination; and (iii) social barriers to gender equality.

A. GENDER EQUALITY IN THE LEGISLATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION²

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

2.2 General provisions for the equality of all citizens before the law are given in the Constitution. Article 6 stipulates that "every citizen of the Russian Federation shall enjoy full rights and freedoms on its territory and shall perform equal duties determined by the Constitution of the Russian Federation" (551, Article 6). Article 19 stipulates that "all citizens shall be equal before law and court" (Box 2.1). In addition, the Constitution guarantees men and women the right to remuneration for labor screened from any forms of discrimination and not below the minimum pay established by the Federal Law, and the right to protection against unemployment.³ Article 38 declares that both parents equally share the right to and responsibility for nurturing and childcare activities.⁴

Box 2.1: The Constitution of the Russian Federation - Article 19

1. All people shall be equal before the law and court.
2. The State shall guarantee the equality of rights and freedoms of man and citizen, regardless of sex, race, nationality, origin, property and official status, place of residence, religion, convictions, membership in public associations, and also of other circumstances. All forms of circumscriptions of human rights on social, racial, linguistic or religious grounds shall be banned.
3. Man and woman shall enjoy equal rights and freedoms and shall have equal possibilities to exercise them.

² The legislation of the Russian Federation includes legislative acts in three categories: (i) legislative acts providing a direct guarantee of gender equality; (ii) gender neutral provisions; and (iii) legislative acts that do not contain any provisions regarding the equality of rights between men and women.

³ 551, Article 37, part 3.

⁴ 205, 1.

2.3 In addition to the provisions of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the statutory principle of equality without distinction of gender is further reinforced by constitutions and charters in force in the territory of 34 out of 89 subjects of the Russian Federation.⁵

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND THE RUSSIAN LEGAL SYSTEM

2.4 Part 4 of Article 15 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation stipulates that "the universally accepted principles and norms of the International Law and international treaties effected by the Russian Federation constitute an integral part of its legal system. If the international treaty ratified by the Russian Federation lays down regulations other than those established by the law, then the provisions of the international treaty are enforced." Russia is a party to the overwhelming majority of the international treaties relating to the prevention and elimination of discrimination, including discrimination by gender, such as the following:

- The International Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights (1996)
- The International Covenant on civil and political rights (1996) and an optional protocol attached to it (1966)
- The UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (1979)
- The International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention № 100 on equal pay to men and women for equal labor (1951),
- The UNESCO Convention on combating discrimination in education (1960)
- The ILO Convention № 111 regarding discrimination in labor and employment (1958)
- The ILO Convention № 156 on equal treatment and equal opportunities for working men and women: employees with caring responsibilities (1981)
- The European Convention on Human Rights and Basic Freedoms (1950) and others.

The Russian Federation has signed, but not yet ratified, the twelfth Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights and Basic Freedoms (2000) [778, 1].

THE EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION PRINCIPLES AND PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE CURRENT LEGISLATION

2.5 The provisions of the Constitution of the Russian Federation for equal rights without distinction regarding gender are reproduced in a number of legislative acts: for example, the Civil Code (1994) guarantees general equality for all individuals entering into civil relations, the Family Code (1995) imposes a ban on the restriction of marriage and family rights on the basis of social, racial, national (ethnic), language and religious characteristics, and the Criminal Code (1996) confirms the equality of all citizens before the law.⁶ The Labor Code (2001) prohibits all

⁵ 205, 244.

⁶ Additional legislative acts include: the Law of the Russian Federation "On the citizenship of the Russian Federation" (1991) guarantees equal access to citizenship for men and women; the Laws of the Russian Federation "On health insurance for citizens of the Russian Federation" (1991) and "the fundamentals of the legislation of the Russian Federation on the health protection of citizens" (1993) provide men and women with equal access to healthcare services; the Laws of the Russian Federation "On forced migrants" (1993) and "On refugees" (1993) declare equal access for men and women to the corresponding protective mechanisms; the Laws "On the fundamentals of government service in the Russian Federation" (1995) and "On the fundamentals of municipal

forms of discrimination at any stage of labor relations and provides preventive and protective mechanisms. Article 3 of the Code contains a proviso that the ascertainment of distinctions, exceptions, preferences, as well as the restriction of rights enjoyed by employees, which are determined by regulations for this kind of labor, stipulated by the Federal Law or conditioned by the specific concern of the state for individuals in need of enhanced social defense and legal protection, cannot be identified as discrimination.

The Electoral Legislation

2.6 The electoral legislation of the Russian Federation is gender neutral in character; it does not ensure equality and does not promote conditions for women's active participation in the political system of the country. As the transformation of the electoral system is still under way, experts think it advisable to supplement the Constitution of the Russian Federation with a special section entitled "The Electoral System," which would warrant special guarantees of electoral rights and opportunities for women. Analysis of the impact of electoral systems on gender equality, as well as on women's representation in elective bodies, proves the advantage of a mixed system. Within the framework of this system, women could participate in elections either through membership in women's electoral associations and blocs or in political parties [205, 86]. Experts consider it advisable for Russia to introduce legal regulations for the participation of female candidates in electoral campaigns waged by political parties and movements (i.e., it is suggested that parties be supplied with legal recommendations on the introduction of party quotas [205, 87]). None of the existing political parties (except for the Social Democratic party headed by M.S. Gorbachev) advances proposals for women's promotion to power structures; neither do they provide registered regulations on women's representation in the party leadership. Some experts argue that the Law "On Political Parties" should reinforce a demand to amend the program and charter documents of political organizations with a section that would lay down regulations for women's representation in the party leadership and would determine party quotas for women's representation in electoral lists of nominees for the seats of deputies in the State Duma or in the legislative and executive bodies in the subjects of the Russian Federation. It is also necessary to ensure political, institutional and financial guarantees that would secure the equal participation of female nominees in electoral campaigns [205, 84].

The Family Legislation.

2.7 From the viewpoint of adjective law, the existing family legislation is based on the strict observance of the equality principle in the relations between spouses. The regulations of the Family Code are for the most part gender neutral and proceed from the assumption that spouses are treated as equal partners. Cases of gender equality infringement are few in number, and are usually conditioned by specific circumstances. Article 49 of the Family Code may exemplify this statement, as it provides for the establishment of paternity by legal procedure [205, 132]. At the same time, the Family Code contains a number of provisions that entail the violation of gender equality without providing sufficient grounds for such violation, or providing arguments to

service in the Russian Federation" (1998) declare equal access for men and women to governmental and municipal services; the Law of the Russian Federation "On police service" (1991) declares the principle of equal protection of human and civil rights without the distinction of gender; and the Law of the Russian Federation "On education" (192) reinforces equal access of girls/females and boys/males to education, although it does not guarantee equal treatment in the instruction process.

support it. Such revisions include the circumscription of a husband's right to dissolve a marriage during the pregnancy period of his wife and a year after the birth of a child, stipulated by Article 17 of the Family Code, or the mandatory responsibility to support a wife (a former wife) during the pregnancy period and for three years after the birth of a child imposed on a husband by Articles 89 and 90 of the Family Code [205, 132].

2.8 In conformity with Article 34 of the Family Code, property acquired during marriage is in the joint ownership of spouses.⁷ The spouse who has performed household or childcare responsibilities, or has had no independent income for other valid reasons during marriage, also enjoys the right to common property acquired during marriage. But experts pinpoint certain discrepancies between the legally guaranteed equality of spouses and the existing opportunities for the execution of this right. For example, paragraph 1 of Article 89 of the Family Code stipulates that the spouses undertake an obligation to provide financial support for each other. This responsibility is equally imposed on husband and wife, and the law makes no distinction between them in this matter except in some particular cases.⁸ It goes without saying that mutual aid and support between spouses is an indispensable characteristic of a normally functioning family union. But the aforementioned regulation is declarative in essence, as, in conformity with the existing legislation, a married woman who has decided to devote herself to household and childcare responsibilities, according to Russian family legislation, has no right to claim support from her husband exclusively by virtue of marital status either during marriage or in case of divorce [205, 116].

2.9 In principle, the Family Code as amended in 1995 provided spouses with an opportunity to regulate their property relations at their sole discretion through concluding an alimony agreement or a marriage contract. Experts point out that the existing legal rules of concluding such an agreement invalidate the marriage contract in practical application [205, 122]. The practical experience of concluding marriage contracts has not spread widely, to date. About 40 percent of citizens, especially in small Russian towns, are unaware of this opportunity, and those who are familiar with it tend to regard a marriage contract as "a commercial deal, which destroys a family." At the same time, women are more prone to regard a marriage contract as "a good innovation, which guarantees spouses and their children the observance of their rights" [87, 47]. It is self-evident that the Russian legislation, at least as regards regulating the maintenance obligations between spouses, has been unprepared for "women's opting out of the labor market and returning to the family," whatever the reasons for this phenomenon. The new socioeconomic environment requires re-examining the corresponding standards of the Family Code. The fact that family legislation includes a number of regulations that are uneven from the point of view of enforcing formal or actual equality between spouses testifies to a lack of consistency in pursuing gender sensitive policies [205, 132].

⁷ Property acquired during marriage (common property of the spouses) includes: income earned by either spouse, income received from entrepreneurial activity and accumulated as the outcome of intellectual activity, retirement benefits and social allowances, as well as other cash payments without special designation (payments of pecuniary aid, compensation for damages incurring disability through work related injuries or other health damages, and others). Common property of the spouses also includes: movable and real estate property, purchased with common earnings of the spouses; securities; shares; bank deposits; shares in capital invested in lending institutions or other commercial organizations, as well as any other forms of property acquired by spouses during marriage.

⁸ The husband's responsibility to provide for his wife during her pregnancy and for three years after the birth of a child as an exception to this rule has been considered above.

PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE RIGHTS

2.10 The Russian Federation legislation confirms and develops the right of its citizens (male and female) to conduct entrepreneurial activities and other kinds of economic activities, that are not forbidden by the law. Private property is protected by the law. Men and women have equal rights to own property, and to possess, use and dispose of property held in both individual and joint ownership. The law guarantees equal right of inheritance to men and women.

PRIVATIZATION GUIDELINES

2.11 The legislation laying down privatization guidelines is formally gender neutral, as it contains no provisions establishing direct or indirect limitations of rights by gender or establishing direct or indirect privileges by gender for the privatization of housing premises and production facilities.⁹ As 1999 approached, 44 percent of the housing fund had been privatized, but there are no data as to the gender composition of proprietors of housing premises [608, 28].

2.12 At the initial stage, small-scale privatization was carried out: that is, trading and consumer services enterprises were auctioned to the public (today 90 percent of such enterprises are in private possession). The second stage was the cheque (voucher) privatization and post-cheque privatization of medium and large enterprises. There are no statistics on the participation of men and women in the privatization of public and municipal enterprises in the Russian Federation. While making no claim to a representative sample, the authors of the research project carried out by the foundation "The Institute of Urban Economy" highlight numerous cases of the infringement of the rules set out for small-scale and voucher privatization that have confronted women. Most of the respondents openly claimed that men and women had unequal opportunities to implement their new social role of proprietors [608, 5-27]. The "Report on the Execution by the Russian Federation of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" points out that women's inequality in access to the services of financial and credit institutions, as well as the low representation of women in the structures of power, prevented women as a social group from taking full advantage of the privatization [278, 27]. The privatization brought about considerable inequality in the property rights enjoyed by women and added to discrimination against women in the economic sphere. As owners of private companies and privatized enterprises, women play an insignificant role relative to men. Women are practically absent from elite groups disposing of property [608, 45].

THE LABOR CODE

2.13 International labor regulations have a major impact on the development of Russian labor legislation.¹⁰ Many fundamental principles of international labor standards are reproduced in the

⁹ In conformity with the Law of the Russian Federation of July 4, 1991, "On the privatization of the housing fund," the state transferred residential premises occupied by citizens from the public and municipal housing fund into the gratuitous and voluntary ownership of citizens. In 1992, the Law of the Russian Federation "On the privatization of housing premises in the Russian Federation" was adopted.

¹⁰ Fifty Conventions of the ILO were ratified in the USSR. The Russian Federation prolonged the validity of 43 of them. In the second half of the 1990s the Russian Federation ratified another five ILO Conventions and the 1995 Protocol to Convention № 81 "On labor inspection," together with the UN Covenants on human rights and the European Convention on human rights.

wording of Russian legal regulations. During the past decade, the Code of Labor Regulations (CLR) of the Russian Federation has been amended repeatedly. According to experts, this was done with a view to improving the labor conditions of working women [1024, 110]. But these legal regulations have often been declarative in character, thanks to lax institutional arrangements for their practical enforcement.

2.14 Starting with February 1, 2002, a new Labor Code of the Russian Federation came into force. During the previous 80 years, the legal regulation of female labor by the state proceeded from the principle of equal rights guaranteed to men and women, though the recognition of woman's reproductive function and the resultant double burden by society fostered the enactment of special rights for working women conditioned by their maternity status. Unfortunately, these rights have often been (and often are) interpreted as benefits. But in international legislation, for example in CEDAW (Article 4.2), special measures targeted to maternity protection are treated neither as benefits nor as forms of discrimination, but are referred to as specific rights [544, 99] (see Boxes 2.2 and 2.3).

Box 2.2: ILO Conventions, Ratified in Different Years First by the USSR and Then by Russia as the Successor of the USSR, Which Regulate the Position of Russian Women in Employment

ILO Convention N 45 (1935) "On the use of Females' labor in underground work at mines of any kind"
ILO Convention N 100 (1951) "On equal pay to men and women for equal labor"
ILO Convention N 103 (1952) "On the protection of motherhood"
ILO Convention N 111 (1958) "On Discrimination in labor and employment"
ILO Convention N 156 (1981, ratified in 1997) "On equal treatment and opportunities for working men and women employees with caring responsibilities"

2.15 The Labor Code of 2002 reflects the declining regulatory role of the state as mandated by labor legislation, in favor of developing contractual relationships, with civil relations ousting labor relations, and individual relations prevailing over collective relations. The socially protective direction of the labor legislation, indispensable in the case of disparity in the economic force between the employer and the employee, is replaced by the idea of "balance of interests," which is justifiable only on the condition of the actual equality of the partners. But the disparity of the partners in employment is obvious, especially if the parties to partnership relations are an employer and a working woman with children, a pregnant employee, a single working mother, a parent with a child invalid, or any single breadwinner of the family [205, 141; 884, 77].

2.16 In commercial enterprises, the Labor Code is often disregarded as a binding document. This is why experts in issues of gender equality believe that in the transition to a market economy Russia should retain the regulating role of the state as the guarantor of human rights protection in the social and labor sphere. The switchover to the exclusive pattern of individual contractual relations of a civil character has proved inefficient, as these relations do not take into account either the specific nature of the subject of an agreement (the individual), or the actual inequality of the parties, which becomes especially obtrusive when the employer hires a woman who has caring responsibilities.

Box 2.3: Discrimination against Women

Discrimination against women implies any distinctions, deprivations or restrictions by gender, directed upon the digression or reducing to naught the ascertainment, utilization or execution by women (notwithstanding their family status) of human rights and basic freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civic or any other sphere.

The adoption by a state, party to the Convention, of temporary special measures aimed at the acceleration of establishing factual equity between men and women shall not be considered discriminatory in nature, but it shall on no account entail the reservation of discriminatory or differentiated standards; these measures shall be repealed upon the achievement of the goals of securing equal opportunities and equal treatment.

The adoption by a state, party to the Convention, of target measures aimed at the protection of motherhood shall not be considered discriminatory in nature (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Article 1.4).

2.17 Experts suggest that a number of new legal regulations should be introduced into the Labor Code. One of these regulations must guarantee the employee's right to the respect of personal dignity, to confidentiality, to privacy, to the non-intervention of the employer into intimate life, and last but not least, to protection from violence at the workplace. Experts suggested the withdrawal from the Labor Code of a corresponding article on the employer's right to dismiss any employee (including a pregnant woman and a woman with children under 14) on the grounds of having furnished deliberately false documents and information at the time of concluding a labor agreement, if the latter could have conditioned the refusal of an agreement (here, no doubt, belong concealed marriage, marital status, pregnancy and other circumstances of a personal character) [205, 173].

2.18 On the whole, practical experience indicates that the reproductive function and the caring responsibilities of a woman appear to exercise a much stronger influence on her opportunities for employment than does her professional efficiency. The findings of a questionnaire survey carried out by the Institute of Urban Economy suggest that females applying for vacant positions are often asked additional questions concerning their caring responsibilities and reproductive intentions. The survey indicated that at privatized enterprises employees with caring responsibilities are far less competitive than those employed in the low paid public and non-profit sectors [608, 82].

LEGISLATIVE GUIDELINES FOR THE PENSION SYSTEM

2.19 Gender equality is not guaranteed by the new pension system. On the one hand, the actual exclusion of non-insurance periods from the list of factors determining the amount of individual pension savings imposes considerable barriers to women's opportunities to add to their pension savings accounts. On the other hand, the existing pension formula for the calculation of insurance retirement benefits, which proceeds from a unified calculating residual life expectancy for both genders (against the background of actual difference in the statutory retirement age for men and women and of a dramatic gender disparity in real residual life expectancy), eventually results in the infringement of men's pension rights owing to the excessive redistribution of men's conditional pension savings in favor of women [90, 142,143].

2.20 Of particular importance is the problem of the notarization of ownership to pension entitlements in cases of divorce. In this connection there is danger of infringing on the rights of

women who have spent their working life, or a considerable part of it, doing unpaid work at home, or who had to choose part-time employment with low pay in an attempt to reconcile household and income-generating activities. The level of the maintenance of such women in old age will be determined exclusively by the goodwill of their husbands and children. These women have been forced to "earn zero pension entitlement," and, in conformity with the existing legislation, the pension savings accumulated by the other spouse and earned during their cohabitation of the spouses are not subject to division. The infringement on women's rights in the actuarial pension plan must be attenuated through an anti-discrimination gender policy in issues of labor and income [87, 109].

B. LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MECHANISMS FOR PREVENTING AND ELIMINATING GENDER DISCRIMINATION

DRAWBACKS OF THE CONCEPTUAL APPARATUS CURRENTLY IN USE

2.21 The literature review points out the fact that though many of the existing legislative acts advance gender equality principles and prohibit discrimination, it is difficult to obtain a clear view of how lawmakers and enforcement agencies interpret the notion of gender equality. Thus, the notions of "discrimination," "infringement of rights," and "legal or illegal distinctions" remain vague for professional lawyers and for the general public. The legislation makes a reticent provision that the generation of obstacles to the exercise by a citizen of his/her rights and freedoms, or the illegal imposition of some obligation on a citizen, should be equated with the infringement of rights. And in legal practice the term "infringement of rights" is further treated as a direct and straightforward obstruction to the exercise of particular rights by an individual of a social category. At the same time, illegally imposed distinctions (including distinctions by gender) which favor the occurrence of unfavorable circumstances for a corresponding individual or group of individuals is rarely treated as "discrimination" [778, 4-5]. That is why, although the Russian legislation provides men and women with equal rights to appeal in court against the infringement of their rights and freedoms, it is rarely possible to exercise this right in practice. Experts believe that it is necessary to elaborate and adopt a special-purpose anti-discrimination legislation, but unfortunately this task was missing from the agenda of the lawmaking process in the State Duma of the Russian Federation of the second (1996-99) and third (2000-03) convocations [778, 5].

2.22 It should be emphasized that a number of federal legislative acts in effect in the territory of the Russian Federation do not contain any special provisions concerning the equality of rights and the prohibition of discrimination, including discrimination by gender.¹¹

RELIEF THROUGH AND CRIMINAL CODE PROTECTIVE MECHANISMS FOR THE PREVENTION AND REVERSAL OF DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES

2.23 Most of the legal regulations concerning issues of discrimination that are in effect in the Russian Federation refer to property law, and the legislation clearly lacks sufficient procedural

¹¹ In this category are legislative acts such as the Housing Code (1983), the Law of the Russian Federation "On the fundamentals of the federal housing policy" (1992), the Federal Law "On the fundamentals of the federal policy in labor protection" (1999), which concern only issues of physical security.

safeguards against discrimination. There are certain tools of judicial, administrative and criminal relief, but they are inefficient and are applicable in theory rather than in practice. Theoretically, a person can obtain protection of his/her rights in court (Article 46 of the Constitution, Article 11 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation). For example, legislation protects the non-pecuniary benefits of citizens, including civil rights — the personal dignity of men and women, their right to freedom of movement, the inviolability of person and family.¹² This right can be executed in the following cases:

- The infringement of individual rights and freedoms
- Impediments to the execution of rights and freedoms
- The illegal imposition of obligations or responsibilities on the individual.

2.24 In several dozen cases the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation referred to Article 19 and paragraph 3 of Article 3 of the Constitution in delivering court judgments. None of the cases under trial were related to discrimination by ethnic identity, language, gender or religious identity, but concerned issues of equality on the basis of age, working record, profession, or place of residence. The legal position of the Constitutional Court regarding the interpretation of the corresponding constitutional provisions is of great importance. The Court interprets Article 19 as a general principle of law and not as an equitable right of a person to freedom from discrimination. According to the Court, the principle of equity in law entails the inadmissibility of making discretionary and ungrounded distinctions (Court ruling № 7-II of June 6, 1995). On the contrary, the Court ascertained that the imposition of grounded and legal preferences or restrictions does not signify violation of constitutional provisions (Court determination № 19-0 of December 27, 1999). For example, an exception or preference caused by the specific requirements of a particular occupation or vocation cannot be held discriminatory.¹³ Consequently, discrimination can be identified as making discretionary and ungrounded distinctions, infringing on personal rights and freedoms. The Constitutional Court also determined that Article 19 is applicable in cases in which distinctions are made between organizations or other legal entities if such distinctions are not justifiable and have a negative impact on individual rights and freedoms.¹⁴

2.25 As far as the judicial practice of courts of general jurisdiction is concerned, the Supreme Court and the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation have no information as to the number, geographic distribution and contents of civil cases relating to issues of discrimination for different causes submitted for these instances.¹⁵ No civil cases entailing judicial examination of discrimination issues by ethnic or gender identity have been reported. It can be concluded that judicial practice in cases relating to discrimination by ethnic or gender identity is lacking in the

¹² Articles 21, 22, 23, 27 of the Constitution, Articles 12 and 150 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation and others. The Legislative Act of 1993 "On court appeal against acts and judgments infringing citizens' rights and freedoms" and the corresponding provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure of the Russian Federation guarantee men and women equal rights to file a suit in court against actions or inaction on the part of state agencies, public associations and officials.

¹³ Court ruling № 8-II of May 24, 2001.

¹⁴ Court ruling № 18-II of December 23, 1999. According to the Court, the equity principle guaranteed by Article 19 applies not only to constitutional rights but also to all rights protected by the law (Court ruling № 13-II of October 24, 2000). [778]

¹⁵ That was the official answer to a request forwarded by a deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation on behalf of the Centre "Memorial" for Human Rights.

country as a whole [778, 7]. In certain cases the Supreme Court revoked decisions of lower courts that related to labor disputes, with reference to the anti-discrimination provisions of the Code of Labor Regulations of 1971. However, these cases did not relate to ethnic or gender discrimination, but only to discrimination by age [778, 8].

2.26 As was mentioned above, the Constitution and the Code of Civil Procedure of the Russian Federation stipulate that the ratified international agreements constitute an inalienable part of the Russian legal system. Theoretically, in conformity with the Resolution of the Plenary Session of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation of October 21, 1995, № 8, international agreements can be enforced immediately in court. But judges are poorly familiarized with international legislation on human rights, which is why the anti-discriminatory provisions of international instruments on human rights are almost never used in judicial practice [778, 9]. At the beginning of the 1990s, references to international labor standards for judgment rationale were practiced only by the Constitutional Court. At the present writing there have been few attempts to apply international standards in court proceedings on concrete labor cases by courts of general jurisdiction (Bulletin of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 1998, № 10). A distinctive feature of the practical application of these documents is that they are often unfamiliar to the general public. It should be noted that the experience of the Russian Federation proves that international legal standards are violated as often as Russian laws [1024, 108].

2.27 The Criminal Code imposes a liability for the "infringement of equality of rights enjoyed by an individual and a citizen" by reason of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, property or official status, place of residence, religious identity, convictions, and membership in public organizations, which has inflicted damage to the "rights and lawful interests" of a citizen (Article 136). Of particular importance is the fact that Article 136 defines criminal offence exclusively in the pecuniary, not the formal sense. Thus, a lawbreaker can be held answerable for a criminal charge only in a case of real damage inflicted upon a victim; directions to inflict discrimination, or incitement to discrimination, if they have not been made in public, are unpunishable. Article 136 is applied very rarely. According to official statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, three criminal charges were instituted on Article 136 in 1997, four charges in 1998, five charges in 1999 and one charge in 2000. Charges were laid against three people in 1997, two people in 1998, three people in 1999 and three people in 2000. Official statistics on legal proceedings and their outcomes have not been released in any form up to the present [778, 10].

2.28 In the Russian Federation the Public Prosecutor's Office is a separate independent state agency.¹⁶ There is no evidence as to the intervention by the Public Procurator's Office affiliates in cases of discrimination. As a rule, the Public Procurator's Office affiliates show little proclivity to institute prosecution of and to investigate cases on Articles 136 (infringement of equality of rights) and 282 (incitement of hostility) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation [778, 11].

¹⁶ Among other things, the Procurator is vested with the following duties: to execute general supervision over compliance with the Constitution and Federal legislation on the part of state and non-governmental bodies; to execute general supervision over the state of affairs pertaining to rights and freedoms of citizens; and to conduct an enquiry and appear for the prosecution in court.

ADMINISTRATIVE MECHANISMS AIMED AT THE PROTECTION OF RIGHTS

2.29 In addition to judicial mechanisms, there are administrative tools for the protection of citizens' rights. For example, the Labor Code stipulates that an employee is legally entitled to lodge a court complaint against discriminatory treatment, and the federal Labor Inspectorate (set up in 1994) is empowered to execute general control over labor conditions. But up to the present, there have been no precedents of these tools being used for the prevention or elimination of discrimination of certain kinds. This is why it is difficult to assess their efficiency [778, 6-7].

2.30 Other administrative tools do not entail control over the observance of citizens' rights. For example, the state Housing Inspectorate is empowered to exercise control over the observance of rights and legal interests enjoyed by citizens and the state in the housing sector. In practice, the Housing Inspectorate supervises the physical condition of residential buildings and its compliance with the officially set technical standards. The Ministry of Education has a supervisory subdivision that is held responsible only for the accreditation of educational institutions; but state and municipal education bodies do not have a direct responsibility for handling matters of discrimination. None of the legislative acts adopted in the Russian Federation explicitly provides for a special form of disciplinary responsibility of public officials for discriminatory behavior [778, 11].

2.31 In the Russian Federation there are no special agencies vested with the duties of the prevention and elimination of discrimination, either at the federal level or the regional level. Theoretically, the Ombudsman for the Russian Federation is empowered to investigate any complaint of the violation of human rights, but only in those cases in which all other available tools of legal protection have been exhausted, or in cases of large-scale and systemic violations. There is no evidence that the Ombudsman has tackled cases of discrimination on any grounds [279]. Up to the present, the personnel of the Ombudsman's office have shown no interest in these issues. Nor have the recently appointed regional ombudsmen shown any proclivity to tackle discrimination issues [778, 12].

2.32 In theory, the indemnification of caused harm and compensation to victims of discrimination is possible. For example, the Constitution stipulates that "the rights of victims of crime and abuse of office are protected by the law and the state provides victims with access to justice and compensation for the inflicted damage" (Article 52).¹⁷ At the same time, the existing legislation does not provide any special guarantees of the above-mentioned kind in cases of discriminatory treatment. In principle, if discriminatory treatment has caused damage, compensation for accrued damages and indemnification for lost profit can be recovered. Consequently, if discriminatory treatment has caused emotional pain, suffering and mental anguish to an individual, has inflicted damage to his/her honor and dignity, and business reputation, this individual can claim damages by a court action. But in practice these legal norms have never been utilized. Administrative tools for individual protection and compensation are not provided by the legislation [778, 12].

¹⁷ Furthermore, Article 53 stipulates that "every citizen has the right to claim compensation by the state for the damage inflicted as a result of illegal actions (or inaction) on the part of state executive bodies or their officials." Pecuniary losses can be compensated as usual by civil proceedings. Moral damage can require pecuniary compensation by court decision" (Articles 151, 1100 and 1101 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation).

2.33 The violation of the existing labor code regarding women's rights is becoming an acute problem. According to the statistics of the Labor Inspectorate, which is empowered to supervise the observance of labor rights enjoyed by employees, the number and gravity of offences to women testify to the existence of an important social problem (see Box 2.4). Among the most typical offences is the dismissal of pregnant women or women with children under three years of age, which is directly prohibited by the law. Women are employed to work overtime or at night without their consent and often without extra pay. It is a frequent practice for a female employee to be dismissed upon her reinstatement after a maternity and childcare leave, on the ground that her professional skills have degraded. There are cases of arrears in wages and delays in the payment of compensation for damage inflicted through work-related injuries and occupational diseases [884, 84]. According to the statistics of the Labor Inspectorate, negligence in labor safety with respect to women is registered on a large scale (which results in mounting occupational trauma among women, with a fatal outcome). A new phenomenon has come into existence: violence and homicide in the workplace. All these trends testify to numerous violations of the legislation, including cases relating to women's rights [884, 84].

Box 2.4: Results of the Inspections Conducted by the Federal Labor Inspectorate with a View to Ascertaining Conformity with Labor Legislation and Legislation on the Protection of Women's Labor, 2002

In 2002, in pursuance of the Executive Order by the Government of the Russian Federation of June 28, 2001, No. 855-p. "On the approval of the National Plan of action for improving women's position and enhancing their role in society for the period of 2001-2005," the branch offices of the Federal Labor Inspectorate carried out almost 58,000 inspections to ascertain conformity with the current labor legislation and legislation on the protection of women's labor. These inspections affected the disclosure and removal of over 34,000 different breaches.

The inspection findings indicated that the infringement of women's labor rights, including those pertaining to issues of labor protection, were multitudinous in nature, which was a frequent cause of adverse labor conditions thereof. Hereinafter is the list of breaches most commonly affected by employers in 2002:

- Abuse of Article 253 of the Labor Code of the Russian Federation. Employers violated the established restrictions on the use of females' labor in labor-intensive jobs and in hazardous and/or dangerous duties, as well as constraints on engaging them in prohibited duties connected with unattended lifting and transporting weights exceeding the marginal limits set for them.
- Article 256 of the Labor Code of the Russian Federation "On granting maternity leave": in a number of cases employers penalized females in their reinstatement rights for the same position (office) after the expiration of the term of maternity and parental leave.
- Abuse of Article 261 of the Labor Code of the Russian Federation "Guarantees to pregnant women and women with children in dissolving a labor agreement." The inspections carried out by State Labor Inspectorate discovered cases of illegal dismissal of working women on the initiative of enterprise administration.
- Article 213 of the Labor Code of the Russian Federation, "Medical examination of some categories of employees" and the Special Order of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation of 14.03.96 No. 90, "On the procedure of executing baseline and periodic medical examinations and medical regulations of admittance to exercising official duties."
- In many organizations which relied heavily on female labor infringement of Article 223 of the Labor Code of the Russian Federation was registered. Their offices lack or have in emergency conditions shower baths and washrooms, cloakrooms, restrooms and dining rooms, as well as females' personal hygiene rooms.
- A frequently registered case was the violation of the general norms of the labor legislation by employers. There were norms regulating the labor relations of all employees irrespective of their age and gender characteristics (arrears in payment and final settlement on discharge, encroachment on labor and resting conditions, improper execution of labor relations or failure to execute thereof, etc.)

2.34 On the basis of the aforementioned considerations, experts consider it advisable to enhance the stringency of law-enforcing procedures and supervisory mechanisms. To this end the following measures are required:

- To elaborate a special code of labor procedure
- To assign labor courts with a specially constituted bench (a judge, a representative acting on behalf of an employer and a trade union representative)
- To upgrade the efficiency of pre-trial anti-discriminatory bodies (the Labor Inspectorate and other public inspectorates, the Ombudsman for the Russian Federation)
- To widen the scope of application and the observance of collective social partnership agreements.

2.35 It should be borne in mind that the lack of a specially designed system of court protection in labor disputes, and the laxity of state, trade union and public control over compliance with legislation, restrict access to the corresponding institutes of social protection, especially for women [205, 175].

C. SOCIAL BARRIERS TO GENDER EQUALITY

2.36 Experts have come to the conclusion that, despite the declaration of equality between men and women in the legislation of the Russian Federation, in day-to-day practice women as a social group sustain heavier injuries than men from the breach of their civil, socioeconomic and family rights [29; 56; 86; 97; 278; 453; 498; 579; 580; 608; 638; 731; 743; 825; 867; 884; 916; 957; 1024]. Women's rights are violated in both the public and private sectors of the economy, and in the latter case the level of discrimination against women is higher.

TRADITIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF GENDER ROLES

2.37 Several social phenomena contribute to the existing gender inequality in economic and, consequently, human development. First of all, gender roles are defined so that the allocation of time among the different activities performed by men and women is carried out on a different scale. Women spend an inefficiently high proportion of their time in unpaid household and caring activities, while men over-specialize in paid public production activities. This results in the weakening of women's competitiveness in the labor market relative to men, as well as in lower pay and restricted access to economic resources [916, 70]. The existing implicit gender discrimination in many aspects of the socioeconomic and political life of the society often conditions the lower estimation of women's labor, even if women have equal abilities and professional training. As an individual's social status in modern society is often equal to that individual's ability to earn money, women suffer from serious undervaluation of their economic status. This situation persists despite the fact that women perform a larger share of total work and that in real life men's paid work is often the result of "cooperative production" which would have been nearly impossible if women did not stay home to take care of the children and perform household duties [916, 70-71]. Other social phenomena are discussed below.

LOW AWARENESS OF THE POPULATION OF THEIR RIGHTS AND THE MECHANISMS OF LEGAL PROTECTION

2.38 The low awareness on the part of the population as to their rights and the tools of legal protection is an important factor in the persisting gender inequality [174, 99-100; 86, 45-51, 834, 107-167]. A hindrance to the implementation of labor rights and guarantees for women is the low legal culture among employers and employees, as well as among trade union representatives acting as propagators and advocates of employees' rights. For example, it is uncommon for hired workers to believe that labor and social legislation applies only to the public sector. Most of the respondents covered by numerous surveys were convinced that private enterprises incur losses by providing maternity and sick leave benefits, etc. (in reality, this is not so: if the employer provides such benefits then the employer gets a relief for the corresponding sum of contributions to public off-budget social funds) [610, 151]. That is why one of the main targets today is the dissemination of legal education. At the same time, some experts believe that if employers become aware of their responsibility for mandatory compliance with legal labor regulations, they will be less inclined to employ women, which might reduce women's attractiveness as part of the labor force and could reduce their competitiveness [205, 170-174].

LOW PRIORITY ATTACHED BY THE POPULATION TO THE GENDER EQUALITY PRINCIPLE

2.39 Surveys indicate that the principle of equality as such is assigned a low value in Russia. For example, in the Rybinsk survey conducted on a representative sample by the Moscow Centre of Gender Studies (MCGS), 8.5 percent of men and 8.1 percent of women accorded importance to the right to equality. Equality had the lowest rating position in the list of rights as selected by the respondents. Experts point out that in modern Russia the issues of equality and social equity are ruled out from political discourse. The Russian liberal reformers of the 1990s are deliberately hostile to the idea of equality. V. Shlyapentoch argues that this position is conditioned by their belief that inequality is an indispensable condition for economic progress and democracy. Whatever the motives of the politicians, the exclusion of equality issues from discourse topics is particularly characteristic of the political environment in Russia. One can state with confidence that the lack of attention to gender equality issues on the part of state institutions is part of the general socio-cultural environment. A change of attitude to gender issues is hardly possible without a reversal of the dominant political ideology [1222, 257]. As far as the importance rating attached to women's equality is concerned, it averaged zero with the Rybinsk respondents: that is, none of the 897 respondents covered by the survey (irrespective of gender, age, education and social position) included it in the rank-rating list. The respondents' negative attitude to the idea of women's equality is evidently explained by women's traditional self-identification. The overwhelming majority of women in the group under survey (70 percent) primarily identify themselves with the family (i.e., one of the most significant self-identification criteria for them is that of sex and marital status [174, 90]).

2.40 Among social practices contributing to gender discrimination and gender inequality, the patriarchal traditions and standards typical of Russia are of particular importance [29; 56; 453; 731; 834]. The implementation of equal rights is confronted by stereotypes and the undervalued self-assessment of women, which conditions their lower participation in the labor force despite the fact that their educational level and professional skills are comparable to those of men.

2.41 An important factor contributing to the persistence of discriminatory regulations and procedures is the gender stereotypes and the openly sexist image of women portrayed by the mass media, as noted by numerous surveys [11; 171; 415].

2.42 Nonetheless, no special anti-discrimination programs, and no programs aimed at providing equal opportunities, have been developed in the country [778, 13]. Experts point out that an overall state strategy with respect to female issues should be designed as a separate venue of action [205, 85]. Of great importance for promoting positive changes to the legislation may and will be the gender expertise of both effective and prospective legislative regulations [4, 209-236].

WOMEN'S INSUFFICIENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AT ALL LEVELS

2.43 The following measures are of great importance in light of the above-mentioned considerations: the promotion of women's extended political participation in the decision-making process at all levels; and the securing of women's participation in representative and executive bodies at all levels. And an important part of the anti-discriminatory strategy, according to experts, is:

- The design of legislative regulations for the implementation of an effective quoting mechanism regarding senior management positions
- The extension of educational programs targeting females, with a view to training them for political and public activity for the entrepreneurial and managerial corps
- the introduction of open periodic contests for vacant positions with women's mandatory participation and their priority right to employment given equality in other conditions, as well as the wide use of collective agreements and contracts for these ends [205, 173].

2.44 The guarantee of women's equal participation in an electoral campaign is linked not only to the electoral formula currently in use. Of great importance is access to participation in elections for female candidates and the opportunity to compete on a fair basis. This should include financing schemes, access of candidates to the mass media and objective coverage of the campaign, supervision over totaling the poll, and the application of sanctions for the violation of "rules of the game" [205, 87]. Some argue that the procedure for the selection and nomination of candidates to deputy positions must be amended, so that barriers contributing to direct or indirect discrimination against women can be removed. It is important to secure equal opportunities for female candidates to conduct their pre-election campaign, and to ensure a timely reaction to statements of violation of the existing legislation [205, 88].

2.45 A specialized center for the training of women for participation in political public activity and governance should be set up. Another measure would be to initiate a selection of female leaders and to design promotion strategies for them. It is important to build a positive image of a woman politician. Special training programs for female nominees to executive and legislative bodies should be elaborated, which would include an overview and a summary of the electoral legislation and new electoral technologies, and the design of a strategy for an electoral campaign. A special training program for female parliamentarians should be developed [205, 88].

2.46 Removing discrimination against women is not accorded a high enough priority in present-day Russia, but the persistence of such discrimination may entail significant losses for society in the future [4, 212].

3. GENDER ISSUES IN EDUCATION

3.1 Women in Russia have a higher educational attainment than men. However, major problems arise at the stage of the practical implementation of women's educational potential. This chapter reviews gender issues in education, beginning with a discussion of the indicators of educational attainment for males and females. Problems of illiteracy, gender disparities in access to education, and gender asymmetry in the impact of expanding paid educational services are then taken up. The final section discusses the implementation of educational opportunities by males and females.

A. INDICATORS OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR MALES AND FEMALES

3.2 In the Soviet era, the task of raising the educational attainment of the population in secondary and special vocational education at all stages of the country's development was given strategic priority. As a result, over a limited time span this policy improved the basic indicators of human potential development and set them at relatively high values by international standards. In addition, it brought about a leveling of the indicators of educational attainment for males and females. During the completion of the first five-year plans, the process of involving females in all stages of vocational and technical education was particularly active. From 1927 to 1995 the number of female students in higher educational establishments increased 28 times, and the share of females in the overall number of students rose twice [100, 14-15].

3.3 The state egalitarian ideology formally guaranteed equal rights for men and women in educational attainment, and as it was free of charge women were granted access to a qualitative education. Toward the end of the 1980s women accounted for 90 percent of the teaching staff, 79 percent of the medical staff, 60 percent of engineers, and 40 percent of scientific workers. Currently, women are on a par with men by the basic indicators of educational attainment, and in some cases they outpace males [173, 286; 767, 51]. According to the micro-census of 1994, men with higher educational qualifications had a slight advantage over women (138 men and 130 women out of 1,000 people). This advantage was achieved solely because of the older age population cohorts (age 50 and older). In all age cohorts under 50, the share of women having higher educational qualifications exceeds that of men [100, 160]. Researchers note that during the past decade women have invariably outpaced men by educational attainment indicators. According to the census of 1989, 46 percent of working women and 34 percent of working men had a higher or secondary vocational education. By the mid-1990s this differential remained basically the same [202, 45; 645, 74; 1104, 27]. Toward the end of the century, the educational attainment of women (in the age cohort above 15) increased relative to that of men, and this gap is likely to widen over longer time spans [1049, 5-7]. Table 3.1 shows the educational attainment for males and females in this cohort for the period 1959-94.

3.4 Researchers ascertain differences in the strategies of general secondary educational attainment and vocational training between males and females. Girls tend to complete the course of comprehensive secondary education, and in their vocational training they show a marked proclivity to acquire best-quality education. On the contrary, boys typically choose a reversed educational strategy: during their general schooling they tend to drop out before completing secondary education and then transfer to vocational schooling, seeking vocational qualifications. The data on the enrollment rates in secondary schools for the 1996-97 academic year indicate that the ratio of boys to girls among pupils (the share of girls was 49.2 percent) approximated its gender-based counterpart calculated for all children in this age group only in the first to ninth forms. In senior school, girls were in the majority (in the tenth form the share of girls was 58.2 percent, and in the eleventh form it rose to 58.8 percent). The major reason for this gender-based asymmetry in enrollment in senior school was the intensive dropout rate after the ninth form, with a shift to the system of elementary vocational training [1049, 5-6].

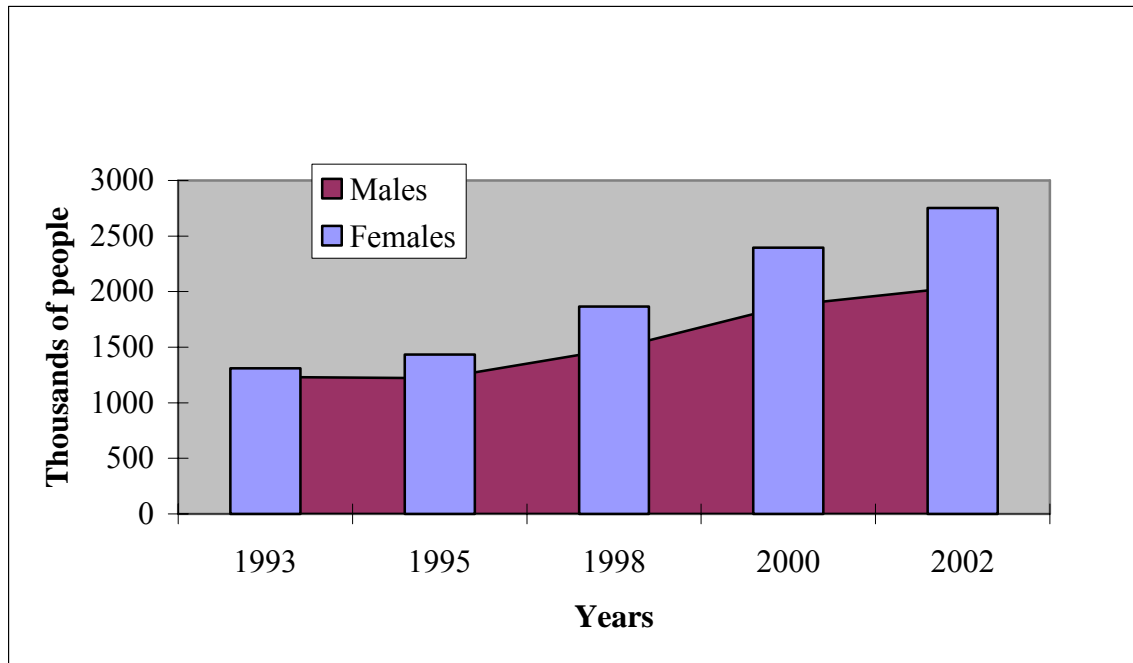
Table 3.1: Educational Attainment of Males and Females Over 15 Years of Age
(calculated for 1,000 people from the corresponding gender cohort, 1959-94)

Years	Higher education	Uncompleted higher education	Secondary vocational education	Completed secondary education	Basic comprehensive education	Elementary education	Those who have not completed the course of elementary education
Males							
1959	32	13	58	63	261	398	175
1970	57	17	78	126	325	288	106
1979	84	18	113	222	318	191	53
1989	117	17	166	323	231	119	27
1994	138	20	190	327	216	92	17
Females							
1959	23	11	58	64	214	239	391
1970	44	13	88	121	253	204	274
1979	71	16	138	190	235	180	169
1989	110	17	214	233	192	137	97
1994	130	17	242	250	190	107	64

Source: Goskomsta, based on 1994 micro-census, Goskomstat.

3.5 Studies completed in recent years indicate that there is a trend toward feminization in higher education, as females account for 56 percent of students. Statistics on the enrollment rates for higher educational establishments testify to a steady upward trend in the female share of the total number of first-year students [100, 17, 32-33]. The share of women in post-graduate education (working at their theses for a PhD or Doctor of Science degree) is also on the upswing, although women are still in the minority in this sphere. From 1996 to 2001, the share of women among post-graduate students rose from 43 percent to 45 percent, and among persons working for a doctoral degree it increased from 30 percent to 41 percent [1049, 8]. Figure 3.1 shows the numbers of male and female students in state universities over the period 1993-2002.

Figure 3.1: Numbers of Male and Female Students in State Universities, 1993-2002



3.2. Illiteracy

3.6 In the near future Russia may face another long forgotten problem in educational attainment, which will undoubtedly comprise a gender sensitive component: the growing illiteracy rate of the population. According to the micro-census of 1994, the illiteracy ratio across the female cohort was 2.6 percent, while across the male cohort it was 0.5 percent, which is not the highest value by international standards [357, 202]. However, given the unprecedented rise in the number of neglected children during the past decade, with the resultant number of street children (most of whom are boys) ranging from 400,000 to 1 million according to different expert estimates, the country will see a rise in the illiteracy rate over the next few years.

B. GENDER DISPARITY IN ACCESS TO EDUCATION

3.7 Despite the formally declared equality of rights for men and women in educational attainment, a number of surveys show gender discrimination in access to education. The findings of the sociological survey by the State Committee for Statistics of the USSR, which was conducted prior to the transition, indicated that women suffered from unequal treatment primarily in earnings and working conditions and lastly in educational attainment opportunities. Of particular importance is the fact that this tendency pertained to both urban and rural women [100, 18-19]. According to the female employment survey undertaken by CIRT RAS in 1994 in the cities of Ivanono and Nizhni Novgorod (covering over 2,000 respondents), only 20.6 percent of respondents pointed to gender-based discrimination in education, whereas the existence of

gender-based discrimination in employment was named by 60.2 percent and discrimination in professional promotion was acknowledged by 55.3 percent [817, 69].¹⁸

3.8 Representative surveys on the violation of equal treatment in education have not been conducted in Russia to date. Of the gender problems in this area, the most widely discussed is the impact of the "feminization" of school education on the development of "adequate masculinity" [742; 777]. A number of researchers point to problems linked to the feminization of the teaching staff in the systems of both secondary and higher education [228; 1214]. At the same time, throughout the transition period, escalating gender-based discrimination in this sphere has paralleled the tendency toward the feminization of higher education [173]. According to data in the 1960s, the enrollment chances in higher education for girls were 2.4 percent lower than those for boys, whereas in the 1980s they fell to 6.2 percent with a subsequent decrease in the 1990s to 12 percent [550]. Data on female students in higher education for the period 1927-2002 appear in Table 3.2.

3.9 Surveys point not only to women's stronger motivation for educational attainment, but also to the higher barriers to enrollment that they face. The level of aspired education for women is higher than that for men [173, 299]. According to the data of the All-Russia Centre for the Surveys of Public Opinion, the share of females ready to save money to pay for their own education is 20.7 percent as compared to 14.6 percent for males [1238, 81]. At the same time, one of the driving incentives for men to proceed with higher education in present-day Russia is their desire to escape military conscription [100, 34-35]. The available data on the structure of women's incentives toward the attainment of higher education present a mixed picture, as well. A survey conducted in St. Petersburg found that 50 percent of male and one-third of female respondents sided with the statement "Girls often seek higher education not really because they need it, but because they want to make a favorable impression in the eyes of their acquaintances"; 50 percent of women and one-third of men respondents disagreed [221, 204]. The findings of the sociological survey, conducted within the framework of the project "Terminology and Gender Research in Russia: Perspective Strategies and Technologies," indicated that, although in the rank ordering of young women's value priorities education rates high, about 40 percent of the female respondents believed that "a university degree and personal connections" are of primary importance in modern society, and only 30 percent claimed that it is knowledge that really matters. Among males, the share of those who placed knowledge first was 45 percent [301].

3.10 The survey of urban households found that the share of females who thought that their opportunities to obtain the desired level of education had decreased during the ten years of transition amounted to 71.5 percent for low-income families, 62.6 percent for medium-income families and 44.7 percent for families with a high level of income [1048]. According to the Rybinsk survey mentioned in the previous footnote, women were restricted in access to the desired post-secondary education. The desired level of education was obtained by 59.5 percent of

¹⁸ According to the sociological survey in Rybinsk in 1997, 77 percent of women and 82 percent of men claimed equal access to education, 20 percent pointed out that women did not enjoy equal rights, and half of them claimed that the situation regarding women's access to education had worsened since the outset of the reforms. At the same time, 35 percent of women and 43 percent of men pointed to equal treatment in business, 12 percent and 26 percent, respectively, claimed equal opportunities in politics, 40 percent and 50 percent, respectively, stated gender equality in the workplace, and 62 percent and 66 percent, respectively, declared equal treatment in the household [173, 306].

females, and 69.2 percent of males. The dominant reason for failure to obtain the desired educational level was a financially strained position (57 percent of women and 49 percent of men). Almost 8 percent of the females failed to obtain the desired level of education owing to the birth of a child; in the male cohort, laziness and poor school grades were scored as second in importance (18.3 percent) [173, 297].

3.11 A number of experts ascertain that women do not enjoy equal access to programs of continuing education and professional skills upgrading as compared to men. The underlying reasons given are factors of an objective (material) and a subjective nature – the first and foremost, the burden of parental and caring duties performed almost exclusively by women in the society, coupled with their household duties [56, 43; 173, 308; 888, 155]. According to some data, after marriage two-thirds of females pursued their labor activity at the original level of professional skills. The main obstacle to professional skills upgrading, according to women, was the severe time deficit generated by the lack of a comprehensive network of social services and, consequently, the excessive household burden shouldered by women. Only one-fourth of women (those having the best educational qualifications) are ready to take up a professional upgrading course [852]. Restricted access to skills enhancement programs reduces the quality of the female labor force.

Table 3.2: Female Students in Higher Education, 1927–2002

Indicators	The academic year								
	27/28	40/41	50/51	60/61	85/86	90/91	94/95	2000/01	01/02
Female enrollment in higher educational establishments, (thousands of people)	47	471	661	1042	1661	1427	1337	2395	2752
Percent of total enrollment	28	58	53	43	58	51	53	56	57
percent of females in total enrollment at higher educational establishments:									
in industry, construction	13	40	30	30	45	34	36	43	44.6
in agriculture	17	46	39	27	41	35	41	49	50.7
in economics and law	21	64	57	49	74	69	65	66	68.9
in health care	52	74	65	56	62	62	65	64	64.9
in public education, art	49	66	71	63	56	53	57	69	68.7

Source: Goskomstat.

3.12 At the same time, the survey data obtained by the Center for Labor Market Studies, Institute of Economy of the Russian Academy of Science (CIRT IERAS) indicate that women seek skills enhancement more frequently than men. Of those employed in the public sector, this intention was voiced by 62.2 percent of the women and 37.8 percent of the men, in the private sector, the corresponding figures were 58.9 percent for women and 41.1 percent for men. In the share of employees undergoing a training course with continued employment, women are on a par with men. In the public sector the share of workers participating in various educational programs was 10 percent for men and an equal share for women, whereas in the private sector

the corresponding rates were 10 percent for men and 15 percent for women, with women having a wider representation in different evening and extra-mural training courses [207, 54-56].

3.13 According to many authors, a significant threat to gender equality in education is posed by its segregation, which today has expanded most obtrusively in the system of vocational training. The existing professional and sectoral employment segregation has been shaped for many years in the sphere of vocational training, and a similar practice is prevails. Most steady in character is segregation by branches of training. On average, in the post-War period the share of females in the total number of students was 30-40 percent for agricultural sciences, 50-70 percent for economics and law, 55-60 percent for public health, and 60-70 percent for public education. In 1998-99, the share of females in the total number of students in the departments of the humanities and social sciences, and in the departments of economics and law, amounted to 67 percent and 7-percent, respectively. In mechanical engineering the number of women fell to 26 percent, and in radio engineering to 22 percent [100, 15-16, 42].

3.14 The problem of gender bias in the system of vocational training has roots in the Soviet system, when violation of gender equality was often justified by concerns about women's health. For example, women were prohibited from entering educational institutions that provided training for those professions ruled out for females by the Code of Labor Regulations, because of harmful working conditions. In addition, unofficial bans were also imposed, including restricting women from entrance to the most prestigious educational establishments.¹⁹ [173, 295].

3.15 A number of authors [85; 173; 777] point to a high incidence of implicit gender-based discrimination at all stages of upbringing and education starting with kindergarten and going up to the university level. Of particular importance is the fact that school textbooks often foster the traditional stereotypes of gender inequality, especially in matters of household and parental responsibility distribution. A considerable part of the teaching staff (female teachers more often than their male counterparts) act as proponents of the traditional patriarchal views by calling for the streaming of school subjects into male and female subjects. Moreover, teachers try to talk females out of taking up "male subjects."

3.16 The idea of a differentiated approach to the schooling of boys and girls is propelled not only by teachers but also by a considerable part of the population. According to the Rybinsk survey, the idea of equal school education for boys and girls is supported by less than half of the respondents. Over 60 percent of the women and over half of the men call for introducing a gender-based differentiation of the curricula for schoolchildren [173, 301]. The respondents listed mathematics, physics, physical training, computer science and law as the basic subjects in the curriculum for boys, and household management, history and literature, the ethics and psychology of family life, and sex education as the basic subjects for girls.

3.17 The strengthening of the position of the proponents of patriarchal views during the transition period was manifested in the revival of gender-segregated schooling for [100; 173]. For example, in 2000, gender-segregated schooling was introduced in Stavropol Kraj. The system of vocational education also witnessed the appearance of several educational institutions

¹⁹ Such establishments included the Moscow State Institute for International Affairs, the Faculty of International Affairs; the Moscow State University, the Faculty of International Journalism; the Institute of Oriental Languages; the Institute of Military Translators; and military and police schools and colleges.

(including universities) that specialized in training only males or only females. In line with this tendency, "male" educational institutions provide boys with qualitative education and multifarious vocational training, thus making them socially and professionally competitive in the labor market. In "female" institutions, girls are trained in subsidiary vocations (such as secretary or governess) or they are prepared to perform the role of "noble maidens."

3.18 Experts note that today the general population, and especially the female cohort, remain unaware of gender-based disparity in education and does not view these disparities as a real problem that may pose a serious threat to women's rights. At the same time, there is every reason to believe that the dissemination of patriarchal views in society on the one hand, and a sustained crisis in the social security system on the other hand, will be conducive to the exacerbation of this problem. A significant threat of furthering gender asymmetry is posed by an extensive introduction of fees for educational services [100; 173; 460].

C. GENDER ASYMMETRY IN THE IMPACT OF EXPANDING PAID EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

3.19 As a rule, gender research papers classify the threats posed by the introduction of paid education into two categories. On the one hand, the potential danger is associated with an escalating gender asymmetry in the distribution of public funds allocated for education, which is allegedly connected to its segregation. A rise in the enrollment rates at universities is mainly achieved by extending paid instruction in the humanities, and in the social and economic professions (the share of students who pay for their education at these faculties totals 50 percent), and these professions are for the most part feminized (the share of females among the students amounts to 67-71 percent). In polytechnics, where males account for the bulk of students, the incidence of paid education is five to ten times lower [100; 427; 973; 340]. As it is the feminized professions that have shifted to paid instruction, fiscal spending on education is becoming increasingly gender-biased, with females being at a disadvantage [89; 93; 94; 100].

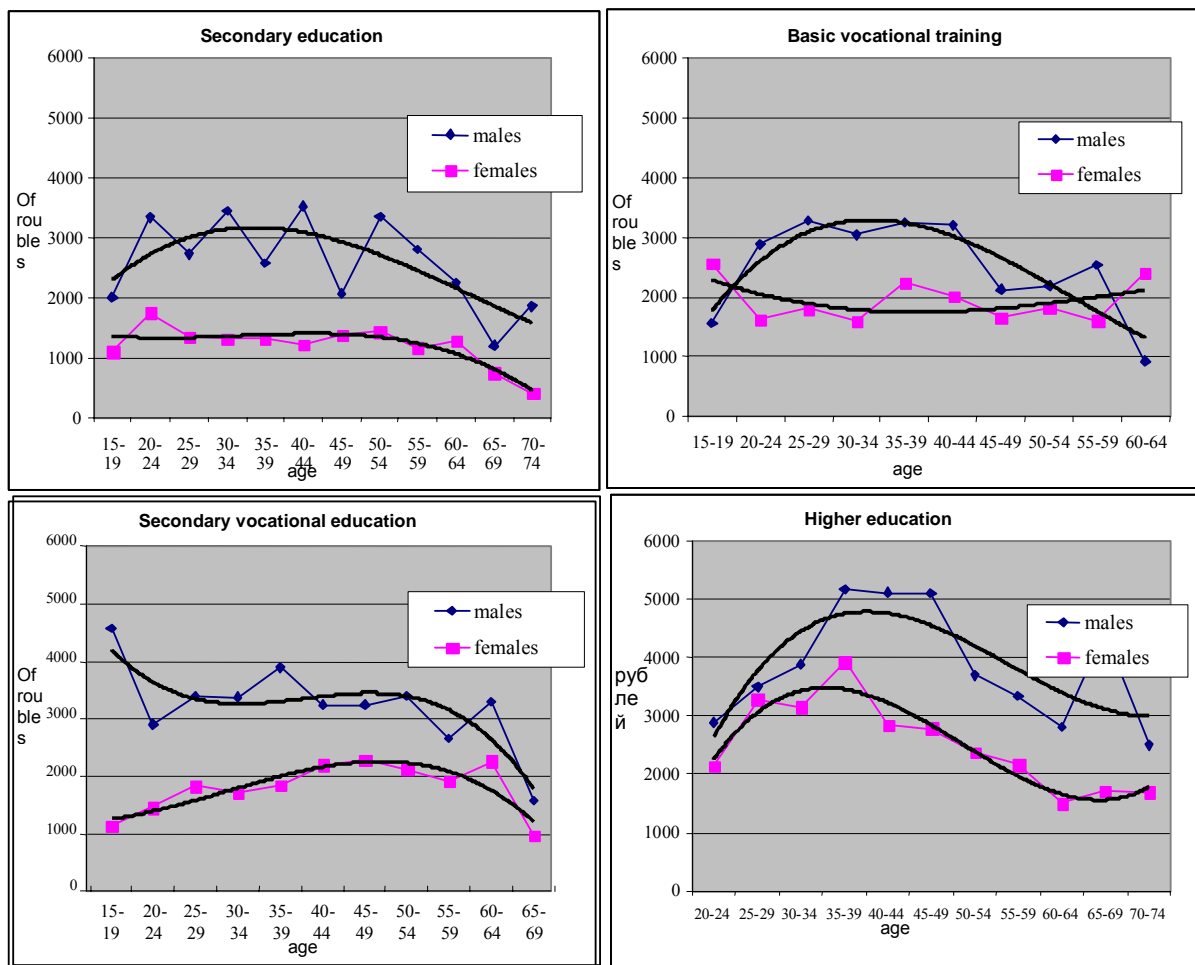
3.20 The other category of threats is connected to the gender preferences of parents and to the returns to human capital. In line with the "new household theory," which suggests that, from the outset, a woman is in a disadvantageous position in the labor market, expenses on higher education for girls have no rationale from the viewpoint of a balanced family budget [460]. Given the considerably lower returns to education of women in the majority of Russian regions, it is much more difficult if at all possible for a woman to reimburse her private cost of education. To crown this situation, the lower economic returns from investment in female education combined with patriarchal traditions, may make parents more inclined to finance the education of their sons rather than that of their daughters [100]. It should be noted that the existence of gender-based asymmetry in the investment in human capital at the family level has been pinpointed by analysts with regard to many countries, but the Russian experience has not suggested such disparities to date [458; 460; 467; 469].

3.21 The Rybinsk survey findings indicate that, at present, Russians do not show any particular preferences regarding the necessity to pay for the higher education of their sons or daughters. Among the respondents, 86 percent have no any gender-based preferences with regard to financing their children's education. Only 3 percent are disposed to finance their sons' education, and 1 percent are inclined to pay for their daughters' education. In addition, the existing demographic trends give strong reasons to project that, in real life circumstances, the

actual shift to a single-child family will save most parents the decision whose education to finance. Instead, the decision will be whether their financial position will allow them to pay for the education of their only child at all [100].

3.22 Another threat seems much more feasible. Given a curtailment of public funds allocated for education, the quality of instruction provided in public secondary schools would tend to move downward, while fees for education in comprehensive secondary schools would become a matter of general practice. With the high prevalence of gender-based stereotypes, there is every reason to suggest that parents will decide upon a list of paid extra subjects for boys and girls in compliance with these stereotypes [173].

Figure 3.2: The Correlation of Wages to the Employee's Gender, Age and Educational Attainment



(RLMS, 2001)

3.23 In any case, it is obvious that by reducing expenses on education the state poses additional barriers to human potential development and to women's professional employment.

3.24 Among issues that have a pronounced gender bias, experts give high priority to the problem of the returns to education. Statistics and calculations suggest that the returns to

education for women are considerably lower than those for men, which is an important factor contributing to female unemployment [100; 173; 460]. On the basis of econometric analysis of the rates of return to investments in education, D.Nesterova and K.Sabirjanova concluded that since the outset of the reforms the rate of return to education for women has been marked by a more pronounced decline [740]. According to N.Zubarevitch, the increase in education levels is paralleled by a larger gender earnings differential between female and male cohorts, which means that in Russia the mechanism of raising educational levels as the main tool for equalizing men's and women's positions in the labor market remains ineffective. At the same time, in Moscow, owing to the advance modernization of gender roles, the education component is starting to operate, and gender pay differentials (69 percent) are much below the average. This trend is not apparent across the country as yet. In depressive rural regions and regions at the bottom of the development scale, where the income of the population remains very low, women's earnings approximate men's earnings. Figure 3.2 shows the correlation of wages in Russia to gender, age, and educational attainment.

3.25 The returns to education for women drop not only throughout a woman's work life but also in the post-entitlement period, as retirement benefits depend on the received earnings and also on the actual number of years worked [100]. Today women's pension entitlements are slightly lower than men's entitlements [86; 88; 87], which is primarily linked to gender-based asymmetry in employment. In comparison with men, women's monthly earnings used for calculating retirement benefits are considerably lower, their share in the group of retirees with preferential pension entitlements (servicemen, politicians, etc.) is comparatively low, their work history is shorter, and their time expenses on reproductive and nurturing activities are not recognized as socially significant [86; 88; 87; 581].

D. IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY MALES AND FEMALES

3.26 Regarding women's comparatively low professional mobility and lesser earnings compared to men, some experts allege that educational levels do not play a significant role in securing women's financial independence or promotion [173; 970]. Nonetheless, the majority of experts stress the existence of important nonmaterial advantages of education for Russian women. According to N.Tikhonova, the dominant factor in determining the type of value set chosen by women, as well as the successful implementation of women's life-cycle strategies, is their educational level. The attainment by a woman of at least an incomplete higher education immediately and significantly increases the feasibility of her achieving the goals she sets in life, including the creation of a happy family. Thus, education is not only an indispensable precondition for a woman's professional self-realization, but is also a passport to a life in which the relations between men and women are built on a different pattern [1048].

3.27 A.M.Ilyshev and I.V.Lavrentjeva highlight the external social effect of the investment in education, which is positive and significant in nature: an increase in educational level is closely allied to improvements in the health status of women and children [442]. A number of researchers point to the fact that women's labor force participation is immediately correlated with their educational level. Women with a high level of education assign a relatively high priority to the financial and social dimensions of employment. Both men and women with a university education have a higher labor force participation and are less prone to restrict themselves to household activities. This tendency may be interpreted as resistance on the part of women with a

high educational level to "burying" themselves in household routines, but it can also be linked to the reluctance of women disposed to perform the traditionally imposed gender role to advance their educational level [100; 888]. Experts estimate that women with a higher educational level are almost twice as sensitive to gender-based inequity in promotion (75-68 percent) as women with an incomplete secondary education or a basic education (43-33 percent) [12; 427, 922, 40]. But this tendency can also be ascribed to women's growing demands for self-realization conditioned by an increase in their educational qualifications; better-educated women have higher ambitions and are more sensitive to actual gender disparity [56; 852]. A survey conducted in Taganrog pinpoints a contraction in gender asymmetry that is due to women's high educational levels [888].

3.28 The problems of the underutilization of women's qualification potential and the low pay scale offered for their labor are of particular importance. Notwithstanding their higher (on average) level of education and better vocational training, women constitute the majority of low-income workers and are concentrated at the bottom of the career ladder as compared to men. Women account for two-thirds of manufacturing workers receiving the bottom level pay grades, and for one-fifth of workers receiving the fifth grade and above [936]. Researchers stress that women's labor potential has always been used at a low level of efficiency. Skilled females (those with university education or secondary vocational qualifications) are traditionally assigned to routine accounting and statistical or clerical job. Their high educational levels add to their social status rather than determining their actual professional opportunities. To advance to the next pay grade, a woman must work one-and-a-half to two times longer than a man, and to be promoted to an equal position, a woman needs a higher level of basic education than a man. The conventional practice is that a woman's position does not conform to her educational qualifications: toward the end of a ten-year married period as many as one-quarter of women are working at jobs unrelated to their vocational specialization [56; 852].

3.29 The Taganrog survey findings indicate a considerable discrepancy in the mobility of husbands and wives. Whereas half of the husbands in the families in the survey had an upward career trend, the incidence of this career pattern for wives was three times less frequent. Among the wives, 40 percent had a stagnant career trend, and 17 percent had a downward career trend (the incidence of a downward career trend for men was only 6.8 percent of the examined cases). Sixty percent of spouses belonged to the same age cohort, 40 percent had equal educational qualifications, one-third were employed in occupations requiring similar skill levels, and only about one-fifth of married couples had equal earnings. In 1989, the general balance of mobility calculated as the differential between positive and negative values of mobility, was + 53.5 percent for the male cohort and + 18 percent for the female cohort. By 1998, the indicators of mobility for both men and women had aggravated substantially. Against this background, the socioeconomic transformation primarily affected men's social mobility: the corresponding indicators were + 3.3 percent for males and - 6.6 percent for females. Experts note that the process of social status transformation proceeds less intensively within the female cohort than within the male cohort. The Taganrog survey data suggest that a woman "catches up" with her husband after the completion of a ten-year family cycle. Another significant tendency is that females from younger cohorts are more actively involved in realizing their opportunities for career advancement than the older generation [436; 888; 1009].

3.30 According to the conventional wisdom, the gender-based disparity in career opportunities and earnings is mainly caused by women's lower productivity at work. Experts point out that this stereotype is justified only in part. According to A.Suvorov, in the period from 1993 to 1998 the marginal efficiency of male labor was approximately 12-14 percent higher than the corresponding indicator for women. At the same time, the average pay for men was 40 percent in excess of the average pay for women [1104, 71]. In the bottom pay quintile, the share of women amounted to 70 percent, although education levels in this group were rather high.

3.31 A possible gender asymmetry in the capacity to work, in labor output and in labor productivity is a highly disputable matter. The findings of CIRT IE RAS indicate that over a quarter of enterprise managers sided with the opinion that men's labor productivity is higher, whereas the proponents of women's higher labor productivity were in the minority of 4 percent. At the same time, 35 percent of employers agreed with the statement that women are notable for a high capacity to work, and only 6 percent of respondents claimed that women cannot keep up with the required rhythm of work. A possible rationale is that in the short run the productivity of women's labor is equal to that of men's labor, but over a longer time span the total returns to men's labor are higher because women are more frequently absent from work, as they are forced to shoulder the double burden of productive and nurturing activities [803].

3.32 The factors that hamper women's successful promotion in the workplace include the gender stereotypes that dominate the set of socially accepted values and the mentality of women, and the double burden imposed on women (the necessity of combining productive and caring activities). It is highlighted that, as has been mentioned, owing to the lack of a developed infrastructure and the predominantly patriarchal views on the role of woman in the family and society, often shared by women themselves, women were often seen as secondary workers despite their relatively higher educational levels. In conformity with the gender contract and gender stereotypes, women preferred to remain in the background and to give over leading positions to men [56; 173; 286; 1104]. The Rybinsk survey found out that, according to female respondents, the major factor hampering women's efficient self-realization in the workplace was an increased time deficit. In addition, the list of obstacles included lack of upbringing, insufficient education, male chauvinism, female passivity, and the disapproval of husbands. Each of the listed reasons was referred to by approximately one-fifth of female respondents [173].

3.33 For most Russian women, the period of professional qualification and skills acquisition coincides with the time of childbearing and nurturing responsibilities, which affect a woman's professional advancement. In the period from 1965 to 1991, the mean age of women at first childbirth dropped from 24.8 down to 22.9 years, and has remained at this level. This indicator is below the average for developed countries. One of the main reasons for the decline in age at first marriage and early motherhood is lack of fertility control [5; 767; 771].

3.34 In many cases women make a conscious choice of giving up productive activity in favor of family responsibilities. Many of these women would prefer a flexible work schedule, which would allow them to reconcile paid work with nurturing and household responsibilities. At the same time, the decision between a career or family is not necessarily the result of conscious selection. Rather, in the majority of cases the decision is forced and is often accompanied by a feeling of psychological discomfort. Women often have to combat gender discrimination in the labor market to the detriment of their family interests, which can be a very painful experience.

Absorption in professional advancement can impoverish a woman's emotional life, with the resultant feeling of loneliness, in addition to the stigma of stepping outside of cultural norms. At the same time, confinement to nurturing activities causes a woman to suffer from a sense of incomplete creative and social self-realization, of decreasing bargaining power within the household, and of utter financial dependence. The survey findings indicate that only about 10-15 percent of women are prepared to concentrate entirely on performing reproductive responsibilities until the attainment of school age by their children [56; 442; 803; 1025; 1048; 1104].

4. HEALTH ISSUES

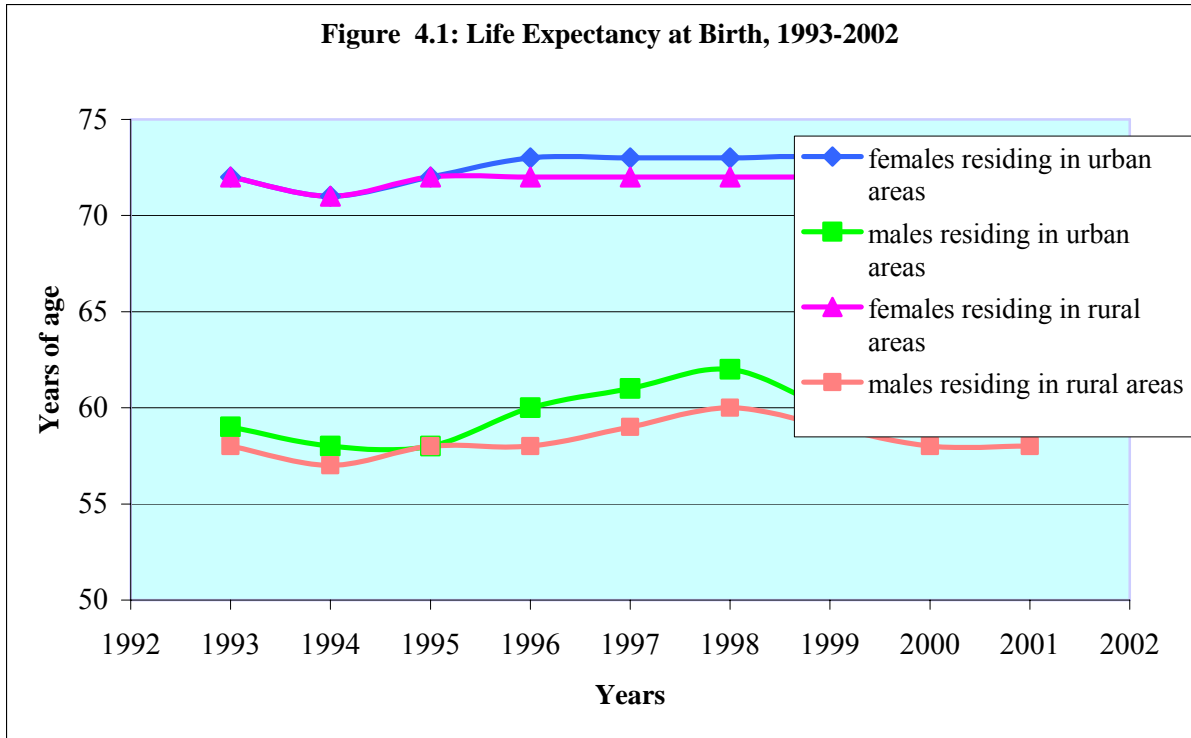
4.1 This chapter provides an overview of the health issues of the Russian Federation. The chapter is divided into the following sections: men's health problems; women's health problems; and reproductive health (dealing with the rights and behaviors of men and women.)

A. MEN'S HEALTH PROBLEMS AND THE EXCESSIVE MORTALITY RATE AMONG MEN

4.2 The high mortality rate among the population is the main threat to Russia's demographic development. The average life expectancy saw a significant increase (two to three years) toward the end of the 1980s, then experienced a dramatic decline at the beginning of the 1990s and a slow improvement to 1998, with a resultant life expectancy of 61 years for men and 73 years for women. From 1998 to 2000, the average life expectancy decreased to 59 years for men and 72 years for women. The present situation, on the whole, can be identified as stagnation: there is no marked deterioration, but neither is there a serious improvement [282, 53; 912, 58-66].

4.3 A notable peculiarity of the situation in Russia is the existence of a colossal gap (12-14 years) in life expectancy between males and females, which is a unique experience in the international demographic environment. Among the urban population, the average life expectancy is a little higher and the gender gap is narrower [339, 45]. The regional variation in life expectancy ranges from 49 years in the Republic of Tuva to 66 years in Dagestan, which is notable for low mortality caused by fatal poisoning and injuries. Against this background the gender differential in life expectancy varies from 9 to 15 years [86, 125; 900]. The lowest life expectancy of males pertains to the Non-Chernozem Zone and the regions of Southern Siberia and the Far East, which are marked by the highest incidence of risk-taking behavior (primarily, alcohol abuse) and the low educational attainment of the population. In the Non-Chernozem Zone, the gender gap in life expectancy between males and females has reached maximum values (14.5-16 years), which is due to a considerable gender disparity in the prevalence of asocial patterns of life [427, 4-5].

4.4 The excessive male mortality has primarily affected men in the active-age cohort. The mortality rates of males and females in the prime years vary significantly with the mortality rate for males being 3.8 times higher [34; 72; 982, 12]. From 1998, two-thirds of the total increase in mortality has been in the active-age population. In 1998, the share of men in the cohort above the active age was only 30.6 percent, whereas women accounted for 69.4 percent.[914, 19]. The chances for men in the 20-year age group to attain the retirement age were 70 percent in 1990, down to 54 percent in 1995 [460, 177]. According to V.Shkolnikov, the relative peak in male mortality in the 25-year age group reproduced itself through several decades. By the present time it has evolved into a mini-plateau with age limits of 20 to 30. Another trend is the surge in relative male mortality in the age cohort of 40 to 50 years (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2 and Table 4.1) [1221].



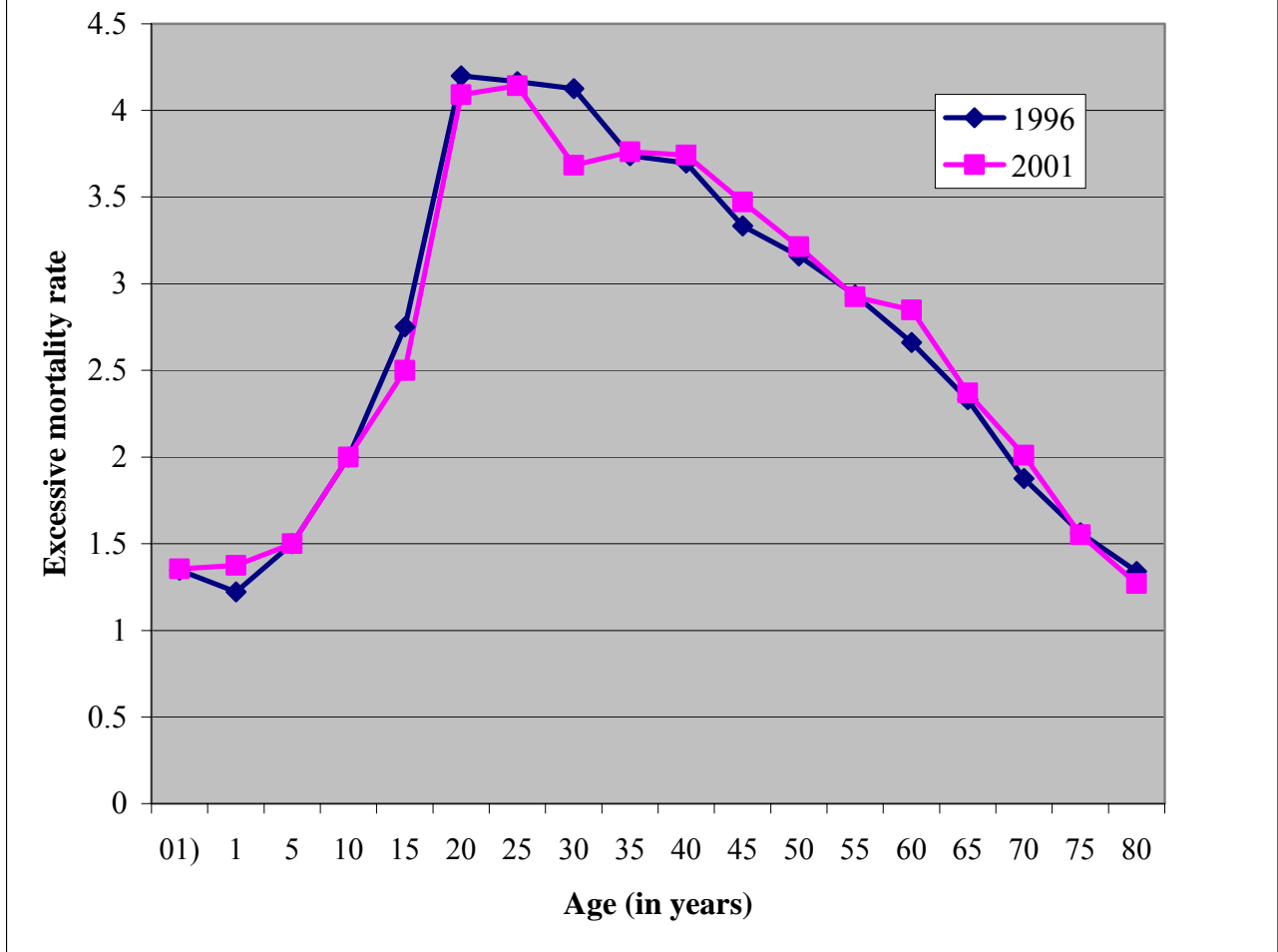
Source: Goskomstat.

4.5 There is evidence of biologically determined and socially conditioned excessive male mortality. According to different estimates [72; 460, 174; 1216], the biological potential can account for a gap in life expectancy between males and females ranging from two to seven years. The rest of the gap is determined by socioeconomic factors (see Boxes 4.1 and 4.2). Among them, analysts usually recognize factors typical of Russia, such as: the difference in self-preservation behavioral practices followed by males and females; over consumption of alcohol by males [460; 912, 66; 1216]; and new factors originating from shifts in the traditional gender role patterns.

Box 4.1: Return of the Traditional Family

In contrast to the days when the socially encouraged model of inter-gender relationships was that of a man and woman working together in public production, today the traditional family model is once again gaining wide recognition in society. Men are forced into a fiercely competitive marketplace; they have to work overtime, are more often confronted with criminal activity, are subjected to professional skills devaluation, and cannot adjust to the new surroundings. Many of them have failed to become accustomed to the breadwinner's responsibilities; they cannot stand the competitive rules of the market, which eventually results in high stress levels [263; 460; 1049]. Empirical studies strongly suggest that the correlation between stress levels and mortality rate in the male cohort is much more obtrusive than in the female cohort [900], and today the 40-year age group is most disproportionately hit by the social roles crisis [1221].

Figure 4.2: Ratio of Male Excessive Mortality Rate to Age Structure of the Population in Russia, 1996 and 2001



Source: Goskomstat.

4.6 Empirical studies suggest that the correlate of the negative tendencies is mounting mortality from unnatural causes. Such causes include the following:

- Factors of exterior influence (fatal accidents, poisoning, injuries, homicides, suicides)
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Premature infarcts
- Cerebral hemorrhages
- Gastric ulcers.

Box 4.2: Suicide Rates in Russia

In Russia the incidence of suicide is 2.5 times that of the European average for males and 1.5 times that for females. The male suicide rate is 5 times that for females, and in the 25-39 year age group it is 8 times as high. Of particular concern is the fact that male mortality from suicide is growing at the highest pace. The mortality rate from suicide for the active-age male cohort increased 1.72 times from 1990 to 1994 and totaled 96.8 cases for 100,000 males [72; 484; 914].

Of particular importance to this excessive male mortality rate is "psychological suicide," when the lifestyle selected by the individual results in loss of health and premature death [914, 70]. At the same time, many authorities [73; 339; 1049; 1216] justly point to the fact that people are not free in their choice of lifestyle. Against the background of social crisis, unemployment, a dramatic decrease in income of the majority of the population, and the degradation of regions found in present-day Russia, a "self-destructive" lifestyle is not necessarily the product of socially motivated choice and personal preference but is often imposed on the individual by the social environment. The Taganrog survey findings indicate that the consumption of alcohol was paralleled by habitation in poor housing conditions and by adverse labor conditions (60 percent), low per capita income (55 percent), and strained family relations (80 percent) [339, 236].

Table 4.1: Males and Females, Dying in their Productive Years (females aged 16 to 54, males aged 16 to 59), by Main Categories of Causes of Death, 2001

	Thousands of people		For the sample of 100,000 people for the population	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
Died of all causes – total	135	515	315	1170
Owing to:				
Circulatory diseases	36	149	85	339
Accidents, fatal poisonings and traumas	40	205	94	466
Tumors	27	48	64	108
Respiratory diseases	5	26	12	60
Digestive diseases	8	23	19	52
Certain kinds of infectious and parasitogenic diseases	4	23	9	52
Other ailments	15	41	32	93

Source: Goskomstat.

4.7 Another factor contributing to the male mortality crisis (and described by a number of analysts), is the conditions of employment. The share of females working in conditions that are below the sanitary and hygienic standards is actually 2 times lower than that of males (14.9 percent and 26.4 percent, respectively). Among those working at equipment that is not in compliance with the safety requirements, the share of females is 0.3 percent, and the share of males is 0.7 percent. Among the total number of victims of fatal accidents males account for 24 in 100,000 people, females account for 2 in 100,000 people [100, 183-184]. Statistical analyses

and multivariate simulations of the impact that the production environment has on demographic processes have disclosed the existence of immediate and direct correlations between the employment structure and the mortality rates across different population groups, and, first of all, in the male cohort. The simulation results suggest that if the entire male population of the region were employed in the coal and oil extracting industries, the mortality rate from injuries, poisonings, homicides and other causes would reach the peak of 31.8 percent [772].

4.8 Education levels have a significant positive effect on life expectancy, including the reduction of the gender gap. Some data suggest a decrease in the mortality rate of the Russian population by 9 percent for males and 7 percent for females per every year of educational attainment [739, 43]. In 1989, the gap in life expectancy between cohorts with higher and incomplete secondary education was seven years for males and about two years for females [56]. The maximum gender differential in life expectancy between males and females is registered in the cohort with the lowest educational levels [100, 191].

B. WOMEN'S HEALTH PROBLEMS

4.9 There are several reasons why the volume of public expenditures on healthcare has a proportionately higher significance for women than for men. First, owing to biological particularities connected with women's reproductive function, women make a more intensive use of healthcare services. Second, the demands for medical service are most significant in the older age cohort, where the female population prevails in numbers. Third, as a result of poverty, women have fewer opportunities to compensate healthcare services [72; 102; 410; 428; 503; 564; 893; 959; 1045; 1143; 1144].

4.10 Estimates suggest that the federal programs cover only 20 percent of the expenditures demanded in the system of women's healthcare. According to D.Ibragimova, M.Krasilnikova and L.Ovcharova, the share of earnings spent on healthcare and medication in the cohort with incomes below the subsistence level, where women are represented 1.2 times more frequently (4 times in the older age groups) is three times larger than that in the cohort with the highest incomes. Among retirees, the share of the pauperized population is significant by deprivation indicator: the principal type of deprivation has become restricted access to the required medical aid and medication. One of the top positions in the cost structure of paid medical services is occupied by paid pregnancy consultations and childbirth assistance: 41 percent of the respondents resorted to this kind of aid, and almost half of them had no opportunity to receive these services free of charge [428]. Within the framework of the survey of the youth's reproductive health and rights, about half of the female respondents complained that qualified services by obstetrician-gynecologists were provided for a fee and thus were unaffordable by them [504].

4.11 Sharp reductions in public spending on the healthcare system and its decentralization resulted in the closing down of a considerable number of health units in small towns and rural areas. This was followed by a consequent increase in the marginal distance of health units from the place of residence. This survey found that women spend more time traveling to the place of destination than do men. Women from small towns and rural areas fall into the category with the lowest incidence of visits to medical institutions. Consequently, the incidence of births

unattended by trained personnel is the highest in this category; it is characterized by a higher mortality rate in the active-age cohort [72, 27-28].

Box 4.3: Access to Healthcare

In the specialized scientific literature published in Russia the problems of gender inequality in health issues are usually considered against the background of the systemic crisis that has affected the healthcare system in Russia, and of restricted access to health services for a considerable part of the population on account of rising fees. Russia holds the ninety eighth international rating position in per capita expenditures on healthcare services; and 37 percent of total expenditures are invested in elite medical institutions. As a result, 30 percent of the impoverished population living in severe indigence are deprived of the medical care they need [72; 100, 915]. The data obtained within the framework of the survey "Taganrog - Three and a Half" suggested that in 1994 paid healthcare services were utilised by 10 % of the population up from 1.5 percent in 1981 [339]. The survey carried out by the All-Russia Centre for the Surveys of Public Opinion found that, in 1999 – 2000, 52 percent of the population resorted to paid healthcare services. The lowest incidence was found in Moscow and St. Petersburg, which, according to experts, testifies to the forced nature of the demand for paid medical aid [428].

4.12 The inaccessibility of medication caused by excessive pricing is recognized by most experts as an acute problem for the Russian healthcare system (see Box 4.3). The excessive pricing has a clear gender bias. Even prior to the turmoil of August 1998, 23-24 percent of Russian citizens could not afford to buy vitally important medicines and medical devices. In particular, for people above 50 years of age, private expenditures on medication decline, and especially for women. This trend is affected by shrinking family budgets in the post-retirement period. In 1998, 58 percent of women from low-income families could not afford to buy the medicines prescribed by their physicians; 30 percent had to refuse the recommended dispensary aid; and 12 percent failed to send their family members to hospital. In 2000, according to RLMS, 63.4 percent of men and 72.2 percent of women failed to buy the prescribed medicine because of a cash shortage. Women with low income levels, from the 9-10 deciles, have lower clinic attendance, and their term of inpatient treatment is shorter. One possible reason for the resistance of young people to using modern contraceptives is their high cost [72; 102, 56-57; 339; 914].

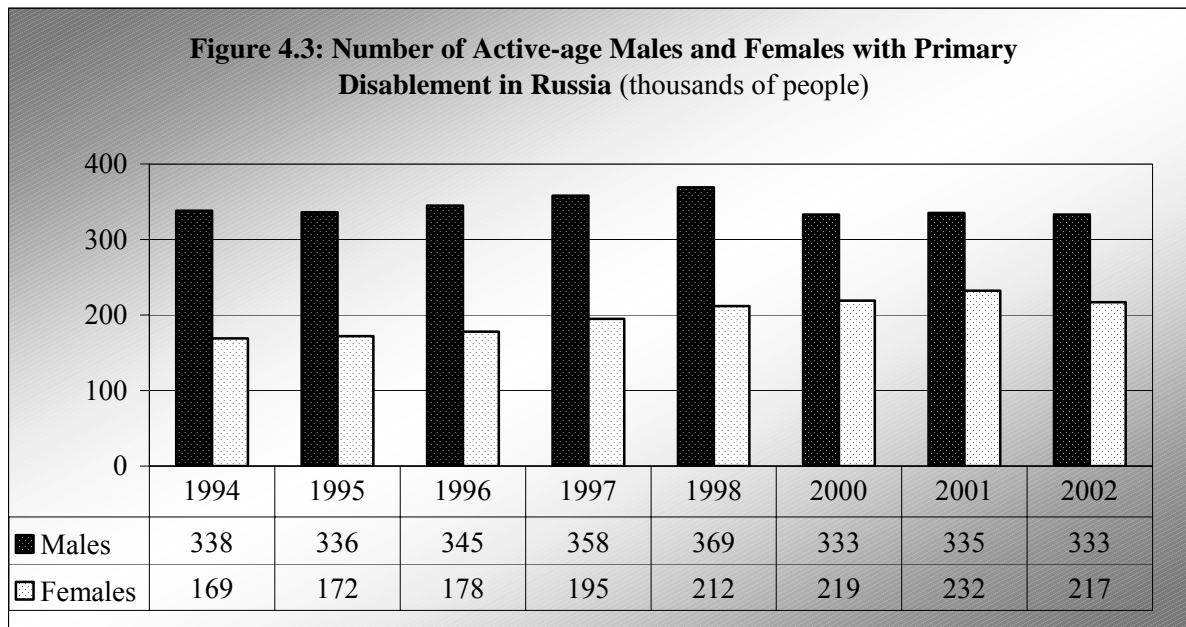
4.13 Experts pinpoint the fact that gender disparity is mostly absent from the healthcare reform agenda, and that the issue of measuring gender inequality in health status and health protection is almost never raised. Simultaneously, the issues of health protection with respect to men as a gender category fall beyond the focus of attention [72]. Therefore, researchers of gender problems have sound reasons for highlighting the urgent necessity to implement institutional reforms in the healthcare system [71; 73; 576; 1045].

4.14 According to numerous surveys, women's longevity is combined with a lower individual health potential in almost all age groups, owing to high social and biological pressures in the family and in the workplace [72; 339; 427; 900; 985]. Across the female cohort in Russia, the individual health potential is, on average, 10 percent lower than that of males [900, 14]. In all rounds of the Taganrog survey, the health status of women was found to be well below that of men: 42 percent of men and 31 percent of women identified their health status as good and excellent, whereas 16 percent of men and 22 percent of women identified it as poor and very

poor. Of particular importance is the finding that the health deterioration process proceeded more intensively across the male cohort: men's estimate of their health status declined by 16 percent and the share of patients with chronic diseases in this category increased 2.4 times; the corresponding indicators for women were 13 percent and 1.9 times, respectively [339, 232].

4.15 In 1997, for the first time since the outset of the reforms, the ratio of female groups (and of Russians on the whole) who were satisfied and dissatisfied with their health status had negative dynamics: the share of females dissatisfied with their health status rose to 57.2 percent; in the male cohort the corresponding share was 43.2 percent [985, 69]. The statistics of the Health Ministry suggest that the incidence of chronic pathologies across the male cohort was higher than that in the female cohort. At the same time, according to RLMS, the share of females in the total number of patients suffering from chronic diseases was 55 percent. It is noteworthy that in post-Soviet Russia the administrative health statistics on incidence rates are misleading concerning the actual number of registered cases. For example, according to RLMS, 49.5 percent of females and 36.8 percent of males complained of health problems, of whom few above 40 percent consulted a physician [72, 16].

4.16 The findings of a number of surveys indicate that the indicators of psychological health are worse across the female cohort, as well. Only 26 percent of women claimed a sense of quiet and confidence in contrast to 40 percent of the male cohort [339, 235]. The survey of the socio-political disposition of females in Volgograd and the Volgograd Oblast found high stress levels with respect to women's social psyche, manifested in such estimates of the current situation as alarming, or menacing (85.6 percent of respondents). Only 11 percent of respondents estimated the situation as being complicated but not hazardous [142].

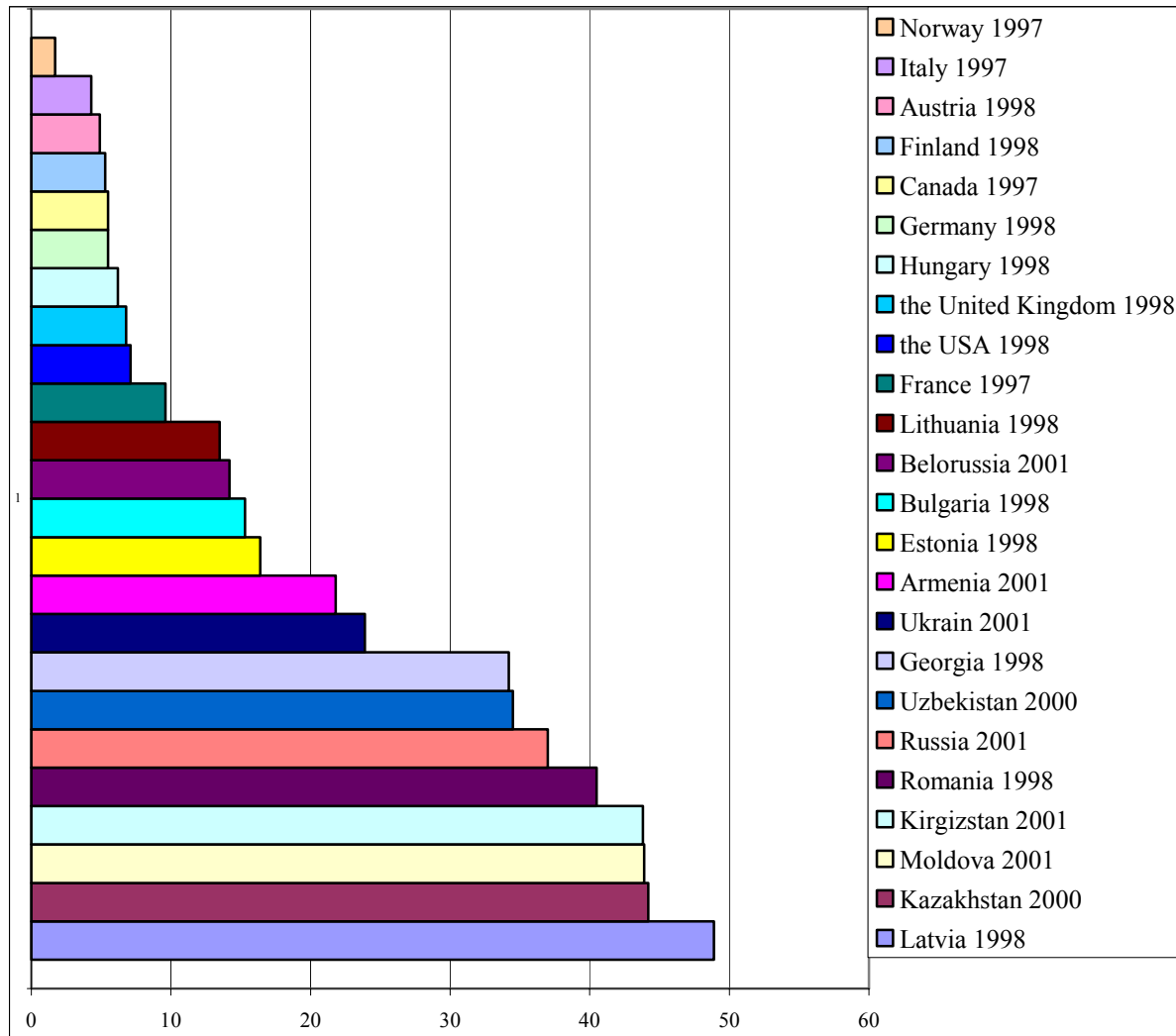


Source: Goskomstat.

4.17 Whereas in the first years of the reforms stress levels associated with employment were practically equal for men and women, presently they have declined for males but remain on the

same high level across all age groups in the female cohort and tend to move upward toward the older age groups. The main factor contributing to these stress levels is fear of unemployment [1215]. At the same time, stress levels are higher for unemployed males than for unemployed females: 20 percent of unemployed men and 17 percent of unemployed women experience acute emotional stress, and 25 percent of unemployed men and 16 percent of unemployed women are characterized by neurotic reactions. The fact that more men react painfully to unemployment relative to women may be attributed to a heavier load of the breadwinner's responsibility for the family. At the same time, an immediate dependence can be traced between marital status and mental health across male and female cohorts. Married men and women enjoy better indicators of mental health [758]. The prospective life expectancy for married women is relatively lower than the prospective life expectancy for married men; men have a reverse correlation by marital status [463].

Figure 4.4: Number of Women Dying of Complications Experienced during Pregnancy, Labor and the Postnatal Period (for 100,000 live births)



Source: Goskomstat.

Suggestion to reduce the number of countries in this graph – it will make it easier to read.

4.18 In view of the low cultural priorities ascribed to self-preservation, it has been common in Russia to neglect one's health. Lately, however, men have shown a tendency toward improved behavior in health matters, whereas women have demonstrated a reverse negative tendency [1216]. These trends have been reflected in the growing prevalence of female alcohol abuse, which is outpacing the prevalence of male alcoholism, and in the leveling of the growth index of the suicide rate. The process of drug abuse feminization has been evolving since 1993 [56, 163; 985]. As the State Committee for Statistics of the Russian Federation does not supply gender desegregated statistical data, it is difficult to analyze the gender implications of disability rates [72], but a negative leveling tendency regarding disability rates across the male and female cohorts is quite obvious (see Figure 4.3), and the ulterior cause for this is the rapidly growing disability incidence among women [100, 193].

4.19 To sum up, among the virulent factors contributing to the upward incidence curve of chronic diseases and disability, of primary importance are stress levels, hard labor conditions, poverty incidence and the collapse of the public healthcare system [71; 339; 100].

C. REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: RIGHTS AND SPECIFIC REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOR OF MEN AND WOMEN

4.20 Among the basic indicators of reproductive health that have been traditionally monitored in Russia are maternity and infant mortality rates, abortion rates (including abortions obtained outside of a hospital setting), the health status of pregnant women, infertility, the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, and trends in contraceptive use [28; 554]. A mere analysis of this scanty list of indicators provides grounds for the conclusion that the reproductive health of the population is facing a dramatic and ever deepening crisis.

Table 4.2: Induced Termination of Pregnancy (by abortion), 1990–2000

	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Total abortion rate:							
Thousands of:	4,103.4	2,766.4	2,652.0	2,498.7	2,346.1	2,181.2	2,138.8
Per 1,000 females aged 15-49	114.0	72.6	69.3	65.0	60.6	56.2	55.0
Per 100 deliveries	205.9	202.6	203.0	198.3	182.6	179.4	168.7
Including mini-abortions:							
Thousands of:	975.0	695.2	645.8	606.9	582.5	561.7	542.1
Per 1,000 females aged 15-49	27.0	18.0	16.9	15.7	15.1	14.5	13.9
Prevalence of abortion with primigravida ^{1/} ; thousands of:	188.8	177.7	183.3	179.0	172.4	160.7	161.1

^{1/} The data are given for network institutions of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation (MOH of the RF).
Source: Goskomstat.

4.21 The maternal mortality rate in Russia is one of the highest in the world (see Figure 4.4) (the maternal mortality rate in Russia is 15 times higher than that in developed countries), but, even so, it is significantly underestimated. According to some data, 84 percent of all cases of maternal mortality could have been averted. Among those exposed to the risk of maternal mortality are, first of all, females from the socially at risk groups -- unemployed women, refugees, forced migrants [56, 10-11; 72, 12]. The mortality rate for infants under 12 months is also extremely high and significantly exceeds the mortality rates in all subsequent age groups excluding the elderly population and the population in declining years. Infant mortality accounts for over 50 percent of the mortality rate for the entire children's population and averages 2 percent of the total number of deaths per year. During the first six months of life, the mortality rate for boys is higher, but this indicator shows substantial regional variation, ranging from 4.79 percent for Chukotka to 1.0 percent for Leningrad Oblast [28; 507; 900; 912, 67].

4.22 Experts point out that the indicators for pregnant women's health have deteriorated during the past decade: the percentage of pregnant women who suffer from anemia has increased more than six fold, the incidence of kidney diseases has increased twice, and the incidence of cardiovascular diseases has increased 1.8 times [28; 34]. The Taganrog survey findings also indicate a dramatic increase in the percentage of women at term who suffer from anemia (from 3.6 percent in 1980 to 34.4 percent in 1997), and a rising incidence of complications at term. In the first weeks of pregnancy only one-eighth of women can be diagnosed as having good health indicators. During the last five years, the incidence of reproductive health diseases has been on the rise across the female cohort [892, 11; 584]. Whereas in 1990 one infant out of seven was born with afflictions or became afflicted in the postnatal period, in 1992 this ratio increased to one infant out of five. In 1995 it increased to one out of four, and in the period from 1997 to 2000 it increased to every third infant [339, 231; 914; 1003, 55]. In addition, the findings of an independent survey indicate that by six months of age the number of girls who have not been afflicted by diseases is almost seven times higher than that of boys [902]. The deterioration in women's reproductive health gives rise to a vicious circle of transmitting poor health down to the next generation. Today 16 percent of newborns in Russia, who have parents who are alcohol and drug addicts and who have no permanent employment and consequently suffer from high stress levels experience anomalies of intellectual growth and development [953].

4.23 Despite the gradual decrease in the abortion rate, which has been registered throughout the past decade (see Table 4.2) the prevalence of abortion as a means of fertility control in Russia is still very high. In this indicator the international rating position of Russia comes second only to Romania [238; 913; 982]. In 2000 the registered abortion ratio was above 2 million cases, which is 1.8 times higher than the number of live births [282, 53]. Abortion remains the most widely used contraception method. The root causes contributing to such a high prevalence of abortions in Russia are: the decline in health values for most Russians that has marked the transition period [913, 62]; (and the extremely insufficient education in family planning issues and contraception use, especially among young men (only one-fifth of men and one-third of women know where they can receive information on contraceptive use and family planning), combined with the conventional view of contraception as a harmful method of fertility control [504; 913, 62; 914, 78-79, 82], and the economic benefits of abortion [76]. Of great importance as well are the value judgments that dominate in the society. The problem of reproductive choice often confronts a woman in the form of a conflict between her own wishes and preferences and a line of behavior considered socially significant and encouraged by society. Hence, there are

increased levels of social anxiety, discomfort, and victimization. The post facto character of abortion favors its flexibility toward sets of oppositions to the pattern of "family – employment," "freedom – dependence." According to experts, the use of modern methods of family planning implies an environment insulated from these oppositions [76].

4.24 Female reproductive health indicators are usually considered outside of any comparison with male reproductive health indicators. Meanwhile, every third male and every second female suffers from different reproductive health problems. Of the total number of married couples suffering from infertility, 55 percent of the cases are conditioned by female infertility and 45 percent by male infertility [72, 18]. Analysts point out that the conventional practice in Russia is to refuse to enforce the protection of male reproductive rights (including the right of males to reproductive health) and to refuse to enforce the protection of male rights to child raising [728]. The findings of the international research project, "Dissemination of Experience in Risk Assessment Regarding Male Reproductive Health in the Ecologically Disastrous Region," conducted in the Republic of Bashkortostan, prompted a conclusion regarding a critical situation involving male reproductive health in the region. There are no official statistics on the male infertility rate in resident families in the Republic of Mari El, but, according to the data of the Republican Centre for Family Planning, it ranges from 45 to 60 percent.

4.25 Throughout the past decade, Russia experienced such a steep decline in fertility rates that toward the end of the 1990s Russia dropped to the lowest rating position among European countries [100, 170]. The absolute rate of live births decreased almost twice, and the total fertility rate fell by 32 percent from 1.73 to a low of 1.17 [900; 121]. The number of pregnant women was slashed by 39 percent whereas the number of females in the fertility years increased by 18 percent. This prompts the conclusion that the fertility rate is affected by the quality of life of the population, and by its physical and social health, reproductive motivations and expectations, rather than by the age structure of the population. The prevailing reproductive motivation in Russia is for a single-child family [72; 953; 1095]. According to analysts, in addition to the deteriorating reproductive health of the population, this trend is conditioned by a long-term tendency toward demographic transition [35; 282, 53] as well as by the contributing effect of value judgments prevailing in different population groups and of socio-demographic factors.

4.26 The demographic aspects of the reproductive behavior of the population (in contrast to the issues of male and female reproductive rights enforcement) have always been a focus of attention of researchers and politicians. In the period from 1991 to 2000, the All-Russia Centre for the Surveys of Public Opinion carried out nine opinion polls among Russians with a final aim of disclosing reproductive motivations across different socio-demographic groups. To this end, indicators of an ideal, expected and desired number of children were tracked. During the period under survey, opinion polls discovered a dramatic decline (almost 47 percent) in the expected number of children. Of particular interest is the fact that the ideal number of children steadily exceeded the planned number (2.25 and 1.82, respectively), whereas the expected number of children was fixed at a lower level (1.31). Experts point out that in none of the age groups did the expected number of children approach the marginal values for extended reproduction. The youngest age group covered by the survey registered the floor indicators of the ideal and desired number of children. In 1991 the ceiling indicators of the expected number of children were found in rural areas; in 1994 they were found in Moscow and St. Petersburg; and during the period

1998 to 2000, they were found in rural areas again. Another notable tendency is that the ideal number of children is at a higher level in the group of working females, whereas the expected number of children is higher for unemployed women [121; 442].

4.27 In the ranking order of factors that hamper the implementation of women's reproductive rights, most of researchers [56, 163; 105; 254; 442] accord priority to intolerable financial and housing conditions and to uncertainty about the future. At the same time, a number of authors [80; 578] point to the prevailing influence of extra-economic factors -- ethical, spiritual, national, and socio-psychological priorities.

4.28 For the 21-27 year age group, of particular importance is the factor of professional skills degrading and of declining competitiveness in the labor market [442]. According to V.V.Bodrova, despite the fact that models of reproduction behavior are motivated by individual value judgments rather than by other factors of influence, at every given moment fertility motivations are greatly influenced by the living standards of the population. The indicators of the ideal and desired number of children are largely determined by value judgments, but the indicator of the expected number of children reaches the maximum values in the population cohort estimating its financial position as good and very good. In contrast to this, among those who estimate their position as very poor, the corresponding indicator is three times lower (0.76). Over one-third of respondents suppose that feelings of certainty about the future would stir up the reproductive behavior of the population [122]. It is also noted that two-thirds of families postpone childbirth because of financial considerations [900, 10]. At the same time, according to the findings of the 1993 survey, the fertility rate for families with low incomes was slightly above that in high-income families [35]. A number of surveys define the extended employment of women in public production as a significant factor contributing to declining fertility [936].

4.29 A number of analysts [35, 89] pinpoint the inverse relation of the expected number of children and women's educational levels, but they admit that by the mid-1990s this correlation had almost come to nothing. For example, in multi-child families, parents were found to have a comparatively lower educational level [55, 58]. At the same time, the findings of the monitoring survey carried out by the All-Russia Centre for the Surveys of Public Opinion suggested that in 1999 women at the highest educational levels had the highest indicator for the expected number of children, namely 1.09, which was 22.5 percent in excess of the average level [1239, 38, 16; 1240, 38]. Thus, a high educational level attained by prospective parents has ceased to serve as a major deterrent with respect to the fertility rate [100].

4.30 In the second half of the 1890s research papers studying reproductive behavior in the light of demographic processes were paralleled by papers that laid stress on the reproductive rights of men and women, including the degree of freedom they enjoyed in their reproductive behavior and the opportunities they had for a full performance of their childcare functions. Analysts were in broad agreement that the current stage in Russia's development is marked by "lack of freedom" in the implementation of family reproductive functions. The real state of affairs regarding protective measures for male and female reproductive health, and for reproductive rights enforcement, is critical according to a whole range of indicators. There are clear signs of gender asymmetry in reproductive behavior [76; 122; 625]. The correlate of this tendency is the growing share of single-parent families, which exacerbates the asymmetry of the parental burden. According to the 1994 micro-census, single-parent families accounted for 13.4

percent of all households and 17 percent of families with children under 18. Every fifth family with children under 18 lacks one parent. The main factors contributing to the high incidence of single-parent families include: increase in the number of divorces; a decline in the number of remarriages; births that occur out of wedlock; and an increased number of widows.²⁰

4.31 According to a number of authors, women's reproductive motivations are closely linked to the marginalization trend in men's social status. Women tend to take on the entire responsibility for childbearing and child rearing, even in cases where both parents desired the birth of a child. The growing incidence of refusals to register legal marriages testifies to this. In modern Russia, the fertility rate is almost entirely determined by a woman's desires and motivation for childbirth, and, even more significantly, by her financial position. Whereas in the past men had the final say in matters of reproductive behavior, today the bargaining power has been monopolized by women. Against this background, the quality of life and the living standards enjoyed by most Russian women set limits on their reproductive opportunities and favor norms of reproductive behavior that differ from the traditional stereotypes [76, 96; 953].

4.32 On the one hand, some analysts claim that the increase in the incidence of out-of-wedlock births points to the growing freedom enjoyed by women in reproductive issues [76; 81]. On the other hand, gender asymmetry in family matters puts both men and women at a disadvantage. In cases of a family break-up, 99 percent of the mothers receive custody of the child, and the father's responsibility is reduced to alimony payments. Men rarely contribute financially and emotionally to children's upbringing when they live in different households. As a result, in one of the most important spheres of life men appear to be deprived of equal rights to realize their individual potential, and the fatherhood institution goes down in value [339; 484, 11]. Both men and women suffer from the lack of cultural arrangements for "parenthood after divorce."

4.33 Legislation provides legal guidelines regarding fathers' financial responsibilities only, and leaves the question of their participation in childcare activities without any regulation. But even in terms of financial responsibility, the legislation lacks effective tools for alimony payments recovery. Against the background of slackening mechanisms devised to handle the practical enforcement of legislative regulations and social guarantees, and against the growth of the informal and "shadow" labor market, the problem of alimony payments recovery is solved much more simply than before the transition. Towards the end of the 1990s, in only every fifth case was the size of alimony payments above the child's subsistence level, with no provisions for expenses on education and healthcare in the cost structure of the latter. According to different surveys, the average alimony payments defray only half of the feeding expenses per child. According to evidence contributed by divorced men, only one-third of these men see their children frequently; 50 percent pay sporadic visits, and 17 percent do not see their children at all. Women ascertain an even lower frequency of meetings. According to these women, over one-third of divorced husbands have no contacts with their children. As time passes, the frequency of these meetings declines. Women usually estimate the father's influence on their children as negative or negligible. Those women who want to alter the existing situation would rather do so by reducing the intensity of communication [180; 254; 845; 846; 914, 182; 1104, 17; 1054].

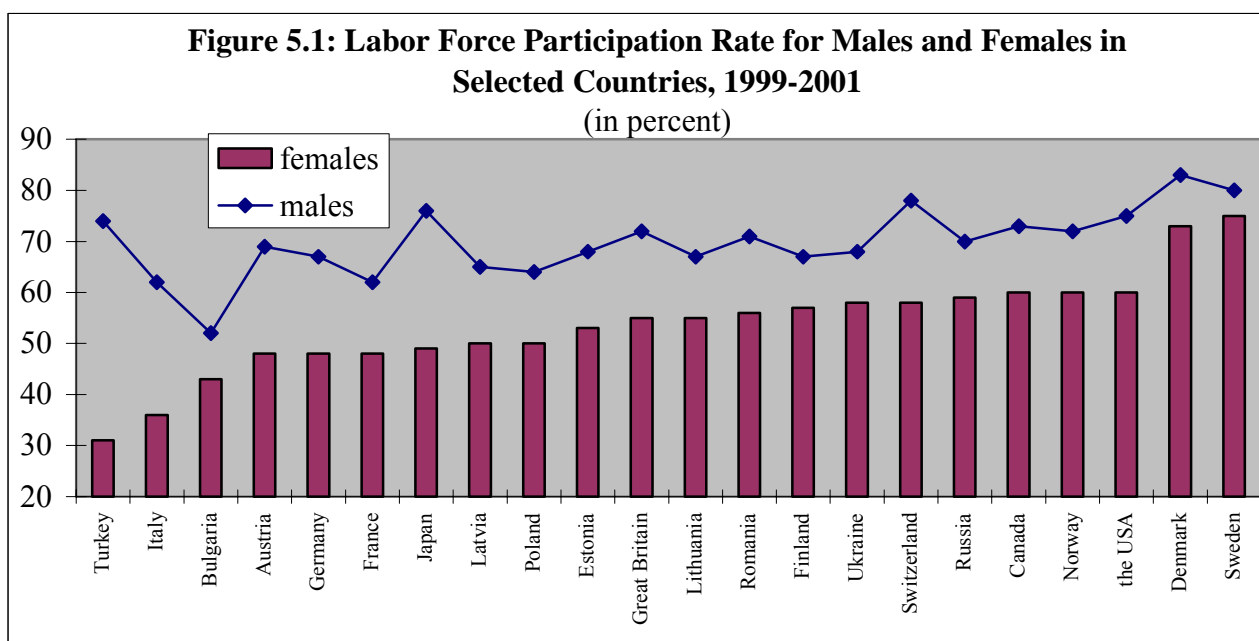
²⁰ The share of children born out of wedlock increased from 15 percent in 1990 to 25 percent in 1997. The highest share of births out of wedlock is registered in the younger and older age groups [130, 157; 256, 125; 254; 982; 1104, 21]. In divorce rate (50 percent of registered marriages end in a divorce) Russia has one of the top international rating positions. On average, every two of five registered marriages end in a divorce [584; 845, 80].

4.34 Restricted freedom in the implementation of women's reproductive functions is also conditioned, according to a number of analysts, by the "absolutization" of their social role as mothers. Hence, there is the danger of reducing all social functions performed by a woman to the motherhood function [76, 81]. But motherhood responsibilities must not be forced upon a female by society; they should be conditioned solely by her individual choice. However, survey findings indicate that about one-third of females and roughly above one-third of males consider motherhood a duty. At the same time, 44 percent of women and 55 percent of men are convinced that a man's duty is to rear and bring up children [254, 92]

5. GENDER ISSUES IN EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR MARKET PARTICIPATION.

5.1 In the last decade the position of women in the Russian economy has deteriorated, as has been measured by a number of indicators. The gender gap in economic activity that existed in the Soviet period has been widening. Moreover, the years of reform brought about a number of key changes in women's employment status, including: a reduction in the labor activity of women of working age; more apparent sectoral, professional and vertical segregation; a widening gender gap in wage rates; and more frequent discrimination against women seeking employment, especially in the private sector [767]. The present chapter reviews gender issues in employment and in labor market participation (see also Figure 5.1, which presents rates for selected countries).. The chapter is divided into the following sections:

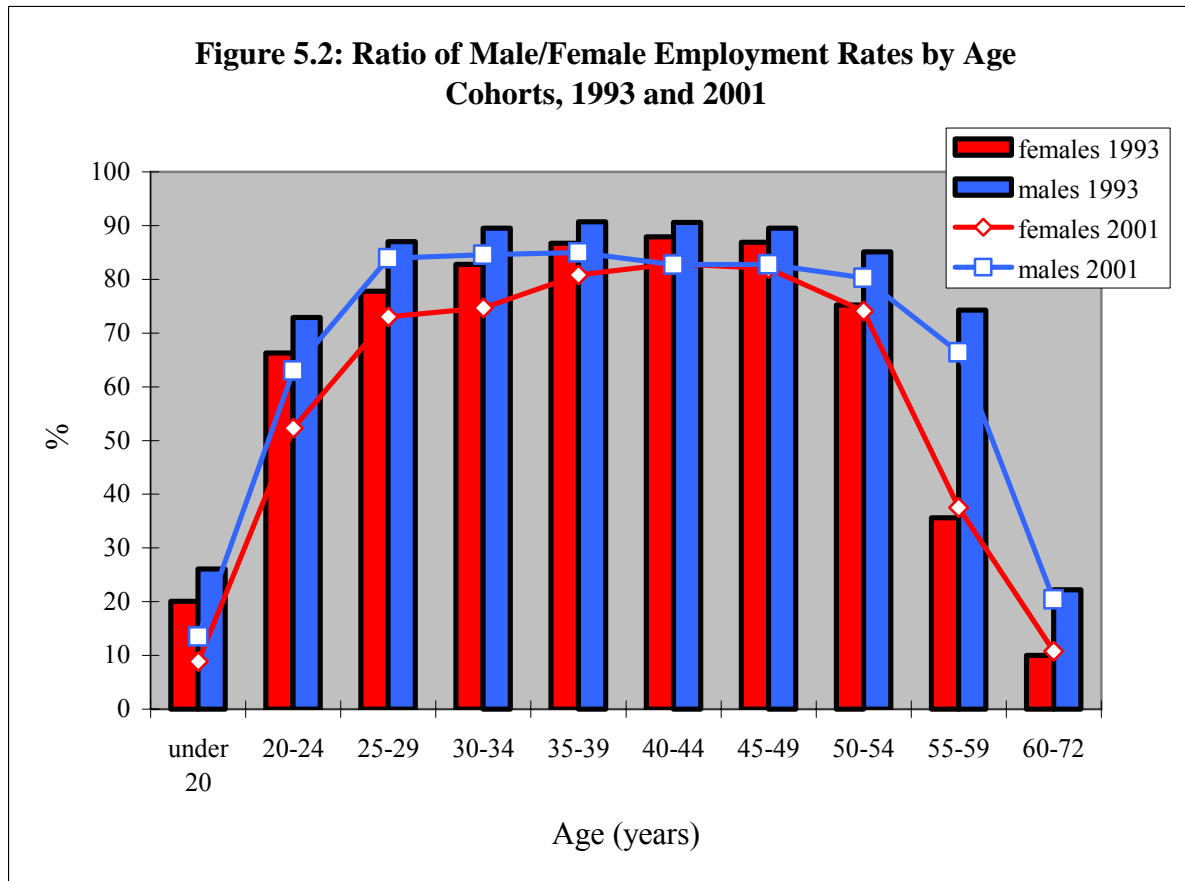
- Trends in male and female labor market participation levels
- Horizontal and vertical segregation
- Gender asymmetry in hazardous jobs and jobs with poor conditions
- Male and female unemployment
- Gender wage differentials.



Source: Goskomstst.

A. TRENDS IN MALE AND FEMALE LABOR MARKET PARTICIPATION LEVELS

5.2 Women’s economic activity rate at the working age went down by 7.5 percent (from 81.6 percent in 1993 to 74.1 percent in 2001); men’s activity rate fell by 6.4 percent — from 86.6 percent to 80.2 percent, in the same period) [1010, 72]. Thus, there have been no substantial gender shifts in this area; reduced labor activity is a population-wide trend, although somewhat more pronounced among women than among men (see Figure 5.2). RLMS data show a more moderate decline by extreme age groups than data provided by Goskomstat, resulting from the higher sensitivity of RLMS to sporadic employment and second job earnings typical of those age groups [919, 217].



Source: Goskomstat.

5.3 In 2001 the share of women in the working-age economically inactive population was 56 percent. The male and female segments of the inactive population have the same distribution into groups willing and unwilling to work: women account for 56 percent of those unwilling to work, and 56 percent of all economically inactive individuals who are willing to work. Notably, there are more men (58 percent) than women (42 percent) among pensioners who prefer not to work; among the voluntarily unemployed, female householders (97 percent) outnumber male householders (3 percent), and students have almost the same gender percentages. The percent of men unwilling to work “for other reasons” is also larger (10 percent of economically inactive men, compared to 7.2 percent of women) [357].

5.4 In the paid sector, the non-employed status of women is either forced (caused by all forms of unemployment) or voluntary. In order to analyze the motivations behind female non-employment in the transition period, experts studied the value systems of economically active women [190; 301; 570], their life strategies and their social feeling [111; 189; 228; 302; 423]. The experts designed a monitoring system that would reveal the social feeling of employed women [423] and examined women's behavioral stereotypes [496], gender stereotypes [188; 440], and gender-specific socialization patterns [614].

5.5 RLMS-based estimates confirmed the initial hypothesis about the influence of socio-demographic factors on the probability of being economically inactive, and the probability of changing the status either way. Negative factors include: gender (women are generally less likely to be economically inactive and less likely to change their status from inactive to active), age, the availability of unearned income (for women), the number of children (for women), family size, the status of the pensioner or student (more applicable to men), and health (more applicable to men). Positive factors include: educational attainment (more applicable to women) and marital status (more applicable to men: married women, and especially married men, tend to be more economically active). The unearned income factor was found to influence entry into but not exit from the labor market. The number of children had a mixed effect: the negative impact of this factor on [the probability of] exit from labor market is in contradiction with its negative impact on [the probability of] remaining economically active [919, 217-223].

5.6 The working-age employment of women and men declined at the same rate, but from different initial levels (in 2001, from 77.5 percent to 67.7 percent and from 82.2 percent to 72.6 percent, respectively). [1010, 72].

B. HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL SEGREGATION

5.7 The problem of growing segregation of women in the workforce and on the labor market is discussed in this section. This segregation is both horizontal and vertical in nature (see Box 5.1). First, the problem of sectoral segregation is discussed. The decline in the number of employed men and women has been uneven by sector [581, 2-5]. From 1995 through 2000, employment plummeted in construction (male employment went down 48.8 percent and female, 49.1 percent), manufacturing (declines of 14.5 percent and 23.1 percent, respectively), and transport services (declines of 19.8 percent and 13.6 percent, respectively). Even in the traditionally female-dominated sectors the loss of female employment was significant: 34.4 percent in light industry, 38.7 percent in the textile industry, and 28.9 percent in the garments industry. A moderate increase (0.3 percent) in total employment was recorded in 2000: the number of employed men grew by 0.4 percent, and the number of employed women, by 0.1 percent.

Box 5.1: Occupational Gender Segregation

Occupational sexual segregation is a stable trend in the employment of men and women in certain occupations, branches and positions. There are two components of occupational segregation: horizontal segregation and vertical segregation.

Horizontal occupational segregation means an unequal distribution of men and women in terms of occupations or branches of the economy (branch-wise segregation).

Vertical segregation means an unequal distribution by positions in the service hierarchy [1041, 137].

The most widespread method of segregation measurement is the application of the Duncan dissimilation index S , which is determined in the following way:

$$S = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i |M_i - F_i| \times 100\%$$

where M_i is a percentage of all men workers employed in an occupation or branch i ;

F_i is a percentage of all women workers employed in an occupation or branch i .

This index shows what percentage of workers of one sex should have changed their branches under the condition that workers of the opposite sex remain in their jobs so that there could be an equal branch-wise distribution of men and women. The dissimilation index may vary from 0 to 100. This index may show value 0 only in the case of full coincidence of structures while value 100 may be reached only in the case of 100 percent sex-based division of labor. Respectively, the fall of some index value in some period shows the reduction of segregation, while index growth means its increase.

5.8 According to official statistics [357], the female-dominated sectors (such as education, health and finance) remain “feminized”; the share of women employed in trade and trade and public catering has increased even more, while manufacturing and construction have faced increasing “masculinization.” Between 1995 and 2001, the share of women in total employment in the manufacturing industries changed from 41 percent to 38 percent; in construction, the share of women went from 23 percent to 18 percent; in trade and public catering, it went from 57 percent to 63 percent; in education, it changed from 83 percent to 81 percent; in public health, it went from 81 percent to 80 percent, and in finance, it went from 74 percent to 72 percent.

5.9 Prior to the reform, however, women workers prevailed in the machine-building and chemicals sectors. The shift in emphasis toward the raw materials sector reduced female employment in manufacturing by half, and the outflow of female labor to the trade sector signals a declining skill level of the jobs taken by women and the loss of the professional capacity initially possessed by the female workforce [464, 158].

5.10 The future prospects are far from optimistic: the growth in the primary industry will expand employment opportunities in “male” jobs, while the forthcoming demographic decline will reduce the demand for female labor in the female-dominated sectors (primary school education, pediatrics, etc.) [464, 157]. The demographic decline, however, is expected to take place over a longer term, owing to structural factors (the more numerous generations have just reached the reproductive age) and postponed births [472].

5.11 The traditionally high percentage of women among scholars resulted in the overall “feminization” of academic research in Russia [994]. However, in order to see the true gender distribution of resources in this sector it is important to take into account not just the percentage numbers but also the allocation of finance flows available to female scholars. With research programs substantially under funded, women’s prevalence in numbers is no longer indicative of

a favorable gender situation. Research budget cuts, especially in the humanities, increase the risk that women with a high level of education may fall below poverty line and beyond social demand [157; 641; 642; 647], as confirmed by a survey of female employees of the Moscow State University [111; 228]. From 1990 through 1998, the total number of women employed in research institutions and projects fell from 1.5 million to 645,000 (men are facing a similar pattern) [870, 47]. The closure of many research and development organizations and the downsizing of medium-level managerial staffs (where women accounted for more than 60 percent of employees) [868, 158] are another indication of the disproportionately heavy consequences of structural reform for women.

5.12 Investments in fixed capital are also gender-biased: in 1999, 49 percent of total investment ended up in male-dominated sectors, 35 percent in gender neutral sectors (machine-building, chemicals, housing and utility services), and 16 percent in female-dominated sectors [868, 156].

5.13 Women in Russia prefer to work in medium and large enterprises (where they account for 53 percent of total employment, compared to 36 percent in small companies) [357]. There are two reasons for this situation. First, small business is usually associated with instability and a higher risk of job loss. Families often adopt the following strategy: the wife keeps her low-paid but secure job at a (relatively large) state-owned enterprise, while the husband looks for a more gainful, even if temporary, occupation with irregular working hours [484]. Small businesses meet these latter criteria. Second, about 40 percent of small enterprises operate in male-dominated sectors, where the share of female employees remains within 20-24 percent [357; 635].

5.14 Vertical as well as horizontal segregation remains high: women tend to fill vacancies of a lower status requiring a lower skills level [484].

5.15 The relative distribution of men and women by main occupation is asymmetric. In 2001 women occupied 36 percent of managerial jobs (of all ranks) and 56 percent of unskilled jobs throughout the economy [1010, 78-79]. Table 5.1 shows the gender distribution for employees who filled state and municipal vacancies (by categories and ranks) as of January 1, 2002.

5.16 Women's career patterns in the changing labor market [39; 145; 160; 299; 400; 632; 718; 845; 862; 882; 972; 1068; 1229; 1230; 1231] have become more complicated, and many women face a descending career [484; 845]. This tendency calls for special support and adjustment mechanisms for career-minded women [39; 718; 1068], implemented both within the framework of corporate personnel policy (micro stimulation) [299] and through macro incentives provided at the national policy level [400]. Despite the high value many women attribute to their careers, their outcomes are unfavorable [1229; 1230; 1231].

5.17 A comparison of social mobility by gender (estimated by "Type of Career" indicator) in the 1980s and 1990s demonstrated drastic changes in the type and direction of gender-specific social status shifts. The current situation is more favorable for men, although the drop in men's mobility balance from a previously higher status level was more significant. Women lost less, but today their social mobility balance has a negative value and there are more instances of descending careers than mounting ones. In the late 1990s, middle-aged women (30-39 years) had

the lowest social mobility balance, and their male age mates had the highest. Length of service (age) is no longer a factor of positive social mobility, while the role of education has increased. Important factors for male (in contrast to female) careers are divorce and post-divorce marital status [845, 84]. It may be interesting to compare these statistics to the situation in other countries.

Table 5.1: Gender Composition of Employees Who Filled State and Municipal Vacancies, by Categories and Ranks of Offices, as of January 1, 2002
(in percent)

	State vacancies in the Federal State Service		State vacancies in the State Service of the Subjects of the RF		Municipal Vacancies	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
Total number of employees who filled the vacancies:	71	29	69	31	75	25
Including:						
Of category «A»	58	42	45	55	27	73
Of category «B»	61	39	48	52	52	48
Of category «C»	75	25	71	29	79	21
Of which by ranks of offices:						
Top	12	88	28	72	42	58
Principal	23	77	46	54	57	43
Leading	67	33	64	36	73	27
Senior	73	27	75	25	82	18
Junior	88	12	87	13	91	9

Source: Goskomstat.

5.18 Women's share in self-employment is comparable with men's (48 percent in 2001) [1010, 72]. However, it is difficult to understand the difference between various types of self-employment (shuttle trader, private tutor, private detective, etc.).

5.19 Outright discrimination takes place when employers are unwilling to hire women. Over half of these employees believe that the burden of family responsibilities reduces the value of female labor. With the competition for jobs being high, employers give preference to those who are prepared to work extra hours and with greater intensity [767, 59].

5.20 A higher discrimination against women on the labor market is also due to changes in the vary nature of labor and industrial relations. The development of a modern, "Postfordist" labor market in Russia will inevitably increase the share of outwork arrangements, partial and informal employment, short-term contracts and sporadic earnings, and will toughen the requirements

regarding labor mobility and skills levels. All of these trends will obviously reduce women's capacity to compete with men in the labor market: women have lower occupational and geographic mobility, bear the burden of reproductive work, and are generally less competitive. This means that they will be pushed into the field of one-time/sporadic contracts, informal sector employment, and outwork, with fewer resources and opportunities available to them [636; 638].

5.21 Women adapt themselves to changes in the labor market [56; 151; 158; 402; 403; 691; 717; 719; 720; 726; 799; 858; 883; 949; 1006; 1043; 1135], in particular, by taking secondary jobs [532; 921] (and thus assuming an additional workload), but shifting to non-public sectors [675] (which are characterized by lack of stability and social guarantees), and by resorting to the informal sector [1126; 1128; 1129] (where gender discrimination is especially pronounced). For example, 84 percent of women having, or looking for, a second job are hired workers, which exceeds the respective male figure by 13 percentage points. There are half as many women as men working under term contracts, small assignment contracts, or other civil law agreements [1139, 182-183].

5.22 The informal sector [1126; 1128; 1129] is the environment in which citizen, worker and human rights violations are common practice: the social benefits envisaged by law are often denied to workers; neither the amount of pay nor the duration of employment is guaranteed; no labor contracts are signed; working conditions are strenuous, with no mechanization, etc. It is this environment that is characterized by substantial gender asymmetry and polarization: very high (and often criminal) earnings (in the male-dominated sector) coexist with low-paid employment with a private entrepreneur (minimarket and kiosk trade, indoor cleaning, etc. – predominantly female segments) [1126, 89].

C. GENDER ASYMMETRY IN HAZARDOUS JOBS AND JOBS WITH POOR SANITARY AND HYGIENIC CONDITIONS

5.23 There is no finite estimate of the exposure of male and female labor to adverse work conditions. On the one hand, negative trends are observed as regards female employment in harmful, hazardous and physically strenuous occupations [500]. On the other hand, the official government policy of occupational benefits and restrictions for women is outdated and affects women's competitiveness on the labor market, rendering them "socially handicapped" [320; 321; 1139]. There are presently more than 600 types of jobs and occupations from which women are restricted.

5.24 The number of workers exposed to harmful and hazardous conditions has been reduced in response to an overall employment decline, but the relative share of such workers in manufacturing, construction, and transport services has grown (1.5 times, on average, between 1990 and 2000) [1065, 279]. Furthermore, more working men than women are facing poor workplace sanitary conditions. At the end of 2000, the number of workers operating in such environments totaled 3,130,300, including 2,277,100 men and 853,200 women.²¹

²¹ In the manufacturing industries, male workers facing such conditions outnumber their female counterparts by 2.4 to 1; in transport services, by 4.8 to 1; in construction, by 6.1 to 1; and in communications, by 12.5 percent.

5.25 In virtually all industries (except in woodworking) the share of women facing substandard workplace sanitary conditions, relative to the total number of women employed, is significantly lower than in the case of men.²² And similar patterns are recorded as regards strenuous physical labor and the operation of equipment that does not meet safety requirements. In 2000, women performing strenuous physical labor in the manufacturing industries accounted for 1.1 percent of sectoral female employment, and men, for 4.7 percent of sectoral male employment; the figures in construction were 3.1 percent and 4.7 percent, respectively and in transport services they were 0.8 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively.

5.26 Changes in the number of women receiving occupational benefits (between 1995 and 2000 the number of women granted privileges and compensation for working under adverse conditions went down 28.5 percent) and eligible for early retirement (in 1995-2000 their numbers were reduced by 22.9 percent), were determined to a large extent by changes in the number of privileged female workers in specific sectors of the economy. In some sectors, the dismissal of female workers eligible for benefits proceeded at a faster rate than the dismissal of women in adverse working conditions. One example is the construction sector, where the number of women receiving occupational benefits and compensations was reduced by 83.4 percent. At the same time, the total number of female construction workers facing adverse working conditions went down by about 50 percent [581, 2-5].

5.27 Gender asymmetry in employment in hazardous conditions and in poor sanitary conditions leads to gender asymmetry in the incidence of on-the-job injuries and occupational diseases. In 2001, in all sectors, 110,000 men and 34,000 women suffered from non-lethal workplace injuries (men accounting for 76 percent of those injured); in the same year, 4,085 men and 283 women were killed in occupational accidents (men accounting for 94 percent of all victims) [100, 184; 668 120].

D. MALE AND FEMALE UNEMPLOYMENT

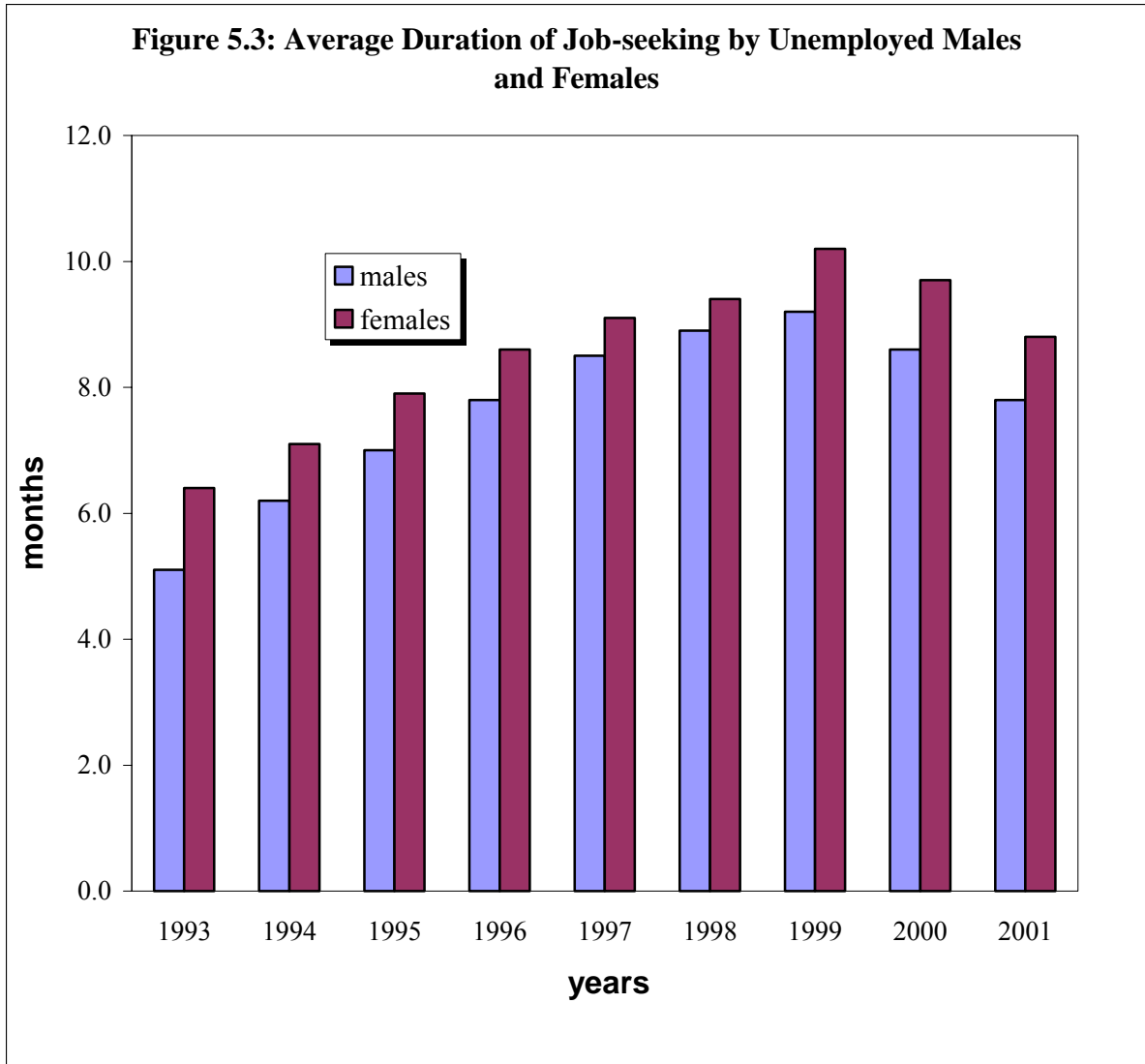
5.28 Another female labor problem is the fact that women are being “pressed” out of jobs and are thereby becoming unemployed at a more rapid rate. Throughout the 1990s, the share of employed women declined from 51 percent to 48 percent. This loss of employment in the 1990s was clearly discriminatory. Of some 12 million people who lost their jobs in 1991-98, 8 million were women. Women were ousted primarily from sectors using skilled labor, such as management, research and development, instrument making, and electronics. Even in the traditionally “female” sectors (finance, communications, trade, public utilities) women are progressively being replaced by men. Many women lost their jobs in light industry because of the economic crisis [870, 46-47; 880].

5.29 The prevalence of women among the officially registered unemployed, in combination with the almost equal male and female unemployment rates (as estimated using the ILO standard), may produce the impression of a relatively gender neutral situation. Nevertheless, female unemployment is more severe in terms of duration of job search, frequency of

²² The 2000 figures for manufacturing were 15.1 percent of women and 26.5 percent of men; in construction, they were 6.1 percent and 11.3 percent, respectively; and in transport services, they were 6.8 percent and 15 percent, respectively [1237, 280].

unemployment, and duration of unemployment. Women tend to be out of a job for longer periods, and they often “escape” from unemployment to housekeeping as an illusory solution to the problem. Most unemployed men succeed in finding a new job relatively quickly, while the majority of women, once out of job, lose employment permanently [740; 767; 1130].

5.30 The duration of female unemployment increased from 4.9 months in 1992 to 10.2 months in 1999 but decreased to 8.8 months in 2001 (the respective figures for male unemployment were 3.9, 9.2 and 7.8) (see Figure 5.3). Throughout the reform period, the percent of women who remained in the job search for more than one year, relative to the total number of unemployed women, exceeded the respective male figure. In 2001 these percentages were 40.5 percent for women and 33.9 percent for men [1010, 85]. Women account for 72 percent of all of the unemployed seeking new jobs for more than 12 months. According to RLMS data, women faced shorter episodes of unemployment on average, but for married women job search periods were much longer. The reason may be that single women put more effort into the job search, or have a lower reserve wage; marriage may also be a factor in reducing employment opportunities [919, 224].



Source: Goskomstat.

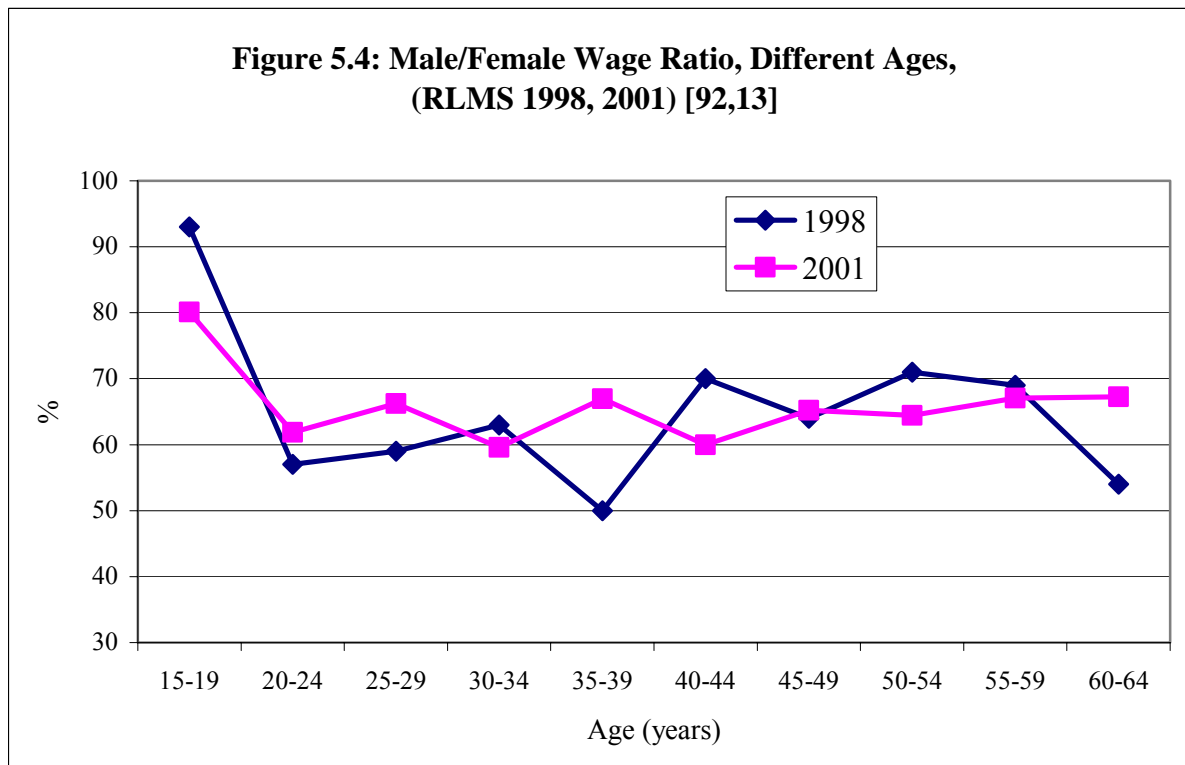
5.31 In almost every type of unemployment — official, hidden, forced, partial or structural — women are either represented equally with men or are at a disadvantage in terms of finding a solution or assuming unemployed status [10; 40; 49; 66; 103; 161; 162; 163; 183; 187; 248; 298; 316; 317; 411; 422; 459; 494; 527; 585; 716; 729; 744; 758; 821; 823; 849; 920; 997; 998; 1000; 1033; 1126; 1127; 1234]. The situation of female unemployment is especially acute among the younger population groups [66; 422; 744; 1000], in rural areas [821], and in economically depressed regions with stagnant industries [187; 422].

5.32 Women are more frequently dismissed (in 2001, 27.1 percent of unemployed women and 23 percent of unemployed men were dismissed), while men tend to resign (in 2001, 22.4 percent of unemployed women and 29.5 percent of unemployed men were released at their own request). Women account for only 39 percent of total voluntary resigned (25 percent - according to official unemployment registries) [357].

5.33 Unemployed men and women also differ in method of job search.²³ According to RLMS, women are much more inclined to apply to government employment offices (and do so more effectively) than to use informal channels of employment. They are generally not as active as men in the job search and, in particular, in selecting between job placement options. This is mostly due to limited opportunities in the labor market, employers' gender preferences (women are reluctant to contact employers and private agencies), income differentials (private agencies offer more expensive services), and differences in the availability of time (interviews with employers takes more time [919, 232].

E. GENDER WAGE DIFFERENTIALS

5.34 In the early 1990s, Russian women earned 60-70 percent as much as men on average, and in the late 1990s they earned only 56 percent (as reported by VTsIOM, the All-Russian Center of Public Opinion Research). According to Goskomstat, the gender differentiation ratio has not changed very much since 1990 [880] and independent researchers report that, for example, in a large city (such as St. Petersburg) the gender earned income differentiation was 63 percent, and in a small city (such as Vyazniki), 81 percent in 1997. [1054, 142]. Age can also be a factor (see Figure 5.4).



5.35 This gender wage gap is associated with horizontal (sectoral) and vertical (intra-sectoral) occupational segregation. For example, in 2000 sectoral segregation by wage was clearly gender-

²³ For example, in 2002 women accounted for 54 percent of those who sought employment through government placement offices, 43 percent of those using private agencies, 46 percent of those looking up employment opportunities in advertisements, 45 percent of those turning to friends, and 42 percent of those applying directly to potential employers [357].

related. The highest wage rates are maintained in primary industries: oil extracting (4.29 percent above the national average), gas (4.41 percent), and nonferrous metals (3.2 percent). The lowest wages are paid in light industry (0.52 percent), agriculture (0.47 percent), and public catering and the social sector (0.65 percent) [1235, 261]. Table 5.2 shows gender pay ratios for the years 1999 through 2001.

5.36 In 2001 the ratio of earnings to subsistence income in the male-dominated sectors ranged between 2.6 and 6.4, while in the female-dominated sectors it ranged between 1.1 and 2.4 [868, 159]. As part of overall labor costs, regular and one-time bonuses, personnel housing and training are typical of the “male” sectors, while in-kind payment is more frequent in the “female” sectors. Total labor costs in the male-dominated sectors are twice as high in absolute terms [1139, 178-181].

5.37 Intra-sectoral wage discrimination is present even in those industries in which female workers prevail in numbers. For example, men earn more than twice as much as women in the civil service, because women are mostly employed in lower-paid jobs [1139, 174-175].

5.38 In addition, there are different pay levels for men and women in similar occupations. An RF Goskomstat survey (2000) shows that this difference emerged primarily from lower wage rates set for women workers. For example, male flight assistants earned 30 percent, doctors 15 percent, and paramedics 10 percent more than their female counterparts [1139, 175].

Table 5.2: Gender Pay Ratios, 1999 – 2001
(Female wages as a percent of male wages)

	1999	2000	2001
Total in the domestic economy	65	63	63
Of which:			
In industry	64	63	62
In agriculture	88	88	88
In forestry	99	103	104
In construction	79	77	77
In public transport	75	73	72
In communications	62	58	58
In trade and public catering	64	65	62
In information and computing services	69	65	67
In geology and mineral prospecting, geodesic and hydro-meteorological services	55	54	49
In housing and public utilities services, non-production kinds of consumer services to the population	76	78	78
In healthcare, sports and social security	71	71	76
In public education	78	80	78
In art and culture	76	72	65
In science and scientific servicing	68	68	66
In finance, loans and insurance	70	72	70
In management	80	81	79

Source: Goskomstat.

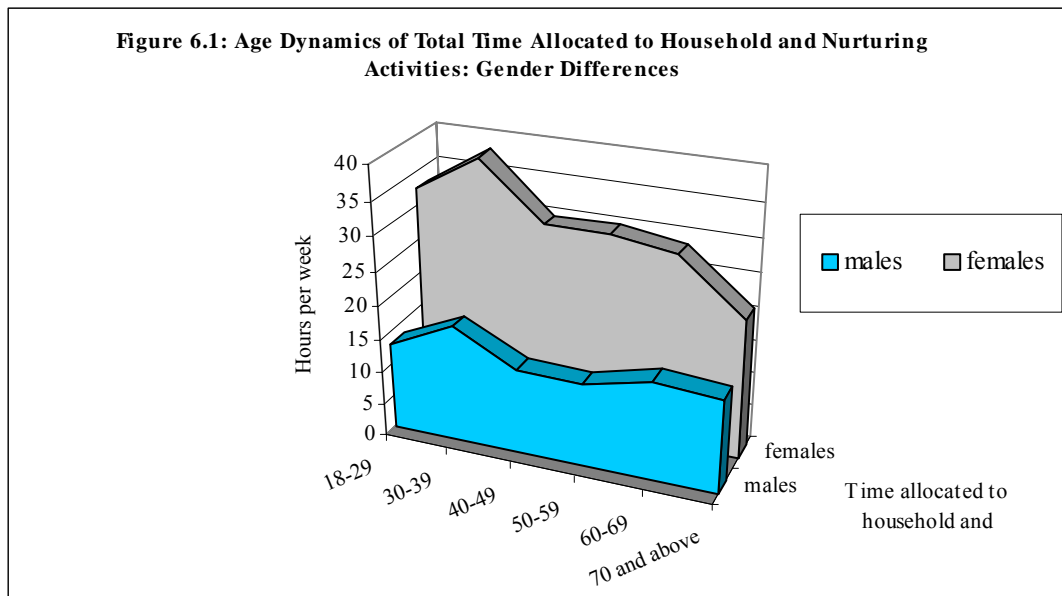
6. GENDER ROLES IN HOUSEHOLDS

6.1 In the Russian literature on gender economics, considerable attention is given to family studies, household dynamics, marital relations and gender roles. It should be noted that the distribution of gender roles is initially determined at the micro (family or household) level, which in turn affects the female labor supply, resource allocation patterns, and the overall economy. This chapter which reviews gender roles in households, is divided into the following parts:

- Household work division between spouses
- Rebirth of the traditional family
- Distribution of income within the household.

A. HOUSEHOLD WORK DIVISION BETWEEN SPOUSES

6.2 Gender roles in Russia are divided in a traditional way: household work remains predominantly a female occupation, while paid employment is dominated by men. The majority of Russian men and women believe that earning money is a role more appropriate for men. Nevertheless, many women find that combining household and professional responsibilities is the best option for them [117; 118]. Many people of both sexes agree in words that the burden of housework should be split evenly between men and women [771, 111].



Source: RLMS, 1998 [673, 59].

6.3 However, in reality it is women who carry out most of the household responsibilities, and the distribution of the workload between the spouses remains unequal (see Figure 6.1). Women work more than three times as much as men do in their households, and almost every woman has to carry this burden. Men spend less time doing non-market work, and one out of five does not contribute any work at all [84; 771; 771]. In addition, most household responsibilities in Russia are distributed unevenly (this is less so as regards subsidiary production [84; 771] and help provided to friends and relatives [771]). Since women carry a much larger housework burden than men, and since a “rational” choice of occupation is a male prerogative, women have a limited choice and a lower capacity to be economically independent or to benefit from the division of labor at home [84; 136; 466; 495; 901]. However, female labor is still widely used throughout the economy (48.3 percent of total employment in 2001) [870, 48]. As a result, Russian women still face a “double” work day.

6.4 Today the division of work performed within the household continues to be gender-biased, while the total duration of household work has increased for both spouses, as more time is now spent on subsidiary production (a survival strategy for many Russian families), where the workload is distributed evenly in most cases. Men contribute very little additional time and effort to raising their children, especially in rural areas [771].

6.5 In spite of the social security reform in the 1990s which reestablished maternity leave as parental leave, men hardly ever make use of such leave. For example, in November 2000, some 8,000 fathers were on three-year parental leave [225; 242], or 2.3 percent of all individuals who were eligible for this entitlement. There were more cases of men taking unpaid leave to care for children aged between 18 months and three years (3.2 percent of all parents taking such leave), than of unpaid leave being granted to parents with children under 18 months (1.6 percent of all parents taking such leave). Experts argue that this situation stems not only from gender stereotypes prevailing in Russia, but also from general ignorance of the use of child care leave (almost half of Russians do not know that the leave can be taken by either parent) [100, 159-160].

6.6 Women’s time apart from paid employment is split between leisure and household responsibilities. The social transformations that have taken place in Russia have reduced the amount of leisure time for women. Women in rural and low-income households are most heavily affected by these changes, as they carry an additional workload associated with subsidiary food production. Secondary employment, which is another widespread coping strategy, also reduces the total leisure time available to Russian women.

6.7 As the value of housework (reproductive work) is not recognized by the society, women suffer losses in employment and pension entitlements [86; 476; 887]. Attempts to evaluate housework and in this way to appropriately account for it in all institutional systems (pensions, employment, social security) leads to the idea of satellite accounts in the system of national accounting, with the purpose of making reproductive work visible in the national income [1026].

6.8 The impact of reproductive and household work on women’s competitive status and on their equal opportunities in the labor market is extensively analyzed in the Russian literature. Some authors examine the consequences of combining housework with paid employment for women, and argue for a new type of gender contract in this sphere [24; 51; 249; 294; 416; 562;

620; 891; 1057]; others address the issue of women's choice between family and work, from the point of view of both male and female respondents (including the younger cohorts [1232]) and from the researchers' perspective [95; 115; 118; 196; 569; 1020; 1025; 1218; 1232], confirming the existence of conflict between the traditional (patriarchal) family ideal shared by some Russians, and women's capacity and willingness to devote themselves entirely to housekeeping [117; 118]; still others question the very possibility of achieving gender symmetry in employment, and discuss equal opportunities and gender stereotypes in the labor market [97; 313; 722; 1028].

6.9 The uneven division of reproductive labor at the micro (family) level and discrimination against women in the area of paid employment are augmented by economic globalization processes, which leads to the export of reproductive labor and unequal access to resources by country. Women are more severely affected by these developments, as their interests in the global labor market are violated [615; 636; 638; 766; 886; 895; 1051; 1075; 1080]. Russian women are involved in international labor migration as a reproductive labor force (nannies, babysitters, surrogate mothers), as objects of sexual trafficking [617; 819; 839; 1074; 1219], and as cheap labor [490; 617; 637; 638; 648; 695; 702; 1073; 1076; 1077; 1078; 1079; 1080].

B. REBIRTH OF THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY

6.10 The first half of the 1990s witnessed a rebirth of the popular ideals of the traditional family, partly as a consequence of women becoming tired of their "double" work day. Other factors contributing to this process were: the idealization of the housekeeper role; labor market contraction, primarily at the expense of women; government policies (maternity leave was extended to three years); approval of the traditional family by male politicians; and the attitude of the mass media in praising the "advantages" of such gender relations (see Box 6.1).

Box 6.1: Gender-based Division of Labor

The gender-based Division of Labor is a form of division of labor according to the perception of "men's job" and "women's job" by virtue of gender distinctions, which, though they allegedly have a social nature, in fact are a result of "natural" qualities and abilities of the sexes. Sex-based division of labor is registered in most known societies, but its manifestation and level of differentiation are socially and historically relative. This form is most typical for industrial societies and is accompanied by a discrepancy between unpaid domestic labor and hired labor, between private and public spheres. Though the spheres are gender-segregated (the private sphere is associated with women while the public one is associated with men), such discrepancies are ideological rather than empirical. In contemporary capitalist societies women are concentrated in specific industries, services and care-related professions. The experience of women's hired labor is mostly associated with the poorest working conditions, lower remuneration of labor and lower trade union coverage.

Source: COLLINS, *Big Explanatory Sociological Dictionary*, M.: AST, 1999. V.1, p.182.

6.11 The renewed public interest in traditional family values and the clear-cut division of roles (the “breadwinner” and the “housekeeper”) in the mid-1990s came into contradiction with the actual economic situation and with the historic household income patterns found in Russia [484]. The two-earner family model inherited from the Soviet system is being reproduced today as living standards are plummeting: the vast majority of households cannot survive on the income earned by one family member. In addition, the negative experience of “staying home” encouraged many women to re-enter the labor market or revise their views on the “normal” distribution of gender roles. By the late 1990s there were more women who were forced to stay at home but were willing to find work than there were women unwilling to work at all (in contrast to the situation in the mid-1990s) [870,48].

C. DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD

6.12 The division of authority and the decision-making mechanism accepted in a household constitute another gender issue. Notably, such factors as reproductive labor, paid employment, household structure, household income and individual family members’ earnings are of secondary importance to the issue of power as a determinant of gender equality and the gender role split in the family [487; 488]. Different studies have produced results that differ slightly. Some authors report that, on the one hand, about one-third of female respondents (37 percent) have to routinely or occasionally ask their husbands for money, or account to their husbands for all or part of their spending. This percentage is almost the same in families with different income levels. On the other hand, about one-third of women share a single household budget with their husbands: under this arrangement all major decisions are usually taken by mutual agreement, while day-to-day spending is undertaken by the woman [263; 1048;1237]. According to other studies, in a certain number of families the women are in charge of the household income and expenses, while the men trust them to deal with nearly all of the social matters and daily needs of the family, and power within the household is distributed in a more democratic way [56; 776, 13; 914].

6.13 A number of authors claim that the distribution of income within the household correlates with the spouses’ relative contributions and also with age (the younger the cohort, the stronger the egalitarian values). They also point out that gender distribution and the allocation of income for certain consumption purposes can be unfair – a manifestation of economic violence on the husband’s part [461; 466; 475; 1237]. Under such a model the woman may be earning more than the man but is denied an equal share of the family money [1237].

6.14 Formal marriage tends to nurture the gender asymmetry of household power more than in the case of de facto marriage or partnership. In particular, economic violence against women is more common in formal marital unions [1237]; in addition, in informal/de facto marriages men contribute more time to housework [771].

6.15 One situation that is regularly reported is that the lower the educational attainment of the husband is, the more likely he is to share housekeeping responsibilities with the wife and have her administer the household budget. Men with the lowest and the highest levels of education are also the most willing to share the breadwinner role. This tendency results from the fact that the former face more severe economic need, while the latter tend to be married to well-educated

women with a high employment status. Women who have a high educational attainment are more determined to have an equal share in the family income [771, 30; 887, 25-40].

6.16 It has also been reported that family relationships tend to be better in households with higher income levels. In poor families the percent of married women dissatisfied with the way their household budgets are managed is higher, and conflicts around this issue occur three times as frequently [888; 1049].

7. POVERTY AND GENDER

7.1 In Russia today the gap between the rich and the poor is growing. It is evident that women are affected disproportionately by the reduction in the standard of living and the increasing lack of economic opportunities. The present chapter analyzes the relationship between poverty and gender, and discussed the issues under the following headings:

- Poverty feminization
- Poverty in single-parent families and full families
- Gender issues of poverty incidence among retirees
- Gender differences in access to resources
- Nutrition
- Gender-specific groups at risk (female groups and male groups).

A. POVERTY FEMINIZATION

7.2 Experts are in broad agreement that, since the outset of the transition, the reduction in the living standards of the population and the restriction of opportunities for human potential development have disproportionately affected women, resulting in the of feminization of poverty. As a rule, women tend to be concentrated in population groups that have a relatively low social status and income level (such as social sector managers, mass intelligentsia, "quasi-intelligentsia," unskilled labor, employees in popular trade and service occupations). A considerable portion of these women live in destitution and poverty [985].²⁴

7.3 Of particular importance is the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Poor people, of whom women are the majority, have restricted access to and control over resources [889]. In addition, savings tend to accumulate in rich households [880]. Poverty feminization is represented not only more often in terms of female income poverty, but also in the existence of extreme forms of female poverty, such as stagnant and deep poverty (the poorest of the poor).

7.4 The problem of the gender-based distribution of earnings has received coverage in the Russian economic literature largely from two angles: through comparing income levels of households with different socio-demographic characteristics, and through assessing the gender gap in pay and income between males and females. Research findings show that the level of

²⁴ According to estimates by T.I. Zaslavskaya, in the basic stratum (among low-paid hired labor) women account for the majority – 55 percent; in the bottom stratum, among socially destitute people the number of women is 1.5 times that of men, whereas in the top ranks of the social rank-order women are in minority relative to men [406, 455-464].

financial security is closely correlated with the demographic composition (dependence burden) and income level of family members [847]. Thus, poverty feminization is determined by a complex of socio-demographic factors. First, women are much more vulnerable to poverty because of the low pay that they receive for their labor. Second, single-parent households (a parent and children) in 97 percent of cases have the mother as the parent. Third, women receive lower retirement benefits relative to men, but women of retirement age prevail in numbers, especially in the oldest age groups. As a result, of the total number of women, nearly half fall into the group of the poor [1003, 41; 889, 13].

7.5 Another important factor contributing to poverty feminization, which is recognized by many analysts, is the decline in pay levels in feminized social sectors that has paralleled the economic reforms. Indeed, feminized sectors have traditionally offered lower pay [45; 101; 113; 135; 382; 405; 484; 710; 767; 848; 901; 1104; 1111]. As a result, a considerable number of women tend to be concentrated in occupations with low earnings, where the wage is often below the subsistence level and thus cannot compensate for the dependence burden or the reproduction of labor capacity [870; 1003, 45-46; 1104, 31]. In statistical series on workers' distribution by pay levels, women are concentrated in the left low pay quintile, whereas men tend to be concentrated in the right high pay quintile [767, 59]. Women's advancement to the category of the rich is fueled mainly by their husband's earnings; in this case, as a rule they play a dependent role in the family, which weakens their social position [889, 14]. A considerable disadvantage (of 30-40 percent) in women's average pay relative to men's pay deals an especially hard blow to single-parent families. On average, the aggregate earned income of women from single-parent families was below that of men, and was only 18 percent in excess of the earnings reported by women from two-parent families. Housewives and unemployed married women have a high representation in the low-income group [1104, 18, 25]. The findings of a survey conducted in the cities of St. Petersburg and Vyazniki suggested that working women were more vulnerable by poverty indicators than working men, and the incidence of deprivation poverty among these women was 21-23 percent higher. At the same time, it is worth noting that the increased vulnerability of women is affected by factors of traditional, rather than "new," poverty (i.e., factors of a socio-demographic nature). In single-parent families the incidence of deprivation poverty was two times that in two-parent families.

7.6 In a research paper by A. Suvorov, which is devoted to the mathematical estimate of factors contributing to the feminization of poverty at the stage of GDP generation and at the stage of income distribution, gender discrimination by labor pay as a factor of poverty is ranked fairly low. His findings suggest that general economic factors account for 55-60 percent of the total resource deficit in poor households, whereas the particularities of the education system and the income redistribution scheme (which show a clear gender bias) account for the residual 40-45 percent. At the same time, gender discrimination at the stage of income generation plays a comparatively small role in determining the general dimensions of female poverty, thus allowing for an insignificant 4-5 percent reduction of the total resource deficit in poor households. Much more significant is the inefficient scheme of income redistribution [1104, 96].

7.7 In this connection, experts point to the insufficiency and the low efficacy of the system of social transfers. Child and family allowances are nominal in character and do not compensate the child's subsistence level, let alone the cost of alternative services. For example, in 1997 a monthly allowance per child was 11.7 percent of the subsistence level; in 2000 it fell to 4.6

percent. Child allowances paid to single mothers were only two times higher; and child allowances paid to families with a parent drafted into the Army, or child allowances to families with a parent evading alimony payments, were 17.5 percent of the children's subsistence level in 1998 and 7 percent in 2001 [calculated by 1010, 137; 231, 86]. And even these scanty sums did not reach the beneficiaries throughout the 1990s, owing to delays in payment. The share of children under 16 (and students under 18) awarded monthly allowances, decreased from 81.7 percent in 1998 to 68.8 percent in 2000 [1010, 172], whereas the share of children under 6 with a money income below the subsistence level increased from 25 percent to 30 percent, and in the 7-15 age group the corresponding increase was from 32.8 percent to 40.3 percent [1010, 138].

B. POVERTY IN SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES AND FULL FAMILIES

7.8 By the beginning of the transition, single-parent families were second only to unwed elderly people in degree of poverty; 82 percent of these families were headed by women. But the findings of the 1993 survey show the advancement of families with children to the top rating position. In this group a prominent position is held by female-headed households, three-fourths of which fall into the category of the poor. Single-parent families exceed all other family types in incidence of poverty, and relative to two-parent families with children their income in 1993 averaged 62 percent. Across the Russian regions, this indicator varied from 55 percent to 69 percent. More than one-third of single retirees and one-quarter of single-parent families fall into the poor category in all of the three basic parameters simultaneously: absolute poverty (by income), relative poverty (by deprivation) and subjectively identified poverty [339; 768; 1104].

7.9 About half of the single-parent (female-headed) households and two-thirds of the single elderly women fell under the official poverty line in the first years of the reforms. Poverty incidence among single-parent households was 2.5 times higher than the similar indicator for married couple households [1104]. The degree of poverty feminization in Russia measured by living standards in female-headed households (female-headed families and single female retirees) declines in years of dramatic economic calamities (for example, the turmoil of 1998) and increases in better years. This is accounted for by a severe downturn in the financial position across all strata of society during the economic crisis, and a resultant shift of social groups, which are traditionally well provided for, into the category of the poor.

7.10 Analysts point out that a significant factor contributing to poverty is the existence of dependents in a household. The Taganrog survey findings indicate that two-thirds of full families with children have an income below the subsistence level. According to the Rybinsk survey, per capita income levels in families with children under 3 were 1.5 times lower than that in families with children in the 3-16 year age group, and two times lower than the per capita income in childless families [100, 163]. Multi-children families are notorious for low incomes and poor housing conditions. Even with social transfers and benefits, the per capita income deficit in two-parent multi-children families in 2000 was 27.5 percent above the average, and in families having other relatives as dependents it was 36.5 percent above the average. Among single-parent multi-children families, 90 percent have incomes below the subsistence level and 70 percent of them have income twice as low as that [55, 58; 1003, 4].

7.11 A number of surveys point to gender inequity as a factor in the distribution of poverty burden. The household's need for survival results in the transfer of the main tools of survival to

the sphere of household activities, which are usually performed by women. In practice, the woman thus minimizes the day-to-day household consumer expenses on nutrition, sanitation and hygiene [33; 776; 869, 889, 11]. The findings of the research project "Poverty and Social Exclusion in Russia: Regional, Ethnic and Social and Socio-cultural Dimensions" suggest that, although a child's needs allegedly are given top priority in collective spending decisions by both parents, it is the woman who tends to limit her own demands where the needs of other family members are concerned. The research provided evidence that even if a woman is able to make everyday decisions regarding the spending of money, this does not ensure her protection from her own deprivation. The responsibility for supervising the provision of household needs can result in the woman's depriving herself of essential needs.

7.12 In contrast to the Soviet period, the problem of restricted access to public pre-school childcare facilities has changed. In particular, the reduction in the availability of childcare facilities has been replaced by the high cost of services. According to ISEPN RAS, at the beginning of the 1990s, 10 percent of families with children under school age could not afford the services of public childcare facilities because of their high cost. The findings of the 1999 survey indicate that only 42 percent of households with children under school age could afford the services of pre-school institutions. The average cost of these services in 1998 was 118 rubles per month (16 percent of the subsistence level) disregarding extra expenses on repairs, nutrition, etc. According to the Rybinsk survey, the average monthly pay of a female under 30 was less than 300 rubles, whereas the monthly cost of day nursery care and kindergarten amounted to 600 rubles. This correlation between her salary and the cost of services makes the reentry of a young mother to her workplace economically inexpedient [790, 20; 428, 36; 888, 43-45; 1049]. In response to the slackening effective demand, the number of public pre-school childcare institutions decreased from 87,900 in 1990 to 50,000 in 2001. Whereas in 1990 about 66.4 percent of children attended childcare institutions, in 1995 the attendance rate had decreased to 55.5 percent, with a small rise to 57.2 percent in 2001 [911, 209-210]. At the same time, 302,700 children needed access to childcare facilities in 2002 [911, 209-210].

7.13 According to analysts, the root cause of the slackening demand for pre-school childcare facilities (whether it is the increase in maternity and childcare leave of up to 36 months or the unavailability of pre-school facilities for many social groups because of the mounting costs of these services) has not yet been determined. Is the contemporary Russian woman free in her choice: to seek paid employment and send the child to a childcare institution; to choose stay-at-home parenting and send the child to a childcare institution; or to choose stay-at-home parenting and refrain from sending the child to a childcare institution? For an answer to this question, further research is required. In addition, in the short-term perspective, considering the structural demographic factor (more populous generations have attained the reproductive age) and the outcome of births postponed in the transformation years, an upward trend in numbers of newborns is projected [472]. Given the decline of pre-school childcare institutions, their reduced availability may worsen and the cost of the services may soar again.

7.14 Another problem concerns the share of unpaid work performed by women who care for sick family members, which is on an upward trend. Young and middle aged working women are in the most vulnerable position. The financial unavailability of social services makes children and elderly people dependent on female care, which reduces women's professional mobility. According to E.V.Kulagina, after the birth of a child with disabilities, 43 percent of mothers and

3 percent of fathers residing in Moscow had to give up formal employment, despite the financial difficulties associated with such a move [72; 100, 197; 889]. Such failures in the social protection system as the absence of "manual" services from assistance programs are, as a rule, socially biased and affect women disproportionately, especially women with disabled children [116; 308]. Thus, the adverse gender consequences of the reforms, with the resulting failure to reconcile labor market and family roles, has delivered an especially hard blow to poor households.

7.15 Experts suggest that women from the poorest households constitute the most vulnerable group. Their position is much worse in relation to both women from better-off social strata, and men from poor households. Women from low-income households are characterized by "social anemia" and permanent stress, which is not registered as a predominant tendency for women from other population groups. Men from low-income households also register this syndrome, but to a lesser extent. The constant self-abnegation and the bad psychological state voiced by women from poor families are largely explained by gender inequity in the distribution of the poverty burden. According to the survey of urban low-income households, women in general and women from low-income households in particular, attested to the virulent impact of the reforms on their family roles, especially those connected with child rearing, more frequently than they attested to the adverse influence of the reforms in other spheres. Women who believed that during the decade of reforms their opportunities to obtain the desired educational levels decreased, made up 71.5 percent of the total of women from low-income households; in households of a medium income level, the number corresponding share averaged 62.6 percent, and in high income households it amounted to 44.7 percent. Declining opportunities to rear and bring up children were attested to by 90.4 percent, 82.3 percent and 78.9 percent, respectively [1048].

7.16 The burden of this forced combination of roles imposed on women from low-income households is much heavier than the burden shouldered by women from better-off families (not only because of the heavier family load, but also because of the need to earn one's living). Survey findings indicate that in many regions of Russia (the Northern Region, Altai, and the Non-Chernozem Zone), in both urban and rural areas, women tend to dominate households, ousting so-called "degrading" men from this position. This example of gender equality can hardly be called positive. In two-thirds of poor urban families, a woman performs the functions of the main or equal breadwinner, and in two-parent families this tendency is registered in more than 50 percent of cases. In well-off two-parent families, the corresponding share is significantly lower. Two-thirds of two-parent families with a woman acting as the main breadwinner faced conflict situations caused by the alcohol abuse or drug addiction of the male spouse, and in some other residue families the problem of alcohol abuse by the male spouse dismayed the woman but did not cause family quarrels. Of particular importance is the fact that if a woman assumed both the breadwinner responsibilities and the functions of the household head the degradation of the household was halted [427, 96]. In poverty conditions across certain population groups, the position of single-parent families is often financially more secure than that of two-parent ones. Contrary to the existing stereotypes, in the families of alcohol addicts, the husbands usually spend more money than they earn for the family [254; 1109].

C. GENDER ISSUES OF POVERTY INCIDENCE AMONG RETIREES

7.17 The share of poor retirees is not very large, but it is tending upward.²⁵ Of particular importance is the fact that the official poverty line set for retirees is one-third lower than the poverty line set for the active-age population. The findings of the fiscal survey by the State Committee for Statistics of the Russian Federation suggest that in 1998 the incidence of poverty among single retirees was two times lower than that for the entire population (19.2 percent versus 40.9 percent). But this ratio was obtained because of younger working retirees. Female retirees above age 65 residing separately from their families and having no access to social transfers other than retirement benefits, whose physical disability prevents them from earning extra income or cultivating their private household plot, are practically always forced below the poverty line. In this case, poverty is notable not only for high incidence but also for extreme forms of manifestation. The survey of 2000 found an upward trend in the share of the poor among single retirees in the older age cohort, of whom 90 percent are females [1104; 768; 339]. The deprivations of female retirees are especially acute in the Northern regions, where the cost of living is much higher and where extra income from the cultivation of a private household plot is lowest [427, 15].

7.18 Experts note that, as the distribution of paid work in the labor market and unpaid work at home puts women at a disadvantage, the introduction of a new public pension system may result in mounting discrimination against female retirees [1104]. In accord with the new standards, the amount of retirement benefits is calculated on the basis of pension contributions and the insurance record with the deduction of (unpaid) periods not covered by insurance (maternity leave up to 36 months, sick leave or parental leave, academic leave, military service, etc.). There is gender asymmetry in resorting to these temporary breaks: parental leave is taken mostly by women, and it is women who as a rule take time off to care for the illness of a child or other relative [87, 108]. Estimates show that if the pay differential between men and women is within the range of 30-40 percent, then, given equality in all other conditions, the accrued pension rights of women will amount to a mere 70-77 percent of men's pensions. The exercise of the right to maternity leave will further reduce women's retirement savings by 7-11 percent. The birth of two children and the resultant successive maternity leaves will "bite off" 14-21 percent of the woman's retirement savings, and three maternity leaves will "bite off" 21-30 percent of savings [87, 106]. Depending on the educational level of the beneficiaries, the retirement savings of men with a university education can increase 1.3 to 2.8 times at margin (in comparison with the savings of men with only a secondary education). The retirement savings of women with similar qualifications can grow 1.5 to 3.1 times, but, even so, women's net advantage will be less pronounced. In reality, the equalization of pension rights to date proceeds exclusively at the bottom level: in 1998, women's average retirement benefit was 90 percent of men's benefit, in 1992 it went up to 92 percent, and in 1994 it went up to 94 percent [86, 70-81].

²⁵ In 1995, 6.8 percent of retirees were poor under the official poverty line; in 1997, the share of poor male retirees was 7.1 percent and the share of poor female retirees was 10.9 percent; in 1998, these figures rose to 12.5 percent and 15.6 percent, respectively.

D. GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ACCESS TO RESOURCES

7.19 The literature on Russian economics examines the gender differences in the access to resources in terms of the following: the use of time budgets and the distribution of housework; employment; income; access to individual property and corporate property obtained through privatization; and access to social benefits (health, education, pensions, social security).

7.20 One of the key resources whose consumption is gender-biased is time, in particular, time spent on household or reproductive work in the broader sense (bearing and raising children, caring for sick and aged family members, maintaining the household, and social communications [636]).

7.21 Analyses of time budgeting [1; 47; 84; 136; 475; 495; 794; 795] and household work distribution [43; 84; 481; 476; 484; 771] in the Russian literature of the last decade is mostly based on data from occasional, one-year surveys performed by private teams (1992, 1993, 1994, 1998; 2002 — aggregate budgets), in particular cities (Pskov, Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Ivanovo, etc.), or, in fewer instances, among rural households. Some RLMS rounds involved the collection of population-wide time budget data. However, nationwide time budget surveys were conducted at varying intervals only between and 1990. In subsequent years this type of statistic, which is so important for the understanding of gender differences in resource distribution, was not collected by RF Goskomstat.

7.22 Most of the burden of housework is carried by women. Gender inequality in work distribution within the household is sustained in time: there were no changes to the pattern either in the Soviet period or in the transition. In the reform period women increased their participation in subsidiary food production to the same extent as men; however, this only increased the discrimination faced by women, burdening them with triple responsibilities (paid employment, housework and subsidiary production). The amount of housework time contributed by women is estimated to be three times the amount contributed by men, who have twice as much leisure time.

7.23 Ultimate social costs of economic reform fell upon households, that is, primarily upon women [868, 155]. The composition of services consumed by households changed in an important way: the relative consumption of services that could be substituted by women's work within the household (such as laundering, tailoring and clothes repair), went down, while the share of "male" services either remained at the same level (shoe repair, domestic appliance and furniture repair) or increased (car repair). Between 1994 and 2001, the share of laundering and tailoring services reduced by 3 and by 1.5 times, respectively, and the share of vehicle repair and maintenance services tripled [1010, 257]. In the absence of representative, continuous and comparable data series describing the situation in this area, we cannot adequately estimate the impact of social and economic transformations on men and women. It is important to start collecting relevant information, at the official level, on time budgets in Russia, at least with respect to seasonality, type of settlement, and the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

7.24 A separate body of literature is focused on women in rural households [48; 58; 65; 198; 466; 646; 651; 801; 821; 976; 1164] and, in particular, on the issues related to rural privatization, private farming and women's participation in these processes. The lack of literature on gender

equity in land ownership and farming opportunities can be explained by the slow progress in land reform and the undeveloped farming sector. There are currently very few studies and no statistics on the gender distribution of land resources, or on the distribution of farming inputs and tools and private farm produce.

7.25 A 1999 qualitative study (focus-group and individual interviews) [466] found that various groups of men and women (including women owning or sharing in the ownership of farms) had very similar opinions regarding private farming development and women's participation in this type of activity. The proliferation of farms established at the "grass roots" level (developed from peasant holdings) is restricted, not only by the unavailability of funds and credit, the limited access to land, and the risk of future instability but, what is more important from a long-term development perspective, by a lack of knowledge (in four key areas: law, accounting, organizational skills and technology); there are no schools, training courses or agencies aimed at eliminating this gap. Many new farms failed because the farmers pursued the wrong personnel management strategies, or because they did not know how to enter into contractual arrangements with local authorities, to keep books correctly, to prepare registration documents and credit papers as required, or to develop marketing infrastructure; novice farmers often met with the hostile attitudes of neighbors.

7.26 At present, Russian women can go into farming only if they have a male partner (usually a husband), in particular, because of a high degree of criminality in the farmers' environment, poor farm infrastructure, and the prevalence of manual labor [466].

E. NUTRITION

7.27 During the past decade, gender asymmetry in the provision of adequate nutrition has not been made a separate object of analysis in the research projects of Russian scientists. However, in order to judge the cuteness of this asymmetry, it is important to analyze the connection between poverty and nutrition further. The comparison of retirees' actual expenses on nutrition with the minimum consumption basket indicates that, on average, the expenditures are 7 percent below the floor level, which testifies to an insufficient consumption of foodstuffs.²⁶ 75 percent of retirees are stinting themselves as regards nutrition. These families are characterized by a consumption of calories, protein and carbohydrates that is below the relatively low standards set for the minimum consumption basket, and they are experiencing mounting expenses on nutrition in the consumer budget. The Taganrog survey findings suggest that the share of the population who identified their nutrition as good and excellent was 42 percent in 1981, 40 percent in 1994, and only 18 percent in 1998, whereas the share of the population who identified their nutrition as bad and very bad was 14 percent, 16 percent and 39 percent, respectively. The lowest estimate of the quality of nutrition came from the age group above 60; the highest estimate was given by parents regarding the quality of the nutrition of their children. At the same time, 39 percent of multi-children families complained of a lack of variety in consumed foodstuffs and a low quality of nutrition; 5.4 percent claimed that they had to live from hand to mouth; 47 percent complained of a lack of clothing and footwear [102, 56-57; 339, 159; 776, 15].

²⁶ The minimum consumption basket per retiree includes 1.5 kg of sausage, 4.9 kg of meat, and 1.8 kg of butter per year.

7.28 Experts point to a steady correlation between level of financial security and quality of nutrition on the one hand, and health status on the other hand, including affliction (or its absence) by chronic diseases. In families with an insecure financial situation, the number of people who claim to be practically healthy is 3.5 times lower than the average. Of those who estimated their nutrition as good, only 8 percent had poor health, whereas among those who had poor nutrition this share was 28 percent. In families with a relatively secure financial position who had no need to cut corners, the number of females with excellent health was 2.6 higher relative to families who had to save even on foodstuffs. According to the survey of poor urban households, positive estimates were given to the quality of nutrition by 14.4 percent of females, and to health status by 19.7 percent of females [1048]. According to mothers of children suffering from chronic diseases, among the major factors contributing to the pathology, the first rating was given to social conditions (poor financial and housing conditions throughout the child's period of growth and development). Target surveys indicate that in 2000 about 10 percent of children under age 6 starved on a regular basis [339, 159; 900, 15; 902, 56].

F. GENDER-SPECIFIC GROUPS AT RISK

7.29 An analysis of men's and women's relative risks of falling within an inferior social group reveals substantial gender differentiation. The following discussion deals, first, with risks that pertain to female groups, and then discusses male groups at risk.

Female Groups at Risk

7.30 The following socio-demographic groups can be identified as female risk groups (primarily in terms of poverty risk): women heading one-parent households [181; 81; 232; 255; 461; 478; 482; 509; 510; 625; 927; 1104; 1110]; women and girls in large families [461, 519, 1145]; female pensioners living alone [218; 501; 1054; 1104]; disabled women and women having children with disabilities; unemployed women; and rural women. Divorce is also a major factor in increasing the risk of poverty for women. Upon divorce, the children (in non-Muslim families) go into the custody of the mother, which adds to the dependency burdens faced by women, especially when the social infrastructure is collapsing and the neglect of child support payments is widespread. [478; 625; 1110].

Table 7.1: Distribution of Aid Recipients in Social Assistance Offices for People with no Definite Residence and Occupation, by Category of Agencies, 2001

	Females	Males	Distribution by gender, percent	
			Females	Males
Total:				
Thousand people	10	47		
Percent	100	100	17	83
Of which:				
In a doss-house	34	42	15	85
In a social shelter	14	6	33	67
In a social hostel	11	10	19	81
In a center for social adaptation	25	27	16	84
In other offices	16	15	17	83

Source: Goskomstat.

7.31 As has been mentioned, the risk of becoming unemployed is higher for young women and for women with many dependent family members. The risk of falling into low-income groups is higher for young and elderly women, for women living in rural areas, and for women working in the government sector and in traditionally “female” occupations.

7.32 Certain models of labor behavior also place Russian women into risk groups in terms of human/citizen rights violation. Female labor migrants face a higher risk of human rights violation because their status is often associated with sexual abuse, the illegal seizure of a passport, the restraint of freedom of movement, debt bondage, breach of contract (underpayment, longer work hours, etc.), sexual exploitation, intimidation and violence [1077].

7.33 Taking up informal sector activity in order to cope with the new social and economic realities poses another risk factor for women: it is here that gender discrimination is especially pronounced [1126; 1128; 1129].

7.34 Rural women form a separate risk group because their living standards are lower than those of urban women. This is the result of the poor condition of the rural economy, a collapsing social infrastructure at the community level, the unavailability of jobs at local forestries, and state or collective farms [651; 801], and gender disproportions in the aging rural population. The problem of female unemployment in rural areas [65; 821] is worsened by the practices of job placement agencies which have mostly “male” vacancies on offer [651].

Table 7.2: Syphilis Prevalence by Age, 2001

	Females	Males	Distribution by gender, percent	
			females	males
Total				
Thousand people	103	104		
percent	100	100	50	50
Of which in age category, of years:				
0-14	1.0	0.8	56	44
15-17	6.5	2.4	73	27
18-19	11.3	4.9	52	48
20-29	44.2	41.2	52	48
30-39	20.7	27.0	43	57
40 and older	16.3	23.7	41	59

Source: Goskomstat.

7.35 Homeless women are fewer in number than homeless men, but their situation is more difficult for a number of reasons (see Table 7.1). First, physically inferior individuals are often ruthlessly oppressed in a criminal and marginal environment. Second, the inaccessibility for homeless women of gynecological assistance and fetal pathology prevention makes their overall situation much worse, with more severe consequences. According to the State Epidemiological Surveillance Center, 33 cases of inborn syphilis were recorded in 1999 in the city of Moscow among children born to homeless women, amounting to 58.9 percent of all registered cases (see also Table 7.2) [1443].

Male Groups at Risk

7.36 The following male at-risk groups can be identified: rural men (the risk of long-term unemployment); homeless men; men serving time in prison; individuals affected by tuberculosis, alcoholics and drug addicts; vagrant boys.

7.37 Faced with a total absence of job vacancies locally, and with unaffordable travel and rental costs associated with employment in neighboring cities (where earnings are low), men become socially vulnerable and are forced to seek temporary or seasonal jobs in the informal sector. Illegal male migrants also constitute a risk group, as they find themselves outside the rule of law. (Illegal female migrants encounter relatively more problems, being subject to sexual harassment, violence, seizure of passport, or handling of heavy objects, but men also become socially vulnerable when falling into this status).

7.38 The Institute for Social and Economic Problems of the Russian Academy of Science estimates the total number of homeless people in Russia at 4,200,000. Of these, 68 percent are men and 32 percent are women; 63 percent of all homeless persons have children, 51 percent are divorced, 15 percent are married, 14 percent are widows or widowers, and 20 percent have never been married. According to the St. Petersburg regional charity association that targets homeless

people, 70 percent of persons who have visited their office were men, and 87 percent of the visitors had a general secondary or vocational education [1443].

7.39 Criminality is a generally male risk area. In 2001, males accounted for 83 percent of all criminal offenders and 92 percent of juvenile delinquents. Men were responsible for 89 percent of grave offences, specifically: 87 percent of murders or attempted murders, 91 percent of thefts, 92 percent of robberies, 94 percent of plunder, 89 percent acts of hooliganism, and 83 percent of drug crimes. Out of the total number of cases of misappropriation, embezzlement, fraud and bribe-taking, between 60 percent and 70 percent were committed by men. The gender distribution of individuals convicted (under sentences that entered into force in 2001) by type of offense is close to the gender distribution of criminal offenders [357]. At the same time, victim statistics show a more even gender distribution. In 2001 there were 555,000 recorded crimes associated with acts of violence resulting in personal injury. Women fell victims of 210,000 such crimes [357].

Table 7.3: Drug Abuse, Active Tuberculosis, Alcoholism and Alcoholic Psychoses Rate for Females and Males, 2001

	For 100,000 of total population		Distribution by gender, percent	
	Females	Males	Females	males
Drug abuse	13.7	77.9	17	83
Alcoholism and alcoholic psychoses	51.9	241.4	20	80
Active tuberculosis	42.1	141.3	25	75

Source: Goskomstat.

7.40 Men run a much higher risk of tuberculosis than women (Table 7.3). In 2001, 75 percent of those affected by active tuberculosis were men (about 80 percent in older working-age groups). Tuberculosis outbreaks recorded in Russia throughout the 1990s were associated primarily with unsanitary conditions in correctional institutions, where most of the inmates are men.

7.41 Gonorrhoea is a predominantly male problem (in 2001, 73 percent of the diseased were men). The pattern is reversed only among children (0-14) — boys account for only 19 percent in this group. With syphilis incidence split equally between the sexes, young women are more frequently affected, while most of the male cases occur in older age groups. In 2001, women accounted for 56 percent of syphilis patients aged 0-14 and 73 percent of those aged 15-17 (Table 7.2) [357].

7.42 Alcoholism and alcoholic psychosis rates feature a clear gender differentiation. These are predominantly “male” problems (Table 7.3). In 2001 there were 51.9 cases per thousand women and 433.4 cases per thousand men. Men accounted for 80 percent of those affected by alcoholism and alcoholic psychosis. Drug abuse is not gender neutral. In 2001 there were 13.7 drug addicts per thousand women and 77.9 per thousand men. Men accounted for 83 percent of all cases [357].

7.43 In the absence of reliable surveys of vagrant children, it is impossible to provide statistics on their gender distribution. There is, however, a credible hypothesis about the numerical prevalence of boys in this groups (inferred by analogy from male prevalence among the homeless). This may be symptomatic of a serious gender problem, given that the number of children and adolescents left without parental care increased 2.6 times between 1990 and 2001 (or 1.13 times between 1995 and 2001) [911]. Another hypothesis to be tested through further research is the growing sexual abuse of boys.

8. WOMEN IN POLITICS: FEMALE-SENSITIVE POLITICS

8.1 Russia's transition to a market economy has had a double-faceted influence on women in the society – favoring new opportunities, but at the same time presenting new obstacles. Neither the male political elite nor the newly launched women's movement has provided the necessary boost to modernizing the society, including the reinforcing of the gender-related component of the power structure.

8.2 The present chapter covers the situation of women in politics in Russia, first discussing the gender aspects of political representation, under the following headings:

- Options and obstacles to women's involvement in political and public activities
- Trends in women's participation in politics
- Improving women's position and ensuring gender equality.

Then the chapter discusses the role of women's NGOs in promoting gender equality, and points to the potential that this movement has to gender equality.

A. GENDER ASPECTS OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

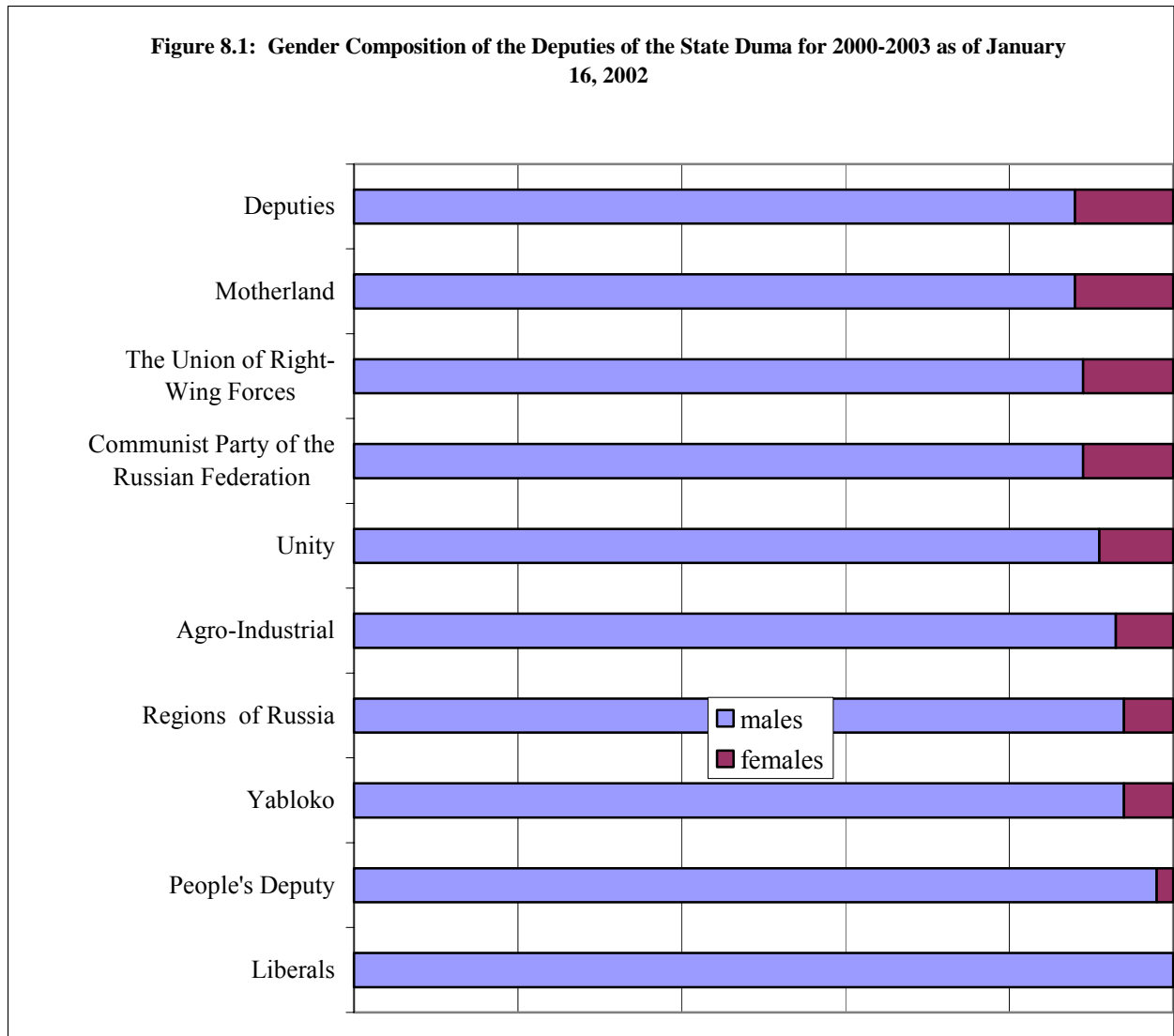
8.3 The process of democratization stimulated by *perestroika* has prompted researchers to re-examine the achievements of the preceding period and to analyze the problems currently existing with respect to women's issues. The main provisions of the research papers dating from 1993 to the present reflect the dramatic events that have been taking place in post-reform Russia. Books, brochures and articles published during this time focus largely on critique and reveal the authors' negative attitudes to experience in handling the women's issue that prevailed during different periods of the country's history [3; 23; 25; 32; 44; 91; 104; 115; 129; 212; 216; 233; 234; 235; 370 ; 424; 595; 747; 786; 910; 1100; 1101]. The most characteristic features of these publications are the following:

- The re-examination of the Marxist-Leninist concept of women's role and position in society that dominated public opinion in the preceding period
- Attention to new problem areas
- The recognition of new aspects of the female issue: the problems of women's equity and equal opportunities, and women's right to self-identification and self-realization.

8.4 Of particular interest are the attempts made by some female analysts, participants in the women's movement, to contrast the "female history" of Russia and that of Western countries, to compare the methods used to attain the selected goals, and to account for the unique character of the historical situation in Russia [12, 10-14; 17; 20; 41; 106; 155; 267, 128-129; 276; 296, 18; 297; 412, 33; 447; 759; 770, 3-4; 1022; 1171; 1173; 1177; 1203, 20; 1207, 86].

NEW OPTIONS FOR AND OBSTACLES TO FOR WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

8.5 Russia's transition to a market economy had a double-faceted influence on women: on the one hand it raised new obstacles, and on the other hand it favored new opportunities, both exogenous and endogenous in nature. The expansion of political freedoms enabled women to speak up publicly against discrimination and sexist stereotypes; the economic crisis and its impact on women bolstered women's activity in issues of the protection of women's rights in the workplace and in employment agencies [129, p.163; 139; 230; 252; 379; 393; 397; 432; 508, 67-69; 522; 563; 575; 591; 598; 692; 736; 796; 800; 866; 906; 1005; 1021; 1040; 1133; 1142; 1084; 1193; 1211].



Source: Goskomstat.

8.6 Under pressure from the international community, Russia is becoming a more open state and submits fairly detailed reports on women's position to international institutions, thus

displaying a certain sensitivity to the influence of women's organizations and associations [207; 277; 278; 281; 731; 734; 857]. The period of economic and political transformation in Russia has favored conditions for launching a contemporary women's movement.

8.7 Many Russian analysts side with the viewpoint that women make a special contribution to the life of the society. The historic experience of the parliamentary movement provides the following evidence: if women have less than 10 percent of the seats in the parliament of the country, this hampers the adoption of bills aimed at the protection of children; if women have 20-30 percent of the seats, the feasibility of the implementation of programs advancing women's and children's interests increases dramatically. Russia's experience proves this tendency: it is female deputies who initiate bills targeting the social needs of the population, but they are underrepresented in the highest legislative body of the country (see Figure 8.1) [1147, 28]. Women politicians stress the priority of such problems as social security, the development of a network of schooling and pre-school childcare institutions, education, healthcare, employment and women's promotion in the workplace. They prod women to participate more actively in political activity and to advance to political positions. Advocating a gender-sensitive approach in all spheres of societal life, women complement the new aspects of the political culture in Russia [1022; 1190, 3-7; 1196, 13]. Nevertheless, this is the case only if a woman politician deliberately concentrates on protecting those interests that are traditionally labeled as specifically "female interests," or that are close to or vital for women [822; 1075; 1169; 1204, 83].

8.8 But the last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century have been marked in Russia by a clear-cut tendency to oust women from political and state authority. The dominant political elite has failed to introduce a stable and well-balanced system of power that functions on a renewal basis and fosters the development of a democratic society with human values as its mainstay. This is one of the gravest failures of the male political elite [797].

8.9 The newly launched women's movement, which is historically destined to become the mouthpiece of the female population of the country, has failed to perform its mission. It has not given a significant boost to the modernization of the society, including the modernization of the power structure, so as to reinforce its gender-related component. Women have avoided the responsibility to determine their own fate and have allowed others to set the priorities and determine the vector of the country's development without their active participation [14; 15; 25; 108; 124; 125; 140; 688; 765; 786; 791; 865; 947; 1039; 1056; 1063; 1119].

8.10 However, it should be borne in mind that women encounter numerous obstacles to forming their own interests and bringing them to the public [910; 1186; 1192; 1198; 1211; 1220; 1244]. These interests fall into three principal categories: political, socioeconomic, and ideological (or socio-cultural) [822; 929; 961; 980; 1017; 1038; 1050; 1056; 1100; 1102; 1103; 1107; 1172; 1173; 1183; 1187; 1203].

8.11 Among the political hindrances encountered by women, the most important are the following:

- The domination of the "masculine" (i.e., male) model in the organization of political life and the functioning of elective public institutions

- The lack of party back-up which entails the restricted financial support of female nominees
- Limited access to political networks
- The domination of double standards
- Lack of contacts and of cooperation with other public organizations, such as trade unions and women's associations
- Lack of a fully fledged educational and training network to propel female leadership on the whole, and to attract young women to politics, in particular
- The nature of the electoral system, which can be favorable or unfavorable for female nominees [26; 1101; 1103; 1172; 1173; 1187; 1203].

8.12 The ideological and psychological barriers to the nomination of women for Parliament include the following:

- Gender ideology and culturally imposed models of behavior, as well as predetermined social roles, assigned to men and women
- Lack of self-confidence on the part of women regarding participation in the electoral race
- Women's perception of politics as a "dirty business"
- Women's image in the mass media [133; 137; 182; 206; 335; 346; 426; 760; 955; 1021; 1091; 1133; 1075; 1084].

8.13 The cultural tradition in Russia persists in stressing and even pressing for women's primary role as mothers and "keepers and spirits of the family hearth." The dominance of the traditional patriarchal system of values favors role segregation by gender, and the so-called "traditional cultural values" are hostile to women's advancement, progress and participation in any political process. Today, an ideology regarding "women's place" that is widely circulating in society sees a woman's role as that of "a working mother," poorly paid and apolitical in views. The past decade has seen no significant changes in the stereotypical attitude of the press toward women in positions of power [335; 426; 584; 760; 955; 1021; 1075; 1084; 1091; 1133; 1172; 1181; 1244].

8.14 The socioeconomic barriers to women's participation in political institutions and elective bodies have their roots in the social and economic status of women in the society. The socioeconomic barriers affecting women's participation in Parliament can be grouped into the following categories: (i) poverty and unemployment; (ii) lack of adequate financial resources (expenses involved in mounting an efficient electoral campaign pose serious difficulties for women in the Russian Federation); [354; 447; 548; 549; 563; 568]; and (iii) the everyday burden of household and professional duties.

8.15 Of great importance as well are socio-cultural barriers. It is common for Russian women to regard politics as a "dirty business." This undermines women's confidence and hampers their participation in the political life of the country. Unfortunately, this view of the political arena (which has wide dissemination in other countries as well) reflects the real state of affairs in a number of states, including the Russian Federation. Although the causes of this phenomenon vary in different countries, some common tendencies can be found [934; 1018; 1186; 1204].

8.16 Another factor that may hamper women in the promotion of their own rights is the stand of the mass media on these issues, as their influence on public opinion cannot be overestimated. The Russian mass media are prone to minimize the coverage of events and activities relating to organizations that channel women's interests. The media, including women's periodicals, do not keep the population fully informed on such issues as women's rights and women's actual position in society, as well as on state measures designed to better the position of women. [335; 426; 760; 955; 1084; 1133; 1243; 1244]. In practice, the media are often used to reinforce gender prejudices and stereotypes regarding "women's place" in the public consciousness. Stories of businesswomen and their achievements, and of the activities of heroic women, are rarely, and only sporadically, featured in newspapers and magazines and in television and radio programs. The most typical topics covered by the mass media are fashion shows, stars and cinema stars, and the secrets of everlasting youth. Such an approach does not inspire women with a sense of dignity nor does it foster their confidence in their own strength or bolster their self-respect; neither can it promote a decision on their part to hold state or political positions and take on public responsibility [335; 426; 760; 955; 1084; 1133; 1243; 1244].

8.17 Among the factors that negatively affect women's promotion to the decision-making sphere are the following: (i) low political culture; (ii) the lack of confidence felt by many women because of the neglect of women's interests by many political parties; and (iii) the political illiteracy of the electorate [184; 193; 213; 219; 241; 267; 291; 292; 310; 929].

TRENDS IN RUSSIAN WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

8.18 In 1993 the State Duma (the lower chamber of the Russian Parliament) was set up. At present the State Duma of the third convocation is operating; its term of legislature terminates in 2003²⁷. Originally, the members of the lower chamber were elected for a two-year term, but in conformity with the Law on Elections to the State Duma as amended in 1995, the term of legislature was prolonged to four years. It is worth mentioning that Russia has a mixed electoral system: 225 seats in Parliament are elected in federal constituencies (by party lists -- the proportional system) and 225 seats are elected in single constituencies (the majority system). In total, the State Duma has 450 seats [1097, 11-14].

8.19 As the result of the 1993 elections, 60 women were elected to the lower chamber of the Russian Parliament (or 13.5 percent of the numerical strength of the chamber): 26 female deputies were elected to the chamber in single constituencies, which amounted to 11.6 percent of the total number of seats elected by this mandate, and 34 female deputies were elected by party lists, which amounted to 15.1 percent of the total number of seats elected by party lists. This set a precedent for the forming of a women's faction. Later the share of women among deputies in the State Duma began to tend downward. In the period 1996-99 women accounted for 9.7 percent of the numerical strength of the chamber, and in 1999-2003 this share decreased to 7.6 percent.

8.20 The elaboration of the electoral system in Russia is linked to the development of a political system whose central pivot is political public associations. All-Russia political associations are the major subjects of the electoral process. For example, 93 public organizations and associations were permitted to participate in the 1993 electoral campaign. In compliance

²⁷ The first Duma operated in 1993-95; the second, in 1995-99; the third, in 1999-2003.

with the requirements set forth in the electoral legislation of the Russian Federation, 35 public political associations were engaged in collecting voters' signatures that were mandatory to obtain registration as an electoral bloc or association, but only 23 of these associations managed to collect the statutory number of signatures. As a result, only 13 electoral associations and blocs were allowed to take part in the elections. Among them, 8 parties and associations won seats in the elections to the State Duma. In the 1995 election campaign, the number of public associations and organizations allowed to participate in the electoral race increased threefold and peaked at 273 entities. But as matters really stood, after compliance with all of the regulations of the current legislation was attested to, only 43 of these bodies (or one-sixth of the total number) were eventually allowed to take part in the elections, and only four of them won seats in the State Duma. The experience of this electoral campaign pointed to the fact that the more associations there were that participated in the elections, the fewer there were that won seats in Parliament. The State Duma of the second convocation had an exceptionally low level of representation, as the total number of votes balloted for the blocs that had lost the elections to Parliament outstripped the number of votes polled by the blocs that had won seats in the State Duma. In 1999, 139 public associations were eligible to compete in the electoral campaign, but only 28 exercised this right and were authorized by the Central Electoral Committee [26, 11; 26; 153, 181; 296, 18-19; 323, 175-177; 343; 348, 129; 988; 1101, 2; 1142, 13-15; 1172; 1084, 102; 1190; 1193, 57].

8.21 Although women play an important role in waging electoral campaigns and winning support for the parties or public political associations that they represent, they rarely advance to decision-making positions in the party hierarchy. Although political parties are equipped with resources for conducting electoral campaigns, women do not benefit from these resources. For example, parties do not provide sufficient support to female nominees. According to surveys, the number of elected female parliamentarians stands in direct correlation with the number of female nominees: the more female nominees there are, the more women members of Parliament there will be. For example, in the elections in 1995 the highest percentage of correlation of female nominees and deputies of the State Duma was registered in four electoral associations (without taking into consideration the political movement "Women of Russia," discussed in more detail below, and in Box 8.1). Of particular significance is the fact that all of the four blocs that had the highest percentage of female nominees belonged in the left-wing pro-communist ideological spectrum. In contrast to this, in the previous (1993) elections three blocs of the four with the highest percentage of female nominees on party lists belonged in the democratic and right-wing liberal spectrum. At the same time, in all but one of the mentioned blocs the share of female deputies did not exceed 11 percent, which meant that the right-wing and the left-wing politicians saw eye to eye on the problem of advancing women to the macro-political level. It is obvious that the associations of a new democratic political wing made little effort to change the percent correlation of their nominees to favor extended women's representation. In single-mandate constituencies the landscape was different: female nominees accounted for 13.1 percent of the total number of contenders for seats in the State Duma, or 41.5 percent of the total number of female nominees [971; 981, 19-21; 1084, 104; 1100; 1172; 1178].

8.22 Until December 19, 1998, the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation had registered 139 all-Russia electoral associations as political associations. Among the leaders of these organizations there were only 21 women, accounting for a mere 15 percent of the total number of organizations seeking the right to participate in the elections. (In fact, 21 women

spearhead only 17 organizations, as some of these organizations have several co-chairpersons.) It should be noted that about 1 million Russian citizens were involved in the work of electoral commissions at different levels, and that women accounted for the majority of the members of these commissions. (This is an active civil potential of the society, which is underutilized by the women's movement.) Of 28 associations admitted to participation in the electoral campaign, 2 associations were female [153, 194-200].

8.23 For the first time in the course of *perestroika*, the multi-party electoral campaign of 1999 did not evolve around the opposition between "Communists-retrogrades," calling for a political restoration, and the vector to the pursuance of the reforms [1186; 1204]. Many Russian analysts have noted that the main peculiarity of the electoral campaign was that it was waged with a view to the forthcoming presidential elections. It evolved against the background of resumed hostilities in Chechnya and a dramatic economic situation (the financial turmoil of August 18, 1998); a threefold or fourfold increase in prices; the decline of the ruble against the dollar). The crisis of the executive power resulted in frequent cabinet reshuffles. The moral crisis came to a head and was further exacerbated during the election campaign of 1999, which went down in history as a war of compromising materials. A fight to the death flared up within the male political elite. Women were faced with a real danger of losing everything that they had won in the period 1993-95. In the party lists of the leading electoral associations, the number of female nominees fell to 10-12 percent, and the rank positions were allocated to the disadvantage of women.

8.24 The process of selection and nomination within the framework of a political party does not favor the advancement of female nominees; in the process of nomination it is the "male characteristics" that are especially emphasized, and they often become the standards and criteria for the selection of nominees. Prejudices frequently have a negative impact on women's involvement in party structures. They restrict women who are ready for intensive party activity from participation, and they repel them from such participation, and do not contribute to their integration into party institutions and party activity [588; 1100; 1172; 1190; 1193; 1199]

8.25 At the same time, women tend to be underestimated as politicians by those who provide the financial resources for political campaigns. As a rule, party lists are headed by men, and women trail at the end. If a party does not poll a sufficient number of votes in the election, seats in Parliament are primarily distributed among men. In cases such as this women are included in party lists to for reasons of political correctness. For example, in contrast to the 1993 elections, in 1995 and 1999 the number of female nominees doubled from 7 percent to 14 percent. In 1995 the outset of the electoral marathon was marked by attempts to "play the female card." This was reflected in the rhetoric of the nominees' election speeches, which were often based on values traditionally associated with women (family, children, the stability of the household, the future -- our children, a socially oriented state, virtue -- the family hearth, etc.), and were also reflected in the exaggerated expansion of the lists of female nominees. As a rule, these lists included the names of "stars," popular actresses, women of letters and the artistic beau monde [379; 571; 595; 597; 598; 600; 601; 1101; 1204].

8.26 Two major factors were behind this tendency. On the one hand, women account for more than half of the electors in Russia, and every candidate doubtless needs their votes; on the other hand, the outcomes of the 1993 campaign raised incessant demands for a new attitude on the part

of parties and associations claiming women's support. "Exaggerated" attention to the female factor was felt to be a forced reaction to the unforeseen victory of the political movement "Women of Russia," which had balloted over 8.13 percent of the votes of the electors who participated in the 1993 campaign. The number of women who "had rushed into big politics" was sufficient to enable them to form their own women's faction in the State Duma. It is well known that this faction was among the most productive in the Russian Parliament: it took an active part in the design and elaboration of half of all of the legislative initiatives debated by the State Duma in the period from 1993 to 1995 [441; 598; 600; 751; 1084, 102; 1134, 221; 1182, 75].

8.27 In 1995 the "Women of Russia" movement did not clear the 5 percent threshold, although it came very close to it and polled 4.61 percent of the votes. Women had succeeded in making effective use of the chance given to them by history, with this breakthrough to the national political arena, but they failed to retain this advantage. The defeat of "Women of Russia" in the elections (see Box 8.1) turned out to be the defeat of all Russian women: the positive image of a woman politician did not become fixed in the public mind. Notwithstanding this general failure, in 44 regions of the country (that is, among half of the subjects of the Russian Federation), the women's electoral bloc cleared the 5 percent threshold. In total, the number of votes balloted for "Women of Russia" was 3,188,813. This represents a real political force whose potential is very high, and it cannot be disregarded. But in 1995 "Women of Russia" polled even fewer votes than in the previous election, when 87 of 89 subjects of the Federation had voted for it. For example, in Omsk Oblast the women's list polled 21.19 percent of votes in 1993, and 6.22 percent of votes in 1995; in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Area, the respective figures were 19.12 percent and 6.62 percent [397; 601; 605; 689; 1102; 1210].

Box 8.1: Defeat of the "Women in Russia" Movement

Experts single out the following causes of the defeat of the "Women of Russia" movement in the 1995 elections.

1. Lack of a clearly defined political grounding of the movement regarding many acute and pressing problems. The movement should have designed its own program of measures for restoring peace in Chechnya. It was necessary to elaborate guidelines for exercising civil control over the Army and to propagate them publicly. The movement failed to seize the moment to identify its attitude to the Communists.
2. The alienation of the bloc "Women of Russia" from many segments of the all-Russia women's movement, which was reflected in the reluctance of "Women of Russia" to take a direct and definite stand and identify itself with the socio-political interests of the female population. The movement based itself mainly on family interests in the ideological underpinning of its campaign.
3. Tactic blunders: the reliance on several "umbrella" organizations to win supporters and expand its social base.
4. The high cost of the 1995 campaign: the cost of participating in the campaign averaged from US\$250,000 to US\$300,000 dollars per candidate (this election campaign was the most costly by international standards).
5. Psychological factors which had an enormous impact [397; 605; 689; 1102; 1210].

Women deputies were for the most part carried away by the illusory ease of the victory in the previous election campaign, which weakened their mobilization potential. In fact, the patriarchal stereotypes continued to prevail in the public mind, paralyzing both the society and the women themselves [79; 139; 194; 261; 397; 456; 499; 549; 583; 952; 1084; 1210].

8.28 In the succeeding period the political movement "Women of Russia," as it had existed in its original format, split into several parts.²⁸ The movement "Women of Russia" defined its goal

²⁸ The brand name "the political movement 'Women of Russia' " was retained by the public association headed by A.V. Fedulova.

as exercising influence on the government's political course and its legislation with a view to promoting the social needs of the population [25; 598; 601].

8.29 The 1999 elections to the State Duma signified another landmark in Russian society's assimilation of the democratic model of power. In conformity with the Law on Elections adopted before the 1999 elections, candidates and blocs were allowed either to submit lists of voters in favor of the bloc, or to deposit a bail. Instead of submitting voters' signatures, an electoral association was eligible (and this was a new provision in the law) to deposit an electoral bail (Article 64): the sum of the bail was 83,490 rubles for a candidate (US\$3,211) and 2,078,250 rubles (US\$80,278) for a federal bloc. At the same time, experts' estimates show that the cost of an electoral campaign in different constituencies ranged from US\$300,000 to US\$2 million. It goes without saying that these innovations put women in a disadvantageous position, since women as a rule do not have access to "big money" [153, 170-171]. (The electoral bail is not reimbursed to the electoral association if the bloc did not participate in the distribution of deputies' mandates and if it polled by election returns less than 3 percent of the votes of the total number of electors who had taken part in the voting by the federal constituency). Of 10 nominees for the position of mayor in Moscow, only 2 collected voters' signatures and the rest deposited a bail. The new legislation retained the requirement of a 5 percent threshold of votes [153, 165-170]. From the viewpoint of women's participation in the elections, both the electoral bail and the 5 percent threshold were not conducive to the nomination and election of many women to the legislative body, in view of: (i) women's aforementioned lack of access to financial resources; and (ii) the fact that the 5 percent threshold is in principle a high barrier for small parties and associations. In view of the latter consideration, it is quite understandable that the international community calls for the reduction of such a threshold, as it undermines the representative character of democracy.

8.30 In the 1999 elections, 20 women were elected to the State Duma by single constituencies. The women who had won seats in the State Duma had the experience of struggle in an election campaign or the practical experience of working at the federal or regional levels of the power hierarchy [26; 27; 1185; 1186; 1204]. Judging by the number of candidates running for seats in the Federal Parliament, the election struggle in the 20 single constituencies where women won their mandates had been very fierce. The minimum number of candidates in one constituency was 4 and the maximum 19. In these 20 constituencies, 138 candidates stood for election; of these, 36 candidates, or 26 percent, were women. Thus, judging by these constituencies, female nominees were more successful here (one-fourth of the female nominees won all seats in these constituencies, and 75 percent of the male candidates won no seats) [26; 27; 1185; 1186; 122-124].

8.31 In the same election, 14 women were elected to the State Duma by party lists.²⁹ In sum, 34 women-deputies or 7.6 percent of the deputy corps (of the total number of 450) became parliamentarians of the State Duma of the third convocation (1999-2003).

8.32 At the same time, not all female candidates were successful. Two women's electoral blocs suffered a defeat: "Women of Russia," which polled only 2.07 percent of votes (1,215,172

²⁹ This comprised 3 women - from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and the bloc "Edinstvo" ("Unity"), 2 women from "Yabloko" and SPS (the Union of Right-Wing Forces) each, and 4 women from the OVR. It is worth noting that 3 women won seats as independent candidates.

votes), and "the Russian Party for the Protection of Women," which polled only 0.82 percent of votes (479,496 votes). In total they polled almost 3 percent of votes [1186, 122-126]. Women were disunited as never before, and as a result the electors' votes were dispersed (several women's blocs entered the electoral campaign). Other electoral blocks also laid claim to women's votes.

8.33 A large political public organization "Otetchestvo" ("Fatherland"), was one of the first to launch a campaign to attract a female electorate to its side. To this end "Otetchestvo" elaborated a special program "Otetchestvo - for Women," intended to foster the advancement of women's role in the society, and arranged a special forum targeting women's non-profit organizations. The party program declared that "Otetchestvo" was fully conscious of the following principle: the norms of democracy and elementary social equity require that men's and women's representation in the administration of state affairs, in executive, legislative and judicial bodies, conform to their share in society structure, and the input they provide to public production and reproduction. But this intent was left out of the provisions actually worded in the program document "Otetchestvo - for Women." Another notable feature is that in the Central Council of "Otetchestvo" women account for only 6.6 percent of members, and in the Political Council their share is 13.3 percent. The introduction of an office of Deputy Ombudsman (the commissioner for equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women) and allocation of fiscal funds to finance a state program of gender equality could help to implement this program [784; 1186].

8.34 The tendency to gender asymmetry in representative bodies can also be seen at the regional level. In 1995-99, elections of deputies to the legislative (representative) bodies of the next convocation were held in 88 subjects of the Russian Federation.³⁰

8.35 The number of deputies of legislative (representative) bodies of state power in the subjects of the Russian Federation (as of June, 1997) was 3,600, of whom women accounted for 9.36 percent or 337 deputies.³¹ By February 17, 1999, the correlation between men and women among deputies had not changed very much: the total number of elected deputies was 3,730, of whom 354 or 9.49 percent were women. As before, in legislative bodies of some Federation subjects, women did not receive any representation at all [185, 9-14; 447; 1186].

8.36 In the executive branch, the situation is even worse (prior to the crisis of August 1998, there was only one woman among republic heads, administration heads, and governors of regions -- the governor of the Koryak autonomous area -- and by October 2001 the number of women in the executive power had become nil). No significant changes in the direction of supporting women's participation in the highest structures of power were made in the aftermath of the Beijing conference of 1995: the commitments made by the government of the Russian Federation in the face of the international community are being fulfilled, but only "on paper", (the corresponding official documents have been approved).

³⁰ Elections were held in 1995 in 10 subjects, in 1996 in 29 subjects, in 1997 in 33 subjects, in 1998 in 17 subjects and in 1999 in 7 subjects.

³¹ In 4 subjects of the Russian Federation (Ryasan, Kursk, Omsk and Tomsk Oblasts) there were no women among the deputies, and in 74 subjects male deputies accounted for 80-99 percent, including Moscow where women held only 6 percent of the seats in the City Duma. In r subjects -- namely, in two oblasts (Moscow and Kurgan) and 2 autonomous areas (Evenki and Koryak) -- women average 30 percent of deputies.

8.37 At the same time, it should be noted that in 26 (of the 89) subjects of the Russian Federation (or in 29 percent) women act as deputy government heads of the republics, deputy governors and deputy heads of kray and oblast administrations. But in the majority of cases women hold a deputy position at the lowest level of state administration, and the prospect of their promotion to the highest echelons looks bleak. A single woman (Vice Prime Minister) has been introduced into the Cabinet, replacing three ministers in the social spheres (including the Ministry of Culture) [447, 1092]. In general, only 1.3 percent of the total number of female employees of the state hold "senior" positions [447; 547]. These figures not only suggest a discrepancy between gender balance in the state bodies and the gender composition of the population, but also indicate a flagrant violation of women's right to be elected to representative bodies.

8.38 Thus women need to set up and develop their own networks, to coordinate their interests with different organizations, to acquire tools that will lead to their expanded representation. One possible mechanism is the system of gender quotas. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, discussions are being held in Russia on the issue of introducing quotas as a tool to ensure women's adequate representation in the Parliament. However, the majority of political parties oppose this measure [984; 1197; 1203; 1205; 1207].

8.39 Nevertheless, the situation is gradually changing for the better, as a number of opinion polls indicate. For example, the findings of the sociological survey of the Russian population (March 31 - April 2, 2000) indicate the following: almost 60 percent of Russians are positively disposed to women politicians, one-quarter show a negative disposition; and 16 percent did not take a definite stand [346]. In April 2003, the State Duma debated in the first reading the bill "On state guarantees of equal rights and freedoms to men and women and equal opportunities for their implementation." It is significant that, of 345 deputies who were present at the session, 342 seconded the bill. However, 105 deputies did not participate in the session and thus did not promulgate their position on these issues [757; 1097].

IMPROVING WOMEN'S POSITION AND ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY IN GOVERNMENT POLICY

8.40 During the past decade the government policy of the Russian Federation has begun to formally pursue the goal of advancing women's socioeconomic status. Throughout the 1990s the President of the Russian Federation issued a number of edicts on policy interventions with regard to women. In these documents the target of bettering the position of women and promoting "equal conditions for the actual equality of men and women in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country" was recognized as one of the priority goals of the country's socioeconomic policy. To ensure the practical implementation of this goal, a number of measures were taken, such as the following:

- The Federal program "Women of Russia" was launched
- The National Report on the Execution of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Russia was drafted
- The National Council for the Preparation of the International Women's Conference in Beijing was set up.

8.41 In 1993 the Public Commission on Female, Family and Demographic Issues of the President of the Russian Federation was founded. In 1996 another set of edicts of the President of the Russian Federation and of executive orders of the government of the Russian Federation on bettering women's position were issued. Yet another measure was the adoption of the Concept of Improving Women's Position in the Russian Federation. Russia joined the Beijing Declaration on the Platform of Actions. Of 12 problem-ridden areas concerning the improvement of women's position highlighted in the Beijing Declaration, the Concept of the Russian Federation adopted only five. These are: (i) the observance of women's rights in unity with basic human rights and freedoms; (ii) the ensuring of women's participation in the decision-making process at all levels; (iii) the promotion of equal labor conditions in the labor market; (iv) the protection of women's health; and (v) combating of violence against women [837, 65-80]. In 1996 the "National Plan of Action towards Bettering Women's Position and Increasing their Role in Society for the period until 2000" was adopted by Executive Order of the government of the Russian Federation. But no funds were allocated for the implementation of this plan and consequently it was not carried out.

8.42 The Commission on Issues of Bettering Women's Position has been functioning since 1996. It proclaimed the coordination of activity by state institutions as its main goal. It should be noted that the powers delegated to this Commission are vague, as are the powers vested in most of the commissions on the issues of bettering women's position that were appointed in the majority of the subjects of the Russian Federation. In addition to this Commission, since 1996, the following divisions dealing with female issues have been set up within the framework of the legislative and executive bodies:

- The Committee on Issues of Females, Family and Youth of the State Duma
- The Division on Women's Socioeconomic Position in the Department of Family, Female and Children's Issues in the Ministry of Labor and Social Development
- The Department of Female, Family and Youth Issues in the Ombudsman's Office.³²

8.43 These agencies are usually considered as elements of the national mechanism for the improvement of the position of women. But it should be stressed that the status of this national mechanism has not been identified, and that this national mechanism does not have an independent budget to finance its activities, lacks the authority of a legislative initiative, and has no power to influence the policymaking process with a view to enforcing gender equality. A considerable drawback of the existing situation is that the question of the distribution and coordination of the activities of the above agencies has been left unsettled [175, 112].

8.44 The national documents and institutions that have been elaborated in the past few years are marked by two main deficiencies. On the one hand, they are declarative in character and their mandates are unfunded. On the other hand, they follow the target of "bettering women's position" which is not the same as that of securing gender equality.

8.45 In 1997 the State Duma adopted the "Concept of Legislative Activity towards the Advancement of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women" [837, 7-61]. The

³² In the Information and Analytical Department of the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation there is a Center for Gender Expertise of Bills, but it is an ad hoc public agency [732, 10].

authors of the Concept particularly stressed that, despite the formally guaranteed legal equality of rights between men and women in Russia, women receive unequal treatment in a number of spheres of life. This situation is accounted for by the fact that men and women lack equal opportunities to exercise their constitutional rights and freedoms [837, 11]. The principal goal of the Concept is to "elaborate an overall strategy and determine priority areas for the law-making process to ensure the equality of rights between men and women and to promote equal opportunities for their implementation" [837, 11-12]. To execute the goals set out in the Concept, the Federal Law "On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Freedoms and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in the Russian Federation" was drafted. In the spring of 2003, the State Duma debated the bill in the first reading.

8.46 In 2000, the government of the Russian Federation adopted another "National Plan of Action for the Betterment of Women's Position and the enhancement of their Role in Society for the period of 2001 to 2005," which outlined such activities as the following:

- The design and presentation of the sixth periodical report on the execution of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Russian Federation
- The development of a collection of normative legal documents by the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the EU on issues of equality between men and women
- The compilation of information bulletins and statistical books
- The monitoring of women's position in the labor market and the elaboration of corresponding proposals with respect to the results of such monitoring.

8.47 Unfortunately, the problem of discrimination against women in the labor market did not receive any attention in this document. In assessing the National Plan of Action on the whole, experts point out that many of the designated targets have been given only vague definitions, the wordings of the proposed actions are abstract in character, and the resources for their implementation have not been specified. These conditions also indicate that the National Plan is unlikely to be carried out [175, 116].

8.48 In the period 2002-03 the Ministry of Labor and Social Development developed a gender strategy for the Russian Federation. Within its framework, the targets and objectives of the state's gender policy have been determined. Among these goals are the securing of human potential development, the advancement of democracy, and the promotion of sustained economic growth. Gender problems in economic, social and mass-media policies are also considered, as are the gender problems existing in healthcare, culture, science and education. Unfortunately, this document fails to specify the policy levers and resources for the execution of these objectives, nor does it define the means of supervision and control [204].

Box 8.2: State Policies with Regard to Women

The patriarchy type is based on the concept of a certain division of functions between men and women in the family and society. Therefore, motherhood, child care and upbringing and housekeeping are considered a “natural” mission of women. Men are assigned the role of a subject of state, professional and public affairs; family head and breadwinner; and a connecting link between the family and society as a whole.

Reduction of women’s involvement in professional activity; creation of conditions for performance by women of their “natural” functions as mother and housewife; restriction of their participation in the process of managerial decision-making and in the public sphere; promotion of an ideal of non-emancipated woman can be considered basic lines of the patriarchal policy.

Paternalistic policy is a policy of state protectionism with regard to women, which is based on Marxist-Leninist perception of ways of women’s problems solution. Basic components of this policy include: achievement of equal legal social status of man and woman; broad participation of women in social production; creation of conditions for woman’s integration of three roles: worker, mother and housewife; arrangement of social protection system for women in the form of benefits, allowances, maternity and child care leaves; limitation of women’ labor, etc.

Egalitarian type of state policy has as its primary objective creation of equal conditions for individual self-realization in all social spheres irrespective of sex. We are talking not about “averaging” of the individual but rather about elimination of sex-based differences in the process of self-realization, achievement of such state of society when men and women could be guaranteed equal opportunities for realization of their creative and personal potential.

Basic lines of egalitarian policy include: participation of women in all spheres of professional activity, including state administration; adjustment of situation with regard to remuneration of labor in production and non-production branches; creation of conditions for maximum release of family members from routine housework; coverage of both parents by state benefits related to child care; overcoming of patriarchy stereotypes regarding men’s and women’s roles in society; creation of favorable public opinion concerning social equality of the sexes [1041,186].

B. THE ROLE OF WOMEN’S NGOs IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

8.49 The environment of post-transition Russia favors the formation of public groups, organizations and associations. The growth of such groups has been registered across the country and has included the creation of women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of different specializations. About 1,000 public organizations were formed and started functioning in the capital, of which one-tenth (100) were women's organizations [3; 25; 44; 124; 688].³³

8.50 The Russian female movement was confronted by an acute need to consolidate, especially at the local and regional levels. The "old" structures of women's organizations made efforts in this direction: "the “Union of Women of Russia" consolidated its power, and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation tried to build a top-to-bottom institutional capacity through its "affiliated" women's organization. The democratic wing of the women's movement made similar attempts. But, like the general democratic movement, its female wing encountered difficulties in the area of joint action. Lack of a nationwide “female” idea, that would spearhead the women's movement in its move toward consolidation, and an "allergy" to organizing activity (aimed at the coordination of activity on a grass roots initiative as well as at forms of institutionalization that would endanger the independence of the newly-fledged groups and organizations) prevented the formation of coalitions among female NGOs (3; 14; 25; 44; 56; 108; 115; 124; 125; 142, 22-24; 148; 155; 165; 424].

³³ As per L.I. Shevtsova, head of the Committee for Public Relations of the Government of Moscow in the described period.

8.51 The transformation of Russian society confronted the women's movement with a new task: to promote the conditions for the emancipation of the individual. This task matches the horizontal system of the amalgamation of organizations. The new women's organizations and associations (the Women's League, the Consortium of Women's Non-governmental Organizations, etc.) are characterized by autonomy and self-reliance: they have self-sufficient party rules and independent budgets, and they have developed an independent program of action and have shown a proclivity to build short-term coalitions for joint action [3; 14; 25; 44; 56; 108; 115; 124; 125; 142; 148; 155; 165; 424; 688].

8.52 As early as the mid-1990s a legislative basis for this task was set up in the Russian Federation, consisting of statutes and directive documents, as well as some components of the state mechanism for determining women's status.³⁴ A special division was set up within the framework of the State Duma: the Committee on Female, Family and Youth Issues; the Presidential Commission on Women's Affairs; the Inter-governmental Commission on Women's Affairs. In addition, in the regions special departments were embedded in the executive branch; as a rule they operated within the framework of social security agencies, which target the problems of the female population. But the creation of a nationwide mechanism for integrating women's interests into the process of societal development was a far-fetched goal. With regard to its deficient character, there is every reason to believe that a certain minimum number of legal provisions was accumulated, which could become a basis for further efforts toward fostering and developing an independent female movement in Russia. Particularly acute was the necessity to render support to the regions in the formation of a women's movement on the grass roots initiative. Such assistance could be provided in several areas:

- Educational and methodological support (leadership schools, business schools)
- Coordination of collegial activities involving equal effort
- Protection (lobbying) of grass roots initiatives in the corresponding federal agency
- Collaboration with state agencies in developing joint projects (social order) (for example, the Moscow Government issued an Executive Order on collaboration with NGOs).

8.53 In the mid-1990s there were signs of a revival in the relations between women's NGOs and the State Duma and a series of hearings on female issues was conducted. An expert panel was set up in the State Duma. The "Concept of Legislative Activity towards the advancement of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women" was designed within the framework of the Committee of the State Duma for Female, Family and Youth Issues, and was approved by the expert panel. Examples of the results of women's lobbying activities were the Edicts of the President, which were issued under the influence of the women's movement in Russia on the eve of the forthcoming presidential elections [553; 751; 1083; 1086; 1087].

8.54 The contemporary Russian women's movement is still undergoing the process of formation, and it would be premature to regard it as a full-fledged political force. At the same time, it has spread across the Russian Federation. A wide variety of goals, forms of activity, and political preferences can be seen within the framework of women's organizations operating not

³⁴ These instruments include Article 19 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, Edicts by the President and Executive Orders of the Government [831; 828; 1082; 1083; 1084; 1085; 1086; 1087].

only in Moscow but also in many provincial cities and a tendency to upgrade the self-identification of the female population has clearly taken shape [27; 28; 29; 435; 533; 751; 865; 1204].

8.55 The globalization of the women's movement is an inherent component of the international globalization process. By the end of the twentieth century the women's movement was expanding in many countries across the world (although differing in scale and measures of influence within national communities). The Internet has gained in importance as a channel for exchanging information and ideas, and as a means of communication.

8.56 Of great importance to the development of the women's movement in Russia is international collaboration. The women's movement in Russia is constrained by lack of financial resources (domestic businessmen are not prone to invest in its development, as they do not recognize its authority as a public and political force). In addition, the existing legislative base does not foster charity initiatives in the country. The international financing of projects delivered by NGOs, including women's NGOs, can in fact have a significant impact on the development of the women's movement, in ways ranging from assistance in drawing up an agenda to the determination of organizational tactics and structure [247; 292; 319; 346; 524; 1204].

8.57 The globalization of the women's movement can entail negative consequences in that those problems which are given top priority by Western female activists and their supporters, may not be similarly applicable to female activists in other countries. As a result, the attempts of female activists to develop a women's movement at the local level can be doomed to failure. This is accounted for by the fact that (taking into account the attempted outsourcing of projects) primary attention will be accorded to those problems which are recognized internationally as being most important, as this strategy can attract international support, rather than to those problems that which have primary importance at a local level. Thus, the development of a wide social base for the promotion of social activity at the local level becomes doubtful, as specifically local interests receive a low priority. This poses problems for the influence of an international component on the development and advancement of the women's movement in present-day Russia [615, 318-320; 928, 23-26; 1204].

8.58 Despite these difficulties, the women's movement in Russia is evolving and operating as well as any other social or public movement in the country. The women's movement makes use of such strong points as women's high educational levels and ongoing value motivation for labor market employment. The women's movement has also elaborated a certain information field and scientific and theoretical potential, which can assist in the formation of temporary coalitions and alliances. In other words, the Russian women's movement is underway and is overcoming numerous obstacles [1053; 1056, 90].

8.59 The specific character of the contemporary women's movement in Russia is represented in the following features:

- It tries to avoid "confrontational demonstrations"
- It does not concentrate its efforts on mobilizing a large number of women

- Like other public movements of the post-transition period, it encounters significant barriers on the way to implementing joint actions and developing cooperative relations with other organizations, groups and associations, especially in Moscow.

8.60 Women's NGOs encounter the problem of a limited conceptual apparatus necessary to discussing the ideology of feminism with the female population; they confront people's disbelief in their capacity to exercise significant influence on the current situation and to achieve success. The activists in the women's movement make a stand against sexism in the public sphere, against the stereotypes of gender roles that were engraved on the public mind throughout the preceding decades and revived with the transition to a market economy.

8.61 The problems of survival and the difficulties in reconciling family and labor market responsibilities are part of a range of topics that can widen the social base of the women's movement, that can sensitize the population to the issues of the women's movement, and that can help provide moral (and possibly financial) aid for the movement itself. Today the Russian women's movement needs to involve women in the movement, to develop a broad social base, to overcome its isolation from various groups of the female population, including the "elite protest" of separate female groups and associations. In the current economic transition, the women's movement needs to engage in collaborative activity and to build coalitions in the fight for gender equality, equal rights and equal opportunities, and the elimination of discrimination because of gender [904, 23; 1075, 23; 1226, 11-13].

8.62 At the same time as has been mentioned, the Russian women's movement is becoming integrated into the world movement, which enhances its international significance. It is the international solidarity of NGOs that will promote intellectual contacts, will raise financial support, and will propel the level of internal legitimacy of the activists in Russia [615; 762; 765; 774; 775; 791; 838; 904; 1075; 1226].

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S GENDER PROFILE

9.1 In the Gender Profile of the Russian Federation, gender issues are analyzed in seven sectors. The information and analyses provided in the previous chapters indicate that there are significant gender differentials with regard to women's and men's positions in the Russian Federation. Although the emphasis in each chapter is on the analysis and assessment of the gender differentials of women's and men's conditions, wherever possible, the implications of gender asymmetry for poverty reduction have been taken into consideration and some actions recommended.

9.2 The Russian Federation presents a unique situation with regard to gender issues. Issues such as the feminization of poverty, the deterioration of women's social and economic position, the critical level of reproductive health, the discrimination against women in employment, and the exclusion of women from participating in the decision-making process, are accompanied by increasing specific male problems such as the size in male mortality rates, the widening gap in educational attainment, and the devaluation of fatherhood.

9.3 As hypothesized in the design of the Gender Profile, some cross-cutting themes are to be considered relevant in understanding and assessing the gender inequalities in the Russian Federation, such as (i) the state of the de jure versus the de facto rights of women and men; (ii) the persistence of gender biased stereotypes on the value of women as workers and their role in society, owing to the endurance of a patriarchal tradition; (iii) the feminization of poverty; and (iv) the low level of awareness of the legislation and programs to protect men's and women's rights. Gender stereotyping and the openly sexist image of women portrayed by the mass media are important factors contributing to the persistence of discriminatory regulations and procedures.

B. LEGISLATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY

9.4 There are relatively few research publications in the Russian Federation dealing with the gender assessment of national law, and all of these sources are of recent publication and are aimed at establishing how the constitutional principle of gender equality is implemented in practice. In addition, the gender equality principle is established in the constitutions and charters of 34 out of the 89 constituent regions of the Federation. However, the presence of this constitutional principle in the current legislation is superficial, because the laws do not share the same understanding and interpretation of gender equality, and in real life this principle is often violated. In general, as a social group, women suffer more than men from violations of their civil and socioeconomic rights.

9.5 Even though Russian law expressly prohibits discrimination (including discrimination by gender), and the Russian Federation is a signatory of most international conventions aimed at preventing and eliminating any form of discrimination, no single legislative act contains a definition of direct and indirect discrimination, segregation or victimization. As a result, these concepts remain unclear for lawyers as well as for the general public. The existing judicial, criminal and administrative remedies for gender discrimination cannot be applied in practice. There is no court practice in Russia for cases of discrimination that is based on national law or international human rights instruments. Furthermore, as mentioned above, discriminatory norms and practices are significantly reinforced by gender stereotypes and a media-imposed sexist image of women.

9.6 Specialized legislative and executive bodies responsible for the prevention and elimination of discriminatory practices do not exist in the Russian Federation; however, there are some elements within administrative mechanisms that allow for monitoring the observance of the rights and interests of citizens in various spheres of life. Nevertheless, there is no information confirming the use of these agencies for the prevention of discrimination or the elimination of forms of discrimination.

9.7 Implementing the equality principle in practice is difficult. According to the Federal Labor Inspectorate, the number and severity of violations affecting women is indicative of a major social problem. Violations of women's rights occur in the public and the private sectors. Given the prevalence of labor law violations by all labor market participants (including the government), and the absence of effective mechanisms to prevent discrimination, experts identify several obstacles to the implementation of the gender equality principle in labor relations: the misconception about the lower value of female labor for the employer; the low self-esteem of women and their inactivity in the labor market; and the low legal awareness among employers, employees and trade unions.

9.8 Many of the studies reviewed focused on career development and the promotion of women. Currently in Russia there is a lively debate on (i) the possible introduction of gender quotas for promotion to executive positions, (ii) more extensive training for women in entrepreneurial and managerial skills, and (iii) the use of collective labor contracts.

9.9 The most serious discrepancies between the legally established equality principle and its practical implementation are found in the area of the property rights of married women. In principle, spouses can regulate their property relations by signing a marriage contract, but these instruments have not yet become common practice in Russia. This is due to a lack of knowledge of individuals' rights and also to prevailing negative attitudes regarding such arrangements.

9.10 In light of the review of the gender profile of the Russian Federation and the new socioeconomic environment, certain actions are suggested (see Box 9.1).

Box 9.1: Actions Suggested With Regard to the Legislation on Gender Equality

- Re-examine the Family Code
- Introduce new legal regulations into the Labor Code. (One of these regulations must guarantee the employee's right to respect personal dignity, confidentiality, privacy, and to guarantee protection from violence at the workplace.)
- Elaborate and adopt a special-purpose anti-discrimination legislation.
- Enhance the rigidity of law-enforcing procedures, through: (i) elaborating a special code of labor procedure; (ii) assigning labor courts with a specially constituted bench (a judge, a representative acting on behalf of an employer and a trade union representative and); (iii) upgrading the efficiency of pre-trial anti-discriminatory bodies (the Labor Inspectorate and other public inspectorates, the Ombudsman for the Russian Federation).

C. GENDER ISSUES IN EDUCATION

9.11 Women currently outpace men in educational attainment, and the gender gap in this area is expected to widen in the near future. Researchers point out that the strategies chosen by men and women in obtaining a general education and preparing themselves for professional work are not identical. Women are more inclined to receive a complete general education, and they more often aim at the highest possible level of professional training. For men, an incomplete general education and a basic vocational training have become increasingly common. Over the last few years higher education has become more feminized (female students account for 56 percent of total enrollment, and the share of women among first-year students is steadily increasing). Despite this situation, and despite the officially proclaimed equal rights and access to education, there is evidence of hidden gender discrimination in access to education at all levels — from pre-school to university. This discrimination increased in the reform period, affecting mostly the low-income section of the population.

9.12 Women seek to upgrade their professional skills more frequently than men, but they find skills upgrading and continuous education programs less accessible, which is primarily related to the gender-asymmetrical distribution of housekeeping and childcare responsibilities and to the higher social barriers that women face.

9.13 Moreover, school textbooks often contribute to diffuse traditional gender-biased stereotypes, especially those related to household and parental responsibilities. Conservative teachers often distinguish between “male” and “female” subjects, and dissuade girls from taking “male” subjects. Unequal access to education based on gender stereotypes is not generally perceived by the public (especially by women themselves) as a tangible problem and a violation of women’s rights.

9.14 Gender asymmetry may increase as more educational services are offered at a charge. Budget allocations for education programs are unevenly distributed by level of education. In most cases, tuition was introduced at the levels where women are predominant, and the growing number of students in vocational training is mainly the result of the expansion of tuition charges in “female” disciplines (the humanities, the social sciences and economics). On the other hand, the share of students who pay for training is relatively lower in the “male” (technical) professions. Furthermore, a substantially lower economic return from the education of women,

combined with the revitalization of patriarchal traditions, may be prompting parents to pay for their sons' education on a priority basis.

9.15 Illiteracy has not yet become a prevalent issue in Russia. However, given the unprecedented rise in the number of neglected children (most of whom are boys) ranging from 400,000 to 1 million, the Russian Federation will see a rise in the illiteracy rate over the next few years.

9.16 Research has shown that education levels have a significant positive effect on life expectancy, including the reduction of the gender gap in life expectancy. In addition, some experts highlight the existence of important nonmaterial advantages of education for Russian women.

9.17 The measures in Box 9.2 are suggested as means of improving the educational attainment of men and women in the Russian Federation.

Box 9.2: Actions Suggested to Ensure Gender Equality in Education

- Carry out an accurate analysis of the national education system from a gender perspective.
- Review the pay scale system and tie it to the educational qualifications regardless of the employees' gender, age, etc.
- Identify specific policies and measures directed to the bottlenecks in men's and women's education to eradicate gender disparities in access to education.
- Ensure schooling for all boys and girls through special measures that promote enrollment and discourage dropping out.
- Design and implement policies that favor families' collaboration in sending children to school, through the establishment of concrete incentives to secure such cooperation.
- Overcome stereotypes within the educational system to achieve gender equality and to increase the level of awareness of the importance of gender equity for men and women.
- Review all educational materials from a gender perspective in order to free textbooks and educational materials from gender-discriminatory and gender biased references.

Gender and Health Issues

9.18 Gender inequalities in the area of public health are usually analyzed as part of an overall crisis of the national health care system. Medical services and pharmaceuticals are becoming too expensive for a larger quota of the population. Russia ranks ninety-eighth internationally in terms of per capita health spending, with 37 percent of total costs incurred in payment for the services of expensive medical centers. As a result, 30 percent of the population living in extreme poverty is deprived of necessary health care.

9.19 There are several reasons to explain why the size of public health spending has more important consequences for women than for men. First, this uneven effect is related to the female reproductive system. Second, women constitute the majority among the older cohorts and as such they have higher needs for health care. Third, the feminization of poverty has reduced women's capacity to pay for medical services. Finally, federal programs cover only 20 percent of the necessary expenses for female health.

9.20 Health reform plans have not taken gender inequality into account. Ensuring the health protection of men, as a gender group, is also generally ignored. Health-related gender issues include a high general mortality and a very large life expectancy gap between men and women (the average male life expectancy, 59 years, is among the lowest in the world while the female life expectancy is 72 years). The gender mortality gap is largely associated with socioeconomic factors $\frac{3}{4}$ differences in gender roles and working conditions.

9.21 The reproductive health of the Russian population has reached a critical level. Russia is among the countries with the highest maternal mortality rates. Infant mortality is also very high, approaching 2 percent of the total annual mortality. The health standard of pregnant women has deteriorated over the past decade, with an adverse effect on child health. Abortion in Russia is still the single most popular method of birth control. Among the reasons for the persistence of this phenomenon, it is important to include the lack of awareness among young people (especially young men) of family planning and contraception and the argument that abortion is a cheap birth-control method.

9.22 Russia is facing a critical situation in terms of the reproductive rights of men and women. There is an evident gender asymmetry in reproductive behavior, and opportunities to carry out parental functions are unequal. Women increasingly assume the sole responsibility for childbirth and child nurturing. But the living standards and the quality of life of most women limit their reproductive capacity and give rise to a new reproductive behavior trend $\frac{3}{4}$ an increasing number of one-parent families. There are two factors behind this tendency: on the one hand, women have more reproductive freedom than before; on the other hand, gender asymmetry within the family has deepened.

9.23 The life expectancy gap between men and women (12-14 years) is the main threat to Russia's demographic development. According to different estimates, the biological potential can account for a gap in life expectancy between males and females ranging from two to seven years. The rest of the gap is determined by socioeconomic factors. Among them, analysts usually recognize factors typical of Russia, such as: the difference in self-preservation behavioral practices followed by males and females; over consumption of alcohol by males; and new factors originating from shifts in the traditional gender role patterns. Box 9.3 provides some suggested actions that could ensure gender equality in health.

Box 9.3: Actions Suggested to Ensure Gender Equality in Health

- Improve the health conditions of men: educate men to change self-preservation behavioral practices
- Improve the sanitary and hygienic conditions of employment. Statistical analyses have disclosed the existence of direct correlations between the employment structure and the mortality rates across different population groups.
- Promote the establishment of more affordable health units and health units that are better distributed geographically to guarantee ease of access to the rural population.
- Carry out a systematic review of the health system, paying specific attention to male health issues and to implementing institutional reforms in the public healthcare system.
- Enhance the data collection system to include gender disaggregated data to guarantee a more homogeneous profile of the health situation.
- Develop a better and more effective reproductive health service for both genders (effective health service interventions and training should be addressed to the larger population: family planning, contraception use, safe abortion, cancer-screening, ante-natal care, etc). These interventions should be integrated parts of the reproductive health services provided by the public healthcare system).
- Increase the public awareness campaign on HIV/AIDS, targeting men and women.
- Improve the legislation in the matter of divorce and child custody. (Currently, legal guidelines regard fathers' financial responsibilities only, and leave the question of their participation in childcare activities without any regulation.)

D. GENDER ROLES IN EMPLOYMENT AND THE LABOR MARKET

9.24 The economic reforms in Russia were accompanied by important changes in employment and the labor market resulting in greater gender asymmetry. From 1992 through 2001, the percentage of working-age women declined more substantially than that of men.

9.25 The gender structure of employment by sector has also changed. The share of women employed in certain “feminized” sectors such as trade and public catering has increased even further. Some sectors (education, health and finance) remain “feminized,” while others (manufacturing industries, construction) face increasing “masculinization.” Growth in the primary industry is expected to open up new prospects for “male” occupations and industries, while the demographic decline will reduce the demand for female labor in female-dominated sectors, including primary school education.

9.26 Gender asymmetry is also characteristic of the informal sector, where the “male” segment usually generates high income (often from criminal sources), while the “female” segment is confined to mostly low-paid employment with small private firms (mini-markets and kiosk trade).

9.27 Vertical segregation remains high. Women tend to fill vacancies of lower status requiring lower skills; in 2001, women occupied 36 percent of managerial jobs (of all ranks) and 56 percent of unskilled jobs. Outright discrimination takes place when employers are unwilling to hire women. Over half of employers believe that the burden of family responsibilities reduces the value of female labor.

9.28 Substantial gender asymmetry exists in exposure to adverse labor conditions. In 2001, men occupied 71 percent of hazardous jobs in the manufacturing industries and 86 percent in the

construction sector. Legal restrictions prevent women from taking more than 600 different jobs and occupations. In 2001, men accounted for 76 percent of those injured at work and 94 percent of those killed in industrial accidents. The high rate of employment in industries with harmful conditions is an additional factor behind the high male mortality rate.

9.29 Despite their generally higher educational attainment, women form the majority of low-paid workers and hold junior positions in their careers. Women's success in career development is constrained by the prevailing gender stereotypes. Many women make a conscious choice in favor of the family, and thus would prefer a flexible work schedule.

9.30 The almost equal male and female unemployment rates (estimated in accordance with ILO standards) portray a more gender neutral situation. Women, however, tend to be out of work for longer periods. The problem of female unemployment is especially acute among the younger population groups, in rural areas, and in economically depressed regions with stagnant industries.

9.31 In Russia, there is still a substantial gender gap in wage rates (30-40 percent). The wage gap stems from several factors, including: (i) inter-sectoral segregation; (ii) vertical segregation; and (iii) different pay levels for men and women in similar occupations.

9.32 Gender roles in Russia are distributed in a traditional way: housework remains a predominantly female occupation, while men prevail in paid employment. In 2001, women accounted for 48.3 percent of the country's total employment. As the value of housework is not recognized by the society, women suffer losses in employment and pension entitlements.

E. POVERTY AND GENDER

9.33 The prevalent social and economic conditions cause the living standards and human development opportunities for women to deteriorate more than they do for men, resulting in the "feminization of poverty." Some studies have found that women comprise 43.3 percent and men comprise 29.4 percent of all poor adults. In addition, female poverty manifests itself in such extreme forms as stagnant and deep poverty ("the poorest of the poor").

9.34 The feminization of poverty is triggered by a set of macro and micro factors, including the following: (i) a gender gap exists in wage rates; (ii) the wages and salaries of many categories of workers — primarily women — are too low to support dependents; (iii) in many cases, the mother is the sole parent; and (iv) retired women receive lower pension benefits. Finally, several researchers point out that the burden of poverty is unevenly distributed between the spouses. Women pursue the goal of minimizing household expenses.

F. WOMEN IN POLITICS: GENDER-SENSITIVE POLITICS

9.35 The transition to a market economy affected women's political status. On the one hand, the process of political transformation introduced the Russian public to international human rights documents and institutions, pushing the government to declare a policy of equal rights and opportunities for both men and women. Women could more easily speak out against discrimination and sexist stereotypes. On the other hand, in the course of the reform, women tended to be more estranged from political and state power.

9.36 As a result, in the 1993 parliamentary elections, women won 13.5 percent of seats in the State Duma, which for the first time enabled them to establish a women's movement. However, in the following convocations of the State Duma, the number of female deputies decreased. In general, however, attempts to smooth gender asymmetry in the sphere of political and state power have been frustrated by political, socioeconomic, and socio-cultural obstacles. Although women play an important role in mobilizing support for their political parties, they do not receive an adequate return for their participation in election campaigns. Furthermore, women are often at the bottom of party election lists, and if the number of votes is low the parliamentary seats are distributed among male candidates on a priority basis.

9.37 Analysis of the role played by the Russian mass media in the election process shows that nearly all the media tend to give minimal coverage of the events and activities of pro-women organizations and the activities of women parliamentarians. Actually, as identified also in other sectors, the mass media often reinforce gender biases and stereotypes about the "proper place" for women.

9.38 Among the obstacles to women's political careers, the following are predominant: (i) women's low social and economic status and the inaccessibility of campaigning funds; and (ii) the poor coordination among women's NGOs and the ineffective cooperation between NGOs and other civil society organizations that have pro-women agendas.

9.39 The exclusion of women from participation in government and in the elected bodies undermines the possibilities for embedding the principles of democracy in the society, hinders economic development and discourages the attainment of gender equality. One important conclusion is that men in Russia have monopolized the political process, passing laws for the benefit of and on behalf of women, but the new laws do not always balance the interests of the male and female populations.

9.40 The measures presented in Box 9.4 are of great importance to the improvement of women's political participation.

Box 9.4: Objectives to Ensure Gender Equality in the Participation Process

- Ensure the introduction of political, institutional and financial guarantees that would secure the equal participation of female nominees in electoral campaigns.
- Include the application of sanctions for the violation of the "rules of the game."
- Design legislative regulations for the implementation of an effective "quota" mechanism regarding senior management positions.
- Extend educational programs to include women, with the objective of training them for political and public activity at higher levels.
- Establish a center for the training of women for participation in political public activity and governance.
- Introduce open periodic contests for vacant positions requiring women's participation

G. THE RUSSIAN GENDER STRATEGY

9.41 Following a Russian-Canadian Conference held in 2002, the Ministry for Labor and Social Development of the Russian Federation elaborated a Russian Gender Strategy that encompasses three areas: economic-environmental, organizational-political, and socio-cultural.

The need to adopt a gender focused strategy was driven by the social problems that resulted from the socioeconomic and political transformations in Russia. “The gender equality strategy should not be mistaken for a strategy towards the elimination of gender distinctions. Its mission is to establish political prerequisites and necessary social conditions for the fullest possible actualization of natural capacities of women and men in all spheres of public life to ensure sustainable public development. The gender policies need to be developed in close association with non-governmental organizations that constitute the more active and conscientious part of the civil society” (Gender Strategy, 2003: 9)

9.42 The Strategy is a basic document that outlines mid- and long-term gender policies and priorities. The main objective of the Strategy is to ensure that a gender dimension is included in the coordination of the efforts between the legislative and executive authorities and the civil society involved in the implementation of social programs, and in the protection of human rights. “The gender dimension of public policies allows: (i) to implement government control, assisted by non-governmental organizations, over the compliance with equal rights of men and women in all spheres of labor activity, administration and income distribution; (ii) to adjust public policies in every sector at the federal and regional levels, and to improve the legislative system aiming to introduce and maintain gender equality; (iii) to promote international cooperation favoring exchanges of expertise in the area of gender democracy, and related joint projects” (Gender Strategy, 2003: 18). In Box 9.5, several mechanisms of gender policies are enumerated. The mechanisms identified in the box strongly support the actions proposed by the Gender Profile.

Box 9.5: Key Mechanisms of Gender Policies

- Consolidate democratic institutions to include institutionalized forms of gender monitoring (through the definition of life indicators that register the level of gender partnership, environment and demographic sustainability as well as any positive or negative changes in health care, education and employment).
- Introduce mandatory statutory gender expert evaluation of all significant plans or projects.
- Promote gender statistics that track changes in incomes, access to vacancies, and allocation of parliamentary seats between men and women.
- Enhance the level of representation of women in legislative or executive authorities in both the federal and local tiers.
- Elaborate and implement national and regional programs combating poverty and attempting to reverse the trend towards the feminization of poverty and unemployment.
- Coordinate the efforts of government and civil society to introduce and enhance gender control over the social and economic change in the interests of a more equitable social and economic order in the country.
- Carry out broad-scale national and international information actions and awareness campaigns aiming to enhance gender symmetry and unbiased culture in Russian society.
- Allocate resources to revisit pre-school and also general education curricula at schools.
- Introduce special training courses in various fields of activity, primarily in those areas where the rights of women are mostly prejudiced (labor market and political participation).

Source: Gender Strategy, 2003: 15-17

9.43 Overall, the Gender Strategy has to be considered a political document designed to broaden the systemic support to the vulnerable groups in the interests of gender equality, through a series of objectives (listed in Box 9.6).

Box 9.6: Lender Strategy and Objectives

- Receive support from the government for the development of non-governmental social infrastructure based on gender equity.
- Elevate the status of unpaid work at home and child care, as well as increasing incentives to reverse the household's functions in favor of a more balanced involvement of men and women in the performance of these tasks.
- Increase the share of the family budget allocated to education and medical services.
- Provide incentives to personal savings in the families.
- Increase the proportion of financial aid and services from public and private sources made available to women and men.
- Increase the number of women in local organizations, including women in high administrative offices.
- Increase income tax benefits (standard children's deductions) to be offered to workers with a low per capita income.
- Protect women's rights in the informal sector of the economy where discrimination and violence against women are more evident.

Source: Gender Strategy, 2003:25

9.44 The challenges that the Russian Federation is facing suggest that both executive authorities and public opinion should revisit many of the issues and seek new solutions for them through a gender issues awareness lens.

9.45 As presented in the Gender Profile and corroborated in the Strategy, the key obstacles to gender equity in employment are: (i) a fully confirmed (statistically) discrimination of women at various stages of privatization; (ii) a lack of compensatory mechanisms to support female entrepreneurship; (iii) the criminalization of business, resulting in the booming of the "grey economy" and turning large and medium-size business into a "purely male occupation"; and (iv) the low level of security available for small and medium entrepreneurship. The labor market objectives of the Gender Strategy are reflected in the actions recommended in the Gender Profile. These objectives are listed in Box 9.7.

Box 9.7: Gender Based Labor Market Objectives

- Harmonize pay levels in various sectors, to narrow the gaps in the labor mode and pay between women and men.
- Ensure higher employment based on principles of gender equity.
- Lower unemployment, aiming to fully eliminate mass unemployment that points to gender discrimination.
- Improve labor conditions, taking into account gender characteristics and offering flexibilities to release women and men from laborious and hazardous work
- Elaborate and implement federal and regional programs for the promotion of small businesses, with a mandatory emphasis on promoting women-run and family-owned businesses.
- Improve credit services to small and medium businesses, and promote female entrepreneurship.
- Provide labor activities and successful careers for people with family, adopting special measures to protect motherhood and consolidate the equality of men and women..

Source: Gender Strategy, 2003: 20-21.

9.46 As indicated in the previous chapters, health care is a vulnerable issue; short-term and medium-term measures are required to improve women's and men's health. The key issue for health care is to ensure protection for women's and men's health throughout their life cycle. It is necessary, according to the Strategy and supported in the Gender Profile, to implement state programs (approved annually) aimed at guaranteeing free medical care, offering Russian citizens, regardless of their gender, equal access to diagnostics, medical and social assistance. Special attention should be paid to address the health issues identified above: (i) the low birth rate compounded by the high mortality rate; (ii) the ineffectiveness of medical care; (iii) the high number of abortions; (iv) the growing number of female disorders and teenage pregnancies; (v) the growth in drug abuse and alcoholism among young people; (vi) growth in AIDS/HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases; and (vii) the high maternity and infantile mortality rates.

9.47 In matters of health care, the issues identified above should be implemented within the framework of ongoing state programs, such as the Program approved annually by the Russian Government to guarantee free medical help to Russian citizens, and the Federal program, "Prevention and Eradication of Diseases of Social Nature (2002-2006)," which has a sub-program, "Urgent Measures to Prevent the Spread of the Disease Caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (Anti-HIV/AIDS).

9.48 Furthermore, the Strategy and the Profile support the implementation of measures identified in the Action Plan of the Concept for the Protection of Public Reproductive Health in Russia in 2000-2004 to increase the length of a healthy active life and to improve the reproductive health of women and men.

9.49 Comprehensive and coordinated efforts by the state (federal and local legislative and executive authorities), the civil society, and the mass media as well, need to be expanded - in the mid-term to long-term - to effectively combat discriminatory stereotypes that impede women's independence and perpetuate their low status in the family and society. The identification of the adaptive gender aspect in the sphere of Russian cultural and educational policies would require strategic planning to shift the emphasis toward a model of gender-oriented basic and continuous education - "learning throughout life." The Strategy and the Profile support the words of the World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century (Paris, 1998) that specifically say that in the process of elaboration and implementation of gender strategies in education, "Further efforts are required to eliminate all gender stereotyping in higher education, to consider gender aspects in different disciplines and to consolidate women's participation at all levels and in all disciplines, in which they are under-represented and, in particular, to enhance their active involvement in decision-making." (quoted in the Gender Strategy, 2003: 34). Therefore, the Strategy and the Profile aim to enhance the system of education (to increase awareness of gender symmetry), which is expected to promote the prestige of unofficial and informal education and self-education and to provide the possibility to combining education with work and family life. The principal areas of cultural and educational policies designed to support and promote gender democracy are included in Box 9.8.

Box 9.8: Cultural and Educational Policies Designed to Promote Gender Equality

- Increase the investments in “human capital.” Guarantee equal opportunities and access to continuous education for all citizens regardless of their age or gender, residence or social status.
- Establish efficient methods of teaching at all levels of the education system to overcome existing gender distinctions.
- Support aspirations for continuous learning through non-formal and informal education.
- Promote advanced information technologies for distance learning.
- Promote academic and applied gender research to facilitate gender equality.
- Support government and non-government research on interdisciplinary studies of gender relations.
- Distribute foreign language texts on scholarly findings on gender equality.
- Develop and introduce specialized courses and gender curricula at all levels of the system of education – from pre-school to post-graduate education.

Source: Gender Strategy, 2003: 36

9.50 The state Gender Strategy has to be viewed as a means of completing the objectives embedded in the Constitution of the Russian Federation. For it to be implemented, a series of action plans (following the goals delineated above) must be developed at the federal, regional and sectoral levels. Therefore the Strategy sets the following priority objectives: as a first phase, (i) to elaborate the National Action Plan to implement the Strategy for the period 2010-2015 (the National Action Plan will specify further phases of the implementation and will identify pilot projects for each of the phases); (ii) to develop a package of proposals for the future legislative projects with regard to gender policies; and (iii) to conduct gender expert evaluation of sectoral strategies, concepts and doctrines and propose adjustments to the ongoing plans (Gender Strategy, 2003: 38).

9.51 On two distinct levels (one more pragmatic and the other more political) the Gender Profile and the Gender Strategy encompass the same objective: to guarantee gender equality and symmetry in the Russian Federation. However, on the one hand, the Gender Profile provides an assessment of the gender situation in Russia, presenting data and information on seven sectors, while, on the other hand the Gender Strategy proposes political alternatives to the achievement of gender equality in those sectors. Above all, however, the Gender Strategy underlines the importance of including the gender dimension in the analysis and definition of Action Plans and Political Frameworks. The Gender Profile strongly supports the actions identified in the Strategy. These two documents recognize the need to enhance the data collection system to guarantee a more objective profile of the gender’ situation in Russia. Both documents support the need for a monitoring system that is seen as a *conditio sine qua non* for the implementation of policies, sectoral strategies, concepts and doctrines aimed at guaranteeing gender equality. Finally, both documents recognize that at the basis of the gender inequality in the Russian Federation there is a lack of awareness of the ideas, laws and opportunities available to men and women, and that this needs to be overcome through a more generalized and diffuse non-formal education.

53. The political framework suggested by the Strategy is consistent with the actions recommended in the Gender Profile. The Strategy designs a broader spectrum of policies and plans necessary to the design and implementation of the actions suggested in the Profile.

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