

Gečienė I. *Stereotypes of gender roles in the occupational field.*- Gender studies center Vilnius university, V. - 2008.- 39p. ISBN 978-9955-33-179-7

The research "Stereotypes of gender roles in the occupational field" is intended to reveal traditional stereotypes of social gender that influence equal opportunities for men and women in the occupational field. The research is based on the review of strategic provisions establishing the principle of gender equality in Lithuanian politics, also on the consideration of statistics of gender occupation and discussion on the studies of social gender stereotypes in Lithuania performed until 2007 and the data of the newly made study on gender role stereotypes in the occupational field.

The quantitative research "Stereotypes of gender roles in the occupational field" was performed in the framework of the project "Stereotypes of gender roles in the occupational field: system of broad monitoring and education" of the Gender Studies Centre of Vilnius University. This project is funded by ESF under point 2.3 "Prevention of social disjuncture and social integration". The research was performed by means of the representative survey of Lithuanians. The Public opinion and Market research centre "Vilmorus" performed this research against order of The Gender Studies Centre of Vilnius University. The research period is from 5 to 8 October, 2006. 1006 Lithuanian inhabitants were interviewed. The survey method: a quantitative interview at the respondent's place. The selection method: multi-stage probability selection.

The objective of the research "Stereotypes of gender roles in the occupational field": to study opinion of Lithuanian inhabitants regarding men and women roles in the occupational field. There was role distribution within a family and approach towards combining men and woman obligations at work and within a family, position on opportunities in making career in professional area and female situation in the business field studied in the framework of this research, as well opinion regarding the role of the Government in encouraging equal men and women rights were examined and the prevailing gender stereotypes in the occupational field in Lithuania were determined.

The research shows that even though the development of democracy and economics in Lithuania is currently impossible without women participation in decision making process at any level of public structure and laws on equal opportunities for men and women have been published, however, practically the principle of equal opportunities for men and women in the social field has not been consolidated yet.

According to the statistic data, the female gender in Lithuania remains in a more unfavourable situation from the point of view of both wages and vertical and horizontal segregation. This discloses clearly that the woman position in the occupational field is influenced not only by structural factors (such as education and age) but also, in the first instance, by tenacious cultural expectations within the society that are related to gender stereotypes.

The data of the research "Stereotypes of gender roles in the occupational field" performed in 2006 shows that, in the opinion of Lithuanian inhabitants, the labour market conditions are more beneficial to men than women and it is easier for men to

find a job. Although the inhabitants' approach towards equal opportunities for men and women speaking about employment is not so strict about the exceptional position of men on the labour market as comparing with former studies, however, one third of Lithuanian inhabitants - both men and women - are still confident that when there is a lack of working places experienced, men would be preferred. Additionally, the opinion predominates that a woman needs to work more and put more efforts to be recognized for her qualification and skills in comparison to men.

While analysing the experiences concerning gender discrimination, it emerges that the majority (95.9 %) of the respondents has not faced the situation when they were not given a higher position at work only due to their gender. Still, only a half of the respondents agree that men and women have equal opportunities to make a career. The majority of inhabitants (84,8 %) endorse that women can deal with a high managing position successfully, however, the statistic data show that women take less responsible posts at work than men. The reasons of such less responsible posts at work are related not with the qualification of women and the need to seek for higher position, but with the combining her family and work and prevailing negative attitude to women in responsible positions.

The most respondents (85,4%) agree with the statement that spouses should equally share their daily Care and housework; though the analysis of role distribution within a family brings to life the fact that the larger part of housework is left for a woman. Due to traditionally prevailing role distribution within a family, women more frequently than men take such responsibilities that influence directly her possibilities to compete at work: she takes a sick-leave when their child/children is/are ill, picks up children from the kindergarten or school and solves their health or other problems during her work time.

On the other hand, women more rarely than men acknowledge that they face difficulties in combining their job and family duties and it shows women resign to such double work load and their laden situation in the occupational field. Yet, women more frequently are confronted to a negative approach of heads or colleagues towards the necessity to combine work and family duties. Moreover, difficulties in combining family and work are indicated as a reason why an own business is harder to start for women.

The research also spotlights the groups that stronger reflect the women discrimination in the occupational field. These are the following: women themselves, the youth up to 29 years old, and people with higher education. These groups are more frequent than other to state that they confront gender discrimination at work, and additionally, they believe a stronger discrimination of women existing in business. These groups thereby more disagree with various images of the woman situation within a family and at work.

It is safe to separate several predominant gender stereotypes: the ones related with features that are attributed to a social gender; the ones related to the professions attributed to gender; the ones related to gender role within a family. The

stereotypes related to the features attributable to women (accurateness, attention, submission), as distinct from the stereotypes related to the features attributable to men (rationality, initiative, leadership), are supported by the majority of inhabitants, which shows that female features are given clichés more frequently.

The most supported stereotypes, related to gender role within a family, are the following: the majority of respondents agree that it is better for a family when their father earns money and their mother takes care home and children, and that a mother should make children and family preferential but not a job. Even though men are more liable to support the abovementioned stereotypes, women do not fall behind them and contribute to supporting the stereotypes that make their situation even worse.

The support of a traditional family model where a man is a breadwinner and a woman is a housewife has not changed within these 15 latter years: in 1991, 62 % of the respondents chose this family made, in 2006 - 63,2% respectively. However, pointing out that all clichés are supported more by older and less educated people, we still can expect that new generations and better education together with additional education on the issues of gender equality will potentially reduce the influence of these stereotypes on the woman situation in the occupational field.

Most inhabitants agree that the Government should create better conditions for women to work and make career and secure equal opportunities for men and women regarding wages, role distribution within a family, and participation in management on the highest level.

Considering the research results and implementing the principle of equal opportunities for men and women, we must not only to publish this principle of equal opportunities for men and women establishing laws but also to change historically developed cultural standards, traditional labour distribution, and gender role stereotypes. Any support of such deeply ingrained cultural standards, approaches, and stereotypes, their succession, and multiplication are the most significant factors suppressing the implementation of equal rights and opportunities.