

## **Accessibility to Childcare Facilities, Gender, and Reconciliation of Work and Family Life in Lithuania**

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### **Abstract**

Accessibility to childcare facilities and reconciliation of work and family life, gender differences in employment in Lithuania are analysed in this article. The article discusses accessibility to childcare facilities in Lithuania, policy issues, describes availability of childcare facilities, women and men participation rates in labour market in Lithuania. Over the last decades, childcare services have become an important matter of public concern. Affordable and good quality childcare facilities may improve the reconciliation of work and family roles and foster labour market participation and gender equality. Despite existing mechanisms, family-friendly policies, successful integration of women with preteen children into labour market is limited by shortage of childcare facilities, issues relating to reconciliation of work and family roles, and poor flexible employment system.

**Keywords:** accessibility to childcare facilities, gender, reconciliation of work and family roles.

### **Introduction**

#### ***Scientific problem, novelty and relevance***

Discussions about gender equality, women involvement in paid employment emphasize that women more frequently than men face problems with reconciling family and work roles. Parenthood causes employment differences between men and women. Whereas men with children tend to work more than men without children, the opposite is true for women: women without children have higher employment rates than women with children (The provision..., 2009).

Generally, the unemployment rates of women in the European Union are higher than those of men. On average, in 25 European Union member states in 2005 women had unemployment rate of 9.8%, while that of men was 7.9% (OECD, 2006). Concerning Lithuania, it could be noted that unemployment rate for both men and women was reduced in a few past years (until the first half of 2008). Unemployment ra-

te of women is still slightly higher than that of men (women had an unemployment rate of 8.5%, while men – of 7.9%) (OECD, 2006).

Lithuanian labour laws provide for equality for all the subjects irrespective of their gender, age and etc., and prohibit discrimination. Concerning parental leave legislation in Lithuania, it should be noted that the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania provides for childcare leave that can be used, depending on a family decision, by mother (or foster mother), father (or foster father), grandmother, grandfather or other relatives who take care of the child until he/she reaches the age of three. The Lithuanian Law on Sickness and Maternity Social Insurance grants the mother between 126 and 140 calendar days before and after the birth on 100% salary compensation. After this period, any of the above mentioned family members is granted a maternity/paternity benefit until the child reaches the first year of age. As of January 1, 2008, parental benefit amounts to 100% of the caretaker's salary before the child reaches age 1, for the second year it amounts to 85%.

Available and good quality childcare services may improve the reconciliation of work and family life, foster labour market participation and gender equality. The availability of good quality childcare services has a positive impact on the female participation rate. Higher participation rate may increase gender equality, foster economic growth and help improve the sustainability of the present day welfare state, especially in the light of an ageing population. Another argument points to the fact that child care services might increase fertility rates by making a child less costly in terms of income and career opportunities (The provision..., 2009).

The reconciliation of family and work roles is one of the major topics on the European social agenda brought to the forefront by the increasing labour market participation of women, changing family forms and the demographic pressure from ageing po-

pulation (Reconciliation 2005). The European institutions have placed special emphasis on combating gender inequalities in public and private spheres. In the course of the 1990s, the EU moved beyond its previous emphasis on equal treatment on labour markets by embracing both positive actions and gender mainstreaming. Yet countries differ in their policy responses reflected in ideological, cultural, institutional, political or legal arrangements. The European Union is seeking to assure successful integration of women into labour market. Programmes, projects, directives communicate promoting of integration of women into labour market. In the frame of European social dialogue the following is discussed: gender roles, promotion of women participation in decision making process, family work responsibilities balance, and equal pay.

Three main governmental policies have been introduced on the EU level with a view of facilitating the reconciliation of family and work roles: the creation of public care infrastructures by the state, the provision of parental leave arrangements and the development of new patterns of working time. The OECD (2001, p. 130) argues that “*the work/family balance is also important for longer-term trends in population ... it is plausible that improvements in the work/family balance could help to increase both current employment rates and fertility rates*”.

Infrastructure of childcare institutions was not developed during the independence. Practically no childcare institution was newly built in Lithuania since 1990. There is a lack of places for children in nurseries, kindergartens, nursery-schools and etc.

Changing family roles, gender equality, family patterns, family and work roles reconciliation issues have been explicitly analysed by Lithuanian and foreign researchers. Issues of family and work roles reconciliation have been analysed by Braziene (2008), Duyvendak, Stavenuiter (2004), Purvaneckiene (2003), Plantenga, Remery (2005); changing educational opportunities and family patterns have been analysed by Lewin-Epstein, Semyonov (1992) and others.

**The aim of this paper** is to discuss accessibility to childcare facilities and reconciliation of work and family life in Lithuania.

**The objectives are as follows:**

1. To provide theoretical consideration of reconciliation of family and work roles;
2. To analyse women and men participation in the Lithuanian labour market;
3. To discuss accessibility to childcare facilities in Lithuania;
4. To describe availability of childcare facilities in Lithuania.

The methods of scientific literature analysis and statistical data analysis were used.

## **Theoretical discourse on reconciliation of family and work roles**

Topic of reconciliation of work and family roles presents a variety of issues to analyse: labour market situation, gender inequality, etc. Due to mass women involvement into paid employment during the last several decades labour market underwent essential transformations. Nowadays work for women is not only a source of subsistence, but also a possibility for self-expression. It is argued that technological advancement and industrialization as well as changing educational opportunities and family patterns involve into labour market more and more women (Lewin-Epstein, Semyonov, 1992). Mass women involvement into paid employment was caused by transformation of economy, rise of network society and globalization. But still women situation in society, their rights and possibilities to get education, professional choices, and position in the labour market and other economic activities in each country are also determined by established traditions, patriarchal attitudes, stereotypes, etc. Castells (2006) argued that “patriarchalism is the main structure of all contemporary societies, for institutionally established men power over women and children in the family is characteristic. If this power would be effective, patriarchalism should pervade all organization of society – from production to consumption and policy, law and culture”. Increasing female employment is an effective way of improving family income. In fact, women’s participation in labour market is the best and most effective protection against poverty in a family with children (Esping-Andersen 2002).

Family-friendly policies can be implemented in a different way, using a wide variety of arrangements, each with somewhat different implications for helping parents to reconcile work and family life. Castles (2003) distinguishes between active and passive measures that facilitate maternity among female employees: active measures include maternity and childcare leave, passive ones – a variety of flexible workplace arrangements. Duyvendak and Stavenuiter (2004) categorize the arrangements to support the reconciliation of paid work and care into three components: time off (such as leave schemes and flexible working time patterns), monetary benefits (including, for example, tax allowances, social security and social assistance) and services (like childcare facilities). Den Dulk (2001) distinguishes four types of work-family arrangements: leave, childcare, flexible work and supportive arrangements (such as employ-

ee counselling or availability of information about existing facilities).

Hakim (1995) suggested that employers accept women employees differently than men. It is proposed that women are less oriented to career, less involved in paid employment than work at home, less expected that they will be seeking training, perfection and rising in professional position; it could be suggested that work for women is more temporary than permanent, and they preferred to choose responsibility in private sphere... (Hakim, 1995). Professional gender segregation is another aspect of gender inequality and important factor influencing men and women differences in earnings, impacting individual career and gender inequality (Fox and Fox 1987; Hughes, 1990; Reskin and Roos, 1990).

Role distribution by gender has a theoretical and practical impact on the economy. According to Nelson (1996), labour market segregation by gender has a particularly negative impact on women. Economic laws show that what is considered "masculine" issues (in particular activities) is valued more than those activities that are considered "feminine". This in part explains the fact that women earn less than men. It is estimated that women, despite a successful career, have to carry out all family responsibilities. Often the role of a woman as a housewife is considered as her primary responsibility without any positive impact on the economy.

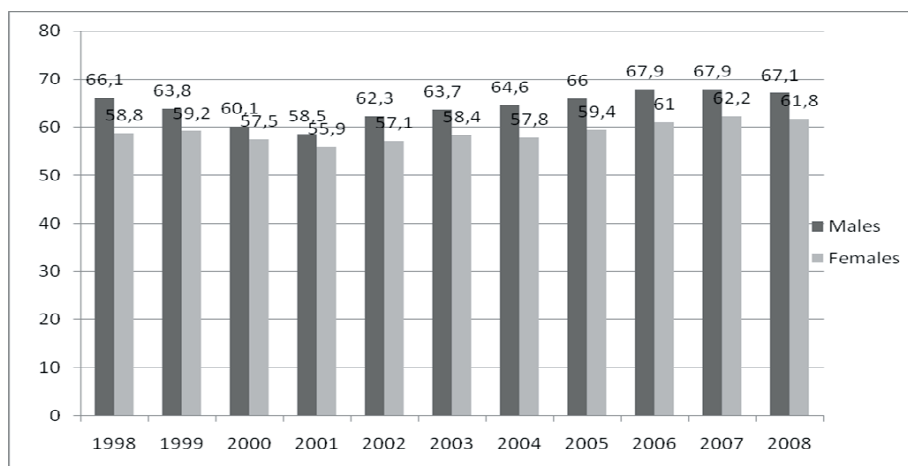
### **Women and men in the Lithuanian labour market**

Public child care services system creates opportunities for both parents (and especially mothers) to work. And that in turn reinforces the economical and intellectual strength of the country, the material situation of the families, stimulates birth rate. It is noticeable that the economical involvement of women is increasing, due to this they are forced to spend more time at work, and to pay less attention to their children. Gaps between women and men persist in all work are-

as, reconciling family and work life, working arrangements and etc.

Sociological research conducted in 2006 shows that every fourth Lithuanian woman because of the child care had to refuse their carrier opportunities, 23% suffered greater physical and emotional stress at work, 22% had to reduce work capacity. These data clearly show that neither the availability of the child-care services, nor their quality satisfy the considerable part of the Lithuanian families. Quality of childcare services is an important factor reinforcing social inclusion. The problems of adjustment of professional and family roles are usually related to family's economical shortage, to social groups named as social risk families. Recently the number of such families keeps growing. These families are not able to adjust independently to changing social and economical situation of the country. Developed child care system creates conditions to coordinate work and children rearing. That creates preconditions for receiving of work income, and not for the domination of social disbursement in the family. Social risk families keep their children at home also because they do not want to lose the financial support guaranteed by the state. Availability of childcare institutions is closely related to participation of family members in the labour market. Due to limited availability and quality it is difficult for a part of the population to reconcile work and family roles (especially single-parent families). In 2004-2005 women labour market participation decreased by 10% due to the limited access to childcare institutions. That is negative factor that influences women's social and economical activity, increases poverty and limits social integration of a child.

Generally, men employment rate is higher than that of women (see Figure 1). According to the Lithuanian Department of Statistics data (2006), depending on gender, children also have a different impact on employment. The employment rates for women aged 20-49 are slightly lower for those with children under 12. On the other hand, the employment rates for men with children are considerably higher than the rates for men without children.



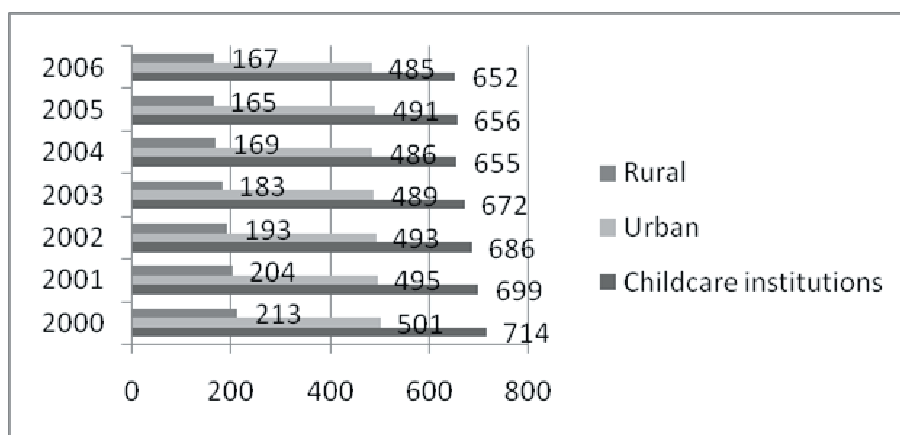
**Fig. 1.** Employment rate by gender (annual average, %)

Sources: Lithuanian Department of Statistics, 2009

The position of women in Lithuanian labour market could be characterized by a high degree of vertical and horizontal segregation. Women and men are engaged in different sectors of employment reflecting traditional gender stereotypes. According to the sociological research, women are mainly engaged in services, education, health and social sector, while men – in construction, business services, transport and etc. There is also a tendency among women for shorter career spans, greater absenteeism, low availability for overtime or long working hours due to gendered division of labour and women’s obligations towards family and childcare. Women are traditionally employed in low paid sectors. For example, women constitute the vast majority of the population employed in health and social work sector (approximately 80%)<sup>1</sup>.

### Availability of childcare facilities in Lithuania

Accessibility to good-quality and affordable childcare facilitates maternal employment (Fagan and Rubery 1997; O’Connor et al. 1999; OECD 2007). There is considerable decrease in number of childcare institutions in Lithuania. After regaining of independence there were 1808 childcare services institutions (1003 in cities, and 805 in rural areas) in Lithuania. In 2003, the number dropped to 672 (489 in cities, and 183 in rural areas). The number of the childcare services institutions has decreased almost three times, and in the rural areas more than four times. The number of childcare services institutions keeps diminishing. Data presented by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science indicated that the number of childcare institutions in Lithuania was constantly decreasing from 2000 to 2006 (see Figure 2).



**Fig. 2.** Childcare institutions in Lithuania, 2000-2006 (Lithuanian Department of Statistics, 2008)

<sup>1</sup> The life of women and men in Europe. A statistical portrait. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications on European Communities, 2008. P. 57.

The number of childcare institutions is decreasing, but the number of children attending childcare institutions is increasing. The data in Table 1 indicates the percentage of children in childcare institutions. At the end of 2000 childcare education institutions were attended by 41%, of 2004 – by 50%, of 2005 – by 53% of 1-6 year old children. During the last three years the number of children attending childcare institutions increased from 14% in 2000 to 21% in 2005, for 3-6 year old children the increase was from 53 to 70%, respectively.

There is relatively smaller number of children attending childcare institutions in rural areas. Childcare institutions were attended by 92.5% of 3-6 year old children in urban areas in 2005, and in rural areas – only by 24.6%, respectively. In 2005 there was a

considerable decrease in participation of 3-6 year old children in childcare institutions in rural areas. There are also differences between the younger children in urban and rural areas. The number of children under 3 years of age in urban areas increased from 2000 to 2005 by 10.9%, and in rural areas only by 1.6% (see Table 1). There is also an increasing demand for childcare services for the youngest children (before one year of age). According to the data of the survey conducted by Klaipeda University, the vast majority of parents indicated that the most suitable time for a child to start attending a childcare institution is 2-3 years of age (38.1% of parents indicated that the most suitable time to start attending nursery is when the child is 2 year old, and 47.8% thought that it was most appropriate when child is 3 year old).

Table 1

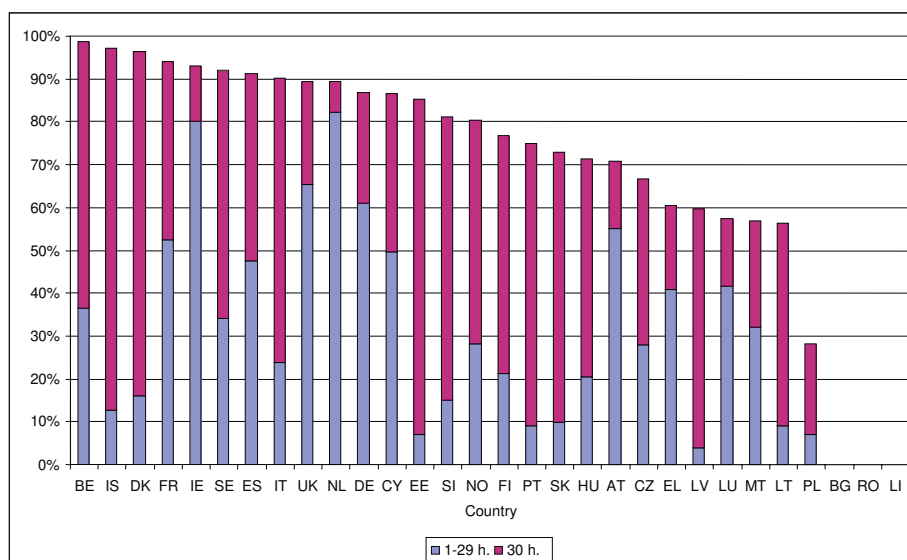
**The Number of Children in Childcare Institutions (2000-2008)**

Age of children		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Total</b>	1-6 years	41.1	42.2	45	48.6	50.3	52.6	54.7	54.9	56.9
	under 3 years	13.7	14.9	16.5	17.8	19.3	21.3	23.5	24.7	23.2
	3-6 years	53.1	55.9	58.5	61.8	64.1	69.6	70.0	72.4	74.8
<b>Urban</b>	1-6 years	58	59.3	61.5	65.2	68.2	72.7	74.6	74.6	75.3
	under 3 years	19.9	21	24	26.5	28.7	30.8	33.3	34.2	32.0
	3-6 years	74.4	75.5	78.6	81.3	85.3	92.5	95.5	96.0	99.2
<b>Rural</b>	1-6 years	11.8	13.3	14.1	19.8	19.9	18.3	20.4	20.3	23.7
	under 3 years	3.2	3.8	3.5	3.8	3.8	4.8	5.7	6.7	6.2
	3-6 years	15.6	17.8	19.5	27	27.3	24.6	27.2	26.7	32.2

Source: Lithuanian Department of Statistics, 2009.

The EU-SILC contains detailed data on childcare services. Questions are being asked about the use of formal childcare arrangements, the use of other arrangements and the number of hours per week. According to the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) data (2006), in Lithuania there are only 4% of children (aged 0-2) in formal childcare arrangements cared of for more than 30 hours. In com-

parison, there are 75% of children (aged 0-2) cared of only by parents (in 2005 this part was 72%). Concerning the data for children from 3 years of age to compulsory school age, in 2005 and in 2006 33% of them were cared of by the parents only. 46% of children were cared of in formal arrangements for more than 30 hours in 2005 (in 2006 this part was 46%).



**Fig. 3. Use of formal childcare arrangements by hours, age of 3 to compulsory school age**

Sources: EU-SILC 2006; data for DE and NO: EU-SILC 2005.

The problem is not only the lack of childcare institutions, but also their nonflexible working time and forms. Most day nurseries cannot satisfy the needs of parents. So far this problem has not been reflected in the policy (on education) of the government. The working time of the day nurseries is fixed, like of many other institutions. Most of childcare institutions are open from 6-7 a.m. till 6-7 p.m. Some of the childcare institutions offer prolonged groups.

According to the sociological research carried out by the Women Information Centre in 2004, non flexible working hours of childcare institutions is one of the main reasons for difficulties in reconciling family and working roles. 76% of the respondents indicated that working hours of childcare institutions are not convenient for working parents. Results of the survey also indicated that 55.8% of parents requested that childcare institutions work 5 days a week from 6.30 a.m. till 21 p.m. 21% of the respondents stated that childcare institutions should be open twenty-four hours. Flexibility of childcare services is particularly important for single-parent families. Another important factor is availability of child care institutions during summer months. Considerable part of child care institutions are closed for long summer holidays (July and August).

### **Accessibility to childcare facilities in Lithuania: policy implications**

While analyzing the solution of the issue of childcare in Lithuania, the dominant one is the policy of support for the family through direct payments. Concerning the indirect family support means and fa-

mily-friendly work organization forms (for example, flexible working arrangements), these are provided insufficiently. The application of the first-type means reinforces traditional gender roles in family and society (because most often mothers stay with the children) and aggravates the return of women to the labour market. The application of the second-type means would open greater opportunities for women and men to reconcile family and work roles, reduce stress and have a positive impact on birth rate.

There is a lack of state support for the development of childcare services in Lithuania. Considering future developments of childcare services according to availability, it is very important to mention Pre-school Education Development Programme (2007-2012). In the implementation plan of this programme as well as support from EU Structural Funds provide for implementation of the following objectives:

- to increase availability of childcare facilities (especially in rural areas);
- to renovate buildings of childcare institutions;
- to renew equipment of childcare institutions, improve professional qualification of educators;
- to improve wage mechanism for educators;
- to create system for monitoring childcare institutions, etc.

The objective of monitoring of quality of childcare services in Pre-school Education Development Programme (2007-2012) is to increase availability of childcare and pre-school education institutions and ensure quality of services provided. The aim of this programme is to ensure availability of childcare services

for all population groups, diminish social exclusion and regional differences, ensure flexibility of childcare services, ensure high quality of childcare services provided and diminish early school drop-out risk (especially important for the children from rural areas). Anticipated results of the Pre-school Education Development Programme (2007-2012) are the following:

- Increased availability of child care institutions in municipalities, especially in rural areas;
- Decreased social exclusion of children, ensuring of equal possibilities to enter school education;
- Until 2012 child care institutions will be attended by 25% of children aged 0-3 (in comparison in 2005 the level of attendance was 21.3%), no less than by 60% of 3-6 year old children, in rural areas – no less than by 40% (in 2005 – by 24.6%).
- At least 500 new working places for social educators, teachers assistants and other specialists established by 2012;
- Diversification of educational services, implementation of new models of nurturing;
- Increased number of private childcare institutions;
- Ensured information for society about availability of childcare institutions in municipalities;
- Improved provision of childcare education institutions with necessary interior and exterior equipment;
- Renovation of childcare institutions;
- Improved professional qualification of educators, directors and other personnel of childcare institutions according to the accredited qualification improvement programmes;
- Implementation of system for monitoring childcare institutions in municipalities.

## Conclusions

- Accessibility to child care is to increase the female labour force participation, gender equality and foster economic growth. Increasing participation rate was a decisive factor in formulating the Barcelona childcare targets as part of the European Employment Strategy. Another argument points to the fact that child care services might increase fertility rates by making a child less costly in terms of income and career opportunities, reduce poverty and increase social inclusion.

- During Soviet times Lithuania had a rather well developed childcare system. At the beginning of transition women were encouraged to raise children at home. Many childcare institutions were closed. Places for children in childcare institutions are very limited now. As a consequence, there is a shortage of kindergartens; this creates difficulties for parents in re-

conciling family and work roles. The policy with regard to the provision of childcare services in Lithuania is rather hesitant. A considerable decrease in birth rate, the rise in prices of child care services, ideological reasons and the notion that ‘the child has to grow at home till he is 8’ all combine into a low demand for and supply of child care services.

- Analysis and evaluation of statistical and sociological research data on childcare provision in Lithuania allow concluding that availability of childcare services in Lithuania is insufficient. The demand for childcare institutions is not met; childcare services cannot satisfy the needs of all urban and rural inhabitants. There are no childcare institutions for children younger than one year of age. The number of childcare institutions is decreasing and the number of children attending these institutions is increasing. There were various reasons for reduction of number of childcare institutions: considerable decrease in birth-rate, the rise in prices of childcare services, ideological reasons (women “returning to the family”) and etc.

- Analysis of gender equality policy, family and work roles reconciliation being completed it is possible to conclude that there is a necessary legal base conforming to the EU standards and directives, but it is still not implemented in practice. Women often face childcare problems: help from partners is inadequate, availability of pre-school institutions is insufficient; quality of childcare services is often unsatisfactory. Furthermore, development of new patterns of working time is still very slow. Despite existing mechanisms and family-friendly policies, integration of women raising preteen children is affected by limited childcare possibilities, work and family roles reconciliation issues and poor flexible employment system.

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## Ikimokyklinio ugdymo įstaigų prieinamumas, lytis ir profesinių bei šeimyninių vaidmenų derinimas Lietuvoje

### Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjamas ikimokyklinio ugdymo įstaigų prieinamumo, pasiekiamumo ir kokybės klausimai Lietuvoje. Analizuojamos socialinės politikos priemonės, užtikrinančios ikimokyklinio ugdymo įstaigų prieinamumą. Aptariant ikimokyklinio ugdymo įstaigų prieinamumą, pasiekiamumą, kokybę, paslaugų teikimo lankstumą Lietuvoje, nagrinėjami Lietuvos statistikos departamento ir Europos Sąjungos (ES) pajamų ir gyvenimo kokybės (EU-SILC 2006), duomenys.

Aptariamos teorinės moterų padėties visuomenėje ir apmokamo darbo sferoje analizės prielaidos. Šeimyninių ir profesinių vaidmenų derinimo problemas, lyčių lygybės, ikimokyklinio ugdymo įstaigų prieinamumo, pasiekiamumo ir kokybės klausimus išsamiai nagrinėjo Lietuvos ir užsienio mokslininkai: Brazienė (2008), Frey (2002), Hakim (1995), Hakim (1996), Herbst (2005) Durand (2006), Purvaneckienė (2003), Purvaneckienė (2005), Reingardienė, Tereskinas, (2006), Lewin-Epstein, Plantenga, Remery (2005), Semyonov (1992) ir kt.

Šiais laikais darbas moterims yra ne tik pragyvenimo šaltinis, bet ir saviraiškos priemonė. Masinių moterų įsitraukimą į darbo rinką lėmė ekonominiai pokyčiai, žinių visuomenės susiformavimas ir globalizacija. Tačiau moterų padėtį visuomenėje, jų teises ir lygias galimybes, profesinės karjeros pasirinkimą, pozicijas darbo rinkoje, ekonominį aktyvumą sąlygoja tradicinis vertinimas, patriarchalinės nuostatos, stereotipai ir kt. Patriarhalistinės nuostatos formuoja šeimyninius modelius, moterų poziciją visuomenėje.

Profesinių ir šeimyninių vaidmenų derinimas yra priemonė, propaguojama ES, kuri užtikrintų lyčių lygybę darbo rinkoje, skatintų moterų dalyvavimą darbo rinkoje, keistų šeimyninio gyvenimo formas ir skatintų gimstamumą. Europos institucijos skiria ypatingą dėmesį kovai su lyčių nelygybe viešojo ir privataus sektoriaus srityse. ES siekia užtikrinti sėkmingą moterų integraciją į darbo rinką – skirtos įvairios programos, direktyvos, projektai. ES propaguoja tris veiksmus, kurie palengvintų profesinių ir šeimyninių vaidmenų derinimą: 1) ikimokyklinio ugdymo įstaigų infrastruktūra; 2) tėvystės atostogų tvarka; 3) lanksčių darbo formų propagavimas, populiarinimas.

Diskusijos apie lyčių lygybę, moterų dalyvavimą darbo rinkoje parodo, kad moterys dažniau susiduria su profesinių ir šeimyninių vaidmenų derinimu nei vyrai. Vyrai, turintys vaikų, yra patrauklesni darbo rinkai nei jų neturintys, ir priešingai, bevaikių moterų užimtumas didesnis nei turinčiųjų vaikų.

Šeima yra vienas pagrindinių veiksnių, kuris diferencijuoja vyrų ir moterų karjeros specifiką. Jeigu santuoka vyrui dažniausia yra privalumas saugumo, pastovumo, fizinio ir emocinio komforto prasme, o moteriai, priešingai, – ji dažniausia susiduria su vaidmenų konfliktu. Tyrinėtojai teigia, kad analizuojant moterų ir vyrų karjeros kelio skirtumus, reikia įvertinti mažiausiai penkis veiksmus: pasirošimą karjerai, socialinę galimybių struktūrą, santuo-

kos įtaką, nėštumą, gimdymą ir vaiko priežiūrą, amžių ir pasirinktą laiką karjerai. Kai kurie jų nėra tokie svarbūs vyrams (pvz., vaidmuo santuokoje, ankstyvoji vaiko priežiūra), nes, kaip manoma, vyrai turi nuolatinę, jiems palankesnę galimybių struktūrą. Vyrai paprastai turi daugiau galimybių išvirtinti perspektyviausiuose ekonomikos sektoriuose, įgyti profesinės patirties jaunesniame amžiuje nei moterys ar dirbti ilgiau nei įprastai trunka darbo diena.

Kiekvienoje visuomenėje vyriškos ir moteriškos ypatybės yra pagrindinių gyvenimo sričių pasiskirstymo pagrindas. Kai nurodoma vyriška savybė, tai dar nereiškia, kad ji iš esmės susijusi su vyriškąja lytimi, tačiau suprantama, kad ji priklauso „vyriškumo“ kategorijai. Kiekvienoje visuomenėje tam tikru laiku tam tikroje aplinkoje egzistuoja susitarimai, kokie dalykai, užsiėmimai, asmeniniai bruožai, veiksmai ir pan. yra suprantami kaip vyriški ir moteriški, kokie vertinami kaip neutralūs. Lyčių vaidmenų pasiskirstymą lemia kultūra. Stereotipinės lyčių funkcijos veikia žmonių pasaulėžiūrą, viltis, nors jos tikrovėje gali neišsipildyti. Lyčių vaidmenų pasiskirstymas ryškus ekonomikoje ir versle.

Ekonomikos dėsniai įrodo, kad tai, kas laikoma kaip „vyriška“, yra aukštesnės „piniginės“ vertės nei tos veiklos rūšys, kurios vadinamos „moteriškomis“. Teorija veikia praktišką gyvenimą ir yra pagrindinė priežastis, kodėl moterys uždirba mažiau nei vyrai (nors teoriškai darbo rinkoje visi turi tas pačias galimybes. Be to, „oficialioje darbo rinkoje“ moterys labiau diskriminuojamos, ribojamos galimybės daryti karjerą). Daugeliu atvejų tikima, kad, nepaisant daromos karjeros, moterys turi vykdyti išpareigojimus ir pareigas, susijusias su šeima. Net jeigu moteris nesiruošia kurti šeimos, dažnai manoma, kad ji turės neigiamos įtakos ateityje, o tai sužlugdys efektyviai dirbti, kai tuo tarpu apie vyrus taip negalvojama. „Šeimninkės“ darbas namuose neturi tiesioginės ekonominės (t. y. piniginės) vertės, tačiau teoriškai gali sužlugdyti mokamą moters darbą, todėl daroma išvada, kad moteris kaip darbo jėga vertinama mažiau. Namų šeimninkės vaidmuo laikomas išimtinai moterišku darbu, kuris neduoda materialinės naudos.

Šiuolaikinės visuomenės ekonomikos sistema ir kintanti galimybių struktūra sukuria alternatyvius poreikių patenkinimo būdus (tai rodo ir mažėjantys gimstamumo rodikliai, didėjantis moterų išsilavinimo lygis ir jų aktyvumas darbo rinkoje). Darbas tampa viena didžiausių vertybių šiandienėje visuomenėje.

Reprodukcinės technologijos suteikė moterims daugiau galimybių kontroliuoti savo gyvenimą. Skyrybų daugėjimas irgi rodo, kad moterys tampa savarankiškesnės. Šeimos ekonominės deprivacijos sąlygomis daugelis moterų šiandien dirba dėl finansinės būtinybės. Dabar jos turi galimybę siekti karjeros, kuri tradiciškai buvo suvokiama kaip vyro veiklos sritis. Šios socialinės tendencijos įgalino naujus lyčių vaidmenų tiek viešojo, tiek privačioje sferoje (perėjimas iš tradicinio į egalitarinį lyčių vaidmenų mode-

li). Vaikų priežiūra ir moterų ekonominis vaidmuo yra tarpusavyje neatsiejami veiksniai. Šioje sąveikoje motinystė moteriai yra prioritetas nei mokamas darbas. Biologinio vaidmens (motinystės) pirmenybės ekonominio aspektu tyrimuose daugiausia dėmesio skirta moterų užimtumo įtakai šeimai, o ne atvirkštinio ryšio analizei. Moterų užimtumas, kaip teigia mokslininkai, tarp šeimos ir darbo sukelia konfliktą, kuris vėliau turi destruktivų poveikį vaikų socializacijai, lyčių santykiams šeimoje ir pačios šeimos funkcionavimui.

Vienas didžiausių moters karjeros raidos sunkumų – jos dalyvavimas dvejose sistemose (šeima ir darbo rinka). Todėl siekdama užtikrinti sėkmingą moterų dalyvavimą darbo rinkoje ES įgyvendina įvairius projektus ir remia priemonių, palengvinančių profesinių ir šeimyninių vaidmenų derinimą, įgyvendinimą. Šeimai palanki politika gali būti įgyvendinama remiantis įvairiomis priemonėmis: skiriamos aktyvios ir pasyvios profesinių ir šeimyninių vaidmenų derinimo priemonės. Prie aktyvių priskiriama motinystės atostogų tvarka, prie pasyvių – lanksčių darbo formų populiarinimas ir įgyvendinimas. Mokslininkai išskiria tris priemonių grupes palengvinančias profesinių ir šeimyninių vaidmenų derinimą: lankstaus darbo laiko modeliai, piniginės išmokos (pvz., mokesčių lengvatos, socialinio draudimo ir socialinės paramos), ir paslaugos (vaikų priežiūros institucijų kiekybinis ir kokybinis atitikimas šeimų poreikiams).

Lietuvoje ikimokyklinio ugdymo įstaigų plėtra nebuvo vykdoma atkūrus nepriklausomybę, praktiškai nėra sukurtų naujų ikimokyklinio ugdymo įstaigų nuo 1990 m., trūksta vietų lopšeliuose-darželiuose, vaikų darželiuose. Nors atkūrus nepriklausomybę šeimos koncepcijose ir kitose programose kalbėta apie palankios šeimai politikos įgyvendinimą, tačiau tokių priemonių nesiimta, parama šeimai tebėra vykdoma tik pinigine išraiška, kai tėvams, auginantiems mažamečius vaikus, mokamos pašalpos, sudaromos kai kurios lengvatos. Kaip kitas palankias šeimai politikos priemonės Lietuvoje galima įvardyti šias: ikimokyklinių ugdymo įstaigų plėtra ir kokybė, lanksčių darbo formų propagavimas, tačiau jos nebuvo vykdomos. Atkūrus nepriklausomybę ikimokyklinių ugdymo įstaigų skaičius mažėjo. Taigi apibendrinant galima daryti išvadą, kad ikimokyklinių ugdymo įstaigų lankstumo ir pasiekiamumo problema, darbo rinkos pozicijos, lanksčių darbo formų nebuvimas, tradicinis požiūris į vaikų auginimą Lietuvoje daro įtaką profesinių ir šeimyninių vaidmenų derinimui, gimstamumo mažėjimui Lietuvoje ir lygių galimybių įgyvendinimui.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** ikimokyklinio ugdymo įstaigų prieinamumas, lytis, profesinių bei šeimyninių vaidmenų derinimas.

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