

Women and Men of Kyrgyzstan

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There are more than 40 different international documents ratified to by now in the Kyrgyz Republic, in which an idea of protection of rights and elimination of any women discrimination forms stands out.

A National Council on Women, Family and Gender Equality at the President of the Kyrgyz Republic was established in 2001 by the President's Decree. The tasks of the Council are to coordinate actions for implementation of national policy and strategy for gender equality, and monitor observance of international commitments concerning gender development, including the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), by the Kyrgyz Republic.

A National Gender Equality Action Plan 2002-2006 of the Kyrgyz Republic was confirmed by the Decree issued by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic on 2 March 2002. A recently developed Gender Equality Action Plan 2007-2012 was approved at the meeting of the Government. The statistical digest dedicated to the position of women and men in our republic has come out the ninth year.

A brief review of the republic is proposed based on the latter (according to data for 2005).

In 2005, the level of extreme poverty or percentage of the population with consumption below national food poverty line reduced by 2.3% as compared to the previous year and amounted to 11.1%; the proportion of the very poor in urban population amounted to 6.5%, while this proportion in rural population amounted to 13.8%. The highest percentage of the population with income less than 1 dollar a day is registered in Batken and Naryn provinces, where the number of the poor has grown since 2002. In other provinces this figure is close to the average national level.

The poverty level among complete and incomplete households according to gender of householder in 2005 (according to survey data, 5016 households) is illustrated by the data given in the table below.

	Total	Including	
		Incomplete household	Complete household
Head of household – man			
Non-poor	65.1	59.3	76.7
Poor	34.9	40.7	23.3
of them, very poor	7.9	9	5.6
Head of household – woman			
Non-poor	73.7	47.3	78.5
Poor	26.3	52.7	21.5
of them, very poor	6.4	15.3	4.8

As is evident, in complete households where the head of household is woman, the level of non-poor households is slightly higher than in households where the head is man. Moreover, the percentage of poor and very poor households is smaller in those households where the head is woman.

The percentage of the poor and very poor among incomplete households is 1.5-2 times higher than among complete households, at that the poverty and extreme poverty level is much higher among households where the head is woman.

Over the last four years the number of children with underweight in the republic has reduced from 12.4 to 6%. However, over the same years the average percentage of underfed girls and boys

has amounted to 9% and 7.6%, respectively, i.e. the number of underweight girls is higher than that of underweight boys.

The ratio of girls to boys in primary and lower secondary education shows that the number of girls going to basic school (classes 1-9) is smaller than boys. However, girls more often acquire education within complete secondary school (classes 10-11), while boys leave education system after class 9 more rapidly. In school year 2005/2006, the coverage ratio of boys at lower secondary school is slightly lower as compared to girls in practically all provinces. The highest value of this ratio is registered in Chui, Batken and Jalalabad provinces, amounting to 9.4, 9.7 and 7%, respectively, which can be explained by that young men pass to professional lyceums, secondary professional education institutions or short-time courses preparing to soonest entry to labor market.

The first national population census of 1999 shows a practically equal education level between women (99.61%) and men (99.35%), and this tendency is observed in all provinces. However, the education level among youth has reduced as compared to 1989. The proportion of women and men at the age of 15-24 and with specialized secondary education has reduced by 2.3 and 3.4 times, respectively.

As compared to 2000, in 2005 the ratio of wages of women to those of men in the republic declined and amounted to 62.5%. Moreover, lowest ratio has been registered in Jalalabad, Chui, Talas and Issyk-Kul provinces, i.e. the wages of women is almost 40% lower the wages of men.

Over the last six years the unemployment rate in the republic has been relatively stable, amounting to 2.8-3.3%; at that, the unemployment rate among women is 1% higher than among men. The unemployment rate in Naryn, Jalalabad and Batken provinces is higher than republican rate. Notably, a higher unemployment rate among women being 1.2-5.4% higher than the republican indicator is also registered in Naryn and Jalalbad provinces.

The number of women and men employed in agriculture in 2004 is characterized in the table below:

	Number of people (th.)		Unit weight (%)	
	women	men	women	men
Employed in economy, total	850.5	1 140.7	42.7	57.3
Including in agriculture, hunting, forestry	328.5	445.4	42.4	57.6
%	39	39		

It can be concluded from the table above that 39% of men and women out of the total employed in economy are employed in agriculture of the country, but the ratio between men and women in both the whole economy and agriculture of the republic is different, where approximately 42% are women and 58% men.

Overall, the ratio between women and men being heads of enterprises in the country amounts to 19.8% and 80.2%, respectively. Moreover, the percentage of leader women in Batken, Osh and Jalalabad provinces and Osh town is lower than the republican figure.

The distribution of government officials employed in governmental authorities according to their work status as of 1 November 2005, in percentage terms, is given in the table below:

	Total		Top		Chief		Senior		Junior	
	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men
Total	41.9	58.1	14.4	85.6	29.7	70.3	38.5	61.5	45.4	54.6
Zhogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic	41.7	58.3	-	100	42	58	41.5	58.5	-	-
Kyrgyz Government	41.5	58.5	-	100	-	-	30.8	69.2	51.4	48.6

Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Processing Industry	19.7	80.3	-	100	7.4	92.6	5.3	94.7	27.5	72.5
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As it can be seen from the table, the ratio between men and women employed in governmental authorities in the republic amounts to 58% and 42% respectively, where this ratio is characteristic for both the Zhogorku Kenesh and Government. However, for the agriculture and processing industry, the employed men account for 80.3% and women only 19.7%. Notably, at all positions in the agricultural sector whether top, chief, senior or junior, men have a leading status. Leader women are completely absent in the Government and Zhogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The world practice shows that until there is at least equal ratio of men and women in higher bodies of state authority, it is early to talk about democracy, and the progress in economic and social reforms conducted by our government slows down. In this regard, the experience of Sweden, the most advanced country in gender issues (the gender movement in Sweden has more than 40 years of experience) is noteworthy. Women account for 45% of the parliament, and 54% of the Stockholm State Council. Former mayor of Sodertalye City Signe Anderson considers that it is a result of a strong political will supported by the authorities, which declared a slogan “Every second job in management to woman”.

The given data from the statistic digest give evidence of that the implementation of equal rights of men and women in the considered aspects lacks finish that means that there is an issue to think about and work on.