



HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER ISSUES: A CASE OF UZBEKISTAN AND LATVIA

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Abstract. Gender inequality is one of the most topical global problems nowadays. The purpose of human development is to increase people's opportunities for a healthy, long and happy life. The main aim of this paper was to investigate the relationship between the human development concept and gender problems in the last decade. The link between human development and gender is less studied, particularly in case of former Soviet Union countries. The case study was based on a comparative analysis of the situation and problems in Latvia and Uzbekistan, and it aimed at studying the relationship between human development and gender issues: gender norms, inequality, difference in education, working hours, earnings, and life expectancy in both countries. Gender and human development analysis aims at contributing to understanding implications of interventions and potential outcomes for women and men in particular countries: Latvia and Uzbekistan. It has been concluded that creating opportunities for women, encouraging women's education may be brought positively to sustainable human development. It is expected that the results of the research will help to determine and solve the human development problems as causes of discrimination against women and men encountered by women in Latvia and Uzbekistan.

Key words: *human development, gender, case studies, Latvia, Uzbekistan*

JEL code: O15, J16, O57

Introduction

The objective of this paper is to develop more effective gender mainstreaming tools and methodologies that will facilitate favourable gender environment. The paper is based on comparative analysis of the socio-economic situation, gender equality status, gender aspects of development priorities and a number of other important factors.

The theoretical literature suggests that human development is a theory and methodology of ecological, economic and social complex development. According to the definition of United Nations Development Programme, human development is a process of providing people with more choice, empowerment and ability.

The founding from the first report of Human Development was "The real wealth of the nation is its people" in 1990, and this phrase was mentioned again as the main idea of Human Development report in 2010. The purpose of development is to create good opportunities for a long, healthy and creative life.

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This simple, but important “truth too often gets forgotten in the pursuit of material and financial” well-being. Mahbub ul-Haq’s (the Nobel prize holder) seminal work laid the foundations for the field of human development. Mahbub ul-Haq’s and Amartya Sen’s ideas were set out in their books “Reflections on Human Development” and “Development as enlarging opportunities” in 1996. “The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people’s choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and can change over time. People often value achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately, in income or growth figures: greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and sense of participation in community activities. The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives.” (Mahbub ul Haq, 1990).

The first Human Development Report was published in 1990 and since then it has been released every year to demonstrate countries’ annual social-economic development tendencies.

The basic concept of human development is noted in the following:

- human development reflects both the expansion of the human choice, and the current level of well-being;
- welfare measured in terms of the ability of people to lead a decent life;
- human development critically depends on the satisfaction of three basic needs, such indicators characterizing human development as longevity, education and material well-being;
- income is a tool that extends the human choice;
- people do not need an infinitely high income to lead a decent life; the positive impact of higher income on human development decreases, as their income rises. (The Human Development Report, 1996).

Human development index consists of the index of literacy, index of life expectancy and GDP per capita in PPS in US dollars. The Human development index is renewed yearly by other indicators and indexes:

- The index of human freedom (1991);
- The index of political freedom (1992);
- Development Index according to gender (1994);
- The display of the empowerment of women (1994);
- Poverty Index – 1 (1997);
- Poverty Index – 2 (1998);
- The index of technological advances (2001);
- Attempts to “green” index (2003).

In 2010, the human development report was enriched by three indexes: Human Development Index for inequality, the Gender Inequality Index and the Multidimensional Poverty Index.

Gender is one of the universal biological differences between men and women; it is the anatomical and physiological reality, that is, a set of biological characteristics which are a prerequisite for the inclusion of the individual to the biological sex, male or female. Evidently, gender is manifested in the relationship between men and women and the authority of one over another. The concept of gender has been used to differentiate the socially constructed roles which are ascribed by society to men and women. More importantly, it helps us identify how differently men and women benefit from social and economic development. Gender examines how cultural, social and economic differences affect the roles of men and women in the family, the work place and in society at large.

In the international scientific practice, special attention has been paid to gender studies, as this research area has strategic and practical significance for social development, in particular, it is important for structural reforms in the transition countries leading to a democratic, economically prosperous society.



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The use of gender approach in addressing the participation of different groups in development activities in accordance with their social roles and specific needs has allowed the development of a gender strategy which includes the following components:

- Priority consideration and the needs and requirements of women (especially when cultural norms and values set limits for equal participation in the activity);
- Definition and status of women in society relation to men;
- Awareness of women's situation, needs and requirements;
- Identification of barriers to the advancement of women;
- Expanding the scope of women, the development of traditional male roles and occupation;
- Elimination of direct or indirect results of discrimination. (D.Alimjanova, 2007).

Gender Aspects of Human Development

Over the last thirty years the term “gender” has become common in the discussions to describe the whole field. The development of science has provided a way to pass these difficulties. Gender is a matter of social relations within which individuals and groups act. Gender equality means that the rights, possibilities, responsibilities, obligations, the treatment of both sexes, as well as their access to resources should be equal. However, in practice it is not always so, due to various social, economic, cultural and historical circumstances, e.g., stereotyped views on the role of women and men in society called the “boy problem” in some countries, the rights of girls to education continues to be inhibited in many developing countries in important respects.

Hilary Lips, American professor studied gender issues and proposed some conclusions about sex and gender studies. In 1984 John Archer suggested a model of gender roles as developmental pathways. He offered women's and men's roles, the same method can be separate pathways of development. In other words, the acquirement of gender roles, and not just the content of these roles may be different for males and females. His discussion concentrated on 4 related dimensions of gender-role acquisition, which he argues may be fundamentally different for two sexes:

- Rigidity or flexibility (extent to which cross-gender-typed behaviour is permitted);
- Simplicity or complexity (how elaborate the content of the gender role is);
- Internal consistency or inconsistency of the role requirements;
- The degree of continuity or discontinuity in role development.

Archer's theory alerts us to the possibility, suggested by much of current literature on gender socialization, that the females and males may not travel along completely parallel tracks in the development of their gender roles. Furthermore, his approach illustrates the usefulness of life-span approach to gender-role development (H.M. Lips, 2007).

In other literature, we can face the two most popular stereotypes – “woman as a domestic slave” and “man as a breadwinner” in the present day situation:

1. Constraints with families. In many developing countries girls take on domestic responsibilities, including the care of younger siblings, and, depending on the country and the culture, boys often receive preferences when choices have to be made regarding education. Since it is commonly expected that girls should be married off at an early age, parents consider educating their daughters a waste of time and money in Uzbekistan. The girls are aware of their parents' perceptions regarding their education. They do not find it necessary to work hard because they assume that they will probably drop out of school early.
2. Constraints within society. These include pressure for early marriage, sexual harassment and violence in and out of educational settings, religious constraints and vulnerability to HIV and AIDS.



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3. Policies of school system and educational practices. School systems in countries of all kinds are not always empowering for girls, nor are they sensitive to their needs through curricula, guidance and counselling services, teaching methods and the presence of appropriate female role models.
4. Benefits of education. Even when girls achieve parity in access to education or academic performance, this parity does not always lead to equal benefits of education, especially in the job market of developed countries.

In short, gender disparities and inequalities are prevalent within the schooling process in both developing and developed countries. Virtually all countries must address the gender disparities and inequalities that shape the ways in which boys and girls progress through the education system (L. Kim, 2007).

In 2010, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly organized some branches as UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Thereby, UN Member States put a historic step in accelerating the Organization's goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals and associated target are to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, and in all levels of education by 2015.

The United Nations defines situation in gender equality in societies:

- In some regions, education remains elusive for girls;
- Poverty is a major barrier to education, especially among older girls in every developing region, except the CIS, men outnumber women in paid employment;
- Women are largely relegated to more vulnerable forms of employment;
- Women are over-represented in informal employment, with its lack of benefits and security;
- Top-level jobs still go to men — to an overwhelming degree;
- Women are slowly rising to political power, but mainly when boosted by quotas and other special measures.

American economist Bernard Walters (University of Manchester) conducted a research on gender and development and suggested the following model the link of economic development and gender equality (Bernard Walters, 2008).

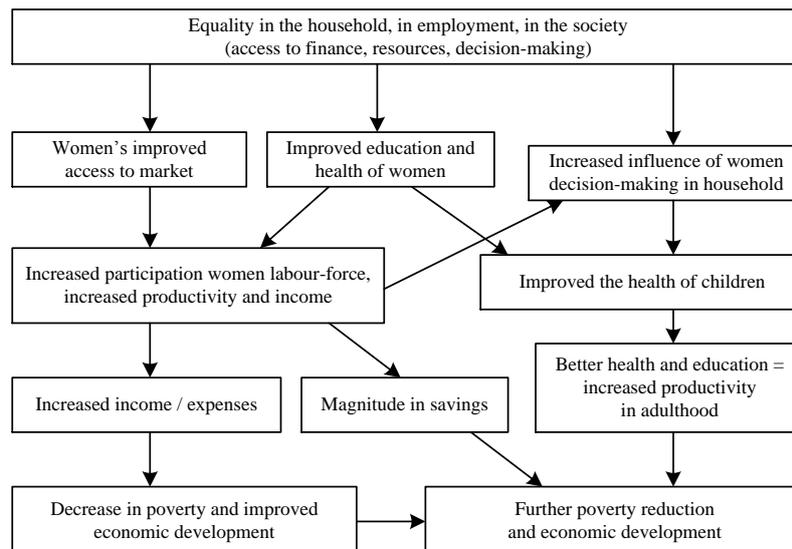


Fig. 1. The relationship between economic development and gender equality



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It is clear that issues should be considered in the gender-based approach that would eliminate gender gaps in the analysis of the welfare state. In accordance with the principle of gender equality, economic, political, and social resources must be allocated between men and women on an equal basis. In general, these suggest policies to increase educational provision to girls, raise certain forms of infrastructural spending, and release a range of institutional constraints will support socio-economic development.

Latvia and Uzbekistan: gender issues and tracks

The Government of Uzbekistan has adopted a number of laws and national programs, including the National Platform of Action (1998-2005), which outline the strategy and priority areas for improving the status of women in Uzbekistan. The National Program has been recently developed based on the President's decree on "Additional measures to support the Women's committee of Uzbekistan". It focuses on improving women's economic situation by increasing employment of women and promoting their entrepreneurial activities. Year 2012 was declared the "Year of the Family". The government of Uzbekistan has developed the State program "Year of the Family".

Since 1997, in Uzbekistan on the initiative of the state each year is titled and devoted to a specific social programme. Year 1998 was proclaimed the Year of the Family, year 1999 was the Year of Women, year 2000 was the Year for healthy generation, year 2001 was Year of Mother and Child, year 2005 was the Year of Health, year 2007 – the Year of Social Protection, year 2010 – the Year of harmoniously developed generation. Each year the Government prepares a social-oriented programme to improve living standards and empower women.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has prepared recommendations to Uzbekistan's CEDAW implementation report. As a follow-up, the Government adopted the National Action Plan and established a national working group to coordinate and monitor its implementation. The Government of Uzbekistan supports a number of activities to raise women's awareness of their rights and to improve women's status in society. The public information campaign in Uzbekistan was implemented according to the "Public Information Strategy on Gender Equality Issues" centring around six problem areas:

- 1) gender discrimination in the labour market;
- 2) gender roles in the family;
- 3) providing the possibility to harmonise work and family life;
- 4) gender discrimination problems in the mass media;
- 5) issues of gender equality in education;
- 6) domestic violence.

As European member, Latvian government has adopted laws and legislations concerning gender discrimination. In 2003, CEDAW Committee submitted Consideration of parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women initial, second and third periodic report for Latvia. Despite of the fact that in some of the existing legislation, there are some gender equality arrangements, but these are insufficient. Several provisions of the new labour law demand the execution of equality in different areas such as employment, salary, paternity regulations. whereby national labour legislation is to be brought in line with EU directives. The new Labour Code, which entered into force in 2002, includes a general provision prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination on women. Consequently, the relevant EC Directives on equal opportunities are transposed into the new Labour Code and the Law on Labour Protection since 2002. According to Article 172 of Labour Code of Latvia stipulates that women with children under the age of three should be awarded full wages while working only 30 hours per week, instead of 40. (Gender and Human Development in Latvia, 1999)

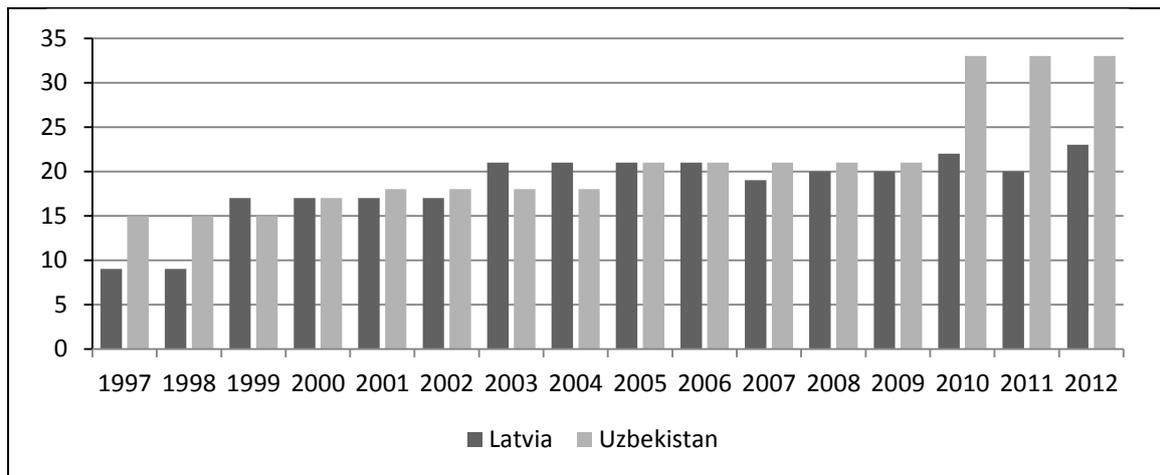


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In 1999, the Department on Social Policy Development was submitted as the responsible agency for challenge of gender equality in Latvia. Women need to become a more powerful force in the political parties and in business by increasing the number of women in various government, thus achieving a faster pace of gender equality policy.

According to the international criteria, one of measurements of gender equality in country is women's participating in policy-making. Women's seats in national parliaments are shown in Figure 2.



Source: developed by the author from the data of State Committee of Uzbekistan and World Economic Forum.

Fig. 2. Seats held by women in parliaments (in numbers)

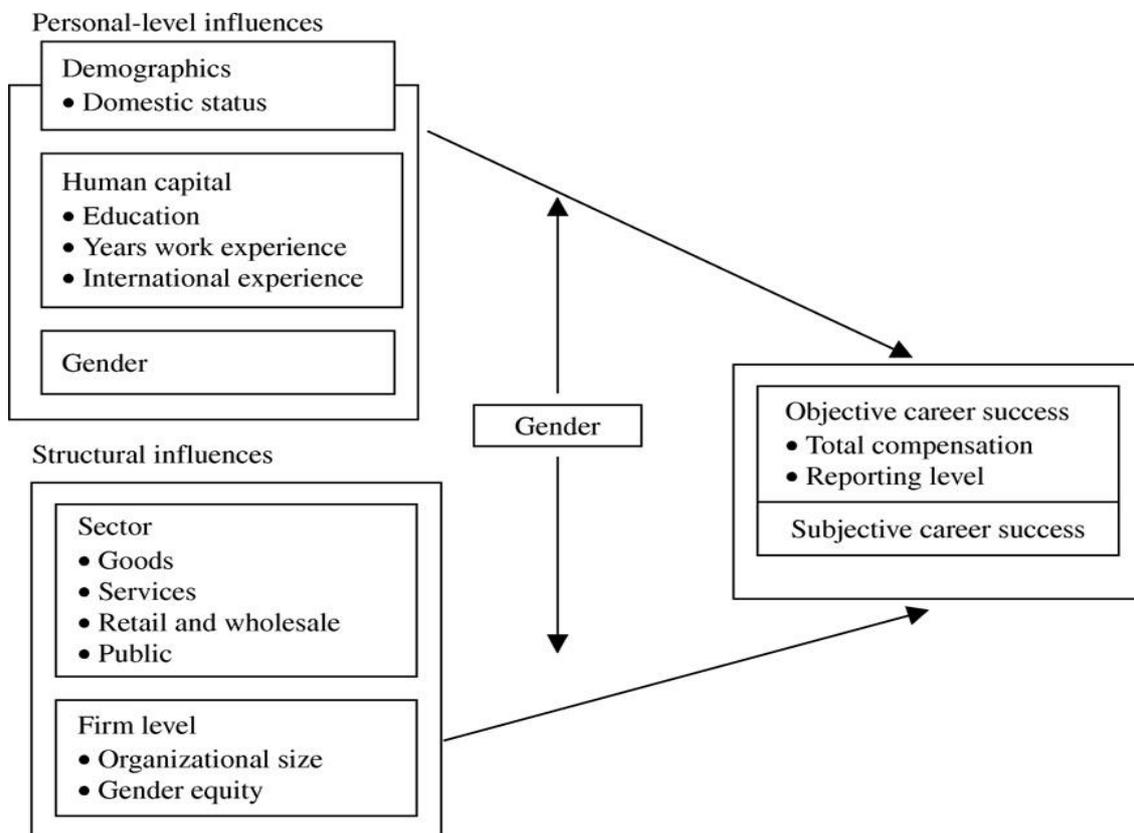
In this statistical data analysis on women's seats in parliaments of Latvia and Uzbekistan is shown. 1999-2007 was the first woman to hold presidential post in Latvia. The analysis of gender inequality in national parliaments by taking into account unequal population size of each country shows that there is a level of inequality in particular countries. In Latvia women don't try to get position in parliaments, but women are getting more active in decision-making and policy in Uzbekistan.

Gender Roles in Labour Market

Women and men are engaged in different areas of activities indicating that the traditional patterns of men's and women's jobs are still prevailing based on the predominant gendered division labour, in particular, women's obligations towards to unpaid household work. Analysing the education system in Western Europe, researchers have come to the conclusion that the school education helps to perpetuate and reproduce traditional gender roles and stereotypes. Myra McDonald wrote on the subject in her book that the child's behaviour in schools is assessed according to expectations imposed on the floor: the behaviour of girls should comply with generally accepted model of femininity, and the boys – masculinity. The school system is making its "contribution" to impart gender roles, in accordance with the boys need to be prepared for their future professional activities, and girls – for domestic duties. In school boys attributed the so-called "Male" subjects and classes, and girls – to "female" ones. This is especially seen in lessons and occupational orientation on which in fact traditional gender roles are rigidly fixed: girls are oriented to women's employment and occupation (housekeeping, secretary, seamstress, etc.), and the boys – to men (carpenter, mechanic, driver, buzzer, etc.). Teachers often encourage the



activities and view of boys. Existing school tacit division of objects into “male” (technical and accurate) and “female” (liberal) shows that boys are encouraged to engage in more complex science, and, therefore, ability to weigh more. And since the training complex items are a priority, therefore, according to teachers, the existing system of education is positively tuned to the boys and “hostile” to the girls. Similar conclusions are representatives of feminist pedagogy contributed to the fact that the view that boys are preferred sex and that the school inhibits girls prevailed in American education for a long time. (MacDonald M, 2009). This point is also sustained by the work of B.Orser and J.Leck, suggested gender concept is modified in two ways. First, gender is incorporated as a moderating variable and the interactions of gender with other determinants of success are examined. Second, their research adds to the model attributes that are potentially relevant to women’s career outcomes (e.g. domestic responsibilities). The gender-interaction model of executive career success is shown in Figure 3. The influences of gender on career outcomes are described in the model. Orser B., Leck J., 2010)



Source: adapted from Judge et al. (1995)

Fig. 3. The gender-interaction model of executive career success

Therefore, the employment rate is a suitable indicator for the quantity of labour supplied. Beside the employment rate, the activity rate is used to account for unemployment. Overall, the discrepancies in the job status are substantial between men and women as well as between countries. (Kaiser L., 2007)



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Table 1

Labour force participation rate (percentage), 2011

No.	Country	Female	Male
1.	Uzbekistan	58.4	71.0
2.	Latvia	94.8	96.2

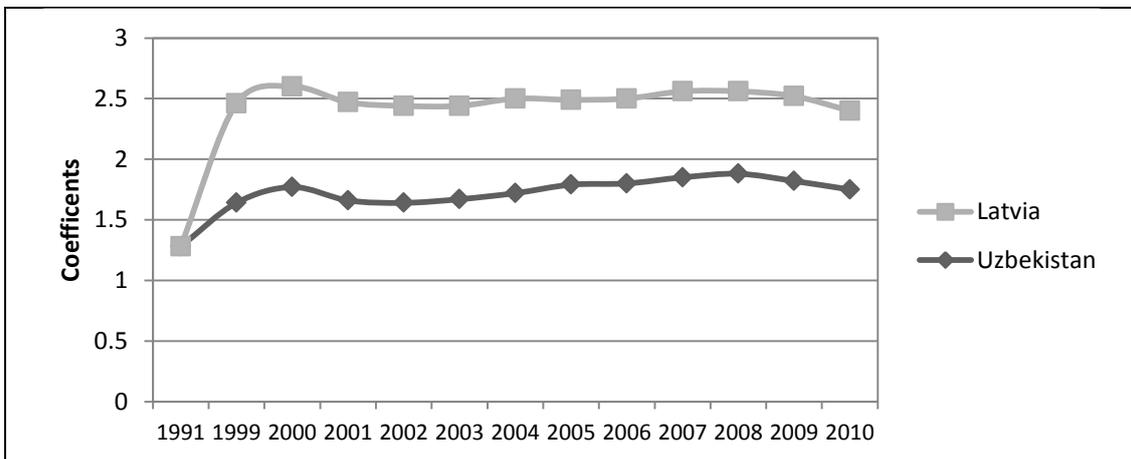
Source: author's calculations based on Human Development Report indicators 2011.

According to Table 1, it is easy to notice that the rate of women in labour market is too low in Uzbekistan in comparison with Latvia. There are more reasons to the absence of women's participation as a labour force despite religious, cultural and traditional causes. According to the statistical data, 68.2% of students of the higher educational institutions in Latvia are female. This is likely to be even more correct for girls because of the impact of girls' education and labour market engagement on fertility, infant mortality and the future health and well-being of the population.

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is a socioeconomic index usually used to measure the relative access to education of males and females. It is calculated as the quotient of the number of females by the number of males enrolled in a given stage of education. The following formula is commonly used to calculate GPI:

$$\text{GPI} = \text{value of indicator for girls} / \text{value of indicator for boys}$$

A value of less than one indicates differences in favour of boys, whereas a value near one indicates that parity has been more or less achieved. International organizations describe attempts to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education and emphasizes the plight of girls in unequal access in developing countries. (Koronkiewicz, M., 2008). In Figure 4 Gender Parity index in Latvia and Uzbekistan is described:



Source: calculated and created by the author using UNSD data

Fig. 4. Gender Parity Index in tertiary level enrolment (coefficients)

In public opinion, the stereotypes associated with the nature of male and female differences in labour are reflected in the gender segregation in employment. They are derived from the first two groups of gender stereotypes. Traditional roles of men and women in society are influenced by both professional

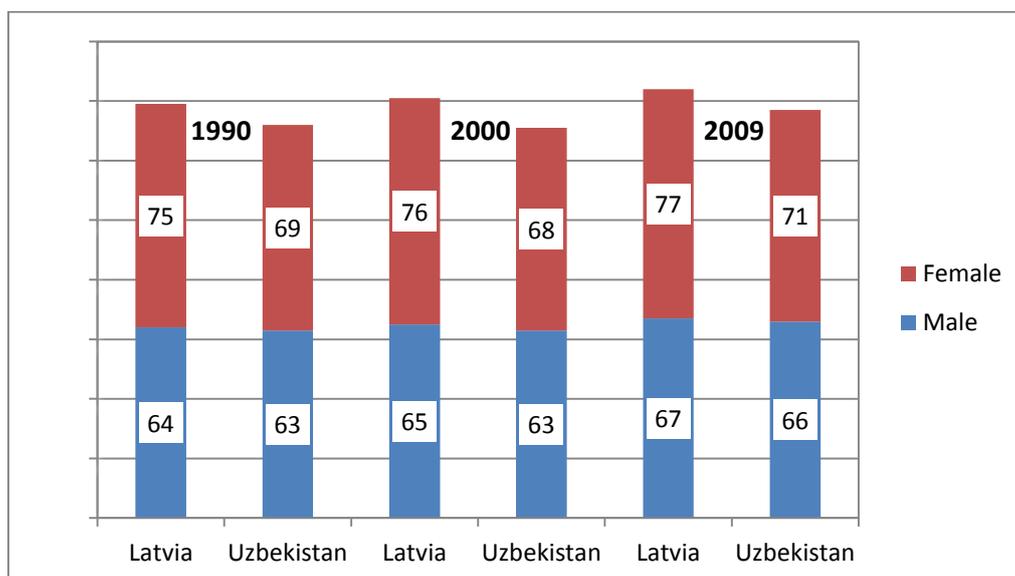


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preferences of employees, as well as the requirements of employers to employees. At the same time, the stereotypes of femininity and masculinity influence when making a choice in favour of a particular employee, male or female candidates, according to which calls are advantages and disadvantages to both male and female occupations. In Uzbekistan women marry in early, they cannot continue their studies, during their maternity leave they lose professional skills and qualifications. Ultimately women command competitiveness than men and face more difficulties in labour market as white collars. As a rule, women prefer such branches as education and public health, while men go for industry, agriculture, building and communication.

Gender challenges do not only depend on women's rights, problems, issues, but also on men's possibilities. Women can expect to live longer than men, and they also tend to have less serious health problems than man (Harris D., 2007). In general, men live on average less than women worldwide, in Uzbekistan the difference is about 5 years. The society has a concept of the stereotype that men should be stronger physically and mentally than women, and thereby men can not cry or show their negative and unfavourable feelings. All these reasons cause hypertonic disease and other diseases of heart and nervous system. According to data provided by the World Health Organization, men are more likely to die in accidents and from cardio-vascular diseases in more cases. So men work more (retire later) and then live less. Life expectancy for male in Uzbekistan is 66 (in Figure 5) and retirement age for men is 60. According to Figure 5, life expectancy in Uzbekistan for men is by 6 years (in 1990) or 5 years (in 2000-2009years) lower than for women. This indicator in Latvia is more significant: the differences of life expectancy for women and men are 9 years (in 1990-2000 years) and 10 years in 2009.



Source: developed by the author using the data of World Health Organization, 2011.

Fig. 5. Life expectancy at birth for men and women (in years)

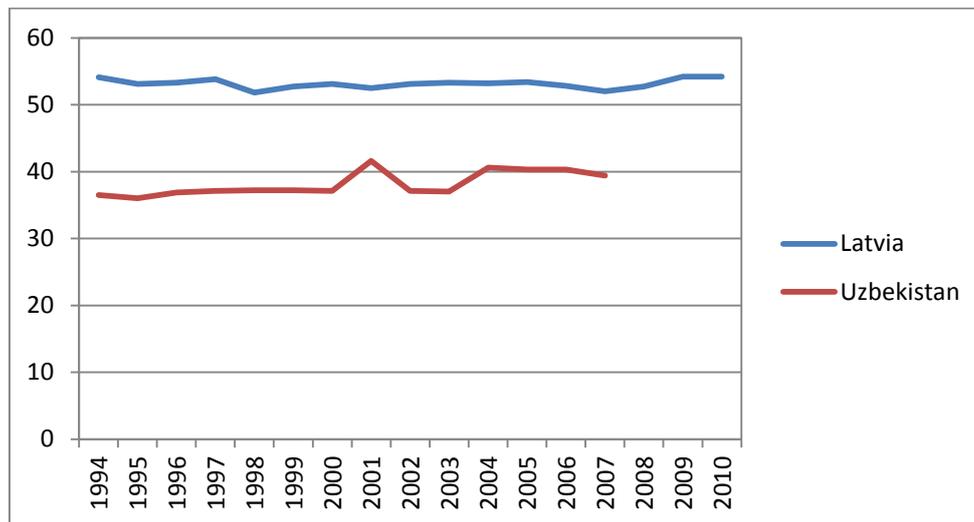
Practically it is admitted the existence of gender marked spheres of labour and occupations. The differences between male and female labour are conditioned by physiological and psychological differences between sexes. In social opinion, that the male labour requires "brute physical power" or "analytical mind", therefore a number of specialties from industrial, technical, building, military,



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agricultural and other spheres are included into male labour, as for science, men are considered to dominate reasonably in technical and natural sciences. The above-mentioned labour distributions sectors for men are well-paid spheres. Women are considered to fit the professions in education, medicine, public service that require particular “female” qualities, i.e. ability to empathize, industriousness, etc. In the fields of science women are considered to take the niche in humanitarian disciplines. Unconditionally, females consider jobs of librarian, teacher in kindergarten, secretary, and archives employee, housemaid, nurses, cashiers and others. The male professions are those of a driver, servant in military, engineer, sanitary engineer, electrician, engineer, surgeon, etc. Besides, the “male” positions are those of the directors and managers in firms and enterprises. However, in comparison with other countries, the share of women in the total number of scientists in Latvia is rather high – 52.4% (32.9% on average the EU). Moreover, in future this ratio may increase, as the share of women in the total number of doctorates awarded every year is high in Latvia and other EU Member States. In 2011 in Latvia 193 females and 104 males received a doctoral degree (65% and 35%, respectively). But the same indicator is decreasing year by year in Uzbekistan.



Source: calculated and developed by the author using the data from the United Nations

Fig. 6. Share of women in the non-agricultural sector (in per cent)

The tendencies of number of women in non-agricultural sector are described in Figure 6. In Uzbekistan 60% population live in rural areas, and most women are engaged to agricultural works. The government of Uzbekistan prepares the programme for rural women’s support: rural women can get preferential credits, grants and loans to begin their own business or enlarge their activities.

While the government programmes are directed to improve economic opportunities for women, the labor market is sex-segregated, and women are usually paid lower wages. Unskilled workers are actually non-productive sphere consisting completely of women. Considering employment in different branches of economy, we can see the following distribution. The women are engaged mainly in public health services and social security, as well as in education, culture, art and science (more than 70 %). As for the other branches, the men’s share is higher. This is especially true in construction, transportation and management, where the share on male participation is more than 80%. Besides, having a rather high



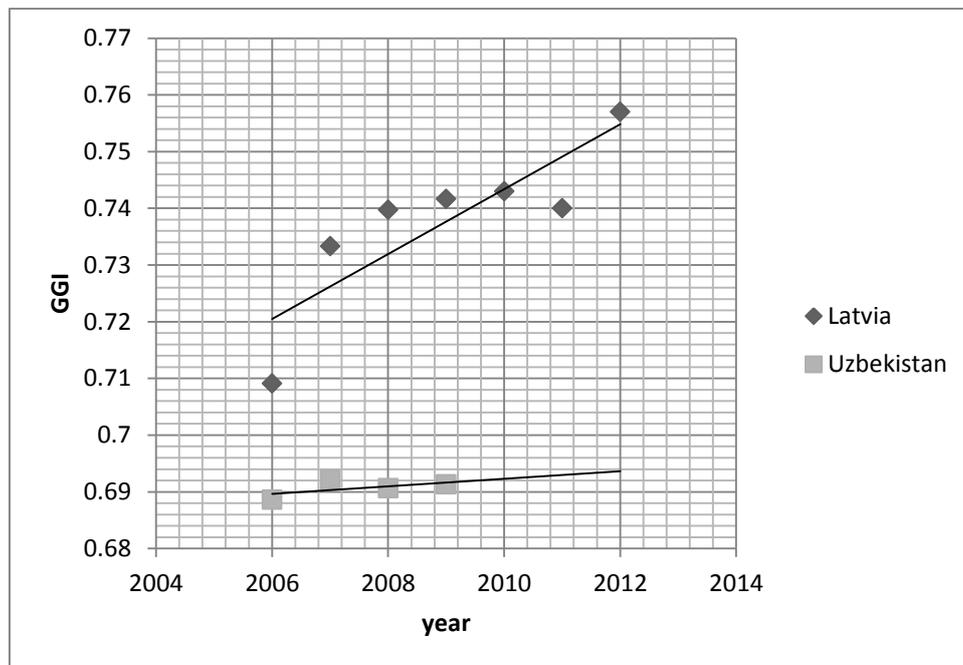
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proportion in terms of higher education (the share of the women here is 18%, and the men – 17.3%), the women are less represented in the economic management. (Azizova N., 2007)

In the statistical edition “The men and the women of Uzbekistan” it is noted about this, “the choice of specialties in educational institutions differs considerably among women and men. The distribution in professional specialization between men and women goes by existing stereotypes, i.e. dividing the labor on “female” and “male”, family traditions and also economic factors.

The World Economic Forum publish annual report framework for measuring Equality the Gender Gap Index as an attempt to assess the size of the gender gap using economic, educational, health and political criteria. According to WEF’s Global Gender Gap Report 2012, GGI is 0.757 in Latvia (15th place) among the 130 investigated world countries in 2012. Undoubtedly, the situation of women from the Baltic States, especially in Latvia, is not as bad as for women from the Uzbekistan (58th place). In Figure 7, Latvian Index is increasing year by year and the Gender Gap Index shows that the gender inequality and women discrimination level is low in this country.



Source: developed by the author using the data from The Global Gender Gap Report

Fig. 7. The Gender Gap Index and tendencies in Latvia and Uzbekistan

The Gender Equity Index (GEI) was introduced to measure inequities in different areas of women’s and men’s everyday lives around the world. The GEI is based on information available that can be compared internationally, and it makes it possible to classify countries and rank them in accordance with a selection of gender inequity indicators in three dimensions, education, economic participation and empowerment. According to GEI ranks 157 countries in 2009 GEI score is 75 in Latvia (17th place) and Uzbekistan’s score is 57 (100th place). The means to achieve equality is gender equity, understood as fairness in the treatment of women and men according to their needs. Human Development Index rankings in Latvia (0.805 is very high HDI) is greater than Uzbekistan (0.643 is medium HDI).



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Conclusions

1. The data analysis on the cases of Uzbekistan and Latvia shows that each country has their own advantage to improve gender equality.
2. The data presented above shows that Latvian people perceive gender discrimination in line below In Uzbekistan. We can say that Latvia is more democratic or less patriarchal in relation to women's issues than Uzbekistan.
3. The movements of less gender equalities countries in Human Development Index rankings are greater than the movements of more developing countries. Thus the countries with higher gender equality index are stable in their positions and are strong in their ability to develop.
4. Gender equality implies the possibility of differential treatment to correct inequalities of departure measures are not necessarily equal, but conducive to equality in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.
5. In general, social policy to improve women's status in societies in countries determines the certain country development level.

The study concludes the following recommendations for Uzbekistan:

- empowering of women and achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development;
- supporting NGO activities to enhance economic and social status of rural women;
- mobilizing efforts of rural communities in addressing economic and social challenges for ensuring rights based and gender responsive development;
- organizing law and physiologic centers to help and supporting for increasing in living standards of women;
- ensuring access to economic and financial resources for women to begin and encourage their business;
- improving of the role of women for gender equality and the rights and interests of rural women;
- strengthening women's rights and possibilities fostering increase of women's social and economic activity.

It could also be said that, Latvian women are more active than men in participating in social life, labour market, education and so on. It can be seen from the above analysis that, even Latvia is more liberal in gender cases, it will reach to sustainable human development by encouraging to improve both women and men possibilities for active participation in public and economic fields.

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