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The Potential of Women in the Labor Market of the Region*



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Abstract. Participating in labor activity and the situation on the labor market are among the most important aspects of research into the empowerment of women; this research has a significant impact on the implementation of labor potential, and, consequently, on the overall economic development of the territory. However, as global and Russian practice shows, women in the labor market represent a more vulnerable category than men and often face discrimination in relation to wages, career position, employment, etc. Authors of scientific papers usually acknowledge that female population has higher levels of human capital, but they do not go deep into the analysis of its qualitative characteristics. In this context, we performed a study of the labor potential of women in the regional labor market (on the basis of the monitoring data on the quality status of the labor potential in the Vologda Oblast). Our analysis has shown that the values of the majority of basic components of labor potential quality in women are higher than those in men (with the exception of the health index). In addition, the level of implementation of the accumulated potential in women is also higher than the same indicator in men. We substantiate this phenomenon by the existence of gender differences in the attitude toward labor. Compared to men, women tend to have terminal values that are more developed, this is manifested in women's greater desire to realize themselves in the labor market. As a result, they find employment within their specialty more often, they are focused on getting a stable job that would allow them to utilize their knowledge, abilities and skills to the fullest extent. Despite all this, labor remuneration for women is lower than that for men. One reason for such differentiation lies in gender discrimination in a latent form, which is due to the stereotypes of the position and behavior of women in society. In conclusion, we propose a number of areas to address gender inequality in the labor market.

Key words: labor potential, labor market, gender, region, inequality, segregation, discrimination, women.

The status of women in the Russian labor market has significant differences from that of men. This is largely due to the reproductive role of women and the fact that they have to combine work and family responsibilities (according to expert estimates, they spend 2.16 times more time on household chores than men and only 30% less time – on paid employment [5, p. 57]), which leads to the formation of specific features of their employment and the emergence of gender asymmetry in the sphere of social and labor relations.

In different periods of Russian history, the role of women in the economic process had its own features. If in the ancient Slavic society they influenced the life of the tribes and took an active part in the life of the community, then a Christian culture was dominated by the idea of the subordinate position of women relative to men. Their activities were reduced to raising children and maintaining a household. The consolidation of the roles of women in managing households was reflected in the “Domostroi”. A patriarchal-conservative concept was dominant in Russia

until the mid-nineteenth century, when the society began to raise the issues associated with the role and rights of women. So, in 1862 in Saint Petersburg, the first women's labor association "Society of women's work" was established. Further, emancipation only intensified, reaching its peak with the establishment of Soviet power. The rights of men and women were equal, though gender-role stereotypes continued to exist.

After the Great Patriotic War in Soviet Russia, an unusually high level of economic activity among the female population was observed under the influence of communist ideology of universal equality, development of the labor law, the fact that the government assumed part of child-rearing obligations and other factors. In 1960, the value of the index in the USSR was 77% (38% in the U.S., 48% in Japan, 45% in France), and by 1980 it reached 88% [39, p. 47]. In the period of market reforms, the level of participation of Russian women in the labor force decreased (in 1992 – 61%; in 1998 – 48%) and at present it is comparable to the level of developed European countries (60% in 2014 vs. 61% in Norway, 60% in Switzerland, 55% in the Netherlands, etc. [1]). On the one hand, it could be due to a conscious choice in favor of homemaking [17, p. 18]. However, this phenomenon was not widespread due to the fact that in most families one breadwinner – the husband – could not provide the necessary level of consumption and well-being [25, p. 9]. On the other hand, it was

due to the fact that employers find women less attractive as employees than men, in terms of competition for jobs in connection with existing stereotypes of status (in public consciousness) and behavior (in the minds of women themselves).

In the modern world, competition in the labor market sets the same high standards before both men and women. It is no coincidence that domestic and foreign scientific literature, despite all the differences in the socio-cultural context of gender studies, [11, p. 181] pays special attention to similar issues. One of the key issues is the discrimination of women in the labor market. G. Becker stood at the origins of the studies in this area. In his opinion, the nature of discrimination lies in the individual preferences of economic agents who, for one reason or another, do not want to get in contact with women [34]. These ideas were developed in the works of M. Spence, and K. Arrow and formed the core of the theory of "statistical discrimination", which is based on information asymmetry in the labor market [33, 42]. Among domestic researchers of this topic it is necessary to mention M.G. Ermakova, I.E. Kalabakhina, A.L. Mazin, E.A. Mosakova, L.S. Rzhantsyna and others, who pay great attention to the issues of covert discrimination. So, E.A. Mosakova, using the data of the analysis of the of employers' advertisements, highlights discrimination against women related to their sex, age and place of residence throughout their entire

working life [20]. It should be noted that as a result, women become one of the vulnerable categories of the population, because they are employed in low-paid positions and receive significantly lower wages than men. Covert discrimination existing in society, according to M.G. Ermakova, leads to the formation of horizontal and vertical segregation in the labor market [9, p. 46].

The problem of segregation as one of the main forms of discrimination is discussed in the works of R. Anker, B. Bergman, F. Blau, etc. In accordance with B. Bergman's model, as a result of occupational segregation, there is a wage gap between men and women. It occurs when supply exceeds demand for labor force in traditional sectors of female employment [35]. According to F. Blau, if a woman obtains professional training that does not take into account the specifics of the company, and, accordingly, she is given a low-paid position, then most likely she will resign from the job. However, if the employer will invest in her training, then there is a chance that the woman will continue her career [36]. The works of Russian researchers indicate that women, for various reasons, are much less likely to become entrepreneurs [5]. In addition, the gap in the level of poverty between men and women allows us to speak about the feminization of poverty [3].

A large body of research is devoted to the study of gender stereotypes. So, the phenomenon of "women's work" and the formation of stereotyped vision of women

in the labor market were reflected in the works of T. Adler, J. Jacobs, J. Parsons, E.R. Yarskaya-Smirnova, E.A. Zdravomyslova, N.M. Rimashevskaya, etc. In particular, by pursuing unreasonable policy, the state itself creates stereotypes about low remuneration of women's work [32]. S.Yu. Roshchin notes that position stereotypes emerge when the employer treats women as a less useful part of labor force, but this triggers the mechanism of substitution: the woman is offered a less paid job [23, 25]. According to research findings, the modern Russian family has retained a traditional division of responsibilities. At the same time, although women have a high level of education and employment, they are economically dependent on men, who have higher income [4, p. 52].

Various aspects of the influence of socio-demographic factors on women's employment were considered in the works of K. Brewster, D. Ribar, E.M. Vorob'ev, T.S. Karabchuk, M.A. Nagernyak etc. While the main focus was on issues such as the ability to combine the status of the mother, housewife and worker. The authors state if a woman has a child under the age of three, this situation significantly reduces her employment opportunities, which increase as the children grow older [15, p. 43]. Moreover, of significant importance is the opinion of the husband on the feasibility of his wife entering the labor market [38].

Another area of gender studies is the study of the differences between men and women in returns on the investment in human capital.

In this regard, it is necessary to note the works of G. Becker, S. Polachek, E.V. Bazueva, S.V. Grinenko, R.I. Kapelyushnikov, A.L. Lukyanova, S.Yu. Roshchin and others. It is necessary to point out that the researchers came to opposite conclusions. For instance, R.I. Kapelyushnikov and A.L. Lukyanova revealed that the rates of return from education of women were one and a half times higher than those of men (7.5% vs 5%, respectively) [14, p. 74-75]. S.Yu. Roshchin and E.V. Bazueva, by contrast, received the results indicating a lower return to human capital in women [2, 24].

However, we consider it important to carry out an in-depth study of qualitative characteristics of women and their subjective understanding of professional prospects in order to overcome barriers that hinder the most complete implementation of available knowledge, skills and abilities in labor activity, since these aspects have a direct impact on the use of labor potential.

One of the most authoritative assessments of human potential in the context of gender is the human development index (HDI), published in annual reports in the framework of the UN Development Program. As recorded in the report for 2015, in all regions of the world, the HDI for women was lower than the HDI for men. The largest gap in the values of the index was observed in South Asia and Arab states: the gender development index (the ration of the HDI for women to the HDI for men) was 0.801

and 0.849 respectively. In Europe, there are several countries (14), in which the level of the considered index for women exceeds that for men. Russia (gender development index is 1.019 [8, p. 220]) is on this list (along with Estonia, Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, etc.).

Relatively high HDI values for Russian women compared to those for men depend, in the first place, on the differences in the level of health. According to official statistics, as of 2015, the gap in life expectancy reached an average of 10.8 years (76.7 years in women vs 65.9 years in men) [29]. An important role was played by an educational component. In 2014, expected years of schooling for women was 0.8 years higher than for men (15.1 years vs. 14.3 years) [8, p. 220]. It is no coincidence that Russian women involved in economic life have a higher level of education in general. On the one hand, the percentage of women with higher and incomplete higher education was 37%, men – 28%. Although, in fairness, we note that the popularity of obtaining university education is characteristic of the representatives of both gender groups. On the other hand, women more often than men obtain vocational education diplomas (81% against 74% for men in 2015). [29]. However, despite the fact that women have higher levels of health and education, the problem of realization of the accumulated potential in the labor market is more acute for them.

Due to the fact that the efficiency of labor potential largely depends on territorial specifics, the issues of studying it in the

framework of the regional labor market are particularly relevant. In this regard, the present paper presents an analysis of the labor potential of women in the regional labor market on the example of the Vologda Oblast. The choice of the category of “labor potential”, which is understood as a “generalized characteristic of measure and quality of the set of abilities in socially useful activities, which determine the abilities of an individual, groups of people and the total working population concerning their participation in work” [18, p. 14], is due to the many years of established research methodology based on the measurement of qualitative characteristics of the population by monitoring a qualitative condition of labor potential of Vologda Oblast population, carried out by the Institute of Socio-Economic Development of Territories of RAS (ISED T RAS)¹.

In accordance with the used approach, the integrated indicator of labor potential quality is the index of social capacity, which is a multi-level system. The basis of the “tree” of properties there are eight basic elements

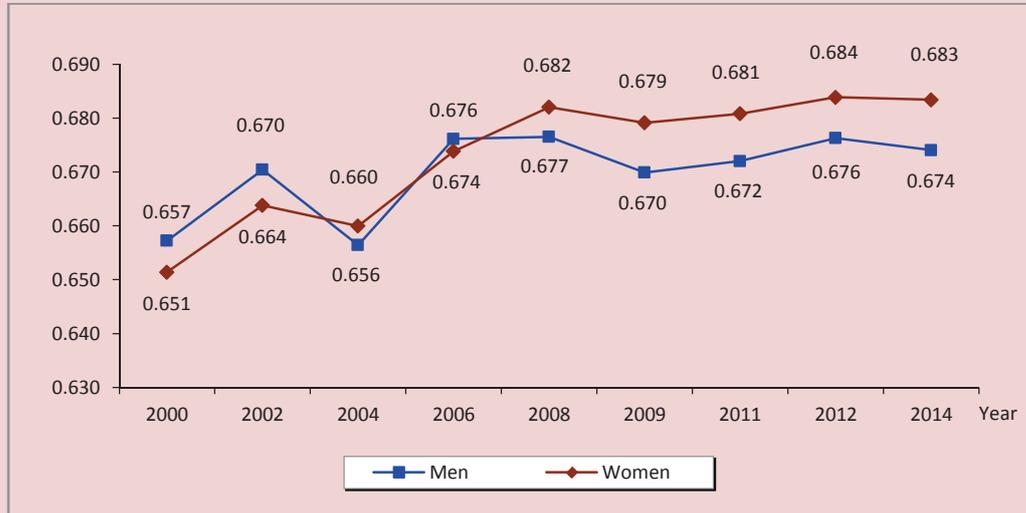
subject to direct measurement: physical and mental health, cognitive and creative potential, communication skills, cultural and moral level, need for achievement [12]. As a result of processing primary information, each of these components receives a numerical score in the form of indices from zero to one.

As shown by the monitoring data, the dynamics of the quality of labor potential of women in the Vologda Oblast from 2000 to 2014 demonstrated a steady upward trend (*Fig. 1*). The index of social capacity during the period under consideration increased from 0.651 to 0.683. And if in 2000 the value of the index for women was markedly lower than that for men (0.651 against 0.657), then since 2007, the situation reverses. Such changes may be associated with the increase in the levels of education, improvement of health, enhancement of creativity, etc.

Among the basic quality characteristics of women's labor potential in 2014 the most developed components were as follows: moral level (0.796), communication skills (0.756), mental health (0.754), and the least developed components included creative potential (0.569), cognitive potential (0.638) and the need for achievement (0.659; *Tab. 1*). It largely coincides with the distribution obtained in men. However, if we compare the absolute values of both indicators, it becomes evident that women have a more developed intellectual capacity, cultural and moral level and a stronger need for achievement. Since the beginning of the 2000s, gender gap in the

¹ The monitoring of a qualitative condition of labor potential of the Vologda Oblast population is conducted by the Institute of Socio-Economic Development of Territories of RAS since 1997. The object of the study is the working age population of the Vologda Oblast. The surveys are carried out every two years (until 2009 they were carried out annually) in August–September in the cities of Vologda and Cherepovets and in eight districts (Babaevsky, Velikoustyugsky, Vozhegodsky, Gryazovetsky, Kirillovsky, Nikolsky, Tarnogsky and Sheksninsky). Sampling method: zoning with the proportional location of observation units. Type of sample: quota by sex and age. The sample size is 1,500 people, sampling error does not exceed 3%.

Figure 1. Dynamics of the index of social capacity in the gender aspect



Source: data of the monitoring of the quality status of labor potential in the Vologda Oblast, ISEDT RAS, 2000–2014.

Table 1. Dynamics of labor potential quality in the Vologda Oblast, broken down by gender

Labor potential quality	2000		Gap	2014		Gap
	Men	Women		Men	Women	
Physical health	0.700	0.659	0.041	0.766	0.743	0.023
Mental health	0.731	0.659	0.072	0.790	0.754	0.036
Cognitive potential	0.629	0.643	0.014	0.610	0.638	0.028
Creativity	0.581	0.586	0.005	0.560	0.569	0.009
Communication skills	0.730	0.728	0.002	0.761	0.756	0.005
Cultural level	0.623	0.621	0.002	0.669	0.688	0.019
Moral level	0.750	0.790	0.040	0.767	0.796	0.029
Need for achievement	0.618	0.623	0.005	0.638	0.659	0.021
<i>Social capacity</i>	<i>0.657</i>	<i>0.651</i>	<i>0.006</i>	<i>0.674</i>	<i>0.683</i>	<i>0.009</i>

Source: data of the monitoring of the quality status of labor potential in the Vologda Oblast, ISEDT RAS, 2000–2014.

intellectual component of labor potential continues to increase, and this indicates the greater adaptability of the female part of society to the challenges of innovation economy.

As for men, they assess their health higher than women (communication skills are developed approximately equally). This is partly due to the fact that health-preservation behavior is more typical of women [6, 20]:

they pay more attention to their health and respond faster to painful condition and seek the advice of a specialist, often exaggerating the number and severity of their problems.

In 2000–2014, an increase was observed in the values of most of the basic indices of labor potential quality of women. As in men, the only exception was the cognitive and creative components. This trend is likely to indicate a decline in the demand for intellectual capacity in the region's economy and, as a consequence, the degradation of relevant characteristics of the population. Thus, during this time, the proportion of young people (16 to 24 years of age) who are not engaged in creative activities increased significantly (Tab. 2).

If in 2000 among the Vologda residents 16–17 and 18–24 years of age the figure was only 38 and 31%, respectively, then in 2014 the values of the indicator increased to 47% in both groups. Since young people at this age usually continue their education (including higher professional education), we can assume that current educational programs have a negative impact on their intellectual potential. A similar situation is observed in other age groups (30–54 years), which confirms the conclusion made previously.

The way in which people use their qualitative characteristics in the labor market has certain peculiarities in the gender aspect². Figure 2 shows that women, spending more efforts doing their job than men use to the

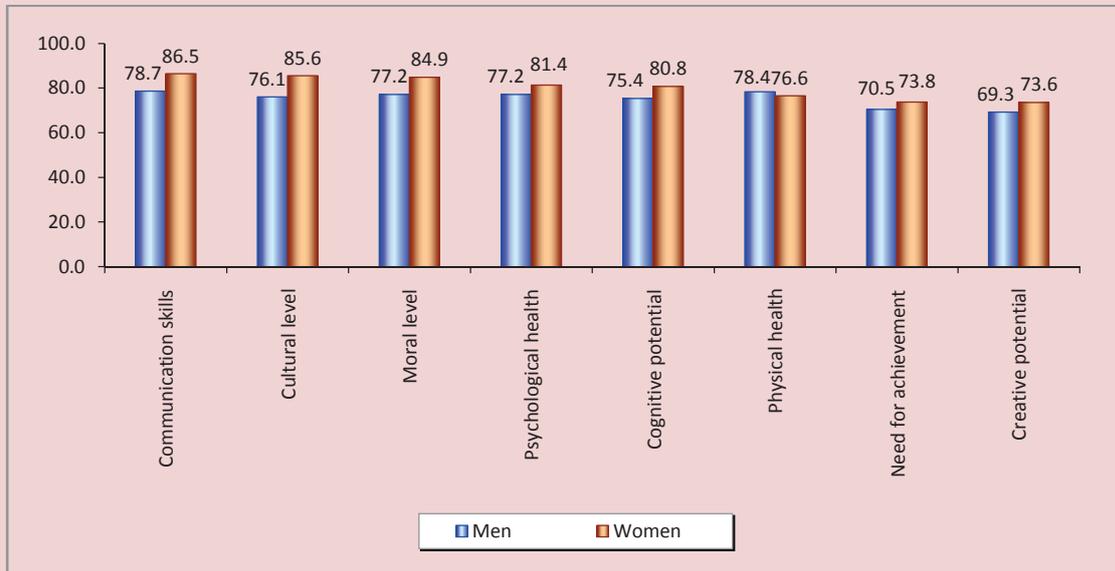
Table 2. Distribution of answers to the question: "To what extent are you currently engaged in creative (innovative, inventive, etc.) activities?", broken down by age groups, %

Answer option	Age, years									
	16-17	18-24	25-29	30-49	50-54	16-17	18-24	25-29	30-49	50-54
	2000					2014				
I constantly invent, write, compose, etc. something – it's my lifestyle	15.2	9.4	4.8	5.5	7.6	5.2	9.6	8.2	5.7	3.4
I invent something when I have a practical need to do something and there is no ready-made solutions	15.2	24.9	20.8	25.1	22.7	24.1	19.7	21.9	17.4	14.8
I invent, compose, etc., when I get the task from the administration	31.5	35.1	28.8	18.5	15.9	24.1	23.2	23.7	21.7	17.9
I never do anything, I do what I was taught before, or what others tell me, what I can read in books, reference books, etc.	38.0	30.6	45.6	50.9	53.8	46.6	47.4	46.1	55.2	63.9

Source: data of the monitoring of the quality status of labor potential in the Vologda Oblast, ISED T RAS, 2000–2014.

² The indicator "implementation of labor potential" reflects the level at which working population use their qualities and skills in specific work activity. The methodology developed at ISED T RAS is based on a set of questions "How much do you commit yourself to work? To what extent do you use your qualities and skills?" [30].

Figure 2. Level of implementation of employment potential of Vologda Oblast population, broken down by gender, 2014, %



Source: data of the monitoring of the quality status of labor potential in the Vologda Oblast, ISEDT RAS, 2000–2014

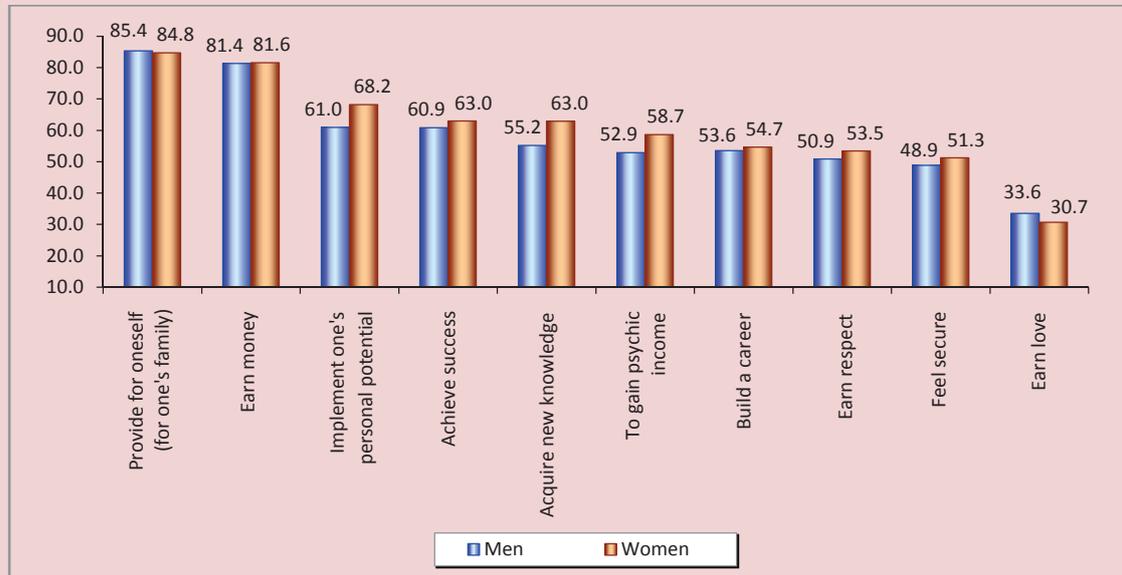
fullest extent their communication skills (87%), cultural (86%) and moral (85%) level, and to the smallest extent – their creativity (74%) and need for achievement (74%). Compared to men, women implement physical health opportunities to a lesser extent.

This hierarchy in relation to gender peculiarities of the use of personal qualitative characteristics in labor activity can be explained by the specifics of employment. According to Vologdastat, in 2014, the majority of women worked in wholesale and retail trade (21%), education (16%), manufacturing industries (13%) and health care and in social services sector (12%) [28],

i.e. in those sectors of the economy dominated by professions of the “man-man” type that requires communication and interaction with other people.

However, in 2014 compared to 2002, the structure of women’s employment by types of economic activity has changed significantly in the direction of increasing their representation in areas such as “financial activity” (in 4.8 times); “operations with real estate, rent and provision of services” (in 2.4 times); “public administration and military security; social insurance” (by 67%); “hotels and restaurants” (by 60%); and decreasing their representation in areas such as “provision of other housing and communal, social and personal services”

Figure 3. Distribution of answers to the question: "You consider your work primarily as a way to..." (answer: "agree" and "completely agree"), 2014, %



Source: data of the monitoring of the quality status of labor potential in the Vologda Oblast, ISEDТ RAS, 2000–2014.

(by 56%); "manufacturing; mining" (by 38%); "agriculture, hunting and forestry; fishing, fish farming" (by 34%) [28]. Such changes positively affected the status of women in society: according to the surveys conducted by ISEDТ RAS³, over the last ten years, more than 20% of female residents of the Vologda Oblast noted an increase in their social status.

A relatively high level of labor potential implementation by women is determined

³ The public opinion survey "Socio-cultural portrait of the Vologda Oblast" was conducted by ISEDТ RAS in 2015. The volume of the sample is 1,500 people aged 18 and older. The representativeness of the sample was ensured by the observance of proportions between inhabitants of different types of settlements (rural settlements, small, medium and large cities); age and gender structure of the adult population of the oblast. Sampling error does not exceed 3%.

by gender differences in relation to work (Fig. 3). Although the vast majority of the population, regardless of gender, sees the work primarily as a source of livelihood, women, unlike men, are more interested how to realize their personal potential (68% vs. 61%), to gain new knowledge (63% vs. 55%), to achieve moral satisfaction (63% vs. 55%), etc. This phenomenon observed by many researchers is due to the fact that men are always given the opportunity to prove their worth, so that they do not feel strong need for self-actualization, striving to fulfill their traditional functions (role of breadwinner in the family) [13, p. 103].

Terminal values (expressed in the value of labor as the most important values in people's life [16, p. 39]) developed in women have affected their social attitudes (*Tab. 3*). Women more than men are willing to grow morally and improve themselves (19% vs. 13%), to work for the benefit of other people (18 and 13%), to acquire new knowledge and skills (18 and 12%), to study, when necessary, a foreign language (16 and 9%) and so on. Experts associate such features with the change of life orientations of women in new economic conditions [31].

According to the monitoring conducted by ISEDT RAS, when choosing a job, women are more focused on getting not high, but guaranteed and stable income at a state enterprise (39% vs. 27% in men). The lack of confidence in the future serves as a

deterrent from employment in commercial organizations and from starting their own business (24% and 6% in women versus 32% and 8% in men).

Despite the high quality of labor potential and its realization, the level of remuneration for women is significantly lower than that for men (*Tab. 4*). As of 2015, the ratio of wages of women to wages of men in the Vologda Oblast amounted to 58%. This result corresponds to the 83rd position among 85 constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

Studies show that the gender gap in wages is mainly due to vertical (work-related) and horizontal (sectoral and occupational) segregation in the labor market [22, p. 243; 26]. The presence of scientific papers that show higher productivity of men in various branches [37], and their relative parity [41]

Table 3. Distribution of answers to the question: "How much are you willing to..?" (answer "I am willing to the fullest extent"), %

Answer option	2014		Average value
	Men	Women	
To build partnerships in the workplace	17.6	18.1	17.8
To develop my personal potential	14.7	19.3	17.1
To grow and improve myself	12.9	18.9	16.0
To do good to people through my work	13.2	18.5	15.9
Learn new knowledge and skills throughout my life	12.8	18.2	15.5
To work for the good of the country	12.0	15.5	13.8
To study, if necessary, a foreign language	8.8	16.3	12.6
To organize my own business, family business	10.3	11.1	10.7
To improve my professional qualification with the help of my own means	8.4	8.4	8.4
To move to another area of the country with more attractive working conditions	7.4	9.8	8.6

Source: data of the monitoring of the quality status of labor potential in the Vologda Oblast, ISEDT RAS, 2000–2014.

Table 4. Average accrued wages of employees, 2015

RF constituent entity	Wage, rub.			Ratio of women's wages to men's wages	
	All population	Men	Women	%	Rank
Russian Federation	35397	42573	29235	68,7	-
five best subjects according to wages ratio					
Republic of Ingushetia	18305	17941	18497	103,1	1
Republic of Crimea	22610	22768	22491	98,8	2
Chechen Republic	17879	18519	17540	94,7	3
Altai Republic	19142	19841	18725	94,4	4
Sevastopol	21559	22540	20749	92,1	5
five worst subjects according to wages ratio					
Arkhangelsk Oblast	38892	48867	28941	59,2	81
Sakhalin Oblast	64462	82012	47939	58,5	82
Vologda Oblast	29567	38385	22401	58,4	83
Astrakhan Oblast	25334	33274	19207	57,7	84
Tuva Republic	30779	44677	23200	51,9	85
Source: data on the wages of employees by personnel categories and professional groups of workers. Rosstat, 2015.					

does not allow us to make an unambiguous conclusion about the superiority of one sex over the other in this aspect. The contribution of discriminatory practices in the general differentiation of wages of men and women (when the level of their remuneration is different for one and the same work) in Russia, according to various estimates, reaches 18% and more [10, p. 282; 21, p. 38; 25, p. 10].

Russian legislation (also thanks to the ratification of international treaties) prohibits gender discrimination in virtually all spheres of society. However, the lack of an effective mechanism for protecting women in the labor market leads to a wide distribution of latent discrimination [7, p. 58]. According

to the public opinion poll conducted by ISED T RAS in 2013⁴, 11% of women get an impression that their rights are infringed upon employment, and 5% – at termination of employment (30 and 39%, respectively, found it difficult to answer). Moreover, every one in five women (20%) knows about similar cases that occurred with other women, while men did not face similar situations at all.

The research conducted in the Vologda Oblast show that in 2014 more than half of women (53%) were confident that they would

⁴ The volume of the sample is 1,500 people aged 18 and older. The representativeness of the sample was ensured by the observance of proportions between inhabitants of different types of settlements and age and gender structure of the adult population of the oblast. Sampling error does not exceed 3%.

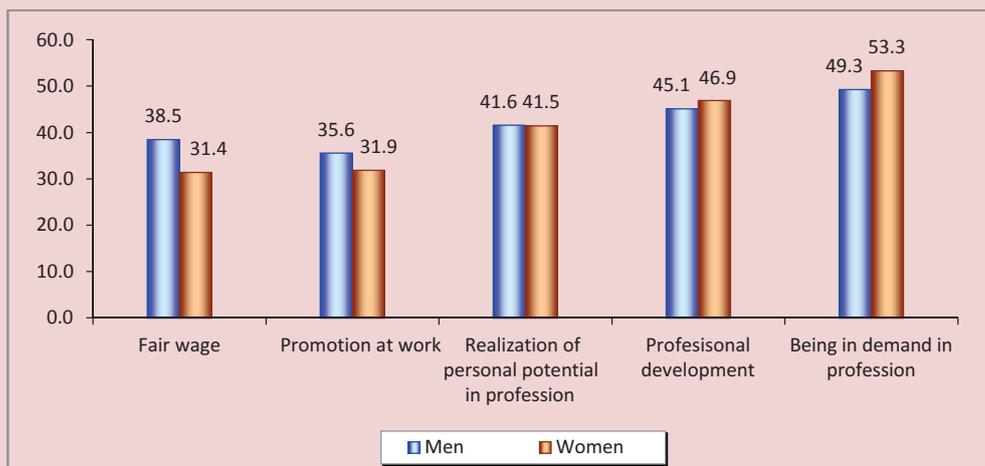
be in demand in the profession, 47% thought they would improve their professional skills, while 42% expected to realize themselves in the labor market, and this is comparable with the results obtained in the group of men (Fig. 4). However, the proportion of women who note the opportunity to obtain a decent wage and get a promotion, is only one third, which is slightly lower than the proportion of men (32 and 31% vs. 36 and 39%, respectively).

Women more often than men find a job within their obtained specialty (57% in 2004 vs. 53% in 2014, respectively; Fig. 5). Among the main reasons for work outside their specialty female residents of Vologda note the change in professional interests (27%), lack of demand in the labor market (25%), and dissatisfaction with working conditions offered by the employer (17%).

According to the data on employment prospects in the next 5 years obtained in the course of the monitoring, the majority of women see themselves working primarily in the Vologda Oblast (92%). According to their self-assessment, in 15 years the number of women in this category will decline to 83% (men – from 93 to 86%) because many of them will be employed in other settlements of the oblast and the country as a whole. This result allows us to make a cautious conclusion about a greater willingness of women to mobility. However, statistics show that in 2010–2015 migration loss of working age female population was 10 times higher than that in men (-5,747 people against -574 people) [28].

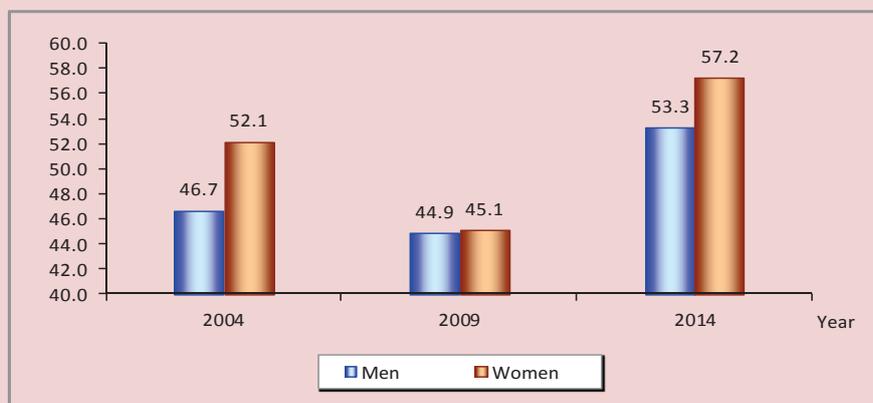
As for the distribution of people employed in the economy by groups of occupations at

Figure 4. Distribution of answers to the question: "How do you assess your professional prospects?" %



Source: data of the monitoring of the quality status of labor potential in the Vologda Oblast, ISEDT RAS, 2000–2014.

Figure 5. Dynamics of employment of the Vologda Oblast population within the specialty obtained in an educational institution of professional education, %



Source: data of the monitoring of the quality status of labor potential in the Vologda Oblast, ISEDT RAS, 2000–2014.

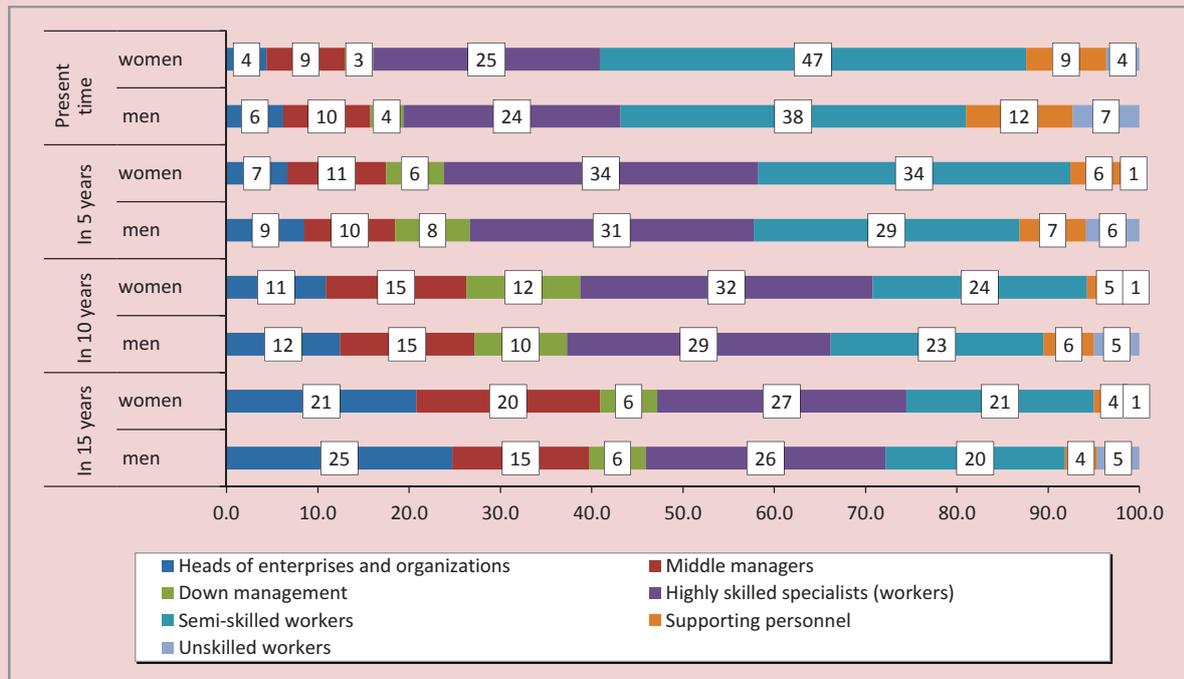
their main place of employment, then at the present time, women who are chief executives at enterprises and their structural divisions continue to represent a small portion (4%), and about half are medium-skilled specialists (workers) (Fig. 6). However, in the long term the share of women who think they will obtain leadership positions, according to self-assessments of the population, will increase substantially, although it will not surpass the level of men (21% vs. 25%). However, men's career ambitions traditionally surpass women's both in Russia and abroad [40].

Thus, our analysis shows that the quality of women's labor potential in the Vologda Oblast has not only reached the level of men, but exceeded it. They are characterized by higher values of cultural, moral, cognitive and creative components of labor potential quality and also greater need for achievement.

Moreover, the gap in intellectual aspect during the period under review has increased significantly, which allowed us to conclude that women are more ready to face the challenges of innovation economy. However, the downward trend in the indices of knowledge and creativity was observed in both sexes, and this indicates the absence of demand for these components in the regional economy.

Terminal values developed in women enable them to realize their employment potential more fully, which also positively affects their social attitudes. Despite this, the amount their wages are significantly lower than those of men. The gender gap in remuneration arises not only due to segregation in the labor market, but also in connection with the prevalence of discriminatory practices in the field of labor

Figure 6. Distribution of answers to the question: "What position do you hold at work now and what position do you think you will hold in 5/10/15 years?", 2014, %



Source: data of the monitoring of the quality status of labor potential in the Vologda Oblast, ISEDT RAS, 2000–2014.

and employment. And women are more optimistic if with regard to career prospects, the possibility of obtaining a decent wage seems to them less real. In light of this, in order to achieve gender equality in the labor market, it is first necessary to create conditions for positive upward mobility and decent wages for women. According to a study made by the McKinsey Global Institute, global gender inequality can lead to additional increase in global GDP by 2025 by 11–26% [43].

In our opinion, the existing barriers can be overcome if the following measures are implemented:

1. The results of sociological research should be taken into consideration when the comprehensive assessment of the status of women in the labor market is formed; in particular, at the development of appropriate measures in the system of state administration, due to the fact that these methods help obtain important information about the qualitative aspects of labor potential and its realization.

2. It is necessary to develop a set of measures (to prepare a strategic document or an action plan) for the creation of conditions to increase the efficiency of upward mobility for women taking into account gender specifics prevailing in the regional labor market.

3. It is necessary to carry out activities to create a positive image of women in the labor market, to inform women about their rights and opportunities and use this knowledge in case of violation of their rights.

4. It is necessary to support the development of open information space in relation to the socio-economic status of women, also broken down by socio-demographic groups.

In conclusion, we would like to note that women represent a rather heterogeneous socio-demographic group in the labor market. In its composition there are many categories for which employment problems are most severe. So, the statistics of the Department of Labor and Employment of the Vologda Oblast shows that the employment of women on maternity leave until the child reaches the age of three is extremely difficult. In 2012–2013 of the 78 women who applied to public institutions of the employment service of the region for assistance in finding a suitable job, only one found a job. This fact must be taken into account in further work to examine the potential of women in the labor market in order to develop targeted measures for overcoming the barriers to

the most complete implementation of the available knowledge, skills and abilities in the labor market. In particular, it is necessary to pay attention to the successful practices of implementation of social innovation. For instance, since 2012 in Moscow, a project “Mama works” is functioning and it implements a broad range of activities that help mothers become successful professionals that are in demand in the labor market. Such activities include:

- psychological support;
- educational programs and trainings;
- additional education;
- job search;
- assistance in opening the business;
- creating their own jobs, etc.

The project implementation has a positive effect on financial well-being of families. More than 1,000 mothers who have had the opportunity to work and have an income (average salary is 10–15 thousand rubles) without negative effects on the upbringing of children now do not need an allowance for the temporarily unemployed. The project cooperates with universities and centers of further education, providing places on preferential terms for young mothers. In August 2014, the project received a presidential grant from the Institute for Civil Society; the grant was allocated for the development of an educational project within 11 months. The business project of the workshop “Mamy sami” (Moms themselves) was the winner of the contest

“Social entrepreneur – 2014”, which helped obtain an interest-free loan from the regional development fund “Our Future” at the opening of sewing production [27].

It is possible to find a solution to the above problems only with the active participation of all interested parties: government, business and society. At the state level, addressing gender inequality would promote economic growth and development of innovation. At the

level of the business community, combating discriminatory practices and the introduction of innovative forms of employment will help increase productivity due to a more complete use of available labor potential. And finally, at the level of society, changing the existing stereotypes that prevent women’s self-fulfillment will lead to improved standards of living in households and will help reduce social tension.

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