

DISPARITIES AMONG YOUTH LABOUR IN SERBIA

Dejana Pavlović^{*1}, Vladimir Obradović², Marija Todorović²

¹ Institute of Economic Sciences, Belgrade

² University of Belgrade, Faculty of Organizational Sciences, Serbia

*Corresponding author, e-mail: dejana.pavlovic@ien.bg.ac.rs

Abstract: *It is evident that the unemployment rate among young people in Serbia is much higher than in developed countries. The latest statistical data have shown that about 32 % of young people aged from 15 to 24 are unemployed or work in the field of the grey economy which is by 15 percentage points higher than the average of the youth unemployment rate in EU countries. Furthermore, Serbia has been facing youth labour disparities indicating more chances of entering the labour market for the male population than female. The reasons for this could be various. The paper includes data of the Labour Market Survey 2017 that was conducted by the Statistical Office of Serbia, and descriptive statistics results in order to explain the main reason for disparities within the youth labour market in Serbia. It is also important to emphasize that respectable insight into youth labour market as well as results of the research, will provide a significant contribution to unemployment problem-solving in Serbia.*

Keywords: *Labour Market; Youth; Gender inequality; Disparities.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Although the Republic of Serbia has an obligation to provide better future for its young citizens, it has been obvious so far, that the Government has been facing a large number of issues within the youth labour market. According to statistical data from 2016, the youth unemployment rate was almost twice as high as the average unemployment rate of young people in EU countries (18%) (ILO, 2016). The women unemployment rate (aged from 15 to 24) is by seven percentage points higher than the men youth unemployment rate (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2017).

However, the issue of employment among young people aged from 15 to 24, as well as the young population aged from 25 to 29, had excited in the Republic of Serbia even before the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008. Accordingly, since 2007 the Ministry of Youth and Sports, at the initiative of the Government, has started to take some actions to improve the employment of young people (Pavlovic, Djukic, and Bodroza, 2017).

One of the current Strategies dealing with this issue is the National Youth Strategy. It was adopted in 2015, and since then it has been focused on young people within on and outside the labour market (aged from 15 to 30). The strategy points out that Serbia faces various issues such as young people leaving their country (males especially, which additionally impacts gender inequalities in the labour market), decline in the number of young people in the general population, high unemployment rate among young people as well as gender inequalities (Youth National Strategy, Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2017).

During the last few decades, a group of researchers has been trying to determine the reasons why young people in Serbia are significantly late in various aspects of their lives such as completing their education, leaving the parental home or finding permanent employment, comparing to the same indicators in developed European countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark (Tomanovic and Ignjatovic, 2004). Most of young people in Serbia leave their parental home in their late 30s, and they are supported by their parents (93.3%), which is an important indicator that they definitely enter the labour market late. Furthermore, it is important to mention that some of them are beneficiaries of scholarships and student loans (Mrdja, 2011; Todorovic et al., 2016).

Besides the fact that the youngsters in Serbia start their families very late, it is also evident that many of male population look for their life and job opportunities abroad. On the other hand, the statistics show that a more significant share of females decides to deal with household and motherhood, which directly affects gender inequalities within the labour market (SILK, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2004). Although the role of women has increased considerably in the education sector, during the last few decades, the number of women with a high level of education is higher than the number of men, especially in the countries of southern and south-eastern Europe. However, there is still a patriarchal stereotype, where men are in charge of the finances in the family (Beveridge and Velluti, 2016). According to the Kabeer and Natali (2013), there

is evidence that reducing inequality in education and raising the average level of education among women contribute to their better economic performance, as it was indicated by GDP per capita.

The issue of gender inequality was also recognized by the UN. Therefore, the UN adopted the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015), dedicating a special attention to gender equality goal. Also, regarding this issue, the Republic of Serbia has been using the National Youth Strategy to reduce inequality between young male and female.

In this paper, we analyzed the core indicators which have profoundly influenced the issue of gender inequality in Serbia. The indicators that are carefully considered are the following:

- education
- wages
- regional differences
- demographic indicators

Data analysis is presented throughout descriptive statistics. The research results will be useful in the making of adequate strategies within the youth labour market, as well as in further researching within the field of youth labour market and solving gender inequalities in Serbia and other countries in the region that are facing the same problem.

The first part of the paper presents the subject of the study and the reasons why we focused primarily on the gender inequalities within the labour market. Moreover, the second part of the paper provides an overview of previous research, followed by an overview of the youth labour market and gender inequality. The fourth part of the paper covers the discussion, and finally, conclusions are presented by a review of labour market differences among men and women.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The idea of feminism and inequalities among women and men appeared for the first time in the 19th century, more precisely, after the end of the Second World War. Women started to fight for their social equality and received huge support by decision makers at the international level. According to this, UN Secretary-General suggested that “investing in women is not only the right thing” but also “the smart thing to do” (Kabeer and Natali, 2013). Since the 1960s, as a result of growing interest in the issue of inequality within the labour market, there has been a significant increase in a number of women involved in science and education as well. This fact gave rise to the development of new research field.

Firstly, women started to be a part of national economics because that was the win-win scenario. Moreover, gender inequality seemed to support economic growth and macroeconomic performance. This was evident in the research carried out by Seguino (2000), who analyzed how gender wage gaps can boost international competitiveness when women are disproportionately employed within labour-intensive export-oriented industries.

In the 1960s, neoclassical theory sought for the reasons of the participation of women within the labour market. Thus, Mincer (1962) implied that the presence of women in the labour market contributed to an increase in family income. Several years after Mincer's theory, the number of women in organizations increased. Moreover, the concern for gender equality gained ground across a wide range of organizations (state, bilateral and multilateral). The achievements of research, in the field of gender inequalities, as well as the impact of education and earnings on the employment of young men and women, led to the development of a large number of theories, such as the theory of capital and the expansion of institutional labour economics (Edwards et al, 1973), segmentation theory (Beneira 2003), etc. Institutionalists studied historical and contemporary segregation, segmentation and discrimination within the labour market and criticized the model of a competitive labour market. However, none of these theories and achievements answered the question why segmentation was present, only analyzed the position of women within the labour market.

A specific group of researchers was analysing over the time the factors that influenced the employment of women, as well as the differences in wages and race, ethnicity and sexuality, gender discrimination and segregation (Power, Rosenberg 1995; Rubery 2005; Strober, 1984; Rubery et al, 2006; Pavlovic et al., 2017).

Furthermore, women successfully occupied their positions within the labour market, in a way that some professions are only common for women such as public relations, systems analysis, bartending, advertising and insurance, depending on country of origin. For instance, women in Europe and North America have recently been involved in nursing, primary teaching, hairdressing and other ‘beauty work,’ as well as various

manufacturing (Bradley, 1989). Men are more represented in occupations such as jobs related to mining, driving, professional catering, plumbing and car sales. The researchers indicate this phenomenon as “job segregation by sex” or “sexual work segregation” (Wharton, 2012).

3. YOUTH LABOUR MARKET AND GENDER INEQUALITY IN SERBIA

Labour market of the Republic of Serbia has recorded a significantly low rate of women employment. Statistical data from 2016 displayed that the women employment rate was 38,1% which is almost 14,7 p.p less that men employment rate. The employment rate among women within the age box from 25 to 54 is by 11 p.p. less than the employment rate among men within the same age box.

The Figure 1 indicates that the women unemployment rate within the age box from 15 to 24 is extremely high. The unemployment rate reached the pick in 2014 with 50% which means that half of young women population couldn't have found the job. However, in the following period, the statistical data imply that the young women unemployment sharply dropped to 36, 3% in 2017. At the same time, the young men unemployment rate (29, 2%) is slightly lower than young women unemployment rate. Moreover, the women inactivity rate is by 6, two p.p. higher than men inactivity rate (63, 2 % and 69, 4% respectively).

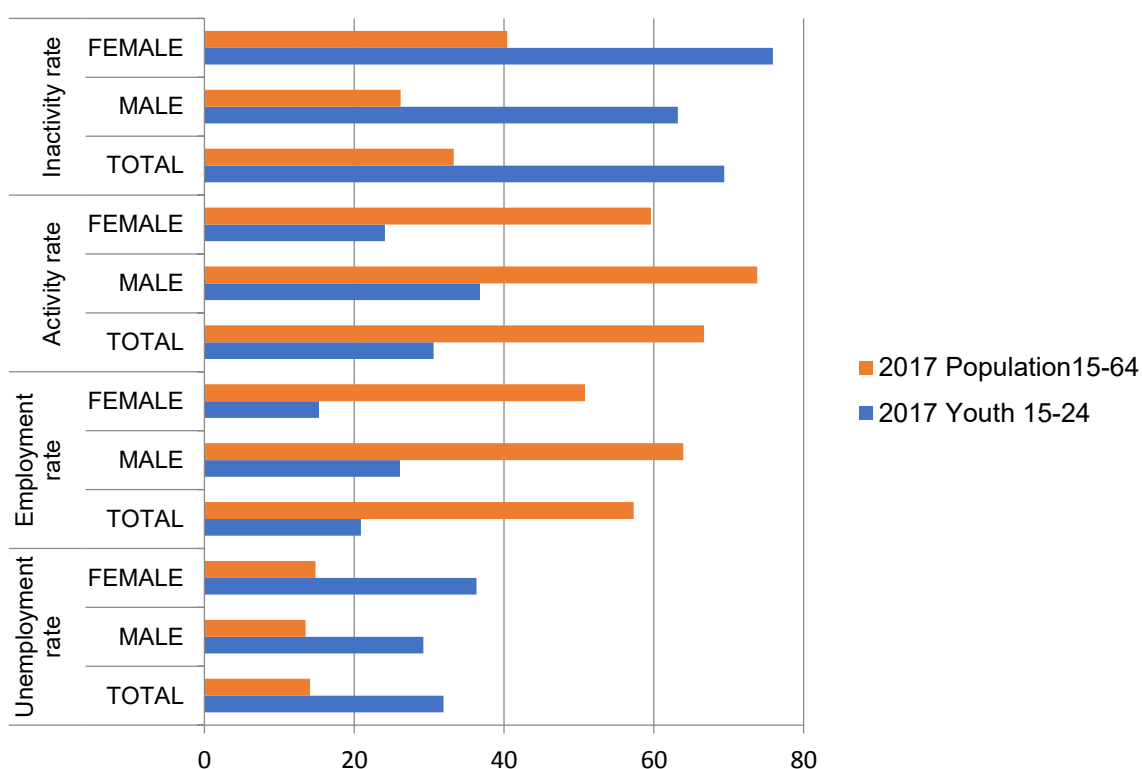


Figure 1: Labour Market in Serbia, 2017.
Source: Statistical Office of Republic of Serbia, 2017.

Considering the region, the worst women position at the labour market is evident in the region of South and East Serbia (43,6%), while the best position is in the region of Vojvodina (28%).

Comparing to the men unemployment rate aged from 15 to 24, the lowest rate is evident in Vojvodina (30%), while in the Belgrade region is 33,9%, in Sumadija and central Serbia is 33,8%, as well as East and South Serbia is 33,6% (Statistical Office of Serbia, 2016).

On the other hand, the women inactivity rate is much higher than the men inactivity rate. According to Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2016), the women inactivity rate was 41,6% comparing to the men inactivity rate of only 26,9%.

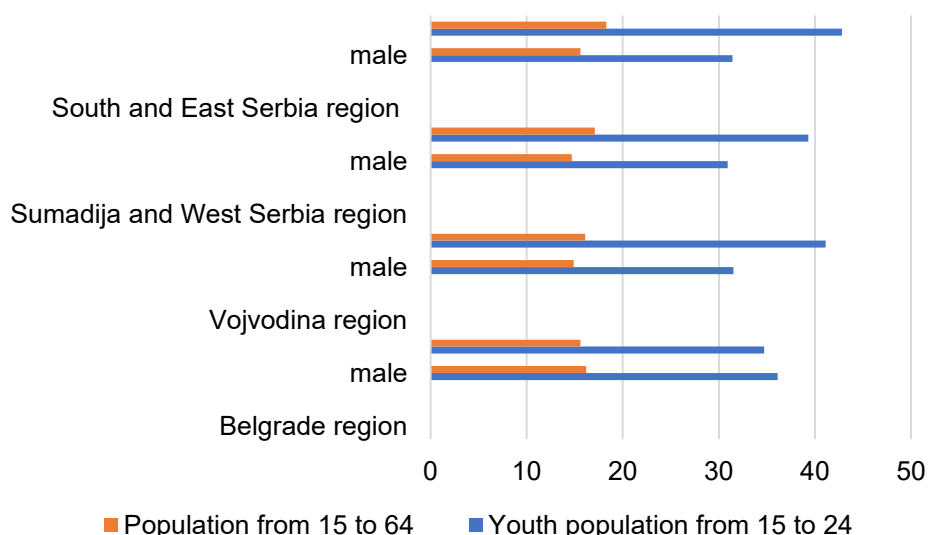


Figure 2: Unemployment rate Serbia, 2017.
Source: Statistical Office of Republic of Serbia, 2017.

If we take in consideration the women inactivity group according to the age, it can be noticed that the highest inactivity rate refers to the age groups over 55 (81,2%) as well as from 15 to 24 (76,7%). Furthermore, the lowest inactivity rate among women aged from 25 to 54 is 23,9% while the men inactivity rate is 12,3% at the same age.

Table 1: Inactivity rate in Serbia, 2017

INACTIVITY RATE 2017			
AGE	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
15+	46, 7	54, 6	38, 2
15-64	34, 4	41, 9	26, 9
15-24	69, 7	76, 6	63, 2
25-54	18, 0	23, 9	12, 3
55+	73, 4	81, 3	63, 6

Source: Statistical Office of Serbia, 2017.

4. DISCUSSION

Investment in the youth should be more strategically planned because they are the creators of our future. Numerous scientists were aware of the inappropriate position of young people of Serbia at the labor market (Obradovic and Pavlovic, 2015; Gorry, 2013; Flinn, 2006). By analyzing various factors, it can be concluded that different indicators influence on youth employment (Gorry, 2013; Zubovic, Zdravkovic and Pavlovic, 2015; Kelly and McGuinness, 2015) in that way additionally slowing down the employment of young women.

The reasons for the unfavorable position of young people in the labour market are many. A large number of economists believe that the financial crisis caused a considerable lack of available jobs, influenced the level of earnings, and on the other hand created a disagreement between supply and demand in the labour market, etc. (Arandarenko, 2011). On the other hand, some researchers believe that the unemployment rate was high and before the crisis (Vasile, 2012).

On the other hand, the number of population is in decline, and consequently, demographic trends significantly influence the labour market, and more precisely, the youth market. According to the 2011 census, the share of young people is 18% (considering young people aged from 15 to 29), while according to the 2002 census, the share of young people accounted for 20%, which means that the young population in Serbia is reducing. Serbia does not belong to countries with a high percentage of young people. Out of the total population, young people aged from 15-24 account for 11.7%. Taking into account a group of young people up to 30 years old, the most significant share of young people is aged from 25 to 29 (480,286). The

most substantial number of young people lives in the north of Serbia (413,765), while 183 848 young people aged between 15 and 24 live in the south of Serbia (Census, Statistical Office of Republic of Serbia, 2011). Observing the population according to the gender structure, out of the total population in the Republic of Serbia, there are 3,499,176 males and 3,687,686 females, more precisely 51% of the total are women. Considering the last two Censuses, the women age rate has been decreasing from 50,8 to 49,5 as well as the men age rate from 45,3 to 43,1. Additionally, regarding the age, there are women within the old and middle age group and more men within the young age group.

In the last few years, due to the unstable political situation in the region, youth dissatisfaction is mostly present, and young people are leaving their country of birth. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia announced that in the period from 1991 to 2001, about half a million young people, predominantly males, looked for a better future abroad. Furthermore, the highest trend of population movements is from the south of Serbia, where according to the 2011 population census, about 1,563,916 inhabitants live, while the most populated region is the South and East Serbia with 2,031,697 inhabitants.

Education significantly influences the employment of young women and men and education had the main impact on finding a job (Buha et al., 2014; Devjak and Devjak, 2009; Pavlovic et al., 2016). Research shows that education provides better jobs and higher earnings (Flinn, 2006; Heckman, Lechner and Taber, 1998), and on the other hand reduces chances for poverty. According to the SILK Survey (2014), out of 100 highly educated people, only one is poor. More recently, the statistical data shows that women attend faculties more than men (women attendance 56%/ men attendance 44%) (Table 1).

Table 2: Enrolled students at Faculties in Serbia

YEAR	TOTAL MALE	TOTAL FEMALE	% MALE	% FEMALE
2011	102441	129220	44	56
2012	105518	133427	44	56
2013	108400	134448	45	55
2014	106594	134460	44	56
2015	112191	138971	45	55
2016	115190	146899	44	56

Source: Statistical Office of Republic of Serbia, 2016.

Out of the total number of employees, there are more women who have completed a high degree of education. Therefore, out of the total number of employees with a high level of education, about 326 thousand are women, while 281.5 thousand are men. The most substantial amount of male population completed the secondary degree of education. According to the statistical data from 2016, the women constitute more than half of graduate students within a vast area of education while men are mostly present in the fields such as IT, engineering and construction sectors. Moreover, in 2016 there were more women with the Ph.D. (57%) than men (43%). On the other hand, there were more men in research sector as well as in SANU where 90% of the members are men.

Three-year high school education is finished three times more by male population while on the other side compared to women population that is more numerous at 4-year high school education. Accordingly, the data from 2016 indicates that the girl's share in grammar schools is 58%, comparing to the number of boys in 4 year high schools 53% (Women and men in Serbia, Statistical Office of Republic of Serbia, 2016).

When it comes to young people aged between 15-24, out of a total of 779,963 young people, more than half completed secondary education (431,032 young people with completed secondary school), while only 2,941 young people did not complete the primary education. Young women 15-24 are more interested in tertiary education than men. According to the data from 2015, there are 17,109 young highly educated women and 9,791 young highly educated men in Serbia (Statistical Office of Republic of Serbia, 2016).

5. CONCLUSION

According to the National Youth Strategy for the period from 2015 to 2025, using a large number of activities Republic of Serbia is trying to reduce the number of unemployed young people aged between 15 and 30. One of the aims is solving an issue about gender equalities. There are differences between the unemployment rate among man and women. Moreover, in some part of the country unemployment rate is much higher than for instance in Belgrade region. Regarding this, one of the reason is a traditional overview of the position of women is the fact that they are under the influence of their family patterns. The woman is more present in the household more than at the labour market. Additionally, male family members very often leave their families and go abroad searching for better job opportunities (Obradovic et al., 2017).

Dissatisfaction of young people, besides lack of job opportunities, is considered as an issue that additionally complicates the entrance to the labour market. It is important to say that the education presents for both sexes, an essential factor in their search for job opportunities. However, although women are very educated, they are still discriminated against in some ways and enter the labour market very hard.

Besides already mentioned Youth Strategy, Republic of Serbia implemented two laws with a tendency to regulate the problem of gender quality. According to this law, international standards within the area of equal men and women employment. To conclude with there is a massive tendency of protecting the position of women in the labour market and society as a whole.

In this paper, we have elaborately presented the differences at the labour market, including the particular focus on gender inequality. The review of the previous research, as well as the present situation, is made to help policymakers to find the most propriety solution in this area.

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