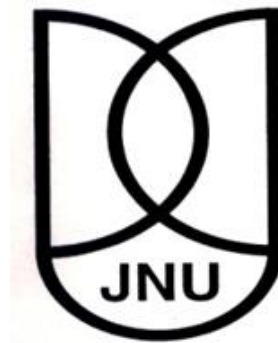


**Gender, Higher Education and Labour
Market in the Neoliberal Era: A Case Study
of Russian Federation, 1991-2016**

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for the award of the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Zakali Ayemi



**Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies
School of International Studies
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
New Delhi - 110067
2018**



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies

School of International Studies

New Delhi-110067

Tel.: (O) +91-11-2670 4365
Fax: (+91) -11-2674 1586, 2586
Email: crcasjnu@gmail.com

20 July 2018

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled *Gender, Higher Education and Labour Market in the Neoliberal Era: A Case Study of Russian Federation, 1991-2016* submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

ZAKALI AYEMI

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Prof. Archana Upadhyay
CHAIRPERSON, CRCAS, SIS

Dr. K. B. Usha
SUPERVISOR

Dedicated

To

My Beloved Parents

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List of Abbreviations

GIFO	Government Individual Financial Obligations
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LC	Labour Code
LPF	Labour Force Participation
NIC ARM	National Information Center on Academic Recognition and Mobility
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RF	Russian Federation
RLMS	Russian Longitudes Monitoring
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UN	United Nations
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Gender, Higher Education and Labour Market in the Neoliberal Era, A Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in 1991 heralded the advent of neoliberalism as the hegemonic political and economic ideology. The core principles of neoliberalism rest with competition, high technology, and knowledge-based economy. As the intense globalisation and complex inter-dependence came to the fore, the Russian Federation underwent a transformation in its political and economic ideology; viz. adopting neoliberalism as its principal political and economic ideology. With this shift, Russia witnessed privatisation, liberalisation, commodification, free trade, market competition and deregulation with state intervention. Focus on developing a knowledge-based economy took precedence. Higher education began to be considered a mechanism for developing skilled and qualified personnel for all-round development of the state. Technical education, specialised training, disseminating and advancing knowledge to fulfil the dynamic demands of the knowledge-based economy thereby became the main premise of institutions for higher education (Donlagic and Kurtic 2016: 91).

The post-Cold War shift in political and economic ideology plunged Russia into the pressures and competition of the neoliberal set-up. To be in tandem with the rest of the world, neoliberal reforms in higher education and labour market became crucial for Russia. However, the neoliberal reforms in higher education and labour market have given rise to an unfavourable environment for Russian women where gender inequality and disadvantages have come to characterise

contemporary Russian women. They not only bore the maximum brunt of post-Soviet transition but had also to endure disproportionately poverty, stress, social tension and insecurity associated with neoliberal socio-economic transition. Since the Soviet era, women's rights protection guarantees and egalitarian approach eroded. Patriarchy and gender inequality got strengthened in the Russian society. Higher education and labour market are the major areas where gender segregation and inequality manifested in many ways.

Education and labour market participation of women is significant in terms of their social mobility and empowerment. Higher education enables them to enter in a rewarding employment and uplift their quality of life and social status. Given the existing gender discrimination, overburden and change in gender roles, women in contemporary Russia have to undergo great disadvantages in society. High educational qualification does not guarantee Russian women respectable employment opportunities in the labour market. Gender asymmetry in state policies and employer's negative approach towards gender equity impact their occupational mobility and returns from employment. It is in this context; this study attempts to examine and highlight the gender issues in the realm of higher education and labour market in contemporary Russia.

Research Problem

Post-Soviet Russia has undertaken numerous transformative steps along the principles of neoliberalism. Russia adopted economic liberalization and reform of state towards democracy in accordance with the ideology of market-driven globalisation and minimalist state as has been universally accepted across the world. Thus, Russia adopted neoliberal reforms for transforming the country from communism to capitalism in accordance with the conditions created by

global capitalism after the failure of Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika reforms of socialist modernisation and Soviet disintegration.

Radical neoliberal reforms for capitalist modernisation began in 1992 by then-President Boris Yeltsin. The main objectives of this radical reform were to adjust the economy with the imperatives of the globalising market and to free the domestic economy and society from the rigid old Soviet welfare system. Under Western influence, Yeltsin followed "Washington Consensus" principles dictated by IMF, World Bank and WTO, and "shock therapy" reforms. The main reforms introduced include privatisation of state owned enterprises, price liberalisation, and reduction of state expenditures on social spending, restrictive monetary policy and liberalisation of foreign trade based on the formula of "liberalization plus stabilization" (Dzarasov 2014: 70-71). The reforms led to the emergence of a new class of proprietors comprised of old Soviet bureaucracy, intelligentsia and criminal underworld. Reforms to facilitate market economy also saw the emergence of Oligarchy in contemporary Russia. The advent of Vladimir Putin's regime in 2000 has further complicated the transformation process because of Putin's authoritarian tendencies in the conduct of Russian affairs. This transformation makes the Russian case a more complex one than others.

Neoliberalism has always been criticized for its negative social impact world over. It has been criticised as producing inequality, poverty, unemployment and other social insecurities. The gendered effects of neoliberalism on women are huge. Therefore, many today seek alternatives to neoliberalism. Similarly, as consequences of Russia's neoliberal policies Russia also is experiencing the rise of socio-economic problems like gender disparity, unemployment, job insecurity, inflation, poverty, social tension, decline in quality of life, to name a few. Higher education and labour market are the two important sectors that have undergone a

tremendous transformation in Russia. Neoliberal reforms in higher education and labour market is argued to have generated adverse outcomes for Russian women.

Neoliberal reforms suggest making higher education sector responsive to market, corporate and neoliberal policy priorities of the government. New management systems, governance regimes, funding and assessment regimes are designed to fulfil the goals of a “global knowledge economy” which treats knowledge and skills as a saleable commodity rather than a public service. In the neoliberal set-up, students are treated as consumers and faculty as producers of knowledge, which in turn are considered saleable commodity or skill. The neoliberal reforms and governance in higher education system have generated profound social questions pertaining to accessibility, equity and quality in contemporary Russia. Against this backdrop, this study looks into the complexity of gender consequences of neoliberal reforms in higher education and labour market in Russia.

The existing higher education system in Russia is based on the global neoliberal discourse of privatisation, globalisation and commercialisation. Traditionally, higher education was treated as a vital component for the socio-economic development. It was considered as a powerful instrument to facilitate upward social mobility of women, the deprived and marginalised sections of the society. In the contemporary competitive world, higher education is seen as an indispensable tool for women to enhance their skills and knowledge, which will enable them to participate in the economic, social and political sphere. Unfortunately, higher education in contemporary Russia is treated as a commodity, which was not the case in the Soviet era. In retrospect, higher education was treated as a public good and right of every citizen (Minina 2017:177).

Today public universities in Russia have undergone transformation and subject to regulatory governance as per the needs and principles of the knowledge economy. New policies and regulatory governance have been introduced in compliance with “global education and financial organisations” (Minina 2017:177). While the ‘right to education’ has been granted through ‘Art. 43 of the constitution of Russian Federation’ and the ‘National Education Law, 1992’, the neoliberal reforms does not treat education as a public good any longer thereby limiting the role of the state as a provider of education. In the recent past, Russia has introduced radical reforms in higher education with the focus mainly on “finance, quality assurance, accreditation, curricula innovations, standards and excellence” (Zajda 2016: 155). Public universities have been granted financial autonomy and encouraged to become “more entrepreneurial and competitive and largely private” (Levy 2006: 123; Bain 1999-2000: 37). It has given rise to the multiplication of private universities and fee-paying students, resulting in transformation of education from ‘public good’ to ‘private good’.

In 1994 through governmental decree No.47, the state allowed public universities to introduce tuition fees, which gave rise to what came to be known as ‘for-fee’ higher education in Russia. Since then, ‘no-fee’ and ‘for-free’ educational programs have proved to be the key determinants of the Russian higher education system. In this system, fees are introduced for ‘female’ professions, while ‘male’ professions are exempted from fees (Mezentseva 2006:1; Bain 1999-2000: 37) thereby reflecting the state’s biases in its investments in higher education. In other words, Russia is spending more resources on educating its male population impeding equal access to higher education. It also indicates that the expenditure of federal budget for education is turning out to be increasingly gendered.

The labour market also has undergone a structural transformation under the neoliberal reforms. Some of the neoliberal transformations that took place in the labour market include: withdrawal of centralised employment, wages and social security, the introduction of private players, change in the demand of labour force qualifications and skills, withdrawal of labours' protection and rights, to name a few. More flexibility and less regulation gave powers to the private sector to rule the market. Dismissing of the labour force and non-payment of wages has become common. In the present system, the market forces determine the labour requirements. As Russia's modern industries shifted more towards the high-technology sector, technical and science education has become a pre-requisite.

The new market reforms brought drastic changes in terms of gender, despite the Soviet legacy of social security and equal rights protection and legal provisions in Russian constitution for promoting women's rights in all spheres of life. Women face gender discrimination in the Soviet society as well as contemporary Russian society. Gender equality in Soviet Russia had its basis on the state ideology and constitutional guarantees. To achieve the emancipation goals of the state, the state encouraged participation of women in education and economy (Prokofiev 1961; Ashwin and Lytkina 2004; Titma et al. 2010; Terama et al. 2014; Semyonov 2014). As a result, there was huge participation of women in education and economy (Mandel 1972; Lapidus 1993), projecting as though Soviet Russia had attained gender equality (Terama et al. 2014).

However, the emancipation goal turned into a double burden for women as they had to bear the burden of domestic responsibilities as well as professional work. The Soviet ideology promoted the image of 'working wife and mother' (Tay 1972; Posadskaya 1993; Lapidus 1993). Women were provided with provisions of state guarantees and welfare policies (Tay 1972; Usha 2005) but were poorly

represented in leadership positions both in the political and economic sphere (Posadskaya 1993; Nechemias 1996). Soviet policies of emancipation resulted in 'gender paradox' in Soviet Russia (Usha 2005; 2012) as it was directed to achieve state socialist goals (Buckley 1990; Bayakhunova et al. 2012).

Post-Soviet Russian society remains patriarchal and gender stereotypes prevails in society. The patriarchal social structure, the gendered state and the past legacy of gender disparity between men and women have perpetuated the present generation. Women has a secondary status in every sphere of society as compared to men. Women representation in decision making bodies are insufficient. There an unevenness in distribution of resources among men and women. Women do not agree that they are in a subordinate position. They do not also challenge the current post-Soviet gender order. The concept of feminism is also not appealing in Russian society. Thus, women continue to remain in oppressive conditions and subordinated positions in the post-Soviet gender order. Therefore, gender inequality prevails in society despite there are a few constitutional provisions to ensure protection of their rights.

The present Russian constitution in principle ensures legal guarantees of equality and freedom for women in every sphere of life at par with men (Art.19) including education (Art.43) and work (Art. 37), the labour code (Art 2, 3, 132) prohibits gender discrimination in employment opportunities and wages (Constitution of Russian Federation 1992). Additionally, the state has formulated numerous legislative reforms and policy changes such as maternity leaves and benefits for women, prohibition of employment of women in unhealthy and unsafe environment (Art.243 of the Labour Code) and introduction of part-time employment for working mothers to maintain formal equality of rights and achieve real equality of men and women.

Besides the domestic legal provisions Russia has ratified several international instruments initiated by the UN for promotion of women rights and elimination of discrimination and gender equality. To achieve the goal of gender just society, countries around the world have committed to improving women's education especially with the implementation of the 'United Nations' Millennium Development Goals 2000-2015 in which gender-specific goals "to promote gender equality and empower women" are vividly laid down. The current 'Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) also has gender-specific goals "to promote quality education and gender equality" as core values in the implementation of Agenda 2030. Russia remains committed to implementing the SDG of gender equality in education. Russia possesses the legacy of the emancipation of women and gender equality under the Soviet Union which was the first country in the world that extended constitutional guarantees of gender equality and emancipation of women.

However, there are no state structures and mechanisms for the realisation of women's rights. There are also no precedence on which legal action against violations of equality and gender discrimination can be carried out. Most of the legal frameworks for women's rights provides only theoretical support for gender equality and prohibit gender discrimination without any real implementation on the ground. Women remained marginalized and subjugated. Therefore, given this context, the Russian Federation is particularly essential and compelling case in point to study neoliberal transformation in higher education and labour market and its gender effects.

The neoliberal transformation of Russia has resulted in gender inequality as reforms in higher education, and labour market took place. Many scholars (Gerber and Schaefer 2004; Roschin and Zubarevich 2005; Mezentseva 2006;

Ashwin 2010; Didenko et al. 2015; Barabanova et al. n.d; Bayakhunova et al. 2012) argued that in the event of transition, there is to be seen an increasing trend of gender segregation in higher education and labour market. The indiscernible mechanisms of discrimination in the labour market devalue the high level of education obtained by women rendering their skills and education futile. Women face blatant gender stereotypes and discrimination in hiring, wages, workloads, and representation in leadership roles.

Gender segregation and inequality are manifested in many ways in higher education and labour market in Russia. Russian women equalled and surpassed men in average educational attainment. However, their concentration is higher in less lucrative fields, and their non-technical education has resulted in women's labour market disadvantages (Gerber and Hout 1998; Gerber and Schaefer 2004; Gerber and Mayorova 2006). In contemporary Russia, despite the freedom to choose a field of study and occupation, the legacy of patriarchal norms and gender order affects women's choice of education (Gerber and Mayorova 2006; Zawistowska 2011; Smolentceva et al. atavist.com).

The privatisation and marketisation brought property rights predominantly to men, who own and rule various enterprises. With bigger authority and possessions in their hands, they became monarchs of privatisation and the key employers. Despite having equal competence and education, private employers practice discriminatory practices in hiring. The highly educated and qualified female workers face debilitating hurdles to enter the labour market as age, gender, and experience of a candidate is given importance rather than education and qualifications (Rimashevskaja 2013: 56). Not only women are stereotyped as less efficient and less career oriented; they have to face vertical and horizontal

gender based segregation in the labour market (Roschin and Zubarevich 2005:12).

The new changes disadvantaged Russian women to a great extent, as they are perceived to be less conversant to technical knowledge. Moreover, the prevalence of social safety net such as maternity leaves due to family reasons, and formulation of protective legislation for women and special rights for mother resulted in women disadvantages. The private employers associate such social benefits with costs and therefore considered women labour force as unattractive (Ashwin and Bowers 1997:1; Teplova 2005:10; Katz 2001:5). Women are labelled to have 'double burden' and regarded as the secondary status labour force (Rimashevskaja 2013: 55).

There is an increasing case of highly educated women having to face discrimination in the labour market. In neoliberal Russia, the human capital potential generated by highly educated women is not fully utilised. The unseen discrimination practices in the labour market are creating a glass ceiling for females to accomplish more senior positions at work creating gender segregation and the wage gap in the labour market. The main particularity of the women's labour force is qualified, and well-educated women lose jobs (Rimashevskaja 2013:56). Their qualification does not necessarily guarantee them a success in the labour market. Women despite being highly qualified and skilled are unable to achieve well-paying employment opportunities. The experience of equality and protection under the Soviet regime is weakened while capitalist characteristics have come to the fore. The quantitative representation of women in the labour market has failed to eliminate the gender gap in Russia's labour market. Unequal gender distribution across professions and industries (horizontal segregation), unequal wages within professions and types of activity (vertical

segregation), and low recognition of women's workforce are highlighted through differences in wages received by men and women (Roschin and Zubarevich 2005: 10).

Thus, neoliberal reforms in Russia have resulted in gender disparity where women are the ones who have been affected the most. Gender differences within occupations, branches and sectors, i.e. private versus public are observed in Russia. The stereotyping of gender in professions and industries have resulted in a disparity between men and women. Differentials in wages favoured men, and they are the one who dominates the lucrative sectors of the economy. In contemporary Russia, Russian men have overwhelmed those sectors of the economy, which had employed mostly women. For instance, areas such as banking have become male-dominated (Ashwin 2006:2). All these problems are leading to attitudinal change towards higher education and employment. Under tremendous pressure, women are looking towards a return to the family due to hardships as a result of abolishing the Soviet era social security guaranteed to them (Pilkington 1992; Ashwin and Bowers 1997:1).

Since higher education and labour market are interlinked, the gendered effect of reforms on women negatively impacts their empowerment. Thus, there is an intersection of gender, higher education and labour market in Russia in the neoliberal context. Therefore, the case of Russia is unique to examine the intersectionality of gender, higher education and labour market in the neoliberal era and to understand the complexity of how to achieve a gender just society which has a Soviet legacy of the right to equality and free education and protection of women's rights.

Studies linking gender, higher education and labour market in contemporary Russia is very few and remains an underexplored area. In the current academic discourse, gender issues in higher education and labour market as a result of neoliberal reforms are dealt with separately. Additionally, a gap is found regarding the problem of overburden on women due to the patriarchal attitude, gender roles and gender stereotyping of women in society. While wage disparity, vertical and horizontal segregation of occupations, unsafe working conditions, contradictory state policies, employer's perception, are emphasised, the impact of the complexity of neoliberal reforms in higher education and labour market on women is not addressed adequately. Moreover, Russia adopted a top-down approach in their attempt to recover from the failures of Soviet system.

The scope of the study is limited to the impact of reforms on higher education and labour market in contemporary Russia during 1991-2016. This period chosen because 1991 marks the beginning of a new era of policy changes in Russia. In 1991, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia embraced neoliberal policies and headed towards market reformation. This era marked not only dynamics of globalization, but also marked shifts in market, new labour force demand, and socio-cultural changes to name a few. This period is also characterised by the World Women's Conference in Beijing and the implementation of 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action' (1995), 'United Nations Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015)' and 'United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030)' in which improving women's education and promoting gender equality was given special emphasis. The issue of gender in higher education and labour market is studied within the broader theoretical framework on the subject.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts an interdisciplinary approach employing theoretical insights drawn from various disciplines such as gender studies, sociology, feminism, education, economics, public policy, global studies and so on. Some of the concepts used in the study are gender, gender inequality, sexual division of labour, higher education, educational equity, academic barbarism, academic capitalism, knowledge economy, human capital, neoliberalism, wage gap, segregation of occupation, economic empowerment, social exclusion, inequality, marginalization, discrimination, social justice and so on. The definitions of key concepts used in the study are as follows.

Gender, Sex and Patriarchy

Gender is a socially constructed characteristics of norms, roles and relationships between women and men or femininity and masculinity. It is used as a means to amplify the biological differences between men and women. Gender is not only limited to biological differences. Instead, it is a well-structured set of beliefs about feminine and masculine characteristics. It can be said that not all women are feminine, nor all men are masculine. It depends on the actions and beliefs one practices. According to feminists scholars, gender order is the construction of a patriarchal society. The patriarchal society characterised men as superior, leader, bread-winner while women as subordinate, submissive, caretaker. Such belief results in the subjugation of women's role and position in the society (Beauvoir 1953; Oakley 1972; Firestone 1970).

Sex is the biological difference between men and women. Feminists pointed out that biological sexual differences are manifested through social descriptions of masculinity and femininity, i.e. masculine as strong and tough while feminine as weak and soft. In the process of socialisation, the notion of differences gets so

profoundly ingrained that gender roles are voluntary/involuntarily performed (Butler 1992). In the patriarchal society, men control over areas such as women's productive or labour power, women's reproduction, control over women's sexuality, women's mobility, property and economic resources. According to Heywood (2003), "Patriarchal ideas blur the distinction between sex and gender and assume that all socio-economic and political distinctions between men and women are rooted in biology or anatomy" (Heywood 2003: 248).

Patriarchy is the socially institutionalized system of domination of women by men. Patriarchy precedes capitalism and continues to prevail in capitalism as well as political-economic systems. Patriarchy and capitalism are intimately entwined, and together they promote oppression. Women's inferior position in a capitalist system is because they are economically exploited as wage labourers along with 'patriarchal oppression' as 'mothers, consumers and domestic labourers' (Mandell 1995: 11). Walby (1986) also points out the subtle linkage between patriarchy and capitalism, which is resulting in gender segregation of labour force. She analyses the association of patriarchy and capitalism as of tension and conflict and not of congruence and mutual accommodation.

Gender Division of Labour

The different role of men and women is being shaped by history, culture and society. Women's position in society has always been subordinate to men. Therefore men being in power and position have interpreted biological differences as a means to subjugate and stereotype women (Beauvoir 1953; Scott 1988; Hill Collins 1990; EACEA 2010). The unequal power relations in the social structure has resulted in the sexual division of labour, in which women's labour is again considered secondary to men. Feminists state that the domination of men prevails over both domestic and economic sphere. Industrialization and

modernization have led to numerous changes in the social and economic sphere having a direct impact on the roles of men and women. Feminist writers claim that the move from household to factory production have impacted the sexual division of labour and the position of women in the society.

Historically, the division of labour in the society was based on the biological differences between men and women. Women confined to the roles of giving birth, rearing children and undertaking domestic chores, while men take on hard and demanding work due to their biology capabilities. As a result, the concept of sexual division of labour regards women's work as her natural duty. On the other hand, men work as productive labour and are valued as it leads to the production of goods and services. The traditional norms of the sexual division of labour prevailed even under capitalism, the concept of labour was generally used with a male bias and reserved for men. Whereas women's labour which generated 'surplus value' is devalued.

Mies (1981) refers to women's labour as 'shadow work'. She proposes that sexual division of labour is a structural problem of the society and should no longer be considered only from the perspective of the family problem. The hierarchical division of labour between men and women and its dynamics is prevalent in the national and international level. She further points out that the asymmetrical sexual division of labour was established through violence and promoted by institutions such as family, state and also by ideological systems. The "patriarchal religion" structured women by nature to be controlled and dominated by man (Ray 2014:10).

Gender Roles and Gender segregation

The term gender roles are understood as societal concept of how men and women should act and behave. Women's responsibilities are confined to private sphere and men's in public sphere. Gender segregation is the separation of people on the basis of their gender.

Feminisation

A process in which more and more women become involved in an activity. Gender inequality, the differential treatment of individuals by their gender. Patriarchy, a social system wherein men have more power over women in all spheres of life.

Patriarchal Renaissance

The rebirth of traditional norms of delimiting women to the domestic sphere, which relegates women's socio-economic status.

Transition Economy

An economic system which is involved in the process of moving from a centrally planned economy to a mixed or free market economy.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism can be defined as a contemporary 'politico-economic theory' favouring free trade privatisation, nominal state interference in the market functions of the economy and reduced the state's expenditure on social services. Earlier liberalism was out of political discourse. However, it re-emerged as a revival of liberalism and reincarnated as neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has become a new paradigm for economic and policy-making. The power of the state is restricted to the formulation of frameworks in support of entrepreneurs in the

market and minimal intervention in the functions of the economy. It is the brainchild of capitalism. David Harvey argues that neoliberalists promotes

well-being of human can be best achieved by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills through institutional frameworks of strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, healthcare, social security, or environmental pollution), then they must be created, by state action if necessary. However, beyond these tasks, the state should not venture (Harvey 2005:2).

In the neoliberal era, individuals are considered in charge of the choices and decisions they undertake. Therefore, inequality and social injustice are acceptable in cases in which individuals freely took the decisions (Nozick 1974; Hayek 1976; Thorsen and Lie 2010:15). Neoliberal policies and processes give power and control to ~~some~~ limited individuals to maximise their profit. Neoliberal policies have adverse effects on everyone, everywhere. For instance, it has resulted in increased socio-economic inequalities, severe exploitation of weaker nations and people, a devastating global environment, an unbalanced global economy while an unrivalled economic benefit of the wealthy (Chomsky 1999; Giroux 2014).

Knowledge Economy

Machlup (1962) was one of the first scholars to define ‘knowledge economy’ by the intensity of the high-skill labour force and knowledge intensity of six sectors of the economy, i.e. education, research and development (R&D), artistic creation, communications media, information services and information technologies (as cite in Cader 2008). According to Powell and Snellman (2004), knowledge economy can be defined as

production and services based on knowledge-intensive activities that contribute to an accelerated pace of technical and scientific advance, as well as rapid obsolescence. The key component of a knowledge economy

is a greater reliance on intellectual capabilities than on physical inputs or natural resources (Powell and Snellman 2004: 199).

In the last few decades, the economy of the developed countries has advanced due development in cutting-edge technologies based on knowledge and information. During the twentieth century, knowledge was not directly measured or incorporated in the production function of the economy. However, in the current economic environment, knowledge has established itself as a ‘factor of production’.

Human Capital

The collective skills, knowledge along with other intangible assets, which an individual possesses that can be of economic value are considered as human capital. OECD defines human capital as “the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being” (OECD: 2001:18). It also refers to the innate or the acquired skills and knowledge that a person has which can be utilised for economic productivity. In this context, according to human capital theory advocates that education maximise the productivity and earnings of a person. It is, therefore, crucial to invest in education as it is not only beneficial for an individual but also for the socio-economic growth of the country. Individuals attain knowledge and skills through education and training, this, in turn, enhances productivity at work. The increased productivity increases the salary because in the labour market the wage of a person is directly dependent on productivity. Since education and earnings are directly correlated. Therefore, education and training should be promoted to enhance the productivity of human capital (Marginson 1989, 1993; Tan 2014).

Higher Education

Higher education is tertiary education obtained after secondary education which is provided by colleges and universities. The objective of higher education is to equip learners with knowledge and skills for their all-round development.

Labour Market

Labour market is defined as space where employees work, demand for employees is created as per the market requirements.

Labour Force

It is the sum of a number of people that can be employed in a country. Sex, it is the biological status of a person.

Gender, Higher Education and Labour Market Linkages in Neoliberal Era

Gender is an important variable to understand the not only on women's status and progress but also the inequitable structures and various constructions of gender while addressing gender gaps in higher education and labour market in the neoliberal era. Critics have noted the adverse consequences of neoliberal reforms in higher education and labour market. For a better understanding of intersectionality aspects addressing gender in higher education and gender gaps in labour market, general consequences of neoliberal reforms are necessary.

Neoliberalism demonstrates three significant trends in higher education, i.e. privatisation, commercialisation and corporatisation (Kezar 2004). Higher education is characterized by capitalist and corporate influence (Chomsky 1998) and is integrated into the system of production in which knowledge is assigned an economic value to realize the goal of the state as well as the individual (Morrow 2006: xxxi). The emerging global trend is of increasing consumerism and corporatism in which "universities have become spaces wherein students are

valued as human capital and courses are defined by consumer demand and governance is based on the Walmart model of labor relations” (Giroux 2015:10). The goals of the university to cultivate intellectual insight, civic imagination, inquisitiveness, risk-taking, social responsibility and the struggle for justice (Ibid) has been taken over by business culture, and ‘new brutalism’ is in academia (Warner 2014) conforming to the global market forces in higher education and is giving rise to academic barbarism instead (O’Sullivan 2016: 14).

Neoliberal reforms in higher education pose numerous questions regarding accessibility, quality, imparting of social values, and knowledge. The distinction regarding power, prestige, and the economic payoff is increasing with significant differences noted by gender (Davies & Guppy 1997: 1419). Academic stratification of disciplines have become familiar with professional faculties, engineering and business being given more prestigious and powerful as compared to humanities or social sciences (Ibid). Gender segregation by field embodies a stubborn basis of inequality. Fields such as medicine, law, business and biology have largely desegregated, however, engineering and physical sciences is dominated by male while women are overrepresented in nursing and education (Jacobs 1995:93-96). This segregation is a result of traditional gender socialization: males avoid "nurturing" fields like nursing and education. Women on the other hand put less emphasis on monetary return when selecting a field.

This gendered educational decision is further observed in the labour market. The imbalanced gender composition of teachers in different fields also have role-modeling effects (Davies & Guppy 1997:1418). Gender differences within disciplines are due to the gender composition of faculty in certain fields of study, for example, vast numbers of female faculty in education drawing predominately

female students (Jacobs 1995). One repercussion of neoliberalism in higher education is that large proportions of the new contingent faculty cadre are females (Currie & Newson 1998). It may lead to a situation where female students follow female faculty, who are increasingly located in fields not favoured by the market (Kandiko 2010:159). The economic benefits derived from higher education reflect the fields of study students select, and women remain segregated from men in this regard (Jacobs 1995:81).

Funds for research are diverted to fields which are close to the market such as hard and applied sciences but away from the social sciences and humanities (Bok 2003; Slaughter & Leslie 1997). In the field of international collaboration disciplines such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics have the edge over soft or feminised subjects in the humanities and social sciences (Vabo 2017: 307). Humanities have been the most affected by neoliberal reforms and is at the peril of demise (Leo 2017: XV). Women are the ones who dominate humanities, therefore, they are the ones most affected by neoliberal changes in higher education.

Though globalisation and introduction of neoliberal reforms have caused increase in women's labour force participation, however, the demand for women workers have not been even in all sectors of the economy. It is mainly in export and service sectors within it in low-skilled occupations with low wages. The unprecedented increase of women's labour force participation has led to "feminization of employment", however, it refers not only to the intensification of women employment but also the simultaneous deterioration in the labour market conditions for women (Razavi 2003: 8). The increasing reliance on market strategies by introducing contract and part-time workers, privatisation of childcare and crèches, removal of welfare benefits and reduction on social

services has resulted in “a crisis of social reproduction and a corresponding increase in women’s workloads” (Nadasen 2013). The social rights and state support services have reduced, women now have access to “lesser economic resources and must either turn to the private sector or increase their own unpaid labor” (Ibid).

Introduction of market reforms and reduction in state subsidies has given private players control over the education system and creation of education system as a profit generating business. Education in the contemporary world is becoming anti-egalitarian (Hill and Kumar 2009). Additionally, demand for science and technical education has increased which is resulting in women labour market disadvantages as women primarily pursue arts, humanities and social science discipline which are not highly valuable and applicable in the knowledge economy. Teichler (1999) and Agarwal (2007) also holds the same view in regard to the expansion of higher education which has resulted in increased graduates whose qualifications does not match the market demand of skills and qualifications. Mostly, women are the victims of such changes.

Traditionally women choose majors paying lesser returns but provide non-monetary benefits such as maternity leaves and benefits. According to OECD (2011), gender differences in educational choices appear to be more about student attitudes (motivation, interest). Gender gaps in fields of the tertiary study indicate young women are not taking advantage of the field of studies that offer better employment prospects, such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics) studies. Even if women complete STEM studies, they are less likely than men to work in these sectors.

Numerous scholars (Chafetz 1990; Yano 1997; Marini 1984; El-Halawany 2009) opines that despite the freedom to choose and pursue education and occupation of one's choice, the process of educational choice is restricted not only by economic incentives but also by social norms and the employment system in each country. Despite having higher education, women have to conform to societal expectations of gender roles, i.e. her domestic role of taking care of family and household work. Another hurdle for women is their lack of confidence and belief in their ability and potential. Women lack motivation for professional advancement, as they consider family role more important than a professional career (Barabanova et al. 2013).

In the neoliberal market reforms, capitalist characteristics have come to the fore. Neoliberal policies have resulted in intensification to what critics call a “feminisation of labour, accompanied by a deterioration of working conditions-casualisation, flexibilisation, violation of international labour standards and low wages” (Moghadam 2005; Cornwall et al. 2008: 2). With the waning in social rights and state support services, women now have access to “lesser economic resources and must either turn to the private sector or increase their own unpaid labor” (Nadasen 2013). Neoliberal reforms have intensified women’s oppression and exploitation. Therefore, in the globally competitive world, economic empowerment of women becomes crucial. Economic empowerment must include establishing a women-friendly market as well as providing a platform for women to compete in the market (World Bank 2006). As well as enabling women to realise their rights to achieve broader development goals such as economic growth, poverty reduction, health, education and welfare (Golla et al. 2011; Kabeer 2012:8).

To achieve women's economic empowerment, target initiatives such as the expansion of women's economic opportunity; strengthening their legal rights and status; and ensure their voice is heard, involving them in economic decision making (UNDP 2008). Women's economic empowerment should not only be about women's participation in the labour market but also about the elimination of structural gender inequalities in the labour market including a better sharing of unpaid domestic workload' (Törnqvist and Schmitz 2009:9; Kabeer 2012:8). According to Nadasen (2013), neoliberalism despite its claims of being "race-and gender-neutrality", it is replacing the traditional order of society with new forms of "racism and sexism". There is an enormous rise in low-paid and part-time workers without benefits or social protection. It has increasingly resulted in women to bear the burden of financial support of the family.

The outcome of neoliberal reforms in higher education and labour market reforms noted above manifest gender gaps in Russia also as elsewhere. As Eddy, Kwaja and Ward (2017: 4) suggest feminist standpoint theory offers theoretical insights to address the gender challenges and conceptions in Russia and mapping out "a mechanism for mapping out the ways in which structures, policies, disciplinary norms, and practice create oppressive forms of power". The structure that created as a result of reforms itself remains as a barrier for women for advancement.

Focus of Study

The study seeks to analyze the following aspects of gender, higher education and labour market linkages.

- 1) Analysis of the relationship between higher education and labour market by linking it to gender in the neoliberal era in Russia.

- 2) Provide a critically, empirically and theoretically informed investigation of gendered characteristics in higher education and labour market.
- 3) Analysis of the reforms and policies in higher education and the labour market.
- 4) Contributes some suggestive measures for policy advancement and implementation in higher education and labour market development.

Research Questions

- 1) How has the higher education and the labour market sectors changed during the neoliberal transformation in Russia?
- 2) How higher education influences labour market outcomes and intersect with gender in the neoliberal era?
- 3) How higher education influence labour market outcomes for women in the neoliberal era in Russia?
- 4) How are women impacted by the new policies and reforms in higher education and the labour market sectors in Russia?
- 5) How are women responding to the gender gaps in wages and conditions in the labour market?
- 6) How is the state addressing women's problems in higher education and labour market sectors?

Hypotheses

- 1) The social construction of female labour as lower in status, wage and skill reproduce social inequalities and creating constraints for women to improve their labour market outcomes in the neoliberal era.
- 2) Given the structural inequality and the legacy of Soviet gender paradox, changes in higher education and labour market sectors during neoliberal transformation in post-Soviet Russia reproduced gender inequality and

segregation with unequal opportunity and outcomes, making women return to the traditional household roles, despite their higher education.

Research Methodology

The study applies analytical review of research literature on gender, education, labour market and feminist studies, documents from academia, major development organisations' reports, review, and governmental policies. It derives ideas from well-known scholars in this field of research N.M. Rimashevskaya, S.Yu. Roschin, N.V. Zubarevich, Sarah Ashwin, Elena Mezentseva, Joseph Zajda, Theodore Geber, S.V. Barabanova, Barbara Alpern Engel, Christine Johanson, Sarah Jane Aiston, N.Didenko, Venera Zakirova, William Smale, Tatiana Gounko, Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, and Tatyana Teplova.

The study uses both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include government documents, political party documents, newspaper, reports, speeches, and so on. The secondary sources include books, articles, journals, periodicals. The study used materials available in English, translations, and Russian languages. The variables such as gender, education, status, state policies, empowerment, employability, employment, labour force participation, etc. are used. The study uses following parameters as analytical tools: the concept of the labour market, social justice, gender inequality, higher education system, labour market transformation, gender order, gender identity, patriarchy, gender disparity, mobility, and so on.

Organization of Chapters

The study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter forms a theoretical framework linking higher education and labour market from a gender perspective in the neoliberal era. The second chapter provides a historical background of

women in higher education and labour force in Soviet Russia. It discusses women empowerment policies in the Soviet Union in general and specifically in higher education and labour market policies. It subsequently deliberates the progression of higher education and labour force participation because of state policies and women's experiences.

The third chapter ponders on neoliberal transformation and changes in higher education and the labour market in Russian Federation. The fourth chapter explores the intersection of gender, higher education and the labour market in Russia. It analyses the neoliberal state policies in higher education and the labour market for promoting women's rights. The impact and result of such policy changes on women and women's response to the changes.

The fifth chapter examines state's response in addressing the issues of gender and the response of women. It also investigates the changing attitude of women towards higher education and labour market and the impact of attitudinal changes on women. The sixth chapter verifies the hypotheses and concludes. It addresses potential resolutions to persistent gender inequalities in higher education and the labour market in Russia. It also outlines the limitations/shortcomings of the study along with some directions towards for future research.

Chapter 2

Women in Higher Education and Labour Force in Soviet Russia: A Historical Background

This chapter discusses women in higher education and labour market in Soviet in the context of the state ideology of Marxism-Leninism and policies for women's emancipation in every sphere of society. It also discusses the evolution of higher education and professional orientation as a result of women's movement in the 19th Century Russia. In Soviet Russia, egalitarian gender order was promoted by state ideology and constitutional guarantees. Soviet policies encouraged gender equality and women's equal access to higher education and labour market participation. However, despite gender equality principles, achievement of high level of education and full employment for women, gender discrimination prevailed paradoxically in the Soviet gender order. Soviet emancipation project for addressing women question turned as a failure in eliminating discrimination and subjugation, thus, perpetuated oppressive patriarchal conditions in society.

The Soviet legacy of gender paradox has strong impact in terms of gender in post-Soviet Russia which is transforming according to the neoliberal principles. Therefore, for a better understanding of women in education and labour market in the post-Soviet era, a historical background of women's emancipation policies and their outcomes, especially in the education and labour force participation during the Soviet era is important. Besides Soviet gender order, the status of women and socio-cultural context in which gender division of labour and gender identities are constructed mainly as per the patriarchal institution of *Domistroy* in tsarist Russia before the Russian Revolution is also necessary to look into.

Status of Women in Russia before the Bolshevik Revolution

In the pre-revolutionary era, women in Russia faced oppression and exploitation as elsewhere in the world. Women were confined to the private sphere with responsibilities of taking care of all household chores, caring elderly persons and rearing children that restricted access to the public sphere. Under the Tsarist rule, women suffered immense social and cultural stigma. The inequality of treatment existed for both bourgeoisie as well as the proletariat women. Women were tagged as ‘second-class’ citizen; they struggled at the private as well as the public sphere. The pre-Soviet Russian society was a highly patriarchal society with a clear demarcation of men’s and women’s spheres. The idea of womanhood had a cultural construct structured through religious and moral laws. For instance, a religious book called as *Domostroy*¹ was prescribed for instructions guiding everyday life activities and family and gender roles, as well as maintaining social order in the country (Tilk 2014: 129).

The *Domostroy* clearly defined man’s and woman’s role in the house and society wherein the man’s role was praised and glorified as head of the family while woman’s role as secondary to man. Though woman had the power over domestic chores and responsibilities; however, she was supposed to take the suggestions of her husband for everything. Man, on the other hand, was given the right to punish his wife severely, in case she commit mistakes in her duty. The *Domostroy* presented a thought-provoking dichotomy of the place of women. Though she was not a complete slave, she was neither less than a servant to her husband (Boyko 2018).

¹*Domostroy*, which literally means ‘domestic order’, takes its name from a series of manuscripts dating back to the 16th century. They offer a set of rules supposed to help mediaeval Russians run a good household.

Therefore, women were legally bound by state and religious power which was incorporated through penal and civil law. There were religious sanctions on adultery, marriage, divorce, and conversion into non-Russian Orthodox communities. In the proletariat family, prior to marriage the female child lived under the absolute authority of her father and after marriage under her husband. Women in both bourgeoisie and proletariat class were treated with absolute authority by their husbands. The Civil Code before Revolution declared: “A wife is bound to obey her husband as head of the family, to dwell with him in love, respect, and unlimited obedience, to show him every compliance and attachment” (Tay 1972: 666). While *Domostroy* and the tsarist legal code gave a lot power and authority for men over women, women were not granted power to challenge their men. Women remain in subordinated status. In this regard Marina Thorborg (2002: 537) states:

In “*Domostroi*”, the Russian Law, from the middle of the 16th century a hardening attitude also towards women of the upper classes could be identified. An absolute low point for Russian women occurred under the autocratic regime of Ivan Groznyj, 1533-84, (known as Ivan the Terrible in the West). Though beginning as a reformer in his brutal fight against the “boyars”, high nobility, the suppression of women was intensified, from his own rapes to raw punishments that afflicted women, when they did not want to pose naked in the snow when he passed by. They were hacked to death or dragged by horses over the fields down to the river to be drowned. Sometimes several hundred Muscovite women were forced to parade naked in deep snow for him, the court, and their families. Some were randomly chosen and flogged to death in front of those gathered, to serve as a warning.

In 1845 an official statute of the Russian Secondary School for Girls states:

Woman, as a lower creation appointed by nature to be dependent on others, must know that she is not fated to rule but to submit herself to her husband, and that only through strict fulfillment of her responsibilities to her family can she assure happiness and gain love and respect both within the family and without (Bisha 2002).

These statutes give the impression that women's subordination and dependency is quite natural because of which they are not supposed to rule, and their domain of actions are strictly the household. Her effectiveness in fulfilling household responsibilities is the measure of her happiness and respect from others within family and society. Such statutes enforced the negative social attitude towards women in Russia and normalises husband's right to absolute authority over wife, thereby perpetuate unequal gender relations and women's domesticity (Usha 2015; Engel 2017).

The reproductive role and domestic role of women was emphasised in both the noble and common classes. The concept of femininity and female roles led to denial of women's right to obtain education. For the most of Imperial Russia, women's work was confined to family and household. Women learned their role at home through their mother or older siblings. Even formal education of women trained and taught them of their roles at home and family at different stages of life. Noble women were trained to supervise in the kitchen and estate while peasant women were taught to weave and sew. (Bisha et al. 159-160). Thus, women in Russia were confined to private sphere and denied equal access to public life. However, Russia is not a place where women's problems remained unaddressed before October Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

Reforms for Improving Women's Status and Access to Education

There were attempts to improve the condition of women at least since the time of Peter the Great who initiated reforms of modernization in Imperial Russian Empire. When Peter I the Great came to power, he brought about many westernised reforms changing the life of noble Russian women. Elite class women were granted the freedom to have a social life in the courts and noble circles; they were granted permission to choose their marriage partners.

Moreover, the education of noble women became one of the key concerns during his rule (Engel et al. 1991: 136-37).

Catherine II the Great undertook special steps in reforming women's position among nobility by promoting women's education. She established the first school 'Smolnyi Institute' for girls of Noble Birth in 1764 in St. Petersburg. In 1765 when she established Novodevichii Institute women and girls from common social backgrounds were given access to education (Bisha et al. 2002: 164). Women were taught music, arts, history, sewing, geography, foreign languages in Smolnyi Institute. At the Novodevichii Institute daughters of commoners were taught practical and domestic economy. To improve women's education in Russia, she asked for the help of French philosopher Voltaire in structuring the curriculum of the institute to inculcate intellectual and free spirit in Russian women.

After 1800 when many public schools were established for peasant girls from humble backgrounds by Empress Maria, Mother Emperors, Alexander I and Nicholas I, through her Special Department of the Royal Household (Muravyeva 2010: 86). As a result of such reforms, elite women became more aware of their social conditions and rights while the condition of peasant women did not change much. However, the newly established position of elite women was under threat as Nicholas I came up with new policies (Engel et al. 1991: 136-37). Female student's enrolment increased by the year 1802. They constituted about 2000 of the 24000 students. Under, Empress Maria Fedorovna and other royal women, a number of institutes were established totalling thirty-six in by 1845 (Ibid: 166).

Social reforms and rights for women became necessary to improve women's social condition. Hence, in response to the social deprivations against women, feminism first began to emerge during the latter half of the 19th century in the restructuring years of Alexander II's rule. Under him, serfdom was abolished under the 'Tsar's Emancipation Manifesto' of February 19, 1861. He introduced reforms such as jury trial, local self-government in rural districts and larger towns with limited rights and granted freedom to print media (Edmondson 1992: 79).

One of the most significant reforms under Alexander II was the introduction of higher education to the lower classes. The life of peasant women improved, they were encouraged to participate in local self-government through the zemstvo² system. As women were introduced to the public sphere, they became aware of their deplorable conditions and began to address their social limitations in various ways (Edmondson 1992:79; 2001). As a result of these measures, women literacy improved to a great extent. Under Alexander II, the number of orthodox schools increased as well as pupils in primary education increased to about 100000. However, women were banned from universities in the nineteenth century Russia, forcing them to look for higher education outside their mother country. Male scholars questioned the ability of the female mind to conceive science and the physical ability of women to undertake extensive research (Aiston 2010).

² A local assembly that functioned as a body of provincial self-government in Russia from 1864 to 1917. The introduction of the zemstvo system was one of the major liberal reforms in the reign of Alexander II. Each district elected representatives, who had control over education, public health, roads, and aid to agriculture and commerce.

Women themselves felt dissatisfied with course content, the pedagogical method applied to teach girls, and attitude of faculty towards them. They began to demand for more opportunities for intellectual advancement and higher quality for education for women. As a result of women's struggle for higher education, a series of lectures for women were introduced resulting in higher women's courses in Moscow and St. Petersburg and several other cities. Despite, the introduction of these courses, women did not receive material support nor formal recognition. These courses were closed down after the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. Therefore, the reforms granting educational opportunities for women during Alexander II were the results of feminist struggles.

Feminist Struggles for Women's Rights, Equality and Education

The feminist activism in Russian Empire towards achieving women's rights and freedom became more visible and organized by 1860s. They were dissatisfied with the curriculum, pedagogy and oppressive regimes in educational institutions for girls. Many were of the opinion that the atmosphere in educational institutions was such that it would not promote intellectual development and permit further academic pursuits (Johanson 1987). Therefore, they contested Russian state and challenged conservative ideals on women's roles and emphasized the significance of women's education through their activism based on liberal ideas and understanding.

Thus, women's movement for female education got strengthened. Elena Likhacheva was one of the early woman activists in Russia who campaigned for women's higher education. She was the president of the courses funding society. In 1889, when enrolment of new auditors were denied. She appealed to the tsar by describing "women as true custodian of religion, morality order in the family and society" (Johanson : 98). Within a month of her appeal, the tsar asked the

education minister Delianov to consider reopening admissions for women (Ibid). Universities were established, employment opportunities were provided, and charities were established by feminist activists to help women in distress and into prostitution. Women began to form self-education circles as well as independent study groups to learn and teach each other. Also, women began to form civic groups for their representation in the diverse political spectrum. Some of which includes the 'Fritsche Circle,' the 'Ladies Committee of the Society for Poor Relief,' the 'Russian Women's Mutual Philanthropic Society.' Some of these groups were quite radical and were focused on women's liberation while others engaged women in political activities through charitable works (Ruthchild 2010). Despite their limitations, the early feminists gave their best efforts in fighting for women's rights. Consequent upon the unequal treatment, and intellectual awareness of women about their social conditions radical female movements took shape. This was a time revolutionary activity in which women's status was considered as a measure social progress were gaining strength.

Women Question and Struggle for Emancipation in the Revolutionary Era

Russian women began to actively participate in every stage of revolutionary movement since the early 1870s. They were influenced by revolutionary socialist writing concerning women's oppressive social conditions appeared in pre-revolutionary era. Socialist writers addressed woman's oppression throughout the 19th century. In 1848, *The Communist Manifesto* written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels briefly discussed woman's subjection to man. Marx and Engels wrote, "the bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production" (Vest 2011:2). Therefore, he suggested the socialist revolution that was promoted to bring forth equality for every social class irrespective of their sex/gender.

For instance, during the common struggle for suffrage in the late 19th century women actively participated with men. It was during this struggle; women realised the need to fight for their cause. However, the differences in the strategies and practices between feminists resulted in two groups, i.e. reformers and radicals during the 1860s and 1870s. Women's movement came to a hold when Alexander II was assassinated. The political situation in Russia turned out to be a threat to the future course of the women's liberation movement (Lindenmeyr 2011). The only existing institution zemstvos and town dumas that were in support of women's suffrage came under attack. Institutions, as well as organisations that were working towards women rights, were banned and forbidden during the 1880s. As a result, the feminists began to focus on defending the areas wherein they succeeded rather than divulging in the new and forbidden territory (Edmondson 1992:78).

The primary focus of feminists during the 1880s was towards protecting women's rights to higher education then fighting with the Tsar. Women's movement created fears among conservatives as a significant number of radical female students began fighting for women's cause. The conservatives held the opinion that education would provide abstract knowledge to women, provide them with a better prospect in future which would, in turn, make women lose their femininity, natural humility and even ability to bear children. As a result of such opinions and views of male political leaders, women had to face numerous limitations and challenges. For instance, though women were granted the right to higher education, yet, access to universities were denied. Women were granted employment; however, they were mostly in the subordinate positions with substandard wages. Women were barred from marrying to keep a job (Edmondson 1992:79; Engel 1992).

After the success of the Bloody Sunday revolution in 1905, many radical groups emerged who raised themselves beyond 'class interests' and worked towards inclusive rights of every woman including working women. Some of such organisations include 'Union for Women's Equality,' 'Women's Equal Rights Union,' 'Women's Progressive Party.' "They not only demanded the right to vote but also demanded: "radical social and labour reforms" (Lokaneeta 2001:1407). The revolution gave new impetus for women's movement. However, the grassroots organisations thrived under the complicated political situation. It was a considerable challenge to obtain an institutional acknowledgment of women's rights.

However, with the help of the male members of the legislative assembly, the parliamentary council of the Tsarist government was under pressure to recognise rights of the workers as well as women and to increase their participation in governance. Women's demand for suffrage became a significant dispute between radicals and liberals during 1905. "While the liberals were arguing amongst themselves on the principles of universal suffrage, the radicals were campaigning for a fully specified formula: not only 'universal, direct, equal and secret' (the so-called 'four-tailed' formula) but also 'without distinction of sex, religion or nationality' ('seven-tails')" (Edmondson 1992: 77).

Thus, in the early twentieth century, as women's equality became an international phenomenon, women workers in Russia also took inspiration from Western Socialists ideologies. In the Second International Conference of Working Women in 1910, Klara Zetkin one of the very well-known feminist workers declared the need to recognise women workers. It was decided that a special day for women would be celebrated on the same day in every country, every year, with the slogan "The vote for women will unite our strength in the

struggle for socialism” (Kollontai 1920). Hence, women’s movement across the world were successful in obtaining the right to vote. However, unlike the success in Western countries, women in Russia could not obtain the right to vote. However, they were expected to work and participate in building up the country’s economy. Women worked in farmlands, factories, workshops, or as domestic help and charwomen. Women realised that their problems would not be solved unless they represent themselves in the decision-making bodies (Ibid). As a result, under the guidance of Alexandra Kollontai and Inessa Armand, the women’s movement in Russia was intensified.

In 1913, Russian women participated in the ‘Working Women’s Day’, it became the first overwhelming reaction against Tsarist’s oppression and subjugation. The local newspapers such as ‘Pravda of Bolsheviks’ and ‘Looch of Menshevik’ began publishing articles on ‘women’s question’. In the subsequent years, women workers began actively participating in movements for women’s rights. For example, on 8th March 1917, a large number of women which includes women workers, peasant women as well as wives of soldiers participated in a protest in Petrograd demanding “Bread for our children” and “The return of our husbands from the trenches” (Kollontai 1920) as the country was undergoing socio-economic turmoil. The protests posed a massive threat to the Tsar’s rule; it marked the first revolutionary movement of Russian women. After the February Revolution, the Provisional Government was established. Under this government on 15 March 1917 in a decree, universal suffrage was granted giving women the right to vote. It also marked the beginning for formulating legislation to provide a comprehensive system of equality for both men and women (Tay 1972: 668).

Hence, considering the rising potential of the women’s movement, the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party began a mass mobilisation of women to fight for

socio-economic equality rather than focusing only on civil and political rights (Lokaneeta 2001:1407). Women were encouraged to participate actively in the revolution to free themselves from the clutch of capitalism and become financially independent to improve their situation. The revolution created a socio-economic upheaval in the quest of releasing women from the control of domestic roles. As a result, tremendous women workers participated in the October Revolution.

State, Women's Rights and Equality in the Soviet Union

The success of the October revolution in 1917 produced a new socio-political environment in the Soviet Union. Women's emancipation and equality became the essential aspects of the new government. For the first time in the world, a state proclaimed comprehensive social, economic, and political equality of both the genders and provided legal guarantees to ensure women's rights. Women were encouraged to be educated, work and participate in the economic as well as political sphere. However, numerous challenges hindered women's emancipation. Lack of education and resulting unemployment were amongst the severe concerns that hampered women's ability to achieve economic and political equality with men. Therefore, improvements in women's education became indispensable to achieve the socialist goal of an egalitarian society. The Bolsheviks believed that economic independence of women would enable them to fulfil family roles as well as participate in the economic functions equally with men. Therefore, policy reforms in all areas of life were implemented to emancipate women.

After the revolution, the legal restrictions which placed women in inferior positions were removed. The new government recognised the equality of women with men and promised to provide equal economic employment opportunities.

Official laws were enacted to support women's emancipation (Schuster 1971:260). The first Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 1918 granted legislative rights to women under the various articles. Article Two, Chapter Five (22) provides:

The Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, recognizing the equal rights of all citizens, irrespective of their racial or national connections, proclaims all privileges on this ground, as well as oppression of national minorities, to be contrary to the fundamental laws of the Republic (Marxists Internet Archive/ marxists.org).

Article Four, Chapter Thirteen (64) states:

The right to vote and to be elected to the Soviets is enjoyed by the following citizens of both sexes, irrespective of religion, nationality, domicile, etc., of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, who shall have completed their eighteenth year by the day of election (Marxists Internet Archive/marxists.org).

Under Stalin, the Soviet constitution was amended in 1936 providing equal rights of men and women, with special extension for women. Chapter X, Article 122 of the 1936 constitution states:

Women in the USSR are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life. The possibility of exercising these rights is ensured to women by granting them an equal right with men to work, payment for work, rest and leisure, social insurance and education, and by state protection of the interests of mother and child, pre-maternity and maternity leave with full pay, and the provision of a wide network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens (Marxists Internet Archive/marxists.org).

Chapter XI, Article 137 provides that "Women have the right to elect and be elected on equal terms with men"(Marxists Internet Archive/marxists.org).

The Soviet constitution was further amended under Brezhnev's leadership. It was adopted on October 1977. It added legal rights of

women. Chapter 6: Citizenship of the USSR) / Equality of Citizens' Rights in Article 34 states:

- (1) Citizens of the USSR are equal before the law, without distinction of origin, social or property status, race or nationality, sex, education, language, attitude to religion, type and nature of occupation, domicile, or other status.
- (2) The equal rights of citizens of the USSR are guaranteed in all fields of economic, political, social, and cultural life” (Novosti Press Agency Publishing House Moscow 1985).

Article 35 states:

- (1) Women and men have equal rights in the USSR.
- (2) Exercise of these rights is ensured by according women equal access with men to education and vocational and professional training, equal opportunities in employment, remuneration, and promotion, and in social and political, and cultural activity, and by special labor and health protection measures for women; by providing conditions enabling mothers to work; by legal protection, and material and moral support for mothers and children, including paid leaves and other benefits for expectant mothers and mothers, and gradual reduction of working time for mothers with small children” (Novosti Press Agency Publishing House Moscow 1985).

All these shows that for the first time, concerted efforts were put fort for comprehensive economic, political and sexual equality of women for which education became an indispensable instrument. A declaration for Unified Soviet School was published in October 1918 granting universal, compulsory and free elementary education for all regardless of gender (Medynsky 1944: 287).

Lenin, a staunch supporter of women's rights pointed out the relation between class and gender issues, and how communism would resolve these issues. Under his regime, the Bolsheviks eagerly worked for women’s liberation more than before. Lenin believed that once equality is achieved amongst all sections of women, they will be able to work together in bringing change and opportunities

that they were deprived. He declared that every communist irrespective of their gender belongs to the party and has the same rights and duties. The wave of social revolution channelled prospects in social mobility of women. For the first time in Russia's history, women could break free from the domestic role and work along with male in academics as well as on the battlefield. It further led to significant changes in evolving women's roles and equalising the differences between genders and classes (Ter-Grigoryan sites.bu.edu).

Under Lenin's leadership, a series of conferences were organised. Lenin stressed that socialism is the means to "women's complete equality with men in law and practice, in the family, in the state, and in society" (Schuster 1971:261). In the First All-Russia Congress of Working Women (1918), Lenin said:

Comrades, in a certain sense this Congress of the women's section of the workers' army has special significance because one of the hardest things in every country has been to stir the women into action. There can be no socialist revolution unless very many working women take a big part in it. In all civilized countries, even the most advanced, women are actually no more than domestic slaves. Women do not enjoy full equality in any capitalist state, not even in the freest of republics. One of the primary tasks of the Soviet Republic is to abolish all restrictions on women's rights (Schuster 1971:261).

In 1919, the women's department 'Zhenotdel'³ was established under the leadership of feminist worker Alexandra Kollontai. It created an autonomous space for women to discuss women's issues and problems. Lenin envisioned that industrial development and nationalisation of the economy would offer women

³ The Women's Section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (1919-1930). In September 1919 the Central Committee passed a decree upgrading the women commissions to the status of sections (*otdely*) within the party committees, thus creating the *zhenotdel*, or women's section.

the opportunity to work outside their home. During Lenin's time, the government mobilised millions of women workers and peasants to partake in building a new society. In 1921, when the economic situation worsened under the New Economic Policy, working women and peasant women were confronted with problems such as unemployment and prostitution. Women voiced out these concerns using Zhenotdel as a platform to criticise the New Economic Policy (Lokaneeta 2001: 1408).

The success of the revolution transformed the social system of the Soviet Union in the form of new advances in the field of gender equality. The state commenced control over issues related to gender by imposing political limitations. Under the socio-political goals, the state put forth abolition of domestic slavery, the liberation of women labour, and improvements in women's educational and living standards. On October 1918, Family Code was passed under which marriage laws were reformed by making matrimony as a civil matter, divorce became easier. A woman was not to be bound to her husband and was considered independent. Additionally, women were even granted rights to property ownership just like men. In 1926, a new Family Code was passed in which household chores and child-rearing became matters of public, social and state concern. In order to release women from domestic burden common kitchens, creches, nurseries, and kindergartens, central laundries, etc. were established (Tay 1972: 672).

When Stalin came to power, he declared women question was solved and abolished Zhenotdel in 1930. He revived traditional conservatism to enforce social and economic policies. Nevertheless, the theoretical claims of equality began to materialise after 1930 as a shortage of labour began. The state undertook various steps to obtain women's participation in the economy. The

Soviet authorities were successful in attracting many girls into skilled work. The Soviet Government approved many special laws in support of the female workforce. The year 1931 marks the most significant entry of female labour into the industry; this was because the law was passed that 50 percent of all pupils in the factory schools must be girls. This law was passed to agricultural schools in 1935. The official decrees resulted in women's massive entry to industrial training, which as a result, mounted their interest to work in the industry (Serebrennikov 1937: 29).

In addition, through the economic planning of the First Five-Year Plan and through Art.122 of the USSR constitution of 1936 which allotted equal rights with men and equal pay. The percentage of women workers increased from 22 percentage in 1922 to 32 percentage in 1932 and between 1922 -1937, women constituted 82 percent of the 4 million new workers (Mandel 1972:260). Furthermore, the Soviet legislation provided a comprehensive policy to strengthen the value of family and women's position within it. Women were allowed to work in all occupations and professions which were not harmful to their health; they were provided free access to all forms of education. The state created a conducive work environment to facilitate women's mass entry into the industry; additionally, a cautious protection system of woman's health, safe work environment for working mothers and her children. In 1931, a law was passed prohibiting women's entry to various kinds of work that requires great physical effort which might be harmful to them. Working hours were fixed to seven-hour working day for most industries (Serebrennikov 1937:6).

Labour laws were granted to protect working mothers and their child. In 1936, a new law for the protection of maternity was passed. Under which, it became illegal to dismiss pregnant women from work, they were entitled to obligatory

leave during pregnancy and child-bearing, in addition to the ordinary dinner interval, nursing mothers were given special privileges to attend to their children in between their works. The Soviet Union practised “equal pay for equal work” both in principle and practice and that “women were paid the same rates as men” (Ibid). In fact, a mother was to be provided with every prospect to support her family and herself as the future workers were under her care (Dutton 1932).

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in 1944 passed a decree to increase aid for pregnant women, mothers having many children, unmarried mothers. To strengthen the measures for the protection of motherhood and childhood. The state created the title ‘Heroine Mother,’ it instituted the order ‘Motherhood Glory’ and awarded ‘Motherhood Medal’ (Tay 1972: 677). Despite the declaration of equality, women were regarded as a ‘specific labour force’ due to their maternity function. Therefore, women were provided special provisions of maternity leaves to combine motherhood with paid employment. By mid-1950s, women were provided with increasing number of maternity benefits as maternity was socially defined function of women. The “construct Mother-Woman became the permanent focus of the party’s concern and assistance” (Posadskaya 1993: 165-66).

Under Khrushchev’s rule, women’s question once again got enhanced. The state restored liberal policies in political, social and economic spheres. Women’s civil rights were reinstated by 1955. The disparity between the state’s claim of women’s emancipation and the reality of women’s status and life came under scrutiny. For instance, women constituted only 19.7 percent of party members in 1956 (Nechemias 1996: 23), their representation was even lower in the Central

Committee. Khrushchev introduced *Zhensovety*⁴ in the late 1950s to increase women's participation in politics and provide a platform for women to discuss their interests, issues and desires (Noonan and Nechemias 2001:191).

Co-education was reinstated; women were once again admitted to high standard institutions to equip them with necessary skills. To enable them to work actively in industries and factories, their responsibility for childbearing/rearing was de-emphasized, divorce and abortion were made legal again. These steps were taken because the more women are free from household chores and responsibilities, the more they will be able to devote their time and energy at work. During this period women were granted special rights for the need of rationalising economic production and advancement of national interests (Women & Revolution 1975-76, regroupment.org).

By 1970s, during the Brezhnev era, the state faced policy dilemma due to contradictory policy developments. Policymakers advocated that women's labour be restricted from the unsafe and unhealthy work environment, women be transferred from laborious manual job to more skilled as well as suitable jobs. Steps to be regulated to maintain the demographic balance of the labour market. However, despite the promotion of policy in the interests of women, the biological and psychological differences between men and women were emphasised, a high value was attached to women's family and maternal roles (Lapidus 1993: 151-152).

⁴ Women's council that served as a legitimate body through which Soviet women expressed their discontents at a local level to be addressed at a higher authority. The *zhensovety* encompassed responsibilities such as to encourage women to take a greater interest in the political affairs of their region; to encourage non-working women into employment; and to enable women to take a more active role in the running of their local community.

When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he brought forth radical political and economic reforms under glasnost and perestroika. The political participation of women and ‘women’s question’ became an important aspect of the Perestroika programme. Gorbachev understood that it was essential to increase women’s role in the political, economic and social sphere for democratisation and restructuring of Soviet Union. As a result, perestroika provided women with a chance to assess their position in every sphere of society. The Zhensovetys (women’s council) was revived in the 27th Congress in 1986 to encourage women to become an active part of the political system. By 1987, nearly 240,000 Zhensovetys were established throughout the country under the Soviet Women’s Committee to unite women for the cause of communist development. Many reforms and policy changes followed. Immediately after the 28th Congress, Galina Vladimerova Semyonova was appointed as a full member of the Politburo of the CPSU. The nation-wide discussions of women’s problems like the ‘double burden’, the absence of women in high political ranks, the disparity between legal rights and practices, divorce, marriage, abortion etc. drew attention in journals such as Literaturnaya Gazeta, Ogonyok, Kommunist and newspapers like Pravda, Izvestia and Moskovskie Novo sti (Usha 2005:152).

Under Gorbachev, the taboos that undermined gender issues were removed by providing opportunities for social as well as political activism. It enabled the growth of genuine independent feminist organisations (Lapidus 1993:137) along with several autonomous political parties, including social movements and the human rights movement. Discussion on women’s issues became an essential part of academia, first Centre for Gender Studies was established. It also enabled the establishment of a feminist journal *Zhenskoye Chteniye* (Female Reading) under Olga Lipovskaya. The ‘First Independent Women’s Forum’ was formed on March 1990 under joint efforts of members of LOTOS (the League for Society's

Liberation from Stereotypes) and Moscow Centre for Gender Studies in Dubna, near Moscow with its slogan: “democracy minus women is not democracy” (Usha 2005: 154).

Under Gorbachev’s economic reforms, the service sector was promoted and expanded to increase female labour force participation from the industrial sector to the service sector. Furthermore, as the country was experiencing economic reforms, the state took two main decisions in support of women’s conditions. The first was ‘On Urgent Measures to Improve the Position of Women, Protection of Maternity and Childhood’, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted it on 10th April 1990. The second was the decision of the Soviet Ministers on 2nd August 1990, ‘On the Additional Measures to Provide the Social Protection of Families with Children in View of the Transition to the Regulated Market Economy’ (Posadskaya 1993:167). Hence, the state granted many legal guarantees to support the emancipation of women and achieve equality with men in every sphere of life. As a result, the status and position of women during the Soviet times improved significantly as compared to the pre-revolutionary times. Women then had in principle no barriers in higher education and labour force participation in the Soviet socialist society.

Women in Higher Education and Labour Force in Soviet Union

The Russian Revolution brought forth an exemplary transformation in the education sector. A vast number of the population was illiterate at the time of revolution creating a massive challenge for the new regime. Before the October Revolution, nearly three-quarters of the population in the age group 9-49 years old were illiterate; four-fifths of the women were illiterate (Tay 1972: 684). Improvement of mass literacy became an apparent tool for political, social and economic construction of a new system and to maintain it.

According to Lenin, without general education, it was not possible to educate people on politics. Therefore, education campaigns were organised on a large scale throughout the country amongst young children, peasants, workers, soldiers and women. Free public education was implemented for preparing a new generation of workers and as a way of discharging women from the drudgery of housework. All the children from three to sixteen years of age were mandated to have access to free and universal education. To combat sex discrimination in education, co-education was immediately implemented. Moreover, for the first time, educational institutes for students with learning and other disabilities were established. Education was considered a public good and to be utilized for the benefit of the society. Education was centrally planned to provide ideal conditions for complete social equality (Kotasek 1993; Terama et al. 2014: 108).

Education Policies

Right to free education was granted through the Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 1918. Article Two, Chapter Five (17) stated:

For the purpose of guaranteeing to the workers real access to knowledge, the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic sets itself the task of furnishing full and general free education to the workers and the poorest peasantry”(Marxists Internet Archive).

It was further reinforced under the Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (1936), Chapter X, Art. 121:

Citizens of the U.S.S.R. have the right to education. This right is ensured by the universal, compulsory elementary education; by the fact that education, including higher education, is free of charge; by a system of State scholarships for the overwhelming majority of students in the higher educational establishments; by instruction in the schools being conducted in the native language, and by the organisation of free vocational, technical and agronomic training for the toilers in the factories, State farms, machine and tractor stations, and collective farms” (Marxists Internet Archive).

Education was secularized and unified departing from the old church parochial school system. It was used as a powerful tool to achieve totality and uniformity. Education both lower and higher education was centralised. Standardization of curricula, as well as textbooks and teaching methods, took place. Teachers had the responsibility to inculcate Marxist-Leninist ideology amongst the pupils. Constitution, history and geography of the USSR became important subjects in the curricula (Szebenyi 1992: Terama et al. 2014: 108).

In 1923, the Soviet Education Law specified the objectives and goals of Soviet education. It stated: "All the work in the school and the whole organization of school life should promote proletarian class consciousness in the minds of pupils and create knowledge of the solidarity of Labor in its struggle with Capital as well as preparation for useful productive and political activity" (Peters 1956:421).

After the revolution, the administrative control of education was placed under the People's Commissariats for Education of the RSFSR (Commissariat of Enlightenment) also known as Narkompros; it sent out directions to the Commissariats for Education in each republic. The Central Planning Commission, on the other hand, was responsible for plans of general education for the all the Republics under the Soviet Union. It planned the number of new educational institutions as well as the kind of institutes to be established, the number of teachers to be employed and the number of libraries to be built. In the third Five-Year Plan 20,000 new schools were established and 500,000 new teachers were trained. It was the prerogative of the Planning Commission to choose the amount of financial resources to be provided to each republic from the central budget. The state's expenditure on education increased rapidly, the

amount spent per head estimated an increase of eight times in between 1932-1941. It increased to 12 percent of the national budget in 1942 (Anglo- Soviet Youth Friendship Alliance 1942).

Anatoly Vasilievich Lunacharsky, the first Commissar of Education formulated a revolutionary education policy to match the comprehensive reformation of the society. The state put forward radical educational policy reforms based on Marxist principles. Discipline and uniformity formed the cornerstone of Soviet education philosophy. The education system was established to function as a fundamental part of the restructuring of society. During the early 1920s, the Narkompros restructured schools into a unified and universal school system to permit continued movement of students from one school to the other. It was also to prepare the system for mandatory universal education through the secondary level. The goal of the unified school system was to allow equity of educational experience amid Soviet children. For the first time, polytechnic education was introduced in the Soviet Union to connect education to the technological and economic needs of the state (Cox 2011: 20-21).

After the October Revolution, the number of schools increased significantly as well as a number of pupils. Prior to the revolution, in the year 1914-1915, there were 105,524 schools with 7,896,249 pupils. It increased to 152,813 schools with 17,614,537 pupils between 1930 and 1931. By 1938-1939, the number of schools increased to 171,579 schools with 31,517,375 pupils. The percentage of literates aged over 9 increased from 24 percent to 81.2 percent from 1897 to 1939 (Medynsky 1944:288).

The Soviet Education System

The education system in Soviet Union was highly rational, hierarchical with bureaucratic lines of authority. The process of education was highly intensive with an aim to produce the most qualified citizens possible. It was highly centralised with firm control of curriculum, the choice of study and courses were constructed cautiously to fulfil the state's economic and political needs.

The goal of the educational system was to link education with the social, political and economic reality of the country. "The entire process of Soviet education from kindergarten to university was based on Marxist materialism and dominated by the conception of producing a young Communist-submissive, disciplined, and unquestioning" (Ross 1960:541).

The education system was divided into the following:

1. Pre-school social education for children up to 7 years (kindergartens, pre-school homes for orphans, children's playgrounds)
2. Elementary school with a four-year course of instruction for children of both sexes aged from 7 to 11 years old.
3. The junior secondary school with a seven-year course for children from 7 to 14 years old.
4. The senior secondary school with a ten-year teaching course for children from 7 to 17 inclusive.
5. Higher educational institutions (universities with a five-year course; institutes-technical, agricultural, medical, pedagogic, and other, with a four or four-and-a-half years' course of training)" (Medynsky 1944: 287).

After completion of junior secondary, a pupil could enter either senior secondary school or a secondary technical training institution such as industrial and agriculture technicums, medical and pedagogical schools. It provided three years course which trained workers in intermediate qualifications such as technicians, assistant surgeons and elementary school teachers. On successful completion of three years of practical work in their respective specialities, they could continue higher education (Medynsky 1944:288).

Despite the limited official data, studies indicate that the number of educational institutions substantially increased during the Soviet times as a result of education reforms. The total number of primary and secondary educational institutions was 7,800,000 in 1913 which increased to 33,400,000 in 1933. The state planned to increase primary and secondary schools to 40,000,000 in 1942 (Anglo-Soviet Youth Friendship Alliance 1942). It was an increase in more than fourfold of 1913. The state also established numerous higher education institutions. Some of the important universities are “the Central Asian, Byelorussian Dnepropetrovsk, Irkutsk, Gorky, Tbilisi, Azerbaijanian, Yerevan and a number of other universities”(Prokofiev 1961:6).

Table 1: Number of Educational Institutions, 1913-1942

	1913	1929	1933	1942 (plan)
Primary Schools	6,800,000	11,700,000	21,300,000	23,000,000
Secondary Schools	1,000,000	2,700,000	5,500,000	17,000,000
Total	7,800,000	14,400,000	33,400,000	40,000,000

(Data Source: Anglo-Soviet Youth Friendship Alliance 1942)

The increase in educational institutions resulted in massive enrolment in education. The enrolment of students in primary and secondary schools was 7,800,000 in 1913; it increased to 35,000,000 in 1940. It was an increase of above fourfold. The students in technical schools also increased substantially from 35,800 in 1913 to 951,900 in 1940. It was an increase in 25 times (Anglo-Soviet Youth Friendship Alliance 1942).

Due to the state’s focus on industrial production and technology development of the country. The government implemented policy to increase skills in the labour force through vocational training (Titma et al. 2003). As a result of which, a large number of students’ enrolment took place in technical schools. The enrolment in universities also increased from 112,000 in 1913 to 650000 in 1940. (see table 2).

Table 2: Enrolment in various levels of education, 1913-1940

	1913	1940
Children in Primary and Secondary Schools	7,800,000	35,000,000
Students in Technical Schools	35,800	951,900
Universities Students	112,000	650,000

(Data Source: Anglo-Soviet Youth Friendship Alliance 1942)

Higher Education System

Education was considered the critical agency for realising the state’s goals in the centrally planned Soviet economy. Every citizen was guaranteed the right to obtain free elementary and secondary education, students who passed secondary education could enrol themselves in higher education institutions by one’s primary educational achievements and participation in work during early education. Tertiary education during the Soviet times was a highly selective procedure to match labour market outcomes (Micklewright 1999; Titma et al. 2010).

Higher education was considered as a socially necessary organisation which was responsible “to train specialists, future organisers and leaders of industry, science culture and education” (Prokofiev 1961:5). The higher education system was

closely linked to the national economy and mirrored the processes of the economy. During the Soviet times, each sector of the economy controlled the labour market separately and thereby the enrolment of students accordingly. According to Heyneman (2010),

educational institutions, faculties, and curricula were governed by each sector and students were allocated to jobs as per the sector of their education. Of the 516 higher education institutions in the Soviet Union, only sixteen institutions were under the Ministry of Education while the rest were under the control of twenty-one federal ministries namely transport, health, industry, agriculture while four were controlled by the Ministry of small engine repairs (Heyneman 2010: 77).

State-owned plants, scientific organisations and institutions provided students with the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the technologies related to production and assisted in acquiring practical skills. The students were given free access to higher education; they did not pay for lectures, laboratories, hands-on training, or examinations. They also had free access to textbooks, study materials, medical amenities, and sports facilities including musical instruments and so on. The state solely funded the institutions. The state provided for all necessary expenses by appropriating generous sum from the budget into the construction of infrastructures, “provision of equipment, payment of salaries to professors and instructors, maintenance of students, and many other expenses, appropriating large sums from the budget” (Prokofiev 1961:6). Additionally, apart from the direct expenditures on education, indirect assistance was also provided. The state expenditures for education grew steadily from 22,500 million roubles in 1940 to 56,900 million roubles in 1950. The government in 1959 sanctioned 94,500 million roubles for general and higher education which was an increase in 4.2 times as of 1940 and an increase of 1.7 times as of 1950”(Ibid).

To fulfil the demands of the economy, there was a massive enrolment of students in higher education. By 1938, there were 47,705 students in the universities. In 1943, the total number of students in all higher educational institutions was 619,897; it was an increase from 12,000 in 1915. By 1943, Soviet Union had 750 higher educational institutions including 23 universities. The vocational training institutions (technicums) increased significantly from 295 in 1915 to 373 by 1939 (Medynsky 1944:289-90). In 1959, nearly 7.5 million people who graduated with higher and special secondary education were employed in the national economy. In the same year 342,000 students were to be graduated from universities and colleges and another 477,000 new students were to be enrolled (Prokofiev 1961:5).

Table 3: Distribution of Students in different disciplines 1958/59

	Student enrolment, thousands 1958/59 academic year	Share in total enrolment (per cent)
Humanities (Universities, pedagogical, law, economic and are colleges)	927.5	41.3
Technical	839.0	39.4
Agricultural	247.0	10.8
Medical	166.9	8.5

(Data Source: Prokofiev 1961: 5)

As a result of the state's rapid development of industries and production process, considerable number of students were admitted to technical education. Post-1970 there has been a steady growth in the total enrolment of students in elementary, secondary and higher education. Hence, the access to education during the Soviet's time was high. The state established a vast number of educational

institutions to educate and train students to achieve its socio-economic goals (U.S. Department of Commerce and State Committee on Statistics of the U.S.S.R. 1991).

Table 4. Enrolment in various levels of education, 1970-1989 (in thousands)

Year	Elementary Education	Secondary education, (general and specialised)	Higher Education
1970	15334	38427	4581
1975	12714	40620	4854
1980	13813	37242	5235
1985	15043	36511	5147
1987	15728	35491	5026
1988	15976	35325	4999
1989	16405	35290	5178

(Data source: U.S. Department of Commerce and State Committee on Statistics of the U.S.S.R., 1991:2-3)

At the All-Union Congress of Educators held in Moscow 1946, it was concluded that “We professors and instructors, obligate ourselves so to conduct our work that every day spent by a student in a higher educational institution will nurture in him Bolshevik ideology, broaden his political and cultural horizon, and enrich him with knowledge of his specialty” (Peters 1956:421).

As per the decision of the USSR Council of Ministers in July 1959, privileges were extended to those students who were working and studying at the same time. The state encouraged collaborative partnerships between science and higher

education and modern industries and employers to foster a beneficial relationship among higher education, planning agencies and the industrial sector. For example, employers could assist students to acquire up-to-date and relevant skills in continuation of education and life-long learning programs developed by HEIs. At the same time, HEIs could take up research and development activities to upgrade their knowledge of modern industrial needs. Moreover, professional staff engaged in innovative activities to gain awareness and experience with innovative technology and techniques that would enhance their instructional roles in the university. Unfortunately, the collaborations did not progress as expected as industries had little incentives to embrace the plan and to participate (Prokofiev 1961:6).

The Soviet system had a highly complex administrative structure of higher education with a plethora of levels and types of institutions with blurry boundaries. Some of the distinguishing features of the Soviet higher education were: thoroughly training and developing “active builders of communist society”, “a determinist setting of curricula with no individual freedom of choice of subject matter” (Ross 1960:540). “The place of the individual and the knowledge that one should possess were entirely as per the state’s needs” (Ibid). The state scrutinised the needs of various occupation then the educational system was directed to train and educate the required number of individuals accordingly as per the needs of industry.

Despite the right to higher education, it was purely the prerogative of the state to plan and manage education. The state plans the number of students to be enrolled based on the needs of each sector of the economy. The objective of the Soviet education higher education system was to develop and train students to accomplish the requirements of the economy rather than fulfilling the needs of

individuals. Though higher education was free for students enrolled in higher education institutions, students had no right to choose the program of study. The curriculum for the particular specialist and the number of specialists needed in the economy each year were all centrally planned.

The Soviet system was a flawless mechanism of workforce productivity. The Soviet system incorporated ‘differentiation strategy’ in its approach to fulfilling labour force demands. For instance, most of the educational institutions were established to provide education and cultivate professionals according to requirements of the state economy. “Burton Clark put the Soviet Union in the top corner of his famous triangle: the state determined the system entirely. It combined the supply-side and demand-side of higher education”(Semyonov 2014:14). As the USSR disintegrated, it paved the way for each of the countries to develop its own goals for higher education as per the social and economic needs.

Women’s status in Higher Education

Interestingly, one of the most crucial policy reforms during the Soviet period was its policy on women's education. Positive norms for women’s emancipation greatly attributed to women’s attainment of higher education. The Soviet educational scheme provided primarily the same opportunities offered to men. Free mass education was adopted as it was crucial to educate a new generation of workers to prepare to run the society and to free women from the drudgery of housework. To free women from the responsibility for child care and pursue education, universal crèches and preschools were established.

In the educational sphere, there was a significant improvement in women’s position. The previous inferior treatment of women in education was removed.

Prior to October revolution, four/fifth of the female were illiterate, the share of literate female was only 12.5 percent in the rural areas (Tay 1972: 684). However, after the revolution, the implementation of compulsory eight-year education policy for all children significantly improved women's education. A decade later women began to obtain higher education at a greater pace. Women constituted approximately one third of university students, about 50 percent of working high-school students including about ten percent of students in technical institutes. With the change in the class dynamics, more women from the rural areas started to pursue higher education especially the peasants and farm workers. Married women and mothers also started attending higher education institutions, especially in medical school. For example, "Smolensk University offered 50 percent quotas" to "students in the medical and pedagogical faculties" to enable more to obtain a higher education as higher education was essential for upward social and economic mobility (Hutton 2015:273). As a result of such efforts, numerous young peasant women grabbed the opportunity of favourable quotas to pursue higher education. The number of peasant women studying agronomy increased from four thousand in 1928 to nineteen thousand in 1933 (Ibid).

According to statistics of the State Planning Commission, there was a substantial increase in students in all types of factory schools, i.e. it increased from 2000 to 178,300 between 1921 and 1928. Within it, the share of female students increased from 13.3 to 27.6 percent from 1921 to 1928. Women's employment in factories was accompanied by systemic efforts to rise their cultural level. For example, more than 50 percent of women members of industrial trade unions were illiterate, however, by the first year of the First Five Year Plan (1928-32), there was a significant increase of literate women members in the Union (Serebrennikov 1937: 11-14).

In 1927, the share of women in higher education was 28 percent. By 1932, women's share of university rose to 33 percent and by 1937 women constituted 38 percent of students. In 1960, the share of women was 43 percent which increased to 49 percent in 1970. Many of them became dentists, doctors, engineers, agronomists and engineers (Pickard 1988; Hutton 2015). By 1972, women constituted 54 percent of the pupils of middle specialist educational institutions while in the higher educational institutions women constituted 47 percent of the pupils. According to an official data, "on 15 November 1966, there were 7,540,000 women with higher or specialised secondary education, making up 58 percent of the total number of such specialists in the national economy" (Tay 1972: 684-85).

Numerous vocational schools were also established to train students and fulfil the technical needs of the economy. In 1928, 178,300 pupils were enrolled in vocational schools which rose to 958,900 in 1933. Interestingly, more numbers of girl pupil joined leading to an increase in the percentage of girl pupils considerably. The proportion of girls in the industrial factory schools rose from 24.9-38.4 percent between 1929 and 1932. The most outstanding growth was in the factory schools for heavy industry. From 1930-1933 the increase in various schools was as follows: 14.3-27.5 percent in ferrous metals, 12.7-26.8 percent in machine-building, 30.6-35.1 percent in electrical engineering (Serebrennikov 1937: 29).

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce and State Committee on Statistics of the U.S.S.R. (1991), the enrolment of women in higher education was consistently higher than male from 1970-1989. In 1970, female enrolment was slightly lower than male; it was 2247 thousand while the male enrolment

was 2334 thousand. However, female enrolment increased to 2449 thousand in 1975 while the male was 2405 thousand. In 1989, female enrolment was 2626 thousand while the male enrolment was 2552 thousand. Women’s enrolment in higher education surpassed men after 1970 (see table 5).

Table 5: Male-Female enrolment in Higher Education in the USSR, 1970-1989

Year	Higher Education (in thousands)		
	Total	Male	Female
1970	4581	2334	2247
1975	4854	2405	2449
1980	5235	2513	2722
1985	5147	2297	2850
1987	5026	2273	2753
1988	4999	2305	2694
1989	5178	2552	2626

(Data source: U.S. Department of Commerce and State Committee on Statistics of the U.S.S.R., 1991:2-3)

The massive enrolment of women could be attributed to significant improvements in pre-school care for children, in 1960 there were nearly 500,000 pre-school care which rose to around five million by 1971. In 1918, there were only twenty-three kindergartens, eight-day cares (ochagi) and thirteen summer playgrounds in Moscow guberniia (province). The next such institutions increased to 279. In 1919, there were around 106 institutions in the city and about 180 in the guberniia outside the city as Petrograd reported (Behrent 2012:235). As a result of increase in daycare centers, women were able to free

themselves from taking care of children and enrol themselves to pursue higher education.

In the U.S. Office of Education reports, it was noted that the share of women students in various disciplines were as follows: 80 percent in education, 60 percent in medical, while between 30-40 percent in technical and engineering students. Women participated actively in practically every field of Soviet life, including “barbering, road repairing, and various heavy trades” (Ross 1960: 541). It indicates that Soviet women enjoyed equal access to higher education.

Women’s Labour Force Participation

Women’s enrolment to higher education increased significantly which opened up opportunities for employment. The increase of female employment can be attributed to labour force orientation of the state towards economic needs regardless of gender. Since the initial years of the New Economic Policy era, engagement of women’s labour in primary occupations turned out to be more extensive than pre-war period. The percentage of women involved in virtually every department of industry and national affairs surpassed the pre-war figures. In the industry, the share of women in 1913 was only 24.5 percentage which altered between 28-29 percent during the years between 1923 and 28. The share of women workers remained almost stable at 28.1 percent in 1923, 28.2 percent in 1926, and 28.6 percent in 1928. In early 1926 the share of women workforce in industry surpassed the pre-war level, it increased from 658,500-769,300 from 1926- 1928 (Serebrennikov 1937:12).

Table 6: Women in the total number of workers and employees (%)

1919	1924	1940	1960	1970	1980	1985	1986	1987	1988
40.9	27.7	38.9	47.2	50.8	51.2	50.9	50.8	50.6	50.6

(Data Source: Rimashevskaja 1992: 11)

From the table, it can be understood that women's labour share significantly increased significantly after 1924. From 1930 onwards, the rate of women employed in all industries, as well as all spheres of socialist production, rose significantly. The female labour firmly engrained in numerous sectors and occupations. It was a period of tempestuous growth of national activities which demanded more workers and in turn led to favourable conditions for mass female employment. Although women suffered a brief period of unemployment during the NEP era, however, after 1924 women's share in the labour force increased significantly. Women's share of total number of workers and employees reached over 50 percent by 1970 and remained so till 1988. It indicates that women have been encouraged in large scale to participate in the economy. By 1988, Soviet Union recorded "the highest female labour force participation of any industrial society. More than 85 percent of working-age women were engaged in full-time work or study, and women constituted 51 percent of all workers and employees" (Lapidus 1988:88; Ashwin and Lytkina 2004:192).

The high labour force participation of women was as a result of Soviet's commitment to equality as well as demographic and economic situation that was prevalent during the Soviet era. To maintain high economic growth rate, it became inevitable to encourage large percentage of women to participate in the economy because women comprised the majority of the Soviet population. The sex-ratio in the Soviet Union was affected because of the Revolutions, the Civil

War and the two World Wars. There were more female than male since 1926, there was almost seventy-six million females as compared to seventy-one million males. Hence, the lack of male population during the time of rapid expansion of economy contributed to massive mobilization of women into the paid work force (Buckley 1981:80-81).

The Outcome of Soviet Gender Equality Policies

Under the Soviet system, participation in the economic sphere was not only an economic duty but was considered crucial in fulfilling social and political integration. Besides, fulfilling the productive role, women had an additional role, i.e. reproductive role to fulfil the demographic duty to the state along with the prescribed role of ‘worker-mothers’. Women also had to shoulder the domestic responsibilities as early Bolshevik strategy of transferring domestic functions from the private to the public sphere could not be realized except for a limited extent in childcare facilities. “None of the Bolsheviks, not even Aleksandra Kollantai, challenged the idea of domestic work as inalienably feminine” (Ashwin and Lytkina 2004:192).

The natural sexual differences was accepted as a norm by the new communist elite as a result of which women were integrated into the labour force as ‘second-class workers’ (Ibid). Though women in the cities had more opportunity to access higher education and had the possibility of pursuing better careers as “doctors, engineers, teachers and even pilots”. Life in the cities was becoming gradually more “Sovietized”, but for women in the country life “remained traditional with marriage, work, religion, and village culture prevailing”(Hutton 2015:14).

Soviet policies presented contradictory claims. The reforms were introduced to encourage women to participate in the economic sphere alongside campaigns to push women back to the confines of their homes. It is evident from Gorbachev statements:

We have discovered that many of our problems-in children's and young people's behaviour, in our morals, culture, and in production- are partially caused by the weakening of family ties and slack attitude towards family responsibilities. This is a paradoxical result of our sincere and politically justified desire to make women equal with men in everything. Now, in the course of Perestroika, we have begun to overcome this shortcoming. That is why, we are now holding heated debates in the press, in public organisations, at work and at home, about the question of what we should do to make it possible for women to return to their purely womanly mission (Gorbachev 1987: 177).

Women at leadership positions were also not free from the subjugation of male party leaders. For example, in 1919, Elena Statsova was appointed as party secretary. However, she was terminated by Lenin and replaced by three men in 1920 when she tried to make the party's central administration more efficient. She was relegated to the position of party's historian. Alexandra Kollontai was the Commissar of Social Welfare (1918-1921) and the head of the Zhenotdel; however, she was dismissed when she opposed to the party's New Economic policy (1921) as a malevolent influence on women and return to capitalism (as cited in Hutton 2015). Therefore, despite claims of equality women faced discrimination at all levels during the Soviet era. The socialist economic system could not bring about equality between the genders.

Despite several economic empowerment policies, gender issues were ideologised by linking "women's rights to class struggle and construction of socialism" (Bayakhunova et al. 2012: 2). The socialist held the belief that women could enjoy full rights only by involving in the political and labour sphere. Though the state "instructed party workers to intensify the work of improving the

qualification of female labour” and “draw them to industries where they have either never been or employed in adequate numbers”(Mandel 1972: 260). Yet, such policies of encouraging women’s labour participation was to realize the political significance of employing women.

The gender discourse during the Soviet era was regulated in a cautious way ensuing in public consciousness that ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ were same and that gender issues were absent in Russia. It produced ‘cultural obstacles’ to mainstream gender equality issues and hindered its progress as perestroika began. According to Posadskaya (1993: 177), “so far, perestroika and economic reform constitute a masculine project. Women are invisible in the sphere of decision-making; they play a role of objects rather than active agents of current changes”. Instead, the public and private sphere increasingly got separated, and women were excluded from the public moved to private sphere. “The current situation is not produced solely by the restructuring itself but is deeply rooted in the system of patriarchy which existed before and during the period of state socialism. Perestroika revealed only a symbolic character of professed gender equality” (Ibid: 178).

The notion of a ‘zhenskii vopros’ (woman question) as a social problem largely became a political tool, used by the Bolsheviks extensively in keeping up the communist party alive (Chatterjee 1999:16). The Soviet political culture has been a male-dominated one from the very beginning. The women were merely regarded as an adjunct to manage domestic duties. They were simply recipients of the state’s welfare policies and programs rather than making them agents of their emancipation. The authoritarian character of the political system, absence of an autonomous women’s movement and lack of proper criticism of socialist

policies converted the emancipation goal into a double burden on women (Usha 2005:162).

There is also an indication that the political leaders were more interested in fulfilling their communist ideologies (Buckley 1990). In the urban region, the right to work for women was considered more of financial necessity rather than new freedom. The wage of a single bread-earner was not adequate to support a family. For instance, “the average monthly wage in the 1970s was less than two-thirds of what was required to support a family of four at even the officially recognised level of ‘material well-being’” (Lapidus 1993: 140). Hence, Revolution instead added to women’s burden as women remained bounded by familial responsibilities in addition to work in the factor or office (Tay 1972: 672-73).

Gender Segregation of Labour Force

Though women were encouraged to participate in the economy, they were considered as ‘second-class workers’. Such discrimination resulted in uneven labour force participation of women in various sectors and occupation of the economy. Women were represented more in low-paying occupation and sectors while underrepresented in prestigious and higher paying professions. Women were substantially represented in education, medical, administrative, commerce and service industry. These sectors were also known as feminised sectors. The share of women was above 80 percent in the food and textile industry, above 90 percent in the garment industry (Rimashevskaiia 1992: 6).

The total share of women in the national economy was 27.2 percent in 1929, it increased to 30.5 percent in 1933 and further increased to 33.4 percent in 1935. Though the percentage of women in all the sectors increased significantly

from 1929-1935 due to women's increasing participation in higher education and labour market.

Table 7: Share of women in various sectors of the economy from 1929-1935

Sectors	1929		1933		1935	
	In thousands	In percent of total number of workers	In thousands	In percent of total number of workers	In thousands	In percent of total number of workers
In national economy, as a whole	3304	27.2	6908	30.5	7881	33.4
Large-scale industry	939	27.9	2207	34.5	2627	38.3
Building trades	64	7	437	16	450	19.7
Transport	104	8	322	13.8	384	16.6
Commerce and public food services	134	19	786	40.5	822	39.4
Educational, health and administrative institutions	961	38.2	1766	45.2	1978	48.8
Agriculture	441	28	508	24.2	685	27

(Data source: Serebrennikov 1937:16)

Yet, the percentage of women in educational, health and governmental institutions sector was more than other sectors. Women's participation in educational, health and governmental institutions sector increased from 38.2 percent in 1929 to 48.8 percent in 1935. While in commerce and public food services, there has been a massive increase from only 19 percent in 1929 to 39.4

percent in 1935. From the data (table 7), it can be understood that women were confined to what is called feminine sectors or 'care' sectors of the economy. Hence, the practice of segregation of labour by industry and sector (Serebrennikov 1937:16).

Since the 1930s, segregation of labour force began. In 1937, at least 1.7 million women were engaged in cultural, educational, and medical work. The ratio of women and men teachers was 540,000:429,000. However, it should be noted that women were in lower manual positions in all these sectors. For instance, even in women, dominant industry such as education, the highest ranks was male-dominated, i.e., 55,000 male professors to 24,000 females (Hutton 2015).

Mandel (1972) also opines the occupational and sector segregation of jobs, as per the Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie SSSR, report 1956, women constituted "65 percent of workers in health (mostly as nurses and unskilled personnel), 54 percent in education and 46 percent in the restaurant trades" (Mandel 1972: 262). However, their share in other sectors was meager, women represented on 7 percent in construction, 11 percent in transport and communication, 16 percent in retail and wholesale trade, and 19 percent in offices (Ibid).

Women concentration in feminised sectors of the economy such as commerce, health, public services and education increased significantly over the years. In industry, construction, and transportation, women were employed in low-skilled, laborious and poorly paid positions (Kolchevska 2005: 115). Women were mostly concentrated in low manual jobs such as "washing floors or sweeping courtyards" (Mandel 1972:260). Their representation in science and management which are highly-skilled jobs was below 4 percent. "In a typical industrial city

studied in one Soviet survey, approximately 4 percent of the women workers were highly skilled; 30 percent were of average skill; and 66 percent were low-skilled” (Lapidus 1993: 141). (see table8).

In 1940 women’s share in education was 59 percent which increased to 73 percent in 1975. In 1959, at least one- third of women were employed in occupations where 70 percent of the workforce were women; it increased to 55 percent by 1970. The medical field became female dominated with 75 percent of women doctors and 98 percent of women nurses; other women majority fields include education wherein 75 percent of teachers were women including 95 percent of librarians.

Table 8: Female Employment in different branches of the economy (%)

	1980	1989
Commerce	12.9	12.8
Health	8.9	10.3
Education	11.8	14.3
Culture and arts	2.0	2.4
Science	3.8	3.6
Management	3.5	2.7
Collective farms	10.9	8.9
Industry, construction, transportation, public services	46.2	45.3

(Data Source: Rimashevskaja 1992:11)

Even within the agriculture sector, men held better paid skilled jobs while women in were employed in heavy manual labour. Even in 1975, “women's wages were only 67-73 percent of men's” (Pickard 1988).

Despite the suggestions of the members of KUTB (Committee to Improve the Labour and Life of Working Women), the central planners segregated the economy based on gender (Chatterjee 2003). The policy of creating female specific blocs of work and replacing of skilled male workers by female workers aggravated prevailing inherent male predispositions against women workers. The sex segregation of employment opportunities further reinforced the issue of low wages. Not only did women face discrimination in access to quality jobs but also faced discrimination regarding wages and payments. Wages and salary in the feminised industries were abysmally lower as compared to male-dominated industries (see table 9).

Table 9: Average Monthly Wages of workers and employees by industry, 1988

Industries	Pay (Roubles)
Economy as a whole	240.4
Industry	263.7
Agriculture	233.5
Construction	316.9
Transportation	287.7
Commerce, catering *	187.1
Public Services*	180.6
Health, Social security*	163.3
Public Education*	175.5

(Data Source: Rimashevskia 1992: 6) *Feminised industries

Patriarchy, Stereotyping and Discrimination

Although numerous policies were formulated by the Soviet government to emancipate women and enable them to attain equality. However, not much was done to eradicate the patriarchal norms and culture that prevailed in the society which continuously undermined women's socio-economic and political situation. Under the prevailing gender norms in the society, women were considered as next to men. Instead sexual stereotyping of occupations was through official attitudes and policies. For instance, women's employment was restricted to heavy or dangerous work 'unsuitable for female' while encouraged women to 'suitably female occupation'. The rational for such classifications was questionable because it was used as a means to divert women labour force to low-paying occupations. Occupation was segregated by sex. Industries in which women were more represented became over more female. The share of women labour force in laborious manual jobs such as such as warehouse workers, goods examiners and distributors and letter carriers increase from 59-74 percent between 1959-1970. According to a Soviet economist, the manual job became increasingly and almost exclusively for women (Sonin 1978: 12: Buckley 1981:85).

Women's occupational choices were also overwhelmingly influenced by social norms as women who pursued demanding careers encounter prejudices; it impeded their professional mobility as well as limited women's accession to positions of responsibility. Studies found out that the existence of widespread misconceptions about women being less resourceful and creative as compared to men, therefore, less suitable for managerial positions (Pavlova 1971). Additionally, the society expected women to prioritise family and household responsibilities than professional work. The state put forth emphasising on familial responsibilities as female domain (Lapidus 1993: 145).

The Soviet policy comprised more of extending maternity benefits and the provision of flexible working hours for women especially working mothers. These policies were considered as provision of equality. “Improvements such as the increase in childcare facilities merely reflects the attempts by the bureaucracy to manipulate the female workforce according to the needs of the economy” (Pickard 1988). There was a lack of women in managerial posts or at higher hierarchy as they were stereotyped as being weak and lack leadership qualities. Managers did not support the idea of training women to take on skilled workers, this reduced women’s potential for promotion. The male-coworkers continued to harass female workers physically and sexually and created an intimidating and hostile work environment. After the closure of the Zhenotdel, no other institution was established to take up the issue of inequality at the workplace (Chatterjee 2003).

Many leaders such as Lenin, Stalin and Gorbachev claimed that the Soviet Union achieved gender equality. For instance, “Gorbachev in his book ‘Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World’ claimed that in Soviet Union women had the same right to work as men, equal pay... every opportunity to get an education, to have a career and to participate in social and political activities”(Pickard 1988). However, the experiences of women were different. It was a challenging task to fight against the patriarchal culture of the society and the state. Despite the presence of few women leaders at the party level, they were placed in lower positions and could not effectively voice for women’s issues. The considerable share of women labour force did not eradicate the disparity of distribution between male and female job at different hierarchical levels of occupation. Nor did women’s improved education level, guaranteed them the

opportunity to enter “administrative, managerial and political roles” which matches their abilities (Buckley 1981: 85).

Gender issues during the Soviet times were considered irrelevant as labour force participation was relatively equal with small gender pay gaps. Hence, the ‘women question’ was considered ‘solved by econometrics rather than social, cultural, and political measures’ (Silova and Magno 2004: 418; Terama et al. 2014: 108). Hence, attaining gender equality was a massive challenge as Soviet’s policies in itself were gendered. The policies were structured in ways deprived of disturbing the position of the men and granted to garner women’s support in building the socialist state. Most of the men in a leadership position just paid lip service in voicing women's equality and rights (Buckley 1981: 80) only to gain women’s support and consent of the leaders who indeed advocated women's rights. Transforming the age-old patriarchal views of the society was difficult. The societal norms of women’s role in the domestic sphere did not change, nor were men ready to share the burden of domestic chores, despite the official claims of egalitarianism. The ‘double burden’ of work, in turn, devalued women’s capabilities, they were made to work in manual and laborious occupations.

Conclusion

Under Tsarist’s rule, women experienced a subordinated position in society and endured immense social and cultural stigma struggling both at the private and public spheres. The inequality of treatment was prevalent amongst the proletariat as well as bourgeoisie women. During the late nineteenth century, the movement for women’s equality became an international phenomenon especially in the Western world leading to an awakening among the bourgeoisie women and slowly penetrated to the proletariat women. However, women’s movement

gained much momentum at the advent of the Russian Revolution, as the Bolsheviks promised emancipation of women as one of its goals. The socialist revolution was represented as the ultimate resolution of their problems.

As Bolsheviks came to power, significant reforms in education and economy took place. Women were granted legal equality to men. Numerous steps were taken to encourage women's participation in education and economy. For instance, childcare centres and communal dining halls were established. Quotas were provided to encourage women to pursue technical education. Pregnant women were provided with extra aids and maternity benefits. By 1930s, under Stalin, it was claimed that the Soviet Union has achieved women's liberation and attained gender parity.

The Soviet policies, however, created circumstances for women to fulfil both production and reproduction roles. By the beginning of the 1930s, the state's missions for women such as communal living, creches and nurseries failed, this led to the official imposition of 'double burden' on working women. The goals and objectives of the Bolsheviks to free women from domestic drudgery was barely materialised as many women were compelled to juggle between the roles of professional workers and home-makers. Although women's labour participation was high in industry and agriculture. Women in the workplace faced discrimination both regarding wages and position offered to them. They were mainly employed in substandard positions and could seldom progress to positions of power. Also, the institutionalisation of regressive social policies banning abortions, illegalizing divorce, and valorizing the role of woman in the family further worsened their situation.

The genderisation of sectors of industry and sectors further worsens their status at work. Though the state implemented numerous policies providing provision for women's education and profession, there was a massive disconnection between the proclamation of policy and practice. Economic commitments along with traditional domestic responsibilities made life increasingly hard for many women. The state was also not able to eliminate the patriarchal culture of the society which continued to subjugate women both in the private and public sphere. As a result, the state policy of women empowerment created a 'gender paradox' in the Soviet Union.

Chapter 3

Neoliberal Transformation and Changes in Higher Education and Labour Market in Russian Federation

This chapter outlines the reforms in higher education and labour market as a result of neoliberal transition in Russia. It also delves into the evolving linkages between higher education and labour market in the neoliberal era and the ways in which higher education is accommodating the changing demands of labour force. It also discusses the consequences of reforms in higher education and labour market. It addresses the first research question in the course of the study.

In a worldwide neoliberal milieu, the growing importance of “knowledge industry, innovations in information and communication technologies, a strong orientation toward the market economy and growth in regional and international governance systems has accelerated flow of people, ideas, culture, technology, goods and services in our globalized world” (Zajda and Rust 2016: 1). As the world economy is moving towards a knowledge-based economy, development of human capital through universities is becoming increasingly crucial for the economic performance of the countries (Wildavsky 2010; Balzer 2010; Forrat 2012: 7). Therefore, the development of “higher education has become the new starship in the policy fleet for governments around the world” (Olssena and Peters 2005: 313).

Such changes in the economy have endowed education with “an economic value by forming both direct and indirect backward and forward links between education and economy” (Agarwal 2007:4). Though primary and secondary education is crucial, however, it is the quality and size of the higher education

that produces quality and professionals to meet the demands of a dynamic globalising economy. Presently, higher education is not treated as a part of the public sector that requires government subsidies and resources. It is instead considered an investment to boost the economy. Countries around the world are encouraging higher education institutions to develop links with industry and businesses by forming new partnerships. To be in tandem with the rest of the world, Russia also embraced the neoliberal reforms. Nevertheless, introduction of market reforms in higher education and labour market has resulted in numerous challenges in regard to accessibility, equity, and quality. Russia's experience in this context would offer valuable understandings for developing as well as developed countries.

Education System in Post-Soviet Russia

Post-disintegration of the USSR, educational planning, policies and regulations in every type of educational institutions have been placed under the control of the Ministry of Education and Science (aka MINOBRNAUKA). The 'Constitution of the Russian Federation, 1993', the 'Federal Law on Education of 1992 (1996 revisions), and the newest 'Federal Law on Education in Russian Federation No. 273-FZ, 2012' together guarantees the right of citizen to education, democratisation of educational institutions, provisions of academic freedom and institutional autonomy and humanisation of education in Russia.

Art.43 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation states:

1. Everyone shall have the right to education.
2. Guarantees shall be provided for general access to and free pre-school, secondary and high vocational education in state or municipal educational establishments and at enterprises.
3. Everyone shall have the right to receive on a competitive basis a free higher education in a state or municipal educational establishment and at an enterprise.
4. The basic general education shall be free of charge. Parents or persons in law parents shall enable their children to receive a basic general education.

5. The Russian Federation shall establish federal state educational standards and support various forms of education and self-education (Constitution of the Russian Federation 1993).

Under the 'Federal Law on Education', every child below the age of fifteen years must obtain a compulsory education. Free education is being granted to every citizen until eighteen years of age. It is the responsibility of the parents and guardian to ensure that their children receive education accordingly. Furthermore, every person can "acquire formal education within its territory irrespective of race, nationality, language, sex, age, health, wealth, social and official status, social origin, place of residence, religion, loyalty, party affiliation and previous convictions" (Ministry of Education and Science 2006-2013).

There are a total of 180,000 educational establishments of various types and categories recognised in the Russian Federation. The system of education in the Russian Federation is structure into general education, secondary education, and higher education. General education includes pre-school education (one-two years); primary general education (four years); basic general education (five years); secondary (complete) general education (two years) (Ministry of Education and Science 2006-2013).

The goal of general education is to advance intellectual, moral, emotional, and physical well-being; developing student's aptitude to acclimatise themselves to society as well as establishing the foundation to empower them to make a conscious choice of the professional education programme and manage it. After the completion of lower secondary education (Grade 9), students must appear in final examinations called state final attestation to be awarded the Certificate of Basic General Education (Attestat ob osnovnom obshchem obrazovanii). This certificate allows the students to be admitted either to secondary general education or technical and vocational education/ training (srednee

professionalnoe obrazovanie). In 2007, the state passed legislation mandating that secondary general education, i.e. eleven years of formal schooling compulsory to qualify to appear Unified State Examinations (EGE¹) to obtain Certificate of Secondary General Education (Attestat o srednem obshchem obrazovanii). “The general secondary school study program train students in the Russian language and mathematics, which are an obligatory part of the EGE. Graduates who successfully pass the EGE in Russian and mathematics are awarded Certificate of Secondary General Education to obtain admission to higher education institutions”(National Information Center on Academic Recognition and Mobility 2016).

Professional education is designed for the continuous development by preparing the pupil with necessary qualification and skills for a professional career. Except for general education programmes, all programmes lead to diplomas and degrees as well as to professional qualifications which enables one to exercise the right to work. Therefore, they are together known as professional education programmes. According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia professional education covers the following:

- 1) Vocational education (nachalnoe professionalnoe obrazovanie)
- 2) Non-university level higher education (srednee professionalnoe obrazovanie)
- 3) University level higher education (vysshee professionalnoe obrazovanie)
- 4) Postgraduate education including doctoral study programmes (poslevuzovskoe professionalnoe obrazovanie) (Ministry of Education and Science 2006-2013).

¹ EGE or ediny gosudarstvenny ekzamen is a standardised exam every student must pass to enroll in higher education. It is compared to the SAT exams of the United States, A-level test of the United Kingdom and Gaokao exam of China.

Neoliberal Transformation in Education

The changing structure of the Russian economy necessitated numerous reforms in the education system to meet the socio-economic demands of the country. As Russia transitioned to neoliberalism, market forces and new models of financing education were introduced. The core of current educational policy in Russia is to develop human capital to 'be mobile, entrepreneurial, dynamic and responsible'. The Ministry of Education and Science has favoured organisation of educational legislation through 'integration and re-processing' considering the socio-economic changes the state is undergoing (Russian Federal Centre for Education legislation 2003-18). The goal of the new education system is to achieve all-inclusive modernisation of educational legislation in compliance with the current standards of legitimisation as well as considering the current needs of individuals and the society for quality as well as suitable education.

Currently, Russian education is being largely marketised. Educational service has been institutionalised and legalised under educational laws. By introducing market reforms into educational sector, educational institutions have been transformed into commercial enterprises and is increasingly becoming demand driven. As Russia is transforming and undergoing international integration, the education system is continuously being reformed to meet the global standards and demands. The state has loosened its control over the education system and is welcoming democratisation and autonomy of educational system. Simultaneously, privatisation of education is being encouraged. The new paradigm in education is associated with concepts such as 'educational market,' 'commodity,' 'competition,' and 'consumer choice' (Minina 2016: 3). Education has been transformed into an economic service with the introduction of "fee-paying programmes, private tutoring and paid electives" and altering interrelation

of Russia's educational agents in terms of students as 'consumers' and educational institutions and teachers as 'service providers' (Ibid).

Reforms in Higher Education

Prior to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, both general education and higher education was highly centralised. Higher education was focused on science and technology to meet economic demands of the country. However, as Russia transitioned to neoliberalism, the primary objective of reforms in higher education consists of modernisation of educational programmes to make Russian education globally competitive and finance-driven. The new Russian education policies consider "discourses of accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of the Western countries educational and social policies of the 1980s and 1990 (Gounko and Smale 2007:534).

The state approved the restructuring of the entire higher education system. It departed from the earlier system of ministerial control and is under the Ministry of Education and Science. However, some state HEIs are established, administered and funded by federal ministries. According to 2015 report, there are a total of 655 state HEI of which 572 are federal institutions, 55 institutions are under regional establishments while the remaining 28 institutions are under local or municipal authorities. Within the federal institutions, some are established and administrated by federal bodies. Such as 'the State University-Moscow Institute of International Relations', it is under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Another State University is 'the Moscow Technical University of Communication and Informatics', it was established and administered by the Ministry of Communication and Industry. The Moscow State University, on the other hand, is a unique institution which is directly financed from the federal budget (Higher School of Economics 2015: 5).

Higher education institutions in Russia are referred to as VUZy (vyshee uchebnoe zavedenie). It is of four types:

- 1) Universities (classical and technical universities)-responsible for education and research in a variety of disciplines with distinct consideration for both social sciences and humanities or natural fundamental and applied sciences;
- 2) Academies-responsible for education and research but focus on a single discipline;
- 3) Institutes-multi-disciplinary and is either independent structural units or part of a university or academy,
- 4) Private institutions - an independent educational unit which offers degrees in non- engineering fields such as business, culture, sociology, and religion (Higher School of Economics 2015: 2).

Higher education is of six levels. They are as follows:

- Level 1: 2-year incomplete Diploma
- Level 2: 3 to 4-year Bachelor's degree
- Level 3: 5-year Diploma (Diplom)
- Level 4: Master's degree (BA, plus 2 years of further higher education)
- Level 5: Kandidat Nauk (Candidate of Sciences)
- Level 6: Doktor Nauk (Doctor of Sciences) (Zajda 2016: 152).

Since Russia's disintegration, the state has introduced numerous reforms in higher education to make it at par with the requirements of the market and global standards. The reforms can be categorised into two phases, i.e. Reforms in the 1990s and Reforms after 2000.

Doctrines and Laws in the 1990s

In order to realise the demands of the new economic system, reforms in higher education became necessary. The primary features of the Russian education reforms of the 1990s are stated in the 'Russian Federation Law on Education, 1992' and the 'Federal Law on Postgraduate Professional Education, 1996'. These two legislations shaped the primary framework for the developments of the Russian education. It incorporates diverse subject matters such as the "role of education in modern Russia, state policy in education, issues of funding,

educational standards and the economics of the education system” (Gounko and Smale 2007: 540). The legislation of the 1990’s resonated with ambitions of creating an education system considering the transformations in the political and social sphere of the state. It was a deviation from the preceding Soviet rationalist that emphasised on fulfilling the requirements of the economy. The goals of the new educational philosophy are focused on ‘humanising’ and ‘individualising’ education approach as well as the incorporation of ‘human capital’ approach (Ibid).

Although higher education was still supported by the government and retained public status, however, the higher education system suffered losses because of the deficit in the budget and hyperinflation in the economy. Unlike other sectors of the economy, it could not benefit from market reforms. The higher education system was granted autonomy over the introduction of educational programs and commercial services to protect higher education system from further weakening. As a result, the educational programs were diversified (International Bureau of Education 2004: 3) and fees were introduced.

Introduction of fees was formally carried out by introducing ‘dual-track tuition system’ wherein some of the students were exempted from paying tuition fees on a competitive basis, the state-funded their tuition fees while others had to pay fees by themselves. The introduction of fees to higher education was not well-taken, the public held the perception that tuition-free education was overwhelmingly better in comparison to paid tuition fees education. It created a ‘post-Soviet delusion’ because both fee-paying students, as well as non-fee-paying students, were part of the same lectures, seminars and workshops. The fee paid programs became a widespread phenomenon only after 1998 (Androushchak 2014: 10).

At present, almost a third of the fee-paying students are engaged in various kinds of distance-learning and part-time programs which is comparatively less costly than the full-time paid educational programs, although it holds an air of the ‘second-rate education’. In spite of the negative perception towards the introduction of fees to higher education, by 2008 the percentage of paying fees students in higher education rose to almost 50 percent. It turned out to be an enormously vital source of revenue for the higher education system as “self-funded students bring 2/5 of universities revenues now actually” (Androushchak 2014: 10). As a result of the introduction of fees, the growing revenues enabled the state to invest more in the education system. Additionally, it led to an increasing number of students in higher education. However, the Russian education system was left disoriented due to “inevitable privatisation, liberalisation of formerly centrally set price and other measures of the ‘shock-therapy’ economic policy” (Ibid).

Additionally, the economic crisis of 1998 made Russia’s leading politicians and authorities realise the necessity of propositioning a strategy for the country’s future growth. Therefore, education policy was aligned to the socio-economic needs of the country. Accordingly, amendments in the educational policy became necessary. Until early 2000, the state did not bring forth substantial reforms in higher education. Nevertheless, new legislation provided provisions for expansion of private higher education institutions, introduced the doubletrack tuition fee system in public universities and diversified higher education institutions’ activities (Platonova and Semyonov 2016: 24).

Doctrines and Laws after 2000

Post economic crisis of 1998, the role of higher education became even more important to upgrade the knowledge and skills of the labour force to fulfil the socio-economic needs of the country. Revisions of socio-economic policies as well in government institutions were proposed by the Strategic Research Center (SRC) in 2000 to contain the socio-economic crisis in Russia. Within this proposal includes the transformation of educational system pronounced in the ‘National Doctrine of Education in the Russian Federation till 2025 (2000)’ and ‘the Conception of Russian Education Modernization till 2010 (2001)’. These two policies were formulated to designed to enhance the role of education for the socio-economic development of the country (Gounko and Smale 2007: 540).

Considering the social, cultural and historical aspects, the national doctrine emphasised on the development of modern education on the basis of “historically formed moral values, modern scientific outlook, international and inter-ethnic relations” (Starodubtceva and Krivko 2015:210). In addition to identifying the primary goals and objectives of education, the ‘National Doctrine of Education in the Russian Federation till 2025 (2000)’ also considered the problems of teaching staff, their salaries and pensions, the expected outcomes in the quality of education, accessibility of education, social provisions for students and the issues related to finance. Pogosian (2012) remarks:

....the Concept of Modernisation of the Russian Education till 2010 compared to the Doctrine, the ‘Concept’ is a well-structured and analytical document. It states the role of education at the current stage of the development of Russia should be determined by the objectives of Russia’s transition to a lawful democratic state, and to the market economy, and that the aim was to overcome the danger of the country’s lagging behind the world’s economic and social development (Pogosian 2012:289).

In the 'Concept', modernisation of education was emphasised to meet the needs of human capital development. The modern education policies, therefore, highlights the importance of education to fulfil the labour market demands and act as the primary instrument for the nation's socio-economic growth. For the first time, the Government of the Russian Federation in 2000 stated that education is a 'the long-term investment' and 'the most effective capital investment'. To realise the goals of education, the government approved the 'Federal strategic program for the development of education for the period 2006-2010'. Under this program, Russia's higher education was developed to be globally competitive, market mechanisms were introduced to the education sector as well as the obstacles of joining the Bologna process, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) was removed. The main theme of this program was to make Russia's economy globally competitive; to developed its education sector by promoting 'flexibility and innovation' as well as improving the quality of education for the growth of human capital in order to response the labour market needs (Gounko and Smale 2007: 541).

In an interview with Alexander Bikbov (2016), it was stated that the state-controlled reforms commenced after the Russian Ministry of Education signed the pan-European Bologna Declaration in 2003. From 2003 to 2005, certain universities served as flagships for the reforms by introducing a division between the bachelor's and the master's degrees, and ratings to measure student progress and the success of teaching staff" (Chesnokova 2016). The Bologna declaration, however, was formally adopted across the nation between 2008 and 2012.

Another change in the education system was the introduction of the Unified State Examination (EGE) in 2009 which eliminated individual university exams. Students who wished to pursue higher education are required to appear this exam

and based on the marks obtained in this exam; the students get admission to HE institutions. The Federal Law No. 83, 2010, 'On the Legal Status of Government (Municipal) Institutions', brought the higher education in Russia under the new economic model. Under this law, the state incorporated Federal Law on 'Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education' (Federal'nyi Zakon, 2010), the earlier system of free public education was withdrawn and allowed the educational institutions to enrol more fee-paying students. This amendment led to the commencement of the privatisation of the higher education system in Russia (Geroimenko et al. 2012: 78).

The incorporation of reforms and policy changes leading to modernisation of the Russian education system can be categorised under three pillars. The first pillar of the modernisation project was the introduction of Unified State Examination (EGE) in 2000 to scrap away the improvidence of individual university admission exams and offer equal access to higher education. Though the transition to this model incited much controversy and criticism, it was implemented universally in 2008. The next pillar was the introduction of the GIFO (State Individual Financial Obligation) project in 2002. The third pillar is the signing of the Bologna process in 2003; it was a significant step which integrated the higher education throughout the country and with European higher education system. The primary objective of this agreement is to make Russia's educational services at par with global standards and also to attract more international students as well as resources. It was also to create "mechanisms for recognition of Russian and international education credentials" and facilitate "academic mobility of students and professors" (Gounko and Smale 2007:541). "The pattern of neoliberal reforms includes reduction of state funding of higher education, shift costs to the market and consumers, stresses

accountability and emphasises higher education’s role in the economy” (Smolentseva 2014:2).

Presently higher education is being given economic value and is assessed by its contribution to economic growth and compliance with the labour market requirements. Therefore, current policies mainly constitute higher education as an instrumental tool for the economy of the country. The state control is withdrawn while the market control has increased. The privatisation of higher education, reduction in state funding and “engagement of private, non-governmental, and other funds is one of the significant features of evolving economies” (Geroimenko et al. 2012: 77). Russia also implemented these policies and reforms as it transitioned to neoliberalism. Some of the significant educational reforms and policies can be categorised as follows:

Privatisation and Commercialisation Of Higher Education

One of the most noteworthy changes in HE is the introduction of the private sector. As per the legislation of the 1990s, the new Russian state permitted the creation of private (nonstate) higher education institutions and, most importantly, charging tuition fees in state institutions. The number of private universities grew swiftly during the 1990s; it increased from 0-358 between 1992 and 2000, which increased to 450 in 2010. The most substantial increase in the number of fee-paying students occurred in the 2000s; it increased from 146 thousand -1940 thousand between 1993 and 2000, then to 4654 thousand in 2009 (Forrat 2013:8).

Table 10: Higher education institutions (at the beginning of the academic year), 2000/01 -2015/16

	2000/01	2005/06	2010/11	2014/15	2015/16
Total	965	1068	1115	950	896

State and municipal institutions	607	655	653	548	530
Private institutions	358	413	452	402	366

(Data Source: Education in Figures: Pocket Data Book, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, 2017: 29)

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of state-financed universities remained stagnant. The increase in the number of fee-paying students was as a result of economic recovery which resulted in substantial population entering college. The number of students enrolled in private institutions also increased as the state introduced private players in higher education. As per the table (10), in the academic year 2000/01, the total number of higher education institutions in Russia was 965, out of which the state and municipal institutions were 607 while 358 were private institutions. Both state and municipal institutions increased till the year 2010/11. However, there was a decline after that due to the state's policy to merge and shut-down non-performing institutions. As a result, in 2015/16, the total higher education institutions in Russia was 896, of which 530 was state and municipal institutions while 366 were private institutions (Higher School of Economics, Moscow 2017).

The total enrolment of students to higher education was 4741.4 thousand, out of which 4270.8 were in state and municipal institutions while 470.6 thousand was in private institutions in 2000/01. The number of students in private institutions increased substantially to 1079.3 thousand in 2005/6. The year 2010/11 experiences the highest increase with 1201.1 thousand student enrolments in private institutions. However, from 2014/15 to 2015/16, the enrolment of students to private institutions declined. Even in the state and municipal institutions, the same trend of increase and decrease can be seen. (see table 11).

The state policy of introduction of private institutions resulted in a massive increase of private institutions. However, the decline in population and resulting decrease of enrolment of students, the economic crisis of 2013 as well as state’s deregulation resulted in non-performance of numerous institutions. Therefore, the state has come up with a new policy to either merge or shut-down non-performing institutions.

Table 11: Students studying at State/Municipal and Private Institutions, 2000/01 -2015/16 (in thousand)

	2000/01	2005/06	2010/11	2014/15	2015/16
State and municipal	4270.8	5985.3	5848.7	4405.5	4061.4
Private	470.6	1079.3	1201.1	803.5	705.1
Total	4741.4	7064.6	7049.8	5209	4766.5

(Data Source: Education in Figures: Pocket Data Book Higher School of Economics, Moscow, 2017: 40)

Change in Admission Pattern and Scholarships/ Fellowships

The admission procedures of HEI have been standardised. The approval of the proposal from the policymakers from State University (Higher School of Economics) to standardised university entrance was another notable transformation in higher education. The national standardized examination is called as EGE, “it consists of standardised format and questions for all subject areas (languages, history, literature, chemistry, physics, biology, etc.) and centrally administered in all high schools nationwide” (Forrat 2013:9). The EGE result is the primary criteria for getting admission to higher education institutions. EGE was implemented to permit potential students to apply to multiple universities without undergoing the hassle of appearing in numerous

entrance examinations. It was also aimed at increasing student's mobility as well as competition between the universities in Russia. Initially, in 2001, the EGE was implemented in selected regions of Russia, but by 2009, it has become mandatory nationwide. It is mandatory for all higher education institutions to accept EGE results (Ibid).

The state also introduced individual state financial obligations (aka GIFO) which is also called as educational vouchers. The Ministry of Science and Education decides the number of students be admitted to specific programs with state funding on a competitive basis. The objective of GIFO was to provide directing funding to the student rather than through the university. Each student has issued a funding certificate that was to be used for paying tuition for their higher education. The intent of the GIFO was "targeted distribution of public finances among higher education institutions, increase competition between universities to attract the best school graduates, and stimulate a fee-paying model of higher education in Russia"(Gel'man and Starodubtsev 2016:108). However, the GIFO experiment was scrapped in 2005 due to opposition by university rectors as inefficient and would lead to a "redistribution of state funding between the universities", and many universities would "experience financial losses" (Forrat 2013:9).

Reduction in State Funding

Financing or funding of higher education has been a concern of Russian HEIs. Though throughout the decade of 2000, about 95 percent of the funds allotted to higher education institutions was through the federal budget. However, Russia is moving towards decentralisation of the educational system. Throughout the last three decades, higher education has been extolled as "a source of innovation, economic growth and regional development" by the

government (Luchinskaya 2011). However, funding to HE was tremendously dependent on the economic condition of the country. For instance, the expenditure from the gross domestic product (GDP) to higher education dropped from 1.2 to 0.4 percent between 1992 and 1998, in conjunction with market-orientated transformations and mass expansion in the enrolment of students. In 2008-09, Russia spent approximately “16 percent of per capita GDP per student enrolled in higher education in comparison of 25 percent in the United States” (Ibid).

The preceding funding pattern of higher education institutions “for construction and maintenance of faculty and staff housing, academic buildings and dormitories, and for the development of well-equipped laboratories” has reduced drastically (Kodin 1996:9). Currently, higher education receives less than 2 percent of the annual government budget, practically all of which is spent toward wages and students’ stipends. At present, universities are now allowed to earn extra income through various arrangements such as “private investments, the production and sale of goods, and the provision of revenue-generating continuing education programs” (Ibid). The most common form of receiving extra revenue is by renting buildings; it is common in central universities such as in Moscow and St. Petersburg wherein quite a few spacious dormitories and academic buildings have become vacant due to decreasing enrolments.

To help HEIs overcome financial pressures, the state has come up with special funding system to revive the dying universities. Russian Ministry of Education and Science decided to provide,

....special funding aimed particularly at supporting the development programs of 40 universities across the country, including the most well-known Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, Novosibirsk State University and others besides such giants as Moscow State University and Saint-Petersburg State

University”. As a result of which “many universities have improved their facilities, installed new equipment for instruction and research, developed new educational programs. Their faculty started to participate more intensively in international collaboration (Androushchak 2014:10).

Nevertheless, this initiative is still at a developing phase and require consistent financial support from the state.

Marketisation and Implementation of University Ranking

Initiatives of quality assurance in higher education have been introduced to make universities competitive at the international market. Accreditation system is an example of quality assurance mechanism which is being implemented to improve the institution’s position in the educational market (Forrat 2012: 7). Russia implemented university rankings as a mechanism to increase competition among universities nationally and globally. In 1999, Kar’era magazine steered the very first ranking of Russian universities. Followed by the Ministry of Education from 2001 to subsequently till 2009. After 2009, the government gave the contract of university ranking to the independent media companies, i.e. the “Interfax Group and Radio Ekho Moskvyy”. By 2010, a diverse range of universities has been put forward by “media, professional associations, student organisations and the universities themselves” (Forrat 2012:18).

At the same time, to surge the effectiveness of state funding, the government introduced measures of quality management systems in the universities. The Ministry of Education organised the first competition for the best quality management systems between the universities in 2000. After joining the Bologna declaration, a Coordination Council on Quality Provision was formed to deliberate on various models of quality management. “In 2005, the Ministry issued recommendations to create and device quality management systems in the

universities and made the effectiveness of a quality management system as one of the accreditation indicators” (Ibid).

The university rectors were mandated to implement quality measures of the work of faculty and students. Moreover, the state had also introduced an initiative under the President’s decree on May 7, 2012; it is informally called as 5/100 project. Under this program, the state is aiming to bring up at least five of the Russian Universities within top-100 in the international rankings. The Ministry for Education and Science was appointed to supervise the project and provide the roadmap. The purpose of this project is to internationalise higher education system by accentuating the role of the universities “in the international academic market by introducing international educational programs, attracting faculty from the international academic market, etc. Universities are to be selected by their plan for internationalisation based on the ‘5-100’ roadmap” (Androushchak 2014:11).

Financial Autonomy of Educational Institutions

The state has also recognised policymakers’ recommendations to grant financial autonomy to higher education institutions. Hence, efforts and steps are being taken by the state to expand financial autonomy of educational institutions. With the passing of the Federal law in 2010, the public sector organisations including higher educational institutions were granted financial autonomy. HEI is facilitated to engaged in the entrepreneurial activity and encouraged “to obtain funds by charging tuition fees and finding potential donors and sponsors within the business sector” (Zajda 2016: 151).

As per the autonomous policy, the state is responsible for paying only for the services delivered to the students but not for the universities. The universities are

allowed to keep and utilise any additional revenues earned. Another mechanism to support the financial autonomy of universities is the creation of ‘endowment fund’. The European University at St. Petersburg became the first university to adopt it in 2004 and was “registered in Ann Arbor, MI, USA”. In 2006, the state adopted the suggestions to create ‘endowment fund’ by the business communities and granted “tax-exempt status of endowment funds” (Forrat 2013:11).

Transformation in Educational Programs and Disciplines

The transition to the neoliberal era resulted in changing demands of skills and qualifications of the labour force. As a result, educational programs and disciplines were required to be changed and updated as per the requirements of the market economy. The significance of natural science and engineering subjects of the Soviet era dwindled as demand for scientists and disciplines such as math and physics decreased. As Russia transitioned to neoliberalism, disciplines such as marketing, advertising, computer and technology gained significant importance due to the commercialisation of products for mass consumption. Law and economy also became popular disciplines (Magun 2010).

Internationalization and Globalisation of Higher Education

Internationalisation of higher education became increasingly important to make Russian higher education system internationally at par with the global standards. To achieve this goal, Russia signed ‘the Bologna process’. The goal of this programme was to attract international students, researchers as well as the expertise to Russian higher education system. The aim of this agreement is being targeted towards improvement in the ‘economic performance’, evolve in ‘scientific and technical expertise’ and enhance Russia’s universities reputation at the global level. Along with these objectives, Russia's strategy was to develop ‘world-class’ institutions by creating federal and national research universities.

With the signing of the Bologna process, the old Soviet system of five-year specialist degree was replaced by bachelors and master's degrees. The incorporation of the new degree system provides students with the choices of degree and programs. It has also permitted the government to eliminate the non-functioning universities. To further improve its HE system, Russia has considered the recommendations of 'international agencies' such as the OECD and the World Bank to emphasise on policy framework stressing on the economic purpose of higher education. The World Bank has been unceasingly supporting Russia in numerous 'education-related projects ever since the mid-1990s. In 1997, 'Education Innovation Project' was carried out with the help of World Bank wherein some higher education institutions were chosen to improve the quality and quantity of social sciences by practising governance system as well as through the efficient use of resources. To promote the state's effort "to improve efficiency and access to good-quality general and vocational education in the Russian Federation", the World Bank approved "a US\$50 million" in 2001 (Gounko and Smale 2007:536). It also imparted the Russian government with the most excellent international practices in the use of ICT ensuring that the country acquires the 'state of the art experience' as it moves towards making HE system globally competitive and as per international standards.

The state has also initiated measures to enhance Russian universities to compete at the global level in knowledge production and innovations. The first step in this effort was through legally granting "Moscow State University and Saint-Petersburg State University special status" (Froumin and Povalko 2014:8). These two universities have been allocated substantial resources for the development of its infrastructures. Likewise, to restructure the higher education system, a

network of regional federal universities have been developed with the aim of letting these universities set leading examples and support the development of other universities. In 2014, nine universities were established by merging the existing higher education institutions. “The effort which began in 2006 has resulted in a network of 29 national research universities in 2008” (Ibid: 8). The universities are to be chosen on a competitive basis for acquiring funding to develop their infrastructure to carry out research and development.

Another initiative to enhance the internationalisation of higher education is through the 5/100 project; this program is developed to bridge the gap between Russian universities and global leaders. Within this project, numerous Federal universities have been established at a regional level, granting some universities national research university status, and provision of new academic mobility grants to attract leading foreign researchers to Russia. The ‘Top 100’ program is a way of offering additional resources to the top performing higher education institutions; this is because in comparison to other developed countries “Russia spends less per capita on higher education and research” (Altbach 2014:7). The primary goal of this program is an effort to bring forth “new ideas and innovative projects out of universities” as higher education in Russia has mainly been traditional in its approach to academic development (Ibid). Foreign and international experts are included in the selection and monitoring committee so that they can introduce international experience and practices in the higher education system. Hence, in the neoliberal transition, the state has formulated and implemented numerous reforms in higher education in accordance to the market principles in align to the global market demands and international standards.

Women's Access to Higher Education

Despite the right to free higher education (Art 43.3) on competitive basis. In practice nearly, 50 percent students pay for their education. Only one-third of the new entrants to higher education are on merit. Prospective students have to undertake special preparatory courses or hire private tutors to get through the entrance examinations. Even though the intent of the education reforms were to promote equity in higher education. However, the phenomenon of entrance examination creates a hurdle for students from lower socio-economic strata to enter a university. In the event of not getting through the entrance examination to avail free higher education. The students have to enter fee paying course. Hence, the financial costs for tutoring and tuition fees have become a 'heavy economic burden for Russian students and their families' (Survey of National Higher Education Systems 2004: 57; Zajda 2016: 154).

In a study, it was found that nearly 53 percent of the students in the universities were full fee-paying students in 2003. According to assessments nearly 80 percent of students in private and about 60-70 percent in state HEIs are full fee-paying students. According to the 'Law on Education', the quota of private students to be admitted to state HEIs is about 25 percent for law, management etc. However, such rules are rarely observed. Many HEIs prefer to enroll full-fee paying students. The incorporation of modern education reforms and the commodification of education has resulted in unequal access to higher education. The students are left with no choice but to accept high tuition fees to enroll in a prestigious HEIs.

Globalisation brought about "radical, controversial and anti-egalitarian reforms" which have a tremendous impact on the outcome of education system (Zajda 2016: 157). It led to the adoption of the Western model of higher education from

the traditional Soviet model of higher education which one of the most radical changes as a result of global competition. Besides, the unanticipated massive growth in students created problems in the delivery of the course, management in human resource and problem in quality assurance of higher education. Introduction of globalization and market forces into education has made students redefine themselves as ‘consumers’ expecting results of their investments (Ibid: 158).

Labour Market Reforms and Policies

As the Soviet Union disintegrated, Russia embraced open market system with neoliberal market reforms. The market economy was a complete departure from the socialist system which provided full employment, centralised wages and labour protections. Under market economy, the state control over the economy was reduced while control of private sector increased. The introduction of the new market system resulted in a change of economic conditions turning into economic turmoil which in turn led to massive loss of jobs and an increase in unemployment. The earlier practice of full employment and labour protections during the Soviet times was eliminated as Russia transitioned to a market economy. Therefore, the state-provided unemployment benefits to support the people who lost their jobs. However, the economic turmoil and resultant budgetary constraints in the country resulted in the reduction of financial support (McAuley 1998:229).

In the 1990s, the unemployment rate increased dramatically as a result of the restructuring of the economy and downsizing of the state enterprises. Adding to these problems, was the change in the demand for skills and knowledge of labour force in the process of economic and technological change. During the Soviet’s time, the economy was focused on industrial and technology. Therefore, the

labour force was trained in to focus on specific skills and expertise. However, as the economy moved towards transition, there was a shift in economic functions which rendered an enormous number of unskilled and skilled labour jobless (Ibid: 300). The economic transformations increased the number of unemployed as well as underemployed individuals. There was “a divergence between education and skills acquired in the Soviet era and those demanded by the jobs of an emerging market economy” (Foley 1997: 27).

In the event of a transition, the state took back a step and paved the way for privatisation in the economy. The advent of free-market entrepreneurs and companies created a new job market where jobs were not created for employees but the employers themselves. Incorporation of privatisation resulted in the withdrawal of the state from the direct determination of wages and salaries paving ways for the private employers to exploit labour force. Hence, the transition resulted in the increasing unemployment, job insecurity, intensifying income inequality and drastically less labour market prospects for workforces with low education and skills. It, in turn, led to a rapid decline in the living standard and welfare of society (Ibid).

Therefore, the adaptivity of the labour force, as well as flexibility of the market, became essential to accommodate the changes taking place in the economy. It became necessary for the state to formulate labour policies to alleviate further escalation of unemployment and to facilitate labour market flexibility. Henceforth, the state formulated and amended numerous labour laws and regulations to facilitate and accommodate the needs and demands of both the employees and the employers. The laws and regulations can be categorised into two phases: The first phase is ‘Laws and Regulations of the 1990s’ and ‘Laws and Regulations after 2000’.

Laws and Regulations of the 1990s

The Constitution of Russian Federation, 1993, Art. 37 states:

1. Labour is free. Everyone shall have the right to freely use his labour capabilities, to choose the type of activity and profession.
2. Forced labour shall be banned.
3. Everyone shall have the right to labour conditions meeting the safety and hygienic requirements, for labour remuneration without any discrimination whatsoever and not lower than minimum wages and salaries established by the federal law, as well as the right to protection against unemployment.
4. Recognition shall be given to the right to individual and collective labour disputes with the use of methods of their adjustment fixed by the federal law, including the right to strike.
5. Everyone shall have the right to rest and license. Those working by labour contracts shall be guaranteed the fixed duration of the working time, days off and holidays, and the annual paid leave established by the federal law (Chapter 2, The Constitution of Russian Federation, 1993 constitution.ru)

Early into transition, the labour market regulatory institutions had not evolved significantly nor were they effective. The labour code of the 1990s was inherited from the Communist regime; it did not befit the open market system. It created a conflict of realities as employees had enjoyed job security and secure employment under the centralised economy. The population expected the state to take care of them as it always had. To protect and accommodate the interest of the employees and employers in the new market system the government placed specific reforms (Lewinbuk 2008:847).

To establish the legal basis of labour relations in Russia and for the smooth functioning of the economic system the Supreme Council of RSFSR, realised the need to prepare a new Labour Code in 1991. The new labour code was named as the 'Code of Laws on Labor of the Russian Federation'. The objective of the new law was expanding employees' rights; add new grounds for termination of workers; clarify the role of trade unions; provide enforcement mechanisms for collective agreements; and provide specific regulations that define the parameters

of labour contracts. Moreover, it changed the terms of leave for women and other benefits. These changes reflected the legislature's attempt to recognise the development of a market economy and adjust the existing law accordingly (Ibid).

However, the Labour Code of the 1990s was just an adoption of the previous Labour Code of 1971, though several amendments were formulated, until the new Labour Code of 2001. From 1992-1999, several amendments took place to compensate for the lack of an active Labour Code. Between October 1992 and December 2000, sixteen laws were passed by presenting numerous additions and alterations to the 1971 Labour Code. Some of the most important laws that changed the development of labour relations were as follows:

the law 'On Collective Agreements'(11/03/1992), the law on 'The Order of Settling Collective Labour Disputes'(23/11/1995), the law 'On Trade Unions, Their Rights and Guarantees of Their Activity'(12/01/1996), the law on 'the Russian Tripartite Commission for Regulation of Socio Labour Relations' (1/05/1999), the law on 'The Basics of Work Safety in RF' (23/06/1999). The most noteworthy changes to the Labour Code were brought in by the law on 'Modifications and Additions to the Code of Laws' (25/09/1992). It was an attempt to adapt the working 1971 Labour Code to the changing economic environment and emerging market relations by providing more flexible regulations (Smirnych 2007:4).

The labour code conferred some additional rights to the management while eliminated the concept of the right to work. It significantly condensed trade union's rights to consultation in regard to safe working conditions of employees and compensation. The Ministry of labour retained the authority to set a minimum wage and regulate the structure of wages and salaries at the ministry level, but, not in the state and private sector. It instead introduced tax-based income to contain wage inflation (Ibid). Despite the changes in the labour code to protect labour force, many improvements did not take place. The earlier Soviet

principles remained, which affected the mobility of the workforce. The World Bank and Izdatelstvo Ves Mir Report (2003) states,

the new Code is still quite restrictive relative to many OECD countries. Employers are limited in their ability to adjust their workforce in response to economic and technological change; workers and employers do not have adequate opportunity to voice their concerns; contract enforcement is weak, and mechanisms for resolving workplace disputes and addressing health and safety concerns are limited. Even though the Government created a modern safety net in the early 1990s, limited financing of this program has made the system largely ineffective, contributing to high rates of poverty among the unemployed (relative to national levels)” (The World Bank and Izdatelstvo Ves Mir Report 2003: XI).

Amongst all the transition economies, the labour market policies of Russia up to 2001 was amongst the most rigid and over-regulated labour market in the world (Smirnych 2007:5). The policies of the state during the 1990s were of little help to both the employers and employees in the complex and transitioning process of the economy.

Laws and Regulations after 2000

Until 2002, the primary legal framework regulating labour and employment structure in Russia was the Soviet. However, by the end of 2001, a new Labour Code was materialised because of fierce political debates. The new labour code became effective in February 2002, though it still retains some of the protective and regulatory structures of the Soviet labour code. Nevertheless, it differs drastically from the previous version in its characterisation of the fundamental principles of labour legislation. As to its structure, the Labour Code consists of general “provisions of labour relations, collective bargaining, employment contracts, work and rest time, salary, guaranteed rights and compensation, discipline and training, work safety, and sanctions for damage to property” (Lewinbuk 2008:863).

The preliminary hope of the new code was to strike a balance between the interests of all kinds of management and workers. It was anticipated to bring about formal and real mechanisms to assure flexibility of labour market and to deregulate employment. The new labour code offered substantial liberalisation of norms regarding signing a temporary labour contract. Though it provided much flexibility to the employers, employees suffer a great deal because some employees testify that the workers are released more often. More part-time workers and temporary contracts began to be employed rather than full-time workers.

Overall, the new labour code provided several substantive changes. The new labour code is also regarded as a welcome and momentous improvement of the investment climate in Russia. Among significant changes in the labour code are the following: Firstly, it provided new grounds for the employers' rights over the dismissal of workers. Secondly, it established the minimum wage as the "subsistence minimum for an able-bodied adult" (Lewinbuk 2008:863). Thirdly, it presented some significant improvements in workers' rights regarding payment of wages. The new labour code supersedes any previously established employment agreements. Precisely, it provides minimum guarantees to the entitlements of the employees under any circumstances. Employment agreements must specify all duties and obligations under the contract. Hence, in comparison to the previous labour code, the new one was more of "a compromise between the interests of businesses and the interests of employees" (Ibid). Nevertheless, it was a more contemporary and comprehensive piece of regulation.

Link between Higher Education and Labour Market in the Neoliberal Era

As a result of market demands for the highly skilled labour force, modernisation of higher education became crucial. As it is through higher education, human capital can be advanced and equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge demands of the market. Under the neoliberal ideology, it became necessary to raise academic performance standard, standardize quality control and assessment, and increase international competitiveness to strengthen ties between education and economic productivity. Therefore, on the onset of the market economy, Russia's Ministry of Education introduced a series of reform initiatives identified as the modernisation reform in close compliance with policy advice from neoliberally minded policy experts associated with global educational and financial organisations such as OECD and World Bank. The neoliberal principles of the free educational market, excellence, standardization and quality assurance have informed the general direction of education reforms in Russia, as well as providing the backbone for the new educational ideology. Within these reforms, there has been a rapid expansion of tertiary-level education across the Russian Federation.

As Russia embraced neoliberalism, the labour market was exposed to the global economy and competition from foreign players. The economy shifted from industrial based to modern hi-tech and knowledge economy. This economic reform presented Russia with a radical and qualitative change in the labour market conditions as well as the nature of employment. With the introduction of market-based institutions, labour market demand and supply became liberalised as well as the wages (Dmitriev and Maleva 1997: 1500). The previous employment protection under the state was withdrawn. It resulted in the bulk of human capital accumulated during the Soviet system obsolete as it could not be used effectively under the new economic conditions.

During the Soviet's time, the need for labour force was determined according to the state's goals and objective for the development of the economy. However, in the event of neoliberal transition, the market determines the labour needs and requirements. The market demand for highly qualified and skilled labour force became widespread in most of the sectors and branches of the economy. As economy moved away from industrial production to service and knowledge industry. Therefore, tertiary education became crucial not only for getting better wages but also for quality employment opportunities (Gimpleson 2010).

As early as 1995-96, individuals having higher or secondary qualifications had better chances of getting employment in comparison to those with primary education or below. While individuals who had completed graduation had well of an advantage as compared to less educated ones, the probability of re-employment of individuals with a graduate degree was 27.5 percentage (Foley 1997: 33). During the initial years of transition, workers with higher and secondary education degree were comparatively protected from job loss, however, by 1996 only higher education provided a distinct advantage in retaining employment.

Table 12: Share of the rise and fall of people employed in various sectors, 1992-2004

	Sectors	1992 (%)	2004 (%)
Fall	Industries	30	21.4
	Farming	14	10.3
	Construction	11	7.8
	Science	3.2	1.8
Rise	Finance	0.7	1.4

	Trade	7.9	17.2
	Management	1.9	4.8

Source: (Smirnych 2007: 17)

The rise and fall in people employed in various sectors indicate the shift of labour force from one sector to the other. In the event of a transition, the traditional sectors such as industries, farming, construction and science (natural) lost importance while sectors such as finance, trade and management gained importance. The transition led to several transformations in the employment structure as Russia transitioned to a market economy.

During the initial years, i.e. from 1991-1998, due to a sudden move from centralised planning system which emphasised on industrialisation to a market economy. Numerous people lost their job as their education and qualifications did not match the market demands, the change accompanied a decline in employment and a reduction in real wages. The economy suffered too severely resulting in the economic crisis of 1998. However, economic recovery post-1998, led to positive demands of the labour force in the market with high returns to education as there was a shortage of skilled labour force (Smirnych 2007:17).

From 1992 to 2004, the percentage share of people employed in industries, farming and construction declined from 30 percentage, 14 percentage, 11 percentage respectively to 21.4 percentage, 10.3 percentage and 7.8 percentage respectively. Whereas sectors like finance, trade, and management experienced increased the growth of employed from 0.7 percentage, 7.9 percentage, 1.9 percentage to 1.4 percentage, 17.2 percentage, and 4.8 percentage respectively. Hence, the employment pattern changed in various sectors of the economy as Russia adopted a market economy. (see table 12).

Hence, though requirements for higher education declined immediate post-reforms, enrolment rates increased again in the later part of the 1990s because of the conditions for strong skill-based workers due to technological change, organisational transformation and institutional arrangements in the workplace. High educational attainment resulted in higher payoffs and wages. For instance, in terms of tertiary professional and technical education, there was a wage increase of 13 percent for males while 20 percent for females. On the other hand, men having university education earned 50 percent more as compared to those having an only secondary education. The wage for women with university education increased by 70 percent (Tan et al. 2008:72). Such high returns to university education elucidate the reason responsible for high enrolment to higher education as Russia transitioned to a market economy.

Post 1991, “the number of students has increased from approximately 3 to 6 million, which represents more than half of the population aged between 17 and 22” (Magun 2010). Additionally, there has been an enormous increase in educational institutions. However, the increase is mainly due to the emergence of private institutions. Even the professors are required to teach less prestigious but better-paid courses as per the market demands.

As per the study of Barro and Lee (2001), it was found that Russia had one of the most highly educated workforces in 2001. In the world rankings, Russia ranked seventh in the population of age group 25 years and above having an average of 10.5 years of schooling. It also had one of the highest shares of the population with a tertiary degree in the age group 25 years and above (as cited in Tan et al. 2008:71). Russia is “well-situated to take advantage of knowledge-based economic activities requiring a well-educated workforce and a significant pool of researchers” (Ibid).

Although Russia has enormous educated population, it faces severe problems in regard to the quality of education provided, including underfunding, low quality of instruction, and deterioration of secondary education as measured by international standardised tests like PISA and TIMMS (Tan et al. 2008:71). It has resulted in significant skill constraints in the labour force. It is, therefore, necessary that the higher education reforms benefit not only the education providers but also the students in acquiring the necessary skills for their professional career and growth.

A clear rhetorical shift towards a neoliberal education model is evident in the official education policies, the degree of penetration of neoliberal mentality into post-Soviet Russian education landscape remains a contested scholarly issue. The commercialisation of Russian education was inspired by multinational organisations, primarily the ‘World Bank’ and the ‘OECD’ are being implemented through the Russian neoliberally-inclined political elite. Since the early 1990s, the multinationals aggressively advocated the strengthening of the economic function of education, and the elimination of transition specific obstacles to a free educational market, while criticising the residues of a welfare state as having ‘major deficiencies regarding supporting a market system’. (Minina 2017).

The transition of Russia to the market system, higher education has been drastically altered through an extreme neoliberal reform. Except for “technological research, a more specialised college education is of little use for the contemporary labour market, which requires general communication and organisational skills” (Magun 2010). “Russia remains a symptom of what

neoliberals could and would like to achieve elsewhere, if only they were not limited by social inertia and the resistance put forth by civil society” (Ibid).

Numerous question arises of the applicability of the knowledge received by the students in the event of neoliberal expansion of higher education: Are the countries having ‘over-supply’ of graduates? Are there indications of ‘over-qualification’ and skill mismatch? Are students pursuing the ‘right type’ of education at tertiary-level? Is there an inadequate number of science and technology graduates? Lastly, how does the category of institution matter for labour market prospects?

At present, the Russian higher education is faced with challenges: Firstly, to improve productivity which is at less than 50 percent of the average of OECD countries and secondly to encourage innovation which is only at 9 percent. The economy demands skills such as ‘problem-solving’, ‘goal-oriented’, ‘command over communication’ and excellent ‘time management skills’. However, research indicates that employers resent lack of such skills in many graduates. It is reported that the mismatch between the skills requirement and its availability rises as there is subsequent rise educational level and it peaks as university graduates enter labour market. Therefore, the fully functional relationship between educational establishments and employers has to develop as tertiary education has become crucial for obtaining quality employment (Moiseev 2013).

Conclusion

In the modern globalising economy, it has become crucial for higher education to adapt to international competitive environments for the positive and steady growth of the country. In the process of neoliberal transformation of the state, higher education, present a channel to provide the demand for highly trained

specialists to compete in the international labour markets. Today, the main ‘competitive advantage’ of a country arises from its ability to invest in human capital development through education.

In neoliberalism, the link between higher education and the labour market has become important than ever. The need to modernise higher education was immediate to meet the market demands of the economy. The state has made momentous strides in reforming higher education system through changes in the curriculum, granting financial autonomy, and diversification and expansion of curricula. However, the introduction of privatisation to education system has negatively impacted higher education. Instead of meeting the demands of the economy, the higher education is faced with numerous challenges. The lack of proper funding, the introduction of tuition fees, the commitment to quality assurance and the emergence of new degree programmes put massive pressure on the higher education sector. The supporters of Soviet legacy holds the opinion that the positive legacy of the Soviet educational tradition is in dwindling away while there is an overemphasis on standardisation and impractical policy. Additionally, higher education has not able to adequately train students with required skills and knowledge.

On the other hand, the introduction of market reforms has severely affected employment. Despite, the change in the labour laws to meet the demands of both the employers and employees. The relaxation of the labour codes has given the employers the power to terminate employees without benefits. With the removal of state control over labour force, the employers misuse their power by paying lower wages with minimum benefits. Labour mobility is still low, in fact, Russia is considered one of the countries with the least flexible labour market but with rigid legislation on employment protection.

Chapter 4

Gender, Higher Education and Labour Market in Russia

This chapter discusses the underlying dynamics of the relationships between gender, higher education and labour market as Russia embarked on to neoliberal economy. The shift to neoliberalism brought about change in the demands of skills and qualifications of the labour force as Russia moved from industrialized economy to knowledge economy. Higher education, therefore, became crucial to fulfil the market demands of qualified and skilled labour force. This neoliberal transition presented an opportunity for women to attain higher education and gain quality employment. As a result, huge number of women enrolled in higher education, Russian women equalled and even surpassed men in attaining higher education. However, the increase of women in higher education did not translate in getting equal opportunity at the workplace, their inability to attain quality employment poses numerous questions. Therefore, this chapter analyses the primary issues and challenges encumbering women's opportunity to attain quality employment despite high level of education. It also studies the underlying complexities and contradictions of the market economy and the ways it impacts women. It will also discuss women's response and resistance to gender inequality, growth of women's movement and NGOs in the neoliberal era in Russia. In the course of the study, it addresses the second research, third, fourth and fifth research questions.

Women and Higher Education in the Neoliberal Era

Since the Soviet's time, women in Russia have not only equalled men in higher education but have even surpassed men. According to the 2015-16 academic enrolment data, women's enrolment in higher education is higher than men. There are 2548.6 thousand females enrolled in higher education against 2217.9

thousand males (Higher School of Economics Moscow 2017). Such a massive enrolment of women in higher education may appear as though women's have achieved equality in higher education. However, an in-depth analysis indicates gender inequality in higher education. Some of the phenomena in higher education is described are described as follows.

Feminisation of Higher Education

The massive growth in the number of students in higher education can be mainly attributed due to the increase in enrolment of women students. The phenomenon of feminisation in higher education is being observed as women surpassed men in obtaining higher education. Since the Soviet time's women's enrolment in HE increased significantly. Between "1992-2000, the number of female students in HE rose by 763,000 or 50 percent while that of male students rose by 327,000 or 25 percent. Russia is experiencing "a feminisation of higher education with 57 percent of women and only 43 percent of men" (Mezentseva 2006:1). This increase in the enrolment of women is further supported by National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) report 2017.

Since the academic year 2000/01-2015/16, the enrolment of women in higher education has been higher than men. The total number of female in bachelor's, specialist's and master's degree programmes combined was 56.7 percent in 2000/01 while the male was at 43.3 percent. In the subsequent years, the enrolment of female students has been above 53 percent as compared to male. Though there has been fluctuation in enrolment in certain years, yet, the enrolment of the female has always been higher as compared to their male counterparts (see table 14).

Table 13: Higher education enrolment and entrants: bachelor's, specialist's and master's degree programmes (thousand persons), 2000/01 -2015/16

Year	2000/01		2005/06		2010/11		2014/15		2015/16	
Total	4741.4		7064.6		7049.8		5209.0		4766.5	
Male	2055.1	43.3%	2950	41.8%	3019.7	42.9%	2396.7	46.01%	2217.9	46.6%
Female	2686.3	56.7%	4113.8	58.2%	4030.1	57.1%	2812.7	53.9%	2548.6	53.4%

(Data source: Higher School of Economics 2017:40)

Table 14: Enrolment to doctoral courses (in thousand), 2000-2010

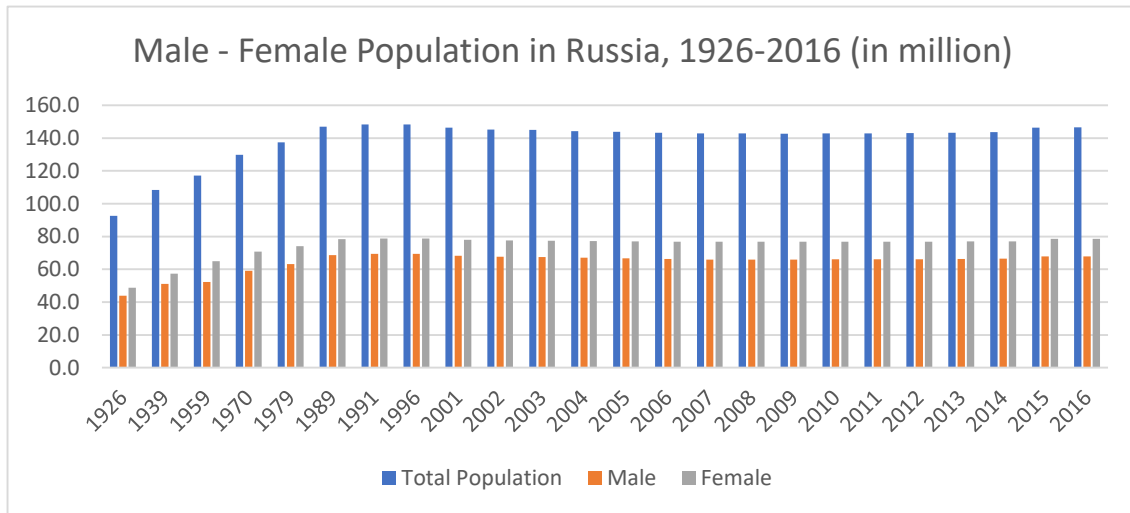
Doctoral courses' enrolment, at the end of the year	Year	2000	2005	2009	2010
	Total	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.4
	Male	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.3
	Female	1.6	1.9	2.0	2.1

(Data source: Higher School of Economics 2012: 45)

The above table indicates that in doctoral courses, the enrolment of the male is more than female. However, women enrolment has been increasing since 2000; it was 1.6 thousand in 2000 which grew to 2.1 thousand in 2010. The male enrolment on the other hand has been declining; it was 2.6 thousand in 2000 which has decreased to 2.3 thousand in 2010.

The phenomenon of increasing female enrolment is due to the female population being higher than the male population. For instance, as per the census of 2016, the total population was 146.5 million of which female population was 78.6 million, representing 54 percent of the population while male was 67.9 million constituting 46 percent. The sex ratio of Russia is 1158 female per thousand males (Federal State Statistics Service aka Rosstat 2017).

Graph 1: Male-Female population in Russia, 1926-2016 (in million)



(Federal State Statistics Service (2017))

From the above graph, it is clear that the total number of female population has been consistently higher as compared to the total number of male population. Hence, the higher total female population has translated into higher women's enrolment in higher education.

Increasing Gender Segregation of Choice of Study/Disciplines

Though, the statistics of women's enrolment in higher education show a positive trend. It is essential to consider the disciplines/fields women are enrolled in as the choice of the subject affects employment opportunities in the neoliberal market system. The neoliberal transformation in the occupation has widened the gap in demands of discipline. As market forces have been introduced to higher education specialities such as "engineering, economic/business and law/administration" are considered more lucrative than "education, agriculture, humanities and social sciences" and are paid more (Gerber and Schaefer 2004: 46-47). It has led to horizontal stratification of higher education and group-based

differences in an educational degree which in turn is creating group-based inequality in the labour market.

Table 15: Number of women in the fields of higher education, 2002 and 2011

Year	Total		Natural Sciences		Engineering sciences		Agricultural Sciences	
	2002	2011	2002	2011	2002	2011	2002	2011
Researcher	187792	153318	43785	37303	114843	83398	7621	7081
Doctor of science	4122	6707	1768	2371	225	325	162	385
PhD	28477	33007	13999	14269	4372	3474	2175	2620

Year	Social Sciences		Humanities		Medical Sciences	
	2002	2011	2002	2011	2002	2011
Researcher	8219	10044	4546	7571	8778	9921
Doctor of science	293	868	604	1049	1070	1709
PhD	2097	4562	1820	3478	4014	4604

(Data source: Barabanova et al. 2013:3)

The above table indicates that from 2002-2011, the total decline of women researchers in engineering was 32445 while the overall increase in the social science and humanities combine is 4850. The share of women researchers in engineering sciences is only 36.8 percent, in natural sciences 41.6 percent while in social sciences and humanities it is 59.2 percent and 64 percent respectively. The total number of women researchers have also declined to about 34000 while that of PhD and Doctor of Science has a slight increase of about 2500 and 4500

(Barabanova et al. 2013:2). The data depicts that women have been shifting their field of study from natural sciences, engineering sciences and agricultural sciences, these are subjects which have enormous potential in the market economy. However, substantially increased in social sciences, humanities and medical sciences which are of lower demands and low returns.

Horizontal stratification of HE increases genderisation of disciplines. Since the Soviet's time, women primarily pursue disciplines such as education, humanities and social sciences while men pursue engineering, science and technology. The tradition of promoting engineering education as a male discipline has penetrated to modern Russia (ibid). Currently, "the share of female students in Russian universities is 56 percent", but their share is "only 24 percent in information technology and 37 percent in physical and mathematical sciences; 46 percent of all postgraduates are females", but only "29 percent in physics and math and 25 percent in technical sciences" (Didenko et al. 2015:1).

Women have become the victim of socio-economic transformations. This is because despite their high enrolment in HE, they are mostly confined in less rewarding fields and discipline of study. It further impacts women's employability in the labour market. The data is alarming; therefore, it is essential that 'informed choices' be specified to women at an early age. Since women's choice of discipline affects their material gain from education.

Increasing Low Returns of Women's Higher Education

The market forces determine the rate of return to different forms of higher education. However, market forces have not penetrated equally to all kinds of industry and sectors. For instance, though service industry has expanded in the event of neoliberal transformation, the return of investment from service industry

such as medical and education has been low. Women being primarily engaged in these sectors are not able to gain maximum returns from pursuing HE.

The horizontal segregation of HE has resulted in low returns to HE for women. Moreover, many women enrol as part-time learners, it affect their earnings as well as employment opportunities. Part-time education is not well-received by employers, as a result, it leads to women earning disadvantage. Studies have indicated that since the 1970s, part-time study has been traditionally pursued by women than men (Gerber and Schaefer 2004:50). It has been observed that among the part-time enrolment, the number of women is more as compared to men. In the neoliberal era women's higher education is increasingly bearing lower returns.

In an RLMS survey conducted in 1998 for “seven identified educational levels, from ‘no secondary education’ to ‘higher education’, the average wage of a woman varies from 53 percent to 66 percent of a man's’. Nevertheless, within “a small fraction of women having postgraduate degree enjoyed practically the same salaries as men with the same education, i.e. 94 percent of the men's”.As per the study “the lowest material gain from education was observed in those professional groups dominated by women while the biggest gain in traditional men's profession (Mezentseva 2006:1). Therefore, making the right choice of the subject while attaining HE is crucial.

Lack of Women-Specific Funding

In the event of transition, the state has encouraged establishment of private institutions and fee-based courses. Introduction of private institutions and fee-based courses has presented new challenges for women to pursue higher education. There are no government statistics which provide “gender breakdown

of the students studying on a ‘for-fee’ and ‘no-fee’ basis” (Mezentseva 2006:1). However, fees have been predominately introduced in “female professions” while “the traditionally male professions remained free” (Ibid). The state also has introduced part-time programs which are tuition bearing. Most of the students enrolled in part-time programs are women. Though part-time education yields lower returns and cost more, it in the post-socialist era, many working individuals enrol themselves in part-time education to receive higher education in hopes of getting better wage. However, part-time education has instead resulted in the wage gap.

To improve quality and international standing of higher education, the state has initiated to increase public funding. The State’s budget had increased from 214.7 billion roubles in 2000 to 3034.6 billion roubles in 2015. Though, funding to HEI has substantially increased in the recent years. There is lack of women-specific funding in HE. Hence, the federal budget allotted for education is unfair and becoming increasingly gender asymmetric, in favour of men than women. Introduction of fee-based institutions and part-time programs has affected women the most. Despite claims of equality in higher education, gender disparity and discrimination is prevalent. It affects women’s opportunity to gain quality employment and leadership position.

Women and Labour Force Participation in the Neoliberal Era

During the Soviet’s times, women’s labour force participation was high because of Soviet’s centrally planned economy with a centralised system of employment and wages. However, due to the focus on only specific sectors of the economy for extensive economic growth, in the event of market transition education and skills attained during the Soviet era was a departure from the requirements of the post-Soviet era. This phenomenon resulted in huge labour displacement and

increasing unemployment. As a result of which numerous workers lost jobs. Nevertheless, the market conditions have improved over the years and employment has increased. In fact, the labour force participation of Russian women is still high as compared to many other countries, yet the position of women in the labour market has declined because of the neoliberal transition of Russia. The change in the labour market policies and withdrawal of state's support has negatively impacted women's position in the economic sphere.

The provision for compulsory employment, centralised wage, maternity and childcare benefits which limited gender discrimination receded while latent patriarchal attitude is given free control, ensuing in overt discrimination of women. The trade unions have not been able to do much to protect women from discrimination while nascent women's movement struggles to protect women's rights. Additionally, stereotyping of women results in insecurity amongst the female workers has resulted in underutilization of their human capital and potential. The discriminatory practices against women affect their overall well-being. Some of the issues and challenges women faces as a result of transition can be categorised into the following

Privatization and Lack of Quality Employment

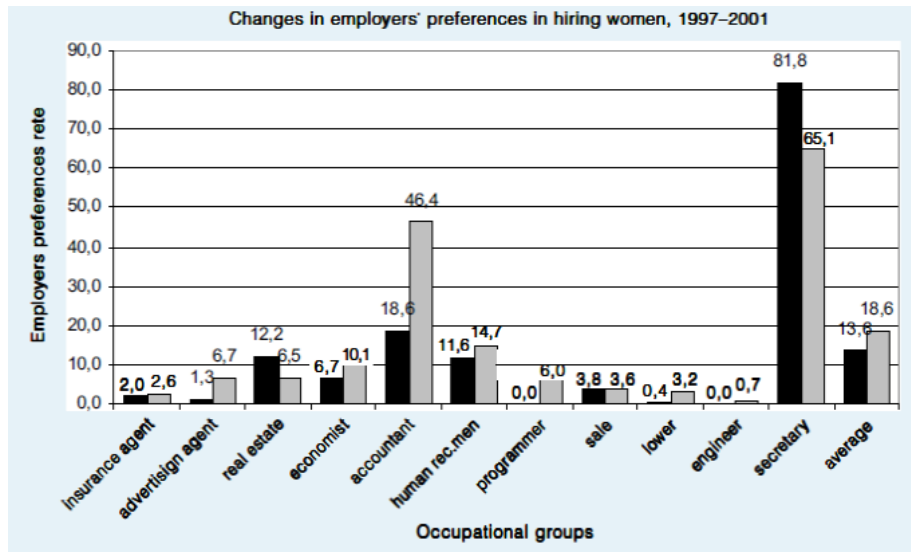
At the event of a transition, education became a factor in getting employment to private sectors. The introduction of the market system resulted in the emergence of a formal private sector. Responding to market conditions and competition, the private employers have limited choices i.e. either make improvements in their product lines or restructure their workforce. In the process of restructuring workforce, the private sector shed off many women employees. Russia has transformed from having universal employment to amongst least employment in developed countries. For instance, the percentage of people employed between

the age group 15-64 was 58.6 percent in 2000, it was lower than EU which averaged at 64.2 percent and the United States at 62.4 percent. The number of women employed declined by 22 percent from 1990 to 1998. (Smirnova 2003:7).

As discussed in the previous chapter, higher education became crucial for getting employment opportunities. Women though surpassed men in attainment of higher education. However, women could not get quality employment opportunities. The growth of the private sector is resulting in women's disadvantage. The main peculiarity in women labour force being that highly qualified women who are better educated than men find difficulty in getting quality employment. Women were the ones who had to bear the brunt of unemployment, early into transition women unemployment stood at 72 percent in 1993 which reduced to 64 percent in 1998. As per the statistics of 2009, the average rate of unemployment of women was low as compared to men i.e. men at 7.5 percentage while women at 6.4 percentage. But the share of women unemployed with secondary and higher professional unemployed is higher than men (Rimashevskaya 2013:56).

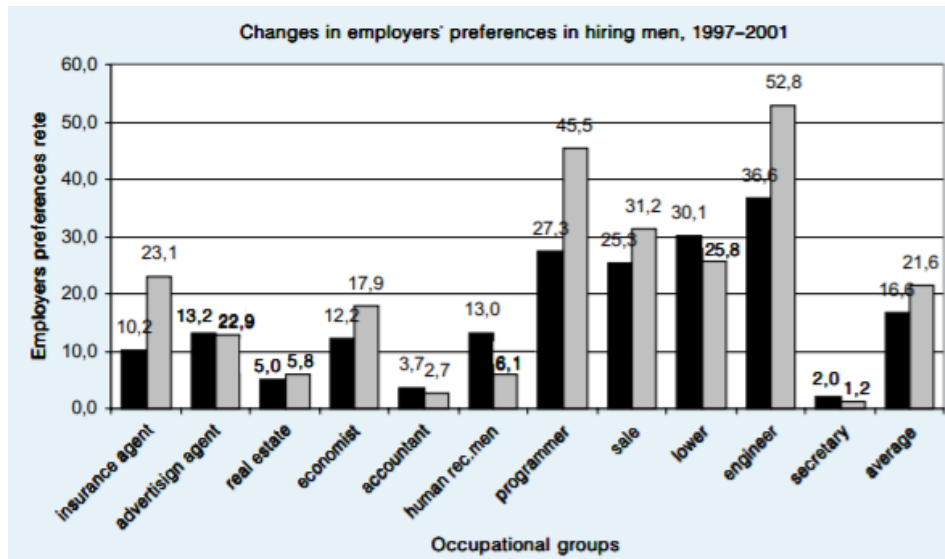
The withdrawal of state control over labour market has given power and control to the private employers. The private employers employ discriminatory practices in hiring, male candidates are given preferences than women. The changing patterns in the hiring of employees is further increasing gender segregation of occupation. The share of men has increased in the traditional female occupation such as insurance agent, real estate agent, sales agent from 1997 to 2001.

Graph 2. Changes in employers' preferences in hiring women, 1997-2001



(Data Source: Roschin and Zubarevich 2005:19)

Graph 3. Changes in employers' preferences in hiring men, 1997-2001



(Data Source: Roschin and Zubarevich 2005:19)

While women are hired for lowering paying and monotonous jobs such as accounting and secretaries. Male are preferred in hiring in almost all occupation groups. Especially, highly technical occupation such as programmer and

engineer, the share of men has increased substantially. It indicates that private employers are biased towards male candidates than female candidates for most of the occupations in Russia (see graph 2 and 3). Managers do not prefer hiring female candidates, they justified hiring men by indicating that female employee as less flexible, less ambitious and more expensive. In a study conducted on 225 privatised enterprises, it was found out that they violated women's labour and social rights. As a result of privatisation, private enterprises were not only unwilling to hire women but also dismissed a huge number of women off work, (CEDAW 1999; Clarke and Kabaline: 2000; Gerber and Mayorova 2006: 250). In another study, "only seven managing directors select a woman over a man despite having equal competence". Over 40 percent of respondents indicated that the number of female employees will keep decreasing in the coming years (Barabanova et al. 2013:4).

In a Centre for Labour Market Studies data (1999), only a quarter of the workforce i.e. 6.7 percent of women and 24.1 percent of men worked in the real public sector. The continuing process of transformation of enterprises and privatisation of firms will have greater negative impact leaving increasing numbers of women without benefits (Teplova 2005:14). Women's representation "among self-employed, entrepreneurs and managerial staff" was still very low during the early period of transition. Women participation in the economic sphere is still undermined, in fact, it is commonly assumed amongst the public that "women's commercial activities are smaller and less "ugly biznis" than men's" (Katz 2001:10).

Increasing Segregation of Occupation and Branches of the Economy

Since the Soviet times, the policy makers segregated occupation into male and female occupation. This segregation passed down even to the neoliberal market

era. In a study conducted by Roschin and Zubarevich (2005) for ‘United Nations’ report “Gender Equality and Extension of Women Rights in Russia in the Context of Millennium Development Goals”, it was pointed out that gender segregation of occupation exists. As per their findings, women are primarily engaged in public services (nearly 60 percent of women while men less than 30 percent).

To carry out a detailed analysis of market segregation, 12 branches of the economy were selected from 1994-2000, applying “an approach in which the branches with the female labour of more than 66 percent” as ‘female’. While branches amounting to less than 33 percent of female labour as ‘male’, the remaining branches as ‘third/ intermediary branches’ category. In the study period of nine years, women dominated in areas such as public health, physical culture and social security while male share in these areas never exceeded 20 percent for nine years. Education constituted nearly 4/5 of women, culture constitutes 67.5 percent while arts constitutes 72.5 percent. The earlier female-dominated sectors such as “finances, credit and insurance declined from 74.5 percent in 1994 to 69.3 percent in 2001” (Roschin and Zubarevich 2005:12).

**Table 16: Share of women in occupational groups 1994-2001,
(in % RLMS Data)**

Occupational groups	1994	1995	1996	1998	2000	2001
Armed forces	6.1	16.9	11.9	10.6	11.6	11.1
Legislators, senior officials managers	25.3	32	32.7	41.8	40.9	46.5
Technicians and associate professionals	81	77.1	76.8	74.3	76.4	74.1
Clerks	92.3	89.2	91.2	89.7	91.1	88.5
Service workers and shop and market sales worker	68.7	66.6	70.2	76.1	78.8	77.9

Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	10.3	0	16.7	10.5	9.4	7.4
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	19.1	16	17.4	16.7	16.7	15.2
Industrial workers	17.4	18.3	19.6	*	18.4	22.1

(Data Source: Roschin and Zubarevich 2005:15)

In the manufacturing industry, the percentage share of women steadily declined by 4.3 percent from 1994 to 2002, while in the housing and communal services, non-productive types of public services, on the contrary, the share of women labour increased by 3.9 percent. During the last thirty years, there has been “expansion of public services” which “stimulated women’s increased employment, amount of jobs and demand for female labour”, however, it has also resulted in further segregation of the labour market (Roschin and Zubarevich 2005:12).

Women are mainly concentrated in service sectors of the economy and in lower positions such as clerks in which share of women is 88.5 percent, service workers and shop and market sales worker constitutes of 77.5 percent of women while technicians and associate professionals represent 74.1 percent of women. Men on the other hand constitutes of 53.5 percent as legislators, senior officials/managers, 92.6 percent as skilled agricultural and fishery workers. The segregation of occupation and branches of the economy is further supported by Federal State Statistics Service data (2017). (see table 17).

Table 17: Percentage of women in different sectors of the economy from 2008-2015

Year	2008	2010	2012	2014	2015
Employed in the economy (in %)	49	49	49	49	49
Leaders (representatives) of government	37	39	39	38	39

and management at all levels, including heads of organizations					
Specialists of the highest level of qualification in the field of natural and technical sciences	32	32	31	29	29
Specialists of the highest level of qualification in the field of biological, agricultural sciences and health	64	64	64	63	63
Specialists of the highest level of qualification in the field of education	78	79	79	80	80
Specialists of intermediate level qualification of physical and engineering activities	26	27	26	25	23
Mid-level professionals and support staff in the natural sciences and health	92	93	92	92	91
Specialists of intermediate level of qualification in the field of education	92	93	94	94	94
Average staff in the field of financial, economic, administrative and social activities	68	67	68	68	67
Employees engaged in the preparation of information, documentation and accounting	90	89	89	87	87
Service personnel	90	90	89	89	88
Workers in the sphere of individual services and protection of citizens and property	60	58	57	59	59
Sellers, demonstrators of goods, models and demonstrators of clothes	83	85	85	84	84
Workers engaged in mining, mining and capital construction and assembly and repair and construction works	13	11	11	9	9
Other skilled workers employed in industry, transport, communications, geology and mineral exploration	61	61	61	62	60
Unskilled workers, common to all sectors of the economy	52	53	52	51	50

(Data source: Federal State Statistics Services/ROSTAT 2017; Ayemi 2018)

It can be noted that the share of women employed in the economy has remained consistent at 49 percent from 2008 to 2015. Regardless of the high percentage of women in the economy, women are mostly in the lower position or traditional feminised sectors of the economy. Women's percentage as specialists of the highest level of qualification in the field of education which is considered as a female profession has consistently increased from 78 to 80 percent between 2008-2015. The share of women remained above 80 percent as sellers, demonstrators of goods, models and demonstrators of clothes. Women's concentration in the preparation of information, documentation and accounting segment was above 85 percent. The service sector which is primarily female sphere of employment, their share constituted more than 80 percent.

Women's share in traditional male occupation and sector remained low. For instance, the position of women as leaders (representatives) of government and management at all levels, including heads of organisations consistently remained below 40 percent from 2008 to 2015. While in specialists of the highest level of qualification in the field of natural and technical sciences, their percentage had declined from 32-29 percent. The percentage of women as specialists of intermediate level qualification of physical and engineering activities remained below 30 percent for the period of study.

The employment occupational gender structure also reflects at the hierarchal level. Women mostly occupied not only the service sector branches but also are more involved in the activities which are connected to services to a greater degree. The percentage of women in leadership position has never increased but remained stagnant throughout the study period. The data also specifies low mobility of genders from one sector of the economy to another sector as there has not been any significant change in percentage share of either men or women in

many sectors from 1998 to 2005. Gender segregation of occupation results in exclusion and marginalization of women from occupation and positions which pays high income and social prestige.

Discrimination in Earnings and Wages of Women

The financial income of women serve as the foundation of their economic independence, women's share in family expenses and also her position in the family. It also indicates 'economic returns on the human capital'. According to the Art. 37.3 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, labour force is to be given the appropriate remuneration as per minimum wages prescribed in the Federal law without any discrimination. The Art. 132 of the Labor Code of the Russian Federation also prohibits any discrimination on wages and labour remuneration. However, the gender gap in occupations and branches results in unequal wage distribution within an industry, resulting in the lower recognition of women's labour.

Until recently there was no systematic statistical data on gender-related wages. However, the RF Goskomstat after transition enabled valuation of gender gap in wages. "In 1998 average female wages in the economy made up 70 percent of male average wages, in 2000 - 63.2 percent, in 2001- 63 percent, in 2003- 64 percent (at large and medium-size enterprises only). The wage gap in smaller enterprises is higher as wages are paid lesser" (Roschin and Zubarevich 2005: 10). Early into transition, small private employers recognised competitive advantage by hiring women as female labour provides equal productivity though much cheaper than male labour. Such practice by the private firms produced discrimination in payments and wages against women. During the mid-1990s, there was a mass entry of women to inferior quality jobs as compared to men.

By 1991, women without college degree were more likely to get low-wage branch jobs, and the odds ratio increased as the transition progressed. By 1997 women with no college degree who changed employers were nearly five times more likely to land in a low-wage industry. Additionally, the unique feature of Russian labour force is that of having two jobs i.e. primary and secondary jobs, men usually tend to have secondary jobs as a result of which there is wage differences between men and women. The segregation of occupation on the basis of branches and industry has further increased the wage gap between male and female.

In an RLMS data (2001), it is noticed that the most considerable gender gap in payment is being noticed in professions dominated by women labour force in which educational qualification required are specialised secondary and university education. Women earn less than men by about 47 percent and 45 percent on the average. The biggest wage gap occurs in the age group 41-45 years old. It is because women of this age group are mostly employed in part-time occupations. Appallingly, women who are postgraduate on average make less than men with secondary education. Only one category of women earn more than men, i.e. women with university degree earn more than men with incomplete university education. Since the mid-1990s, both men and women have benefitted from university education. In 1996, the university diploma, other equal conditions provided, would increase the wages of women with secondary education by 34 percent and in 2000 increase by 56 percent. By 2001, there has been increasing returns on investment by obtaining university education for women which amount to 61 percent. In terms of attaining technical or vocational education, men's wage increased by 12 percent while women's wages increased only by 10 percent (Roschin and Zubarevich 2005: 11-12).

The occupational segregation led to gender disparities in wages. There is a prevalence of lowest earnings in predominantly female professions while highest returns in traditionally male professions. Hence, the main factors responsible for gender disparities in wages in Russia are gender discrimination of sexes, gender segregation of occupation, and type of organisational ownership i.e. public or private company. Likewise, differences in the quality of human capital in terms of age, educational level, and experience also contribute to the gender gap. The transition has a positive impact on women with higher education than women with less education as they are employed in sectors and branches where wages and working conditions are of lower quality.

Gender Structure in the Labour Market

Gender-related stratification of a society is a result of socially accepted characterization of masculine and feminine roles which results in greater gender inequality. Due to the social norms prevalent in the society, the life decisions which both genders take seem voluntary in compliance to stereotypes and expectations deep-seated within oneself. These expectations are called as symbolic violence as Bourdieu described. Individuals become prey to this violence in the process of socialisation and various institutions such as school, church or state reinforce it. It also results in the gender-related choice of study regarding investment and expected returns to education. Gender discriminates between the estimation of profits to be gained from education. Women, in general, expect lower financial returns as compared to men because of their value system. Women usually tend to have higher regards for familial responsibilities while lower financial aspirations. The supreme importance of maternity in women's hierarchy of life success makes them devalue financial success.

Genders norms inherited from the Soviet era reproduced in Russia “reducing women's expectations and making them accept jobs men would not” (Gerber and Mayorova 2006:2065). Notably, in the female-headed households, female heads are so poor that they had to accept any job that is offered. In dual-headed households, women are considered as secondary earner resulting in their income as supplementary. Therefore, they readily accept lower wages. Traditionally in Russia, it is a socially accepted standard behaviour for women to participate in bringing income to fulfil the necessary level of consumption and prosperity, as it cannot be fulfilled by a single earning male member of a family. The developed social traditions and high education level of women support women's employment.

Though the Soviet gender order encouraged women to work, however, women were to put their families first while accepting secondary status at work as natural. Till today, women are guided by such norms when they apply for jobs. They regard stability of income rather than obtaining equal wage or status as men. Men, on the other hand, defined their status through pay and work (Ashwin 2002:23). Along with the past gender norms, cultural factors such as gender segregation of occupation and industry has resulted in women's lower status and position in the labour. In the neoliberal era, gender discriminatory practices have become more prominent.

Social Norms and Gender Roles

It is not only the economic factors that affect the choice of study but also the cultural and social factors that shape the persisting gender differences in obtaining higher education. The society is still governed by the interpretation of male and female occupations, it affects women's opportunity to opt for disciplines which provides better employment prospects. Due to the prevailing

gender norms that are deeply ingrained in women by the society, many women tend to choose less lucrative fields of study as they consider other incentives such as the ability to spend more time at home or with family rather than earnings, society approves of such choice for the women. “Women make educational decisions with future family responsibilities in mind and place a higher priority on social rewards; they also favour ‘bureaucratic’ rather than ‘entrepreneurial’ characteristics of a job” (Marini 1984; Gerber and Schaefer 2004:34). Thus, the socialisation process plays a huge role in women’s choices of disciplines.

State socialist economies exhibited high levels of sex-segregation by occupation (Trappe and Rosenfeld 2004; Gerber and Mayorova 2006: 2049). Even in the Soviet Union, “women were mostly employed in lower routine non-manual, low-grade technical and low paying professional job” (Ibid). The traditional sex-segregation of occupation has been passed to the present generation. In an express-poll at Kazan National Research Technological University 2012, though most of the female students expressed genuine interest in their chosen profession by performing well in their studies. However, as they have to work in the male-dominated environment women’s education and in a technical field is undermined by their male superiors. Some men hold the view that women entry to engineering field is an attempt to occupy the traditional male territory. Women entering the technical field constantly need to prove themselves to their teachers as well as their male bosses and co-workers. It is even harder as women try to achieve higher positions in such fields due to continuous resistance from their male superiors. Women having humanities degrees are no exception to this struggle of attaining leadership position (Barabanova et al. 2013:4).

Another hurdle for women is their lack of confidence and belief in their ability and potential. Since the Soviet’s time “women themselves discussed seriously

whether they were capable of operating machine tools. The same problem arose with respect to managerial posts at the very lowest level” (Mandel 1972: 260). Some of the women lack motivation for professional advancement, as they consider family role more important than a professional career. In 2007, sociologists interviewed 288 engineering students to analyze their attitude towards their profession and life. As per their report, female students lacked confidence in their professional skills despite securing higher marks than their male counterparts. They had doubts about the engineering profession being right for them. Because of the lack of confidence and doubts in one’s choice, many female students either drop the course or look for a job in some traditional feminine sector after graduation. In an RLMS data, more than half of the women openly acknowledged that they do not possess enough qualities required in the current economic condition. However, on the contrary men were more optimistic, only 10 percent male mentioned that they lack skills and valuable qualities as compared to their female counterparts. Hence, women’s tendency to doubt their skills and abilities also affect their employment prospects (Roshchin and Zubarevich 2005:18).

Many people consider the engineering profession as traditionally male oriented profession and doubt women’s ability to correspond with their male counterpart. However, the conventional engineering occupation of working in factories and poor labour conditions have been dramatically changed with modern technological improvements. Within engineering and technical field, women can work in an administrative position or in management as the previous need for physical strength “has given way to orderliness and ability to concentrate, both areas in which women excel” (Barabanova et al. 2013:4). Therefore, without major shift in the attitude of the society, women entry to technical education and

profession is an acute challenge. Without a change in the socialising process with a change in gender norms, convergence in HE will be a challenge.

The gender dynamics in the current process of the economic sphere depicts increasing gender segregation. In the event of a transition, men have become owners of enterprises and the critical employers as they were the former heads of governmental enterprises. They often display “aggressive style in their professional activity and consider tyranny as the most effective means to pursue their goals” (Rimashevskaja 2013:56). In the private sector, with more significant power and resources in their hands, men have become ‘rulers of privatisation’. In the event of a transition, lack of government control and support for women, there is a resurgence of conservative views on gender role.

Feminization of the Low-Paid Branches of the Economy

Gender stereotypes under market conditions have far more negative consequences on the women. Creation of male and female occupations is not only causing horizontal segregation but also creating vertical segregation in the labour market. Despite economic reforms, the positions with higher responsibility which requires higher qualifications and better paid off are taken by men while women are left with less important positions. Due to discrimination and the tradition of employing women in low paying jobs, even after transition, not many improvements have taken place for women. The economic crisis and low employment opportunities left women with no choice but to take up low paying jobs resulting in female disadvantage in the quality of new jobs and narrowing their opportunities and limitations.

Though women have attained high professional education, due to discriminatory practices in the labour market, “women have lower status which can be

represented in the form of a ‘social pyramid’: the higher the position within the pyramid the lesser is women’s representation inside that position” (Rimashevskaja 2013:55-56). For example, though education is considered as feminine branch, the leadership positions are retained by men. Within higher education systems, only 7 percent of rectors are women while the rest 93 percent are men, while women constitutes nearly 70 percent as professors and more than 80 percent at intermediate level. Similar situation is in the healthcare sector and other sectors of the economy.

The traditional economic structure of segregation of sectors and industries into male and female sphere of occupation became more prominent in the event of transition in Russia. “Healthcare and physical culture, education, social provision, finances, credit and insurance and pension provision are considered feminised sphere” with more than 60 percent share of women in these sectors (Ibid). These are the sectors wherein wages have stagnated during the transition period. Though, the service sector expanded massively “since the onset of the market system, service industries such as trade, catering, personal services, healthcare, and education sectors in which women dominate have lower wages or slower growth” (Gerber and Mayorova 2006: 2049). Hence, due to the previous allocation of women in the state sector as well poorly performing branches, even after the transition to the market system, women face challenges in moving to the “dynamic branches and the private sector” of the economy (Ibid).

As transition advanced, the private sectors had to compete with domestic as well as foreign firms for which the labour costs had to be reduced. Therefore, more women were employed as they offered better productivity at lesser costs i.e. women accepted lower wages as compared to men. Employers undergoing competitive pressure would cut costs by changing the workforce balance i.e.

moving their workforces toward feminised occupations, as well as making necessary adjustments necessary in product lines as well as operations. Besides, there was an expansion of female-dominated occupations which in turn increased female employment opportunities. “Between January 1991 to January 1998 the average occupational percent of both male and female increased by 3-4 percent implying that employers were in favour of “hiring people for jobs in female-dominated occupations as they were motivated by the lower wages of such occupations” (Gerber and Mayorova 2006:3065). Unlike the large privatised firms, the managers and owners of new private firms were more concerned with “competition and cost-cutting”, therefore, preferred hiring highly qualified females.

Thus, early in the transition women having college degree had more chances as compared to their male counterpart in finding employment opportunities in newly private firms. “The forces of market competition and labour market gender segmentation combined to provide strong incentives for hiring and retaining female rather than male employees” (Ibid). As a result of which, the low paying sectors in the economy are becoming increasingly feminised. Though, the post-socialist transition resulted in increased of women’s access to employment, but it also resulted in channelling them away from high-quality jobs toward low-quality jobs. Competition in the market as well as the lowering of women wages resulted in high concentration of women in the low paying sectors of employment.

Decline in State’s Protective Measures

Due to the neoliberal transformation, the state has drastically reduced social protection system. As a result, the state support for women has declined. The previous experience of equality due to the centralised system of employed and

payment has been overtaken by the privatised system of employment and salary. In “a market economy, employers are more sensitive to costs connected with maternity leave, absence for family reasons, protective legislation for women and special rights for mothers” (Katz 2001:5). Therefore, the lack of social infrastructure has allowed public and private enterprises to provide social benefits at a moderate expense. To save costs on social benefits, some employers offer higher wages and at times compensate employees through informal cash payments.

Additionally, the phenomenon of employing part-time workers and contract workers have risen as a means to avoid extra costs on social benefit payments. These phenomena affect women the most as they are the ones who are mostly employed as part-time workers and contract employees. The private employers consider maternity leaves and benefits as extra costs thereby considering women as less attractive work force. They pay women lower wages and provide long maternity leaves to reduce their participation in the labour market and also depreciate their human capital (Teplova 2005:15). As a result of such regressive policies, women’s re-entry into the labour market is low.

Stereotyping and Discriminatory Practices

Gender stereotype may not seem as offensive initially. However, the continuous process of stereotyping results in discrimination and the long run society losses much of it. Gender stereotype produces inequality not only in the economic sphere but also in the political and social areas. It results in division of occupation and position in the labour market. For instance, employers tend to perceive that most women are “less ambitious and committed to work” but are “more oriented towards family concerns”, therefore, women are “more likely to demand maternity and sick leave” (Gerber and Mayorova 2006:2050). Such

stereotyping of women leads to generalising of women and in the process ambitious and hardworking women lose their opportunity and prospects in the labour market. Employers often try to 'weed-off' women by ignoring concrete indicators of education and qualification. They hire workers based on gender and age without considering the skills of the candidate which results in the socially passive position of women.

Identifying discriminatory practices at the workplace is difficult. However, discrimination at the workplace is exposed through employment and promotion policy of an organisation as it reproduces gender preferences in engaging workforce specific jobs and types of activity. Hence, such discriminatory practices enhance the existing horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market. There are two types of stereotypes, i.e. situational and behavioural which adds to gender inequality and gender discrimination. The situational stereotype is a result of employers' perception that since women have 'dual burden', they cannot be expected to work extra hours nor plan career growth. While behavioural stereotype occurs due to women perception that they are less preferred labour force, they cannot compete with men, so they should accept activities which require less work and efforts (Roshchin and Zubarevich 2005:18). Some of the phenomena that is observed due to stereotyping and discrimination are as follows.

1. *Second Sort of Labour Force.* The society demands women to fulfil both the domestic function as well productive function of the economy. The patriarchal norms of women as primary care-takers has not changed. Since the Soviet time's women were expected to work at home and at the economic sphere too. The employers consider that this dual role of women hampers efficiency and productivity at workplace. Therefore, women are tagged as a less attractive

source of the labour force, more precisely the 'second sort of labour'. Furthermore, due to women's familial duties and responsibilities especially during the childbearing age, they tend to lose years of work experience. Hence, despite having the same level of education as men, women tend to have less work experience. Additionally, the dual burden of work and family also slows down their mobility at the workplace. Therefore, women become less attractive workforce to the private employers. They are tagged as unimportant workers and second-rate professionals.

2. *Gender Violence, Sexual Discrimination and Harassment.* Incidents of sexual discrimination and harassment are still hushed in Russia. Many women who undergo sexual harassment and abuse at the workplace are stigmatised or mocked at. There are no concrete legislations either in the constitution or the labour code law against sexual discrimination and harassment. Legislation on gender violence and discrimination have been introduced since the mid-1990s. However, it failed to be implemented. The only closest protection against harassment is under Art. 133 'Compulsion to Perform Sexual Actions' of the criminal code of the Russian Federation, it states,

Compulsion of a person to enter into illicit relations, pederasty, lesbianism, or the commission of other sexual actions by means of blackmail, threat of destruction, damage, or taking of property, or with the advantage of material or any other dependence of the victim, shall be punishable by a fine in the amount of 200 to 300 minimum wages, or in the amount of the wage or salary, or any other income of the convicted person for a period of two to three months, or by corrective labour for a term of up to two years, or by deprivation of liberty for a term of up to one year (Art.133, Criminal Code of Russian Federation).

Due to lack of protective legislation or law at the workplace, female victims of sexual harassment either quit their job or they must tolerate it. Not every woman has the luxury to leave a job and find a new one as there is a danger of the previous employer giving bad reference. In fact, incidents of passing lewd

comments, groping, or asking of sexual favours for employment or promotion are the common problems faced by women at workplace. However, as of now this kind of harassment and abuse are not criminalised making working environment unsafe and unhealthy for women's growth at workplace. In a poll conducted in 1999, 25 percent women reported of being harassed at workplace either by their male colleagues or employers, the number was confirmed in further surveys conducted by the Levada Centre and Social Research Strategic Centre (Krovvidi 2014). According to Amnesty International (2018), recently, three journalists reported sexual harassment against Leonid Slutsky, the chairman of the State Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee. However, the speaker of the Duma Vyacheslav Volodin responded against the allegations by asking the journalists to find a job somewhere else. According to Denis Krivosheev to Amnesty International (2018),

“Russia should be addressing the deeply-seated gender-based discrimination, harassment and violence in the country. That means promoting a frank debate on the issue and urgently implementing protective measures; not eroding the existing legal provisions and stigmatizing women who report abuse” (Krivosheev 2018).

There is a dire need for reformations of Russian legislation in regard to sexual discrimination and violence in conformation with international human rights standards to effectively combat all forms of sexual discriminations and violence, whether it is at the workplace, home or elsewhere. At present, Russian law is unable to protect victims of sexual harassment and assault. Due to the lack of legal support and protections, many women choose not to report incidents of harassment and abuse. However, such events are humiliating and destructive; it affects their self-esteem. Recently, a feminist organisation called RoshNahal has come to the fore protesting against harassment of women in Russia and demanding amendments in the Art. 133 of the criminal code.

Discriminatory Wages and Its Consequences

Financial independent is crucial for women to attain equality in all spheres of life. In spite of the egalitarian claims of socialism, Soviet women could not achieve earnings parity with men. The gender gap in earning was at same level as many advanced capitalist countries. Women on average earned about 70 percent of what men did (Gerber and Mayorova 2006:2048). In the event of transition, the centralised system of wage payment is being replaced. In the market system, the employers have the liberty to pay wages according to what they consider is suitable. As a result, women are often paid less than men for the same occupation. In a study conducted by Atencio and Posadas (2015) “on earning distribution between men and women for the period 1996-2011”, it was reported that “gender pay gap in the Russian Federation is amongst the highest of high-income countries” (Atencio and Posadas 2015:2). If both men and women were employed in the same occupation “the gap in pay would be 37 percent” (Ibid). It was also reported that women despite having higher qualifications than men are paid lesser. It means that the wage gap is increasingly widening in the transition period.

Despite the high participation of women in the labour market, the gender pay gap in the Russian Federation is twice as high as in OECD countries, i.e. the average earnings of men is about 30 percent higher than women in Russia (OECD Employment Outlook edition 2016). After transition women’s earning is decreasing gradually as compared to men. The economic reforms have instead enlarged reduction of the wages in feminised branches. For instance, “in 2008, the lowest wage level in comparison to national wage level in the economy was as followed: 75 percent in health care, 65 percent in education, 43 percent in agriculture and 40 percent in textile and sewing production” (Rimashevskaja 2013:57).

In the post-socialist transformation, the status of women is further deteriorating primarily due to change in the structure of wage distribution. The market reforms have introduced a more skewed pattern of wage distribution with a steep decrease in women's wage. In the event of transition, wage increased in the top hierarchy of the occupation while decreased in the bottom hierarchy. Therefore, women earning disadvantage is because of their high concentration at the bottom paying jobs as well low paying sectors. The earnings and wages of a woman is a representation of her economic independence, her share in family expenses and in turn her position in the family.

However, in the post-Soviet period, women's status has further deteriorated due to change in wage distribution system.

1. *Women's Income as Supplementary Income.* Though traditionally, women have been encouraged to work in the economic sphere. However, due to women's low earnings, their wages are considered as supplementary income in dual-earning households. Many women also tend to weigh the value of their time at home and professional work and choose to work in the labour market in case they are offered a market wage higher than their reservation wage¹. Therefore, if more household members work, women's reservation wage increases. Also, if there are more children, then women tend to give more importance to household work than working in the market.
2. *Poverty.* Post disintegration of the USSR, "one-third of the Russian population fell into poverty with more than half of these households headed by women, and with women comprising the overwhelming majority of unemployed workers" (Moghadan 1995; Hawkins and Knox 2014:12). The instances of economic

¹ Reservation wage is the value the woman places on her time at home.

crises have led to massive unemployment and financial pressure on families. Therefore, women had no choice but to accept positions which were turned down by men. Especially women in female-headed households have no choice but to take any job that is available due to the poor economic conditions of the family. It led to a phenomenon of women's poverty multiplication, as prospects of getting paid better in the feminised occupation are low. Thus, to exterminate poverty without elimination of gender stereotypes is not possible. The single mothers are the worst off in today's Russia, "sociologists and economists speak of an increasing feminization of poverty: the birth of the first child causes a decrease in the standard of living of 30 percent, the birth of a second child by 60 percent" (Kosterina 2011: 2).

Women despite having better educational qualifications are paid lower and "belongs to the low-paid category of the population". For example, 67 percent of working women have higher or special secondary education, while only 46 percent of working men have the same education. Hence, a phenomenon of 'new poor' has become popular in the Russian Federation. 'New poor' are the category of people living under poverty despite of having jobs, women in Russia are the majority falling under this category of 'new poor' because their poorly wages are not sufficient for living an adequate lifestyle (Consortium of Women's Non-Governmental Associations 2010:3).

Wage discrimination is the result of the traditional patriarchal values of the society. Historically, the consumption industry in Russia was regarded as less valuable for the economy, in such industries wages were paid lower. It is not surprising that women were mainly employed in such industries and paid lower because they were considered as the secondary earners of the family. Hence, even after economic reforms, this vicious discrimination in wages exists. Though

vast number of women have been able to attain higher education, but due to their concentration in less lucrative fields and forms of study. Women earn less as compared to men with otherwise similar university degree.

Women's Resistance and Growth of Women's Organisations

Women face blatant gender stereotypes and discrimination on a multitude of fronts such as in hiring practices, wages, promotion, domestic work, representation in position of power, and sexual harassment etc. Since the Soviet's time, there existed 'gender paradox', "in spite of high levels of empowerment in terms of education and employment; women have not gained powerful positions in decision-making bodies" (Usha 2005: 141), this legacy continues till today. Therefore, to check such issues, women organisations became necessary as state withdrew support on arrival of market reforms.

Emergence of Grassroots Movements

Though the state barred formation of independent groups of any kind outside the state and the Communist party. However, on the onset of perestroika, women did get some leverage to discuss about the issues faced by them. By the late 1980s, the underground movement was mobilised enabling the formation of many women groups who started discussing and protesting discrimination and inequality women faces in their daily activities. As a result of such groups, there was an increased "awareness about gender inequalities in the form of job discrimination, exclusion of women from decision-making bodies, the double burden of paid and domestic work, as well as patriarchal social culture" (Hardwick 2014). Additionally, the move "towards liberal democracy further encouraged formation of political groups, civil society, research groups and non-governmental organizations" (Ibid). Suddenly, women's club, groups and

associations appeared in the domain of the speakable, some 300 of them managed to get official registration” (Ayvazova 1995; Kondakov 2012:37).

‘Women of Russia’ the first political group was the result of the successful collaboration of women groups. By 1991, many groups began to register itself which resulted in the fruitful implementation of the first independent women’s forum wherein hundreds of women participated. By 1995, hundreds of groups were officially registered, however, not all women groups call themselves feminist, but they worked towards reshaping state control over women issues. Currently, there are thousands of women groups and organisations, some of which are unregistered. Some of the earliest well-known women organisations were “Soldiers’ Mothers Committee which was founded in 1989; Petersburg Centre for Gender Studies, it was established in 1992; Women of Russia, formed in 1993; in 1994, Russian Association of Crisis Centers for Women (RACCW) was established; and Gender Research Centre in Ivanovo, established in 1996” (Kondakov 2012:37).

Movements of Women Organizations and Women NGOs

Women organizations in the early years were highly networked especially in the large cities. They jointly organized national campaigns and “uniting dozens of NGOs on common issues affecting women such as increasing violence against women and the need to increase women’s presence in politics” (Sundstrom 2002: 211). As a result of their collaboration, Russian Association of Crisis Centers for Women (RACCW) was established in 1994 with “a membership of thirty-four NGOs from regions across Russia, stretching from Moscow to Norilsk in the far north and Itrkutsk in Siberia” (Ibid).

'Women of Russia' was the first all-women political party formed by members of Communist women's groups in 1993. It was the first political party which worked against discriminatory law. The party was able to gain 21 seats in the parliament from 1993 to 1995. However, in 1995, the party was not able to secure the 5 percent vote necessary to hold seat in the parliament. In its maiden struggle to pass legislation on violence against women, it got only 8 percent of popular vote (Sperling 1999:117). As a result of the socio-economic turmoil, the women movements which began to mushroom in the early 1990s began to lose popularity and direction. To give a new impetus to the women's movement "Women of Russia introduced a 'Charter of Women's Solidarity' in 1997, more than 300 women's organisations across a broad philosophical spectrum signed it. Though the charter did not result in concrete political action, but it signified a major step towards identification of principles on which many women's NGOs can agree" (Sundstrom 2002: 211).

Many women's organisation focused on helping women who lost their jobs because of economic transition. They gave group counselling as well as re-trained unemployed women to enter the labour market. However, these women were trained on basic skills like handicraft and sewing which was not a very lucrative means of earning a living. This was because the NGOs themselves lacked financial resources, basic infrastructure and human resource. However, currently there are numerous women organisations and NGOs in Russia who are actively working to uplift women's position in all spheres of life. Today, women's NGOs are involved in vast array of issues and problems encompassing women's rights and gender equality.

The rising figure of women's NGOs in Russia and its progressive nature of sharing information, cognizance of each other, and even alliance on projects, it

can be said that though women's movement in Russia is a small one, it exists and is gradually gaining strength. Especially in regions outside Moscow and St. Petersburg, women's NGOs have gradually begun to develop better associations with politicians as well as bureaucrats, women NGOs are starting to have a voice in public policy. In the Novgorod Oblast, the regional Social Chamber for oblast economic policies considered the recommendations submitted by Irina Urtaeva (leader) of the local 'Women's Parliament' to promote women's entrepreneurship in the region. In the Udmurt Republic, 'Crisis Center for Women and Children' is established to tackle issues of domestic violence, it is municipally funded. At the federal level, women's NGOs, along with government ally Lyudmila Zavadskaya was able to make changes in the draft version of the new Federal Labor Code which had discriminatory prohibitions on women's involvement in certain occupations (Ibid). 'Petersburg Aegis' and 'Consortium of Women's Non-Governmental Associations' was able to provide data of discrimination against pregnant women "through the Council for promoting the development of civil society and human rights under RF President to president D. Medvedev" (Consortium of Women's Non-Governmental Associations 2010:4), who in turn, made the Procurator General of Russia to look into the matter. Women NGOs have been able to yield some success in their struggle for attaining women's equality in Russia.

Problems of Women Organisations and NGOs

Under the current social, political, economic scenario, the women's movement suffer a multitude of problems in Russia. According to Amrita Basu, "women's movements are less likely to emerge when states are weak and repressive and there is a chasm between official pronouncements and actual politics and practices" (as quoted in Hardwick 2014). Some of the problems can be listed as:

1. *Lack of appealing ideology and public support.* The women's movement still face difficulties in finding an appealing ideology to grab the attention of the people. Feminism is resisted in Russia as a Western concept. Due to the gender paradox that existed in Soviet Russia. During the Soviet times, the state presented feminism as a separatist movement, many held the view that feminism means living alone without men and their help. Additionally, the term equality is problematic in Russia because of the Communist idea of women's dual role at home and at the workplace, some women still hold the opinion that equality means to have a double burden. Democracy is associated with corruption and economic difficulties. Many women's NGOs are not taking any step to improve their public reputation. They are instead focused on academic activities such as conducting gender analysis of government legislation or holding seminars independent of government's influence. Increasingly very few organisations are conducting significant outreach activities with the broader public. Out of "seventy women's NGOs in seven regions around Russia, only 23 percent was engaged in charity work, only 20 percent were engaged in collaboration with activities outside women's movement. Only 41 percent had organized conferences and only 41 percent reported producing and circulating information about themselves and their issues" (Sundstrom 2002: 214).

Most of the charitable organizations are not oriented towards women's issues such as gender stereotyping and discrimination but instead they emphasis on women's traditional role as caretakers of other vulnerable groups. Only limited organisations are working towards addressing social problems which are the result of political resolutions and practices. Hence, the lack of strong ideology is, in turn, resulting in lack of support from the public.

2. *Distasteful image of feminism.* In Russia, the public still holds a distasteful image of feminism. Such image has been cultivated as early as in the 1980s with the onset of perestroika when criticism against women began as they started voicing against discrimination and inequality. Many accused women of forgetting their ‘natural vocation’. In an interview Olga Voronina mentioned that “Feminism is being shaped as a movement that is belligerently directed against men, created by women who were not pretty, were unsuccessful in their private lives and were in all likelihood lesbians ...” (Voronina 2014). Hence, there is a lack of widespread support from amongst women themselves to avoid being associated with such an image. To add to this problem is the attitude of many human-rights defenders in Russia who considers sex-based discrimination as far-fetched.

3. *Lack of governmental structures and institutions.* As per the official data, only 22 civic women’s organisation at the national level while at the regional 300 organisations that undertaking women’s issues in Russia. In Russia talks about equality of rights and facts about sexual discrimination are not encouraged. Therefore, the problems associate with discrimination against women are either covered and the state does not readily acknowledge it. The state does not have any institution which is solely in charge of combatting discrimination against women. Such phenomenon exists “because of the president’s and the government’s reluctance to match their actions to their words on the issue of equal rights for women” (Ostanina 2011 gwi-boell.de).

The only existing department, i.e. ‘The Department for Medical and Social Problems of the Family’ under the Ministry of Health and Social Development which was responsible for implementing gender-oriented policy has been eliminated. Therefore, for women in order to get their voice heard in the policy-

making is through lobbying with the government officials who support women's cause. There is lack of government committee specifically assigned to look into women issues. Any positive political development solely is dependent on personal affiliation between women activists and individual politician or bureaucrat. Without government support bringing any bill on the Duma's table is a humongous challenge.

4. *Lack of funding.* Due to economic difficulties and lack of trust in women movements, women organisations do not get financial assistance and support from the public. The only funding is through foreign aids and grants. In a study conducted, it was found that 67 percent of women's NGOs considered in the study had received foreign funding at least once in their existence, while 42 percent reported that majority of their funding was through external sources. In a study conducted by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), it confirmed that "feminist and human rights organisations overall receive 90 percent of their financing from Western grantmaking organisations" (Sundstrom 2002:222). This indicates that Women NGOs are heavily dependent on foreign funding. However, the repressive policies of the state towards foreign funding is further adding to their problem. In 2008, through a presidential decree, the tax-exemption status of ninety percent of foreign NGOs and foundations working in Russia were removed. Subsequently in 2012, restrictive legislation was put in place making it obligatory for NGOs funded by foreign organisations to register as foreign agents (Hardwick 2014:16). Thus, without the financial support from the Western donors, there is a possibility that many NGOs will become weak and may cease to exist.
5. *Restrictions on the right to public protest.* The right to public protest in the Russian Federation is curtailed. However, in the recent years, women have

gained the courage to show their resistance to patriarchy through mass protests. The Labor Code of the Russia Federation provides special protection and rights to pregnant women. However, according to Consortium of Women's Non-Governmental Associations (2010), it found that "in St. Petersburg alone over 700 cases of dismissal of pregnant women and non-payment of allowances to mothers of small children". To demonstrate against such discrimination, for the first time after 1917 hundreds of women protestors took to the streets.

Women's resistance was very evident during the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2011/2012. The feminist rock collective Pussy Riot's created a much furore with their punk prayer performance. In December 2011, the members of Pussy Riot took part in the pre-election protests voicing out their resistance publicly against Putin's regime as 'patriarchal oppression'. In many of their interviews, they outrightly declared that Russia has a deep tradition of gender and revolution and that it had amazing women revolutionaries. Though their performance was distasteful to some and they were even arrested (Hardwick 2014 e-ir.info).

"Pussy Riot succeeded in the second wave feminist maxim of making personal political and bringing the plight of Russian women to global attention" (Hardwick 2014 e-ir.info). Recently on March 2018, as a part of the global social media protest known as '#MeToo movement'², Ms. Sobchak who is also a presidential candidate staged a solo picket outside the lower house of the Russian parliament asking the resignation of Leonid Slutsky (chairman of the State Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee) against whom several journalists have accused of sexual harassment.

2. The goals of this movement were to hold those who partake in sexual misconduct and also those who cover it up accountable.

The government is working towards tightening its control over citizens' activities (particularly in the political sphere) with increasing surveillance, police raids, and arrests. Hence, being openly resistant towards gender discrimination and oppression has caused many women their lives and some are constantly under threats. Women journalists are especially targeted for their relentless reporting on human rights issues. For example, Tatyana Mamonova, known as the founder of modern Russian women's movement was exiled from the country in 1980. In 2006, Journalist Anna Politkovskaja was assassinated, while in 2009, Natalia Estermirova, a human rights activist was also assassinated. In Russia, NGOs articulating oppositional views against the state's policy are likely to be subject to consequence and termination in case of expressing serious dissent. Women NGOs are not immune from this danger (Ibid).

Emerging Trend of Women's Movement

As a result of such problems, many women crisis centers which provides service in the form of hotline or in-person consultation to victims and survivors of gender violence are either closing down or ceasing to exist. Some of them are shifting towards advocacy services and awareness campaigns emphasizing violence in the family rather than women specific. Women organization still lag in public support. Some even hold the opinion that women's group are not useful in helping women, while other think that women's group are too radical. Women NGOs, on the other hand, lack cooperation and is divided into two camps, i.e. the 'old-school' organization and the new feminists. The 'old school' organisations are descendants of Soviet-era Zhensovety, their approach is traditional. They are mainly involved in charity works, however, dependent on the state. Therefore, the feminists holds the view that the old school is more inclined towards pursuing state objectives than working for women's rights and needs. While the

feminists camp though are working towards changing the outlook of the society but is disconnected from the public at large.

Nevertheless, crisis centers and women groups such as women's business organization are receiving wide appreciation and support. Though other NGOs based on feminist ideologies who promote gender equality goals are still lagging in support. In a poll conducted by 'Russian ROMIR research group', it was reported that "only 23 percent of the respondents were willing to support the charity activities of NGOs, while 64 percent were not willing to do so" (Sundstrom 2002:221). This indicates that even after nearly three decades of the existence of many NGOs, they have not been able to gain the public trust. Many people still have the fear that "charitable organizations are a cover for dubious activities" (Ibid).

Therefore, in the light of diluting women's movement, many feminists are reiterating the importance of joint effort of feminist scholars to push forward feminist agenda on gender equality. In an interview Oksana Pushkina (United Russia party) said that there is a

new patriarchal order under which gender stereotypes is thriving, the social norms of men must be masculine and strong, and women should be feminine mothers", represent a "massive impediment in the development of women's rights ... and completely [hold] back the strength and position of Russian women in society (quoted in Ferris-Rotman 2018:).

To understand the perspectives of feminists in Russia, below are some excerpts of a newly formed group called the initiative group 'For Feminism'.

To our regret, we have to concede that the women's movement in Russia has lost significant ground. Instead of promoting the interests of women in general, some organizations have concentrated on dealing with local tasks (Bitten 2011: 1).

Taking such a step is a strategic error and therefore the time has come to address that error by developing new models of behavior. The society must be presented with alternatives to the patriarchal model, a system in which both the genders are mutually respected in the family as well as the society (Ibid). There is a need for the feminist to come together and create feminist agenda in the society, “because today’s ‘women’s issue’ is being articulated in the political arena in a spirit that is solely patriarchal: benefits for children, maternal capital, abortions etc.” (Maksimova 2011). Hope should not be placed on legislative changes alone as laws are only half of the battle. Feminist organization must become a movement that changes society’s attitude towards equality of the sexes. The need to combat the attitude which considers women as second-class human beings. “This is a long-term process. But it has to get started” (Ibid). Vera Akulova (2011), affirms,

Russian society is still living in a state of total disaster when it comes to gender issues”. There are endless series of examples such as the horrendous statistics on domestic violence through to the fact that hardly anyone in Russia knows the word ‘sexism means’. “The group ‘For Feminism’ is the only grassroots initiative which places gender issues on its key and permanent agenda and brings them out onto the streets (Akulova 2011: 3).

The traditionalist ideologies and policies have secured centre stage in today’s Russia with no social movement to challenge issues of gender. In the contemporary world, it is impossible to abandon values such as “human rights, personal dignity and equal rights of women, values put into place history, at the cost of suffering” (Zdravomyslova 2011: 3). A society which lacks such important feature of modernisation will be thrown back into the archaic. Thus, contemporary Russia is in a great danger because to be at par with other developed countries Russia must let go off the patriarchal model of society and promote equality of both the sexes.

Conclusion

The neoliberal transition of Russia provided women with better access to higher education and labour market but at the same time has increased gender gap. Traditionally, education was considered as a 'public good', but now it is becoming a private well with principles moving towards decentralisation, privatisation, differentiation, diversification and competitive individualism. The introduction of privatisation and 'for-fee' and 'no fee' based institutions has gravely impacted women as fee has been introduced in female educational field. Additionally, although women's enrolment in higher education has substantially increased and even surpassed men. In the event of decentralisation of education and economy, there has been a declining trend of women in technical and engineering education. Hence, women's educational qualification has not materialised in getting quality employment opportunities in the neoliberal market system. The lack in obtaining quality employment affects women's ability to climb up the professional ladder in the economic sphere. Despite of the statistics indicating high female labour participation and employment they are mostly concentrated in the lower positions and feminized branches of the economy and lower paying jobs such as medical, education, services and so on.

In the event of neoliberal transition, gender segregation in higher education as well as labour market has been observed. Despite the implementation of policies to make higher education at par with the global standards and develop its human capital. Highly qualified women in post-socialist Russia still lag behind men. The human capital of women is not fully utilised which is producing greater female labour market disadvantage. Labour market policies, reforms, and social guarantees put in place to support women are instead acting as barriers for women to enter the market. Women are treated as 'second-sort' of labour force, they are unable to utilise their educational qualifications and skills to gain quality

employment. Confinement of women in lower quality jobs will not make women at par with men economically nor socially.

Women from all walks of life such as academicians, entrepreneurs, women NGOs have the responsibility to work together to promote women's empowerment by sharing their own knowledge and experience. As it is only women who can highlight women's issues to the larger public and work productively towards it. Civil society such as women groups and women NGOs should be revived. Women organisations on their part need to put more efforts to raise awareness about women issues to the broader public. Gender issues should be part of both political and public discourse. Anti-discrimination laws must be formulated and enforced appropriately.

Women specific policies in HE is crucial; women should be provided with 'informed choices' about the demands of the disciplines in market economy. Additionally, proper funding and financial support is required for women's enrolment to traditionally male disciplines such as engineering, natural science, technology etc. In addition, gender courses should be introduced to higher education, conferences and seminars should be organized as well as books and magazines should be published on gender discrimination prevailing in the higher education and labour market so that positive changes can take place in understanding the complexities of gender issues to a larger mass.

Chapter 5

State Response for Addressing Gender Issues in Higher Education and Labour Market

This chapter examines the state response to addressing gender issues in higher education and labour market in Russian Federation in the event of neoliberal transformation. It examines the achievements of the state under its commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the Millennium Development Goals (2000), and Sustainable Development Goals (2015) to support and achieve gender equality goals in the Russian Federation. It also explores the changing attitude of women towards higher education and labour market participation and its consequences. It addresses the sixth research question.

Gender is a great concern in the Russian society. The deep-rooted gender-paradox in the society has resulted in a general tendency to resist feminist ideals and indicates that feminism is a foreign concept in Russia. People commonly reject the idea that women face discrimination. Nevertheless, despite legal claims of equality, women in Russia face inequality and gender-based discrimination. Numerous scholarly work confirms that women do not enjoy equal status and opportunities as men in Russia. The past political, social and economic factors have shaped the gender issues and its movements in Russia.

Soviet Russia was one of the first countries to provide a constitutional guarantee of equality. During the Soviet's time, it was claimed that the state had achieved equality in all spheres of life. For instance, during the Soviet's period, Stalin closed Zhenotdel (Women's Division), affirming that women in the Soviet Union had attained freedom and equality with men and that such special women's

organisations were not required. Since then official discussions on gender inequality was practically non-existent, feminist ideals became more of a luxury of the bourgeois women. People were discouraged from discussing gender issues. No statistics on gender was provided to the public. Scholars and researchers were not allowed to conduct studies on gender-related issues. As a result of such policies, gender issues in Russia have often been overlooked historically.

In the post-Soviet transition, the society is experiencing a move towards patriarchal conventions of women's place in the home with traditional gender roles. In the process of socio-economic reforms, the gender order in the society is deepening and resulting in disparity in the attainment of education and quality jobs, thereby leading to wage gap and inequality in the domestic sphere. The implementation of neoliberal market reforms has further pushed back women to the domestic sphere. As a result of growing traditional outlook towards life, the patriarchal gender norms have regressed women's ability to gain equality. Despite being highly educated, women are discriminated against at the labour market. The growing gender segregation can be seen in higher education which in turn is aggravating gender segregation in the workplace. According to many gender research scholars and feminists (Olga Zdravomyslova, Vera Akulova, Natasha Bitten, Yelena Maksimova, Olga Voronina) in the event of transition of Russia to neoliberalism, a phenomenon called as 'patriarchal renaissance' has come to the fore. It is crucial to promote gender equality in all spheres of life so that the human capital potential of both men and women is utilised equally for the socio-economic development of the country.

State Response to Gender Issues

The development of a society can be indicated by the degree of equality between men and women. Women's status can be improved by providing legal guarantees, societal appreciation of the differences between the genders and self-realisation of one's ability. Despite claims by the official data and statistics of achieving gender equality in Russia yet inequality and discrimination persist.

To uphold formal equality and rights of every citizen, the state has formulated a variety of legislation and regulatory documents. The Art.19. 3 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees equal rights and freedom to both men and women. The Labor Code of the Russian Federation provides legal protection and benefits to women; women are being protected from working in industries dangerous which are dangerous to their health. They are also provided with the provision of maternity and parental leaves. Women are eligible for lower retirement age than men. According to the Art. 59 of the Criminal Code, women are not subjected to capital punishment. In order to promote equality between the genders, the state has passed numerous legislation and regulations. Along with the legal steps, numerous regional centres for gender studies have been established, and gender issues have been introduced into the higher school curricula. However, the extent to which women enjoys the legal guarantees and protection provided to them is still questionable. This is because the state does not have a constitutional committee or ministry specifically for handling gender issues.

Until recently, gender issues in Russia has been widely ignored and was not part of the political and social discourse. However, due to the pressure from the international organisations and civil organisations in Russia, gender issues are now slowly being able to penetrate to the political discourse and is being socially

discussed. The state has ratified to the commitment to improve gender equality and upliftment of women's status through signing the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), UN Millennium Development Goals (2000) and UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015).

Numerous declarations have been put forth. Some of the decrees passed in the Russian Federation in support of women's rights and status includes:

Decrees by RF President: On Priorities of State Policies Concerning Women (1993); On Increasing Women's Role in Federal Power Bodies and Power Bodies of RF Subjects of the RF (1996). Including Adoption of the National Plan of Action towards Improvement of the Status of Women in the Russian Federation and Increase of their Role in Society by 2000, 2001-2005 (Roschin and Zubarevich 2005:7).

The state also approved "the Family Code and the new Labour Code" by considering recommendations of "ILO Convention No. 156" which aims at provision of "equal treatment and equal opportunities for working men and women: workers with family responsibilities' to evade discrimination of workforce (Ibid).

Under the stipulations of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the state adopted a guideline to advance the status of women in the Russian Federation. It delineated strategic goals as well as planned the steps to achieve the goals. The focus areas included: "Observance of women's rights in conjunction with human rights and fundamental freedoms, the involvement of women in decision-making at all levels, ensuring equal rights in the labour market, health care for women, violence against women" (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women 2004:3). The procedures to accomplish these goals were framed and adopted through the 'National Action Plans for the advancement of women and the expansion of their role in society'. The first plan was during the period 1997-

2000 while the second plan to cover the period 2001-2005. Within ‘The Action Plan’, the state incorporated its commitment to offer resolutions to the problems which affect women’s status. Some of the measures were to “improve the status of women on the labour market, to protect women's health, to develop a system of social services for women, and to provide assistance to women who have been the victims of violence”(Ibid). The second plan was framed under ‘A National Plan of Actions to Improve the Status of Women and Their Role in Society (2001- 2005)’, however, it could not be materialised due to lack of finance.

In response to fulfil the UN Millennium Development Goals, the state has called upon for developing a new program document ‘Gender Strategy for the Russian Federation’. The goal of this program document has been to outline the requirement and standards for confirming equal rights and opportunities for both the genders in all spheres of life. The outlines of this draft have been discussed at many international conferences, seminars and meetings of governmental heads. It has been subjected to experts’ scrutiny in the various ministerial and departmental level of the Russian Federation. The draft was to be finalised after due consideration of the comments and suggestions and then be approved by the federal government (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women 2004:3).

Hence, many of declarations have been passed under the federal government, yet, the execution of these policies has not been satisfactory due to lack of functional structures responsible for gender issues in the Russian Federation. Women still face inequality regarding wages; they are still unable to move to traditional male sectors and occupations. There is a lack of mechanisms to resolve the issues of balancing salaries in the fields such as healthcare, education, culture and social services in which women's labour dominates. Massive inequality between men

and women labour force is created due to hidden gender discrimination, delay in payment of salaries and benefits. Despite, statistics in the unemployment offices show that women unemployment has decreased, yet the percentage of women who are unemployed is still very high when compared to the total number of people unemployed. Nonetheless, women's representation in governmental bodies has been increasing, primarily at the regional and municipal levels, yet, the main problem is the lack of women in decision-making levels.

State and Women in Higher Education

Every citizen in Russia is being guaranteed equal rights to education through Art.43 of Russian Constitution and the 'Federal Law on Education'. On 6th February 1998, a decree was passed under the 'Ministry of General and Professional Education No. 302' which emphasised: "On the Cross-Institutional Research Programme: Feminology and Gender Studies in Russia" (Zydravomyslova and Shnyrova 2001: 22).

Russia signed the Beijing Declaration in 1995 to promote equality and women's rights. It also participated in the 'Convention on the Eradication of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women'. These two proceedings formed the basis of the 'Concept on the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Russian Federation' and the 'National Programme for the Improvement of the Status of Women'. Under the Concept, the state recognised the need to develop professional education and courses for women and hinted on governmental support for studies on gender to remove gender stereotypes.

Women's representation in education was high since the Soviet's time. Nevertheless, the gendered culture in education prevailed. Despite large representation of women in higher education, they were unevenly in various

disciplines of study. Women constituted 90 percent teachers and 70 percent medical doctors. These professions were considered as ‘feminised professions’ lacking high status or income. Women’s access to prestigious institutions as well as universities were limited. Therefore, to promote equal opportunities to education, the Ministry of Education established a cross-institutional research programme in 1994. The objectives of this programme were to assist women in the new socio-economic environment, to formulate curricula as well as manuals to promote courses on women and gender studies. It also aimed to create research centres for women and gender studies in higher education institutions as well as different regions of Russia and create networks amongst various centres to collect and monitor information in regards to women’s issues and problems (Zydravomyslova and Shnyrova 2001: 23).

In 2000, Russia signed the UN Millennium Development Goals, under which one of the key goals was ‘to achieve universal primary education’. In 2016, the gross enrolment ratio in primary education was 102.08 percent, of which female ratio was 102.34 percent against the male ratio of 101.83 percent, in secondary education the gross enrolment ratio was 104.81 percent, of which female enrolment ratio was 104.02 percent against male enrolment ratio of 105.56 percent. In tertiary education, the gross enrolment ratio was 81.82 percent, of which female enrolment was 89.32 percent against male enrolment of 74.72 percent (UNESCO Institute of Statistics 2018). The high representation of women at levels of education may indicate women have achieved gender equality in education. However, in the field of higher education, women face gender stereotyping and discrimination. They are discriminated against in the streams of subjects such as science, engineering and technology which are considered as traditional male subjects. As a result, women face hardships in

attaining quality employment as in the neoliberal era, resulting in women's high concentration in the lower positions.

Women are yet to achieve gender equality in all disciplines of higher education. There exists 'gender paradox' in higher education. At present, there are no legal measures, mechanisms or reservation system to promote equal access to all disciplines of higher education. Nor there is much-organised work on the elimination of gender gaps and gender inequality in higher education. Regrettably, gender segregation in higher education is not considered as high-priority issues, despite it is leading to gender inequality in the labour market. Nevertheless, Russia has signed the 'UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015) within which the fourth goal is to 'achieve inclusive and quality education' as quality education is a crucial tool for achieving sustainable development goals. Therefore, within this commitment, there is a prospect and scope for achieving inclusive and quality higher education in Russia.

State and Women in Labour Market

In the domain of the labour market, the state has been taking an active role by adopting several laws and amending the labour code. Since the Soviet's time, the state adopted 'the ILO Convention, 1958 (No.111): Discrimination against employment and occupation'. Under this agreement, the state is required to pursue policies which guarantee the "equality of opportunities for men and women in access to vocational training, work and particular occupations, without discriminating based on sex, wages and working conditions" (ILO 1958). In addition to that, the Soviet Union provided legal rights to education and employment. Yet, due to the regressive policies of some leaders, 'women issue' was considered solved and no substantial initiatives and measures were undertaken to reduce gender segregation and immense gender inequalities.

The state has put forth numerous decrees to promote equality in the labour market. In 1998, the state passed decree ‘On compulsory social insurance against industrial accidents and occupational diseases’ and in 1999, ‘On the fundamentals of occupational safety in the Russian Federation’. These laws have been endorsed to guarantee equal rights as well as secure occupational safety. In 2000, the Government of the Russian Federation through its resolutions No. 162 and No.163, espoused schedules to prohibiting heavy, harmful, and dangerous work by women or by persons under the age of 18 years. The schedules were prepared after careful evaluation of workplace by scientifically established medical and biological criteria and acknowledged by the Russian Ministry of Health in accord with the Russian Ministry of Labor. The schedules have incorporated the provisions of the ILO conventions (No. 13, 45, and 138).

The new Labor Code of the Russian Federation has been formulated considering the law-enforcement practice and the provisions of the ‘United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women’ and ‘ILO Convention No. 156 on equal treatment and equal opportunities for working men and women: workers with family responsibilities’. It was formally adopted on 30th December 2001. Some of the principles in support of women labour force are as follows:

- Art. 2. Provides legal regulations of labour regulations. Employers are to provide equality of rights and opportunities to every employee without discrimination. It promotes equal opportunity in career advancement considering work performance, skills and seniority. Under this article, professional training and skill development is to be provided without discrimination and provides right to official state protection of labour rights and freedoms”.
- Art.3. States the right of every individual to have equal opportunities in realising one’s labour rights. It prohibits discrimination based on

age, sex, colour, race, language, social status and so on which is irrelevant professional qualities of an employee”.

Art.132. Prohibits discrimination of wages and remuneration” (Dewey & Le Boeuf 2009: 131-132).

In addition to the above legal guarantees, pregnant women are provided with the following provisions.

Art. 64. Prohibits refusal to conclude labour contract of pregnant women.

Art.70. Prohibits probation for pregnant women and women having children aged up to one year and a half.

Art. 96. Prohibits night-time work for women with children of up to three years of age.

Art. 99. Restricts overtime work for pregnant women.

Art. 122 and Art. 126 provides provision for paid maternity leave.

Art. 254. Provides provision of transfer of pregnant women and women with children under 18 months to other lighter jobs.

Art. 258. Gives the provision of break for nursing a child in addition to rest and lunch breaks (LC OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION NO. 197-FZ OF DECEMBER 30, 2001, wto.org).

In addition to legal guarantees, the social insurance policy was implemented to provide support to the women. Till 2001, social insurance was provided by the employer. However, to remove barriers of receiving maternity benefits from the private companies, the “state collects social insurance or social security premiums and pays out maternity or parental or other benefits” (Teplova 2005:4). In 1999, the “law on the foundations of obligatory social insurance” passed on the responsibility for “paying child benefits, family allowances, maternity and other leaves away from the enterprises to regional social insurance funds” (Ibid 7).

In 2000, the local governments were given the responsibility of providing preschool, kindergarten education. Two important types of leave have been granted to women, i.e. maternity and parental leave. The state provided 140 days of maternity leaves, i.e. seventy days before and after the delivery seventy days

more. Mothers who have worked at least for one year in the same organisation have been given the right to receive 100 percent of their regular salary while at maternity leave with a maximum total monthly payment of 85 times the minimum monthly wage which was set at 450 roubles in 2002. In 2002, the earlier childcare leaves (up to 36 months in 1991) were replaced by parental leave with the same length of time to claim benefits. During the leave period, parents receive “leave payment of 500 roubles per month until the child reaches 1.5 years old and 50 roubles per month during the age of a child from 1.5 to 3 years old” (Ibid 9). In 2017 the minimum benefit of maternity leave was increased to 34,521 roubles for the leave period or 7,500 roubles per month since July 2016 (Sinyavskaya: 2017). The leave benefits of children between 1.5 to 3 years old were to be paid from the payroll funds by the employer. Though, the leave can be availed by either of the parents or family members. However, women typically tend to avail of this leave.

Women were also given a choice to work ‘part-time’ or from home while availing maternity leave; they were allowed to avail “leave in parts (with breaks) with the right to return to the same position” (Teplova 2005:9). In addition, employers had to pay a new ‘single social tax’, or ‘unified social tax’ under the following bracket; “up to 100, 000 roubles 35.6 percent of an employee’s earnings, between 100,000 to 300,000 roubles 20 percent of earnings, and lower amounts on higher earnings” (Teplova 2005:9). These policies are introduced to encourage women to enter and stay in the labour market and at the same time able to fulfil their familial roles.

Women in Russia are barred from being employed in 456 types of work under Art. 253 of Russia’s Labor Code- Federal Law No, 197, 2001.

Labor of females on hard, dangerous and unhealthy trades as well as underground working excluding non-physical work or sanitary and domestic services is forbidden. Labour of females on the work related to the manual lifting of weights exceeding maximum permissible standards [is forbidden]. The lists of industries, professions, and jobs with unhealthy and/or dangerous work conditions with restricted female labor as well as maximum permissible weights for manual lifting and handling by females are approved in the procedure fixed by the Government of Russian Federation taking into account opinion of the Russian Trilateral Committee on Social and Labor Relations (Labor Code- Federal Law No, 197, 2001).

However, these restrictions on women's entry into jobs have resulted in women's disadvantage. Many women are not aware of such existing laws, and hence they spent years pursuing education which cannot be pursued as a career. For instance, it took Svetlana Medvedeva five years to fight for getting employed as a captain of a shipping company. Her initial application was rejected because of her gender under Art. 253 of the Labour Code. Svetlana mentioned that she had not been warned about the existence of such law that debars women from entering specific industries. Like Svetlana, many women lack information on such existing laws which devalues women's ability and skills (*Moscow Times* 2017).

In addition to the labour code, the state has approved 'Guideline for action on the labour market for 2003-2005', under which the goal of the state is to provide appropriate employment prospects for the population with special consideration for women. It is because the economic the needs of the economy can be fulfilled by providing the workforce with the appropriate professional qualification and a quick response to dynamics of the labour market. In this guideline, detailed procedures for widening employment prospects for women in the labour market were considered, it also includes measures for enhancing their competitiveness as

well as increasing their professional mobility. In accordance with this guideline, under the federal government a draft on “State guarantees of equal rights and freedoms and equal opportunities for men and women in the Russian Federation” was framed (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women 2004:1-2). However, there have been many questions regarding the realisation of this Guideline at the meetings of the ‘Commission on the Status of Women in the Russian Federation’ under the Government of the Russian Federation. The state has been identifying forms and methods within this framework, to expand opportunities as well as assist women’s adaptability to new working conditions and increase their competitiveness in the contemporary competitive labour market.

The state has developed mechanisms to impart gender equality policies at the Federal level. Some of the national mechanisms which have been established in the Russian Federation for improving women’s status includes:

The Commission on the Status of Women in the Russian Federation under the leadership of the Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation; the Department on Women, Children, and the Family of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development of the Russian Federation. Also, the Committee on Women, Family, and Youth of the State Duma of the Russian Federation; the Social Commission attached to the Office of the Chairman of the Federation Council for Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in Russia (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women 2004:23).

Though the state has created these structures, yet, it lacks commitment and stability. For instance, in 2004 ‘the Commission for the Status of Women’ was terminated as a result of the administrative reform of the executive branch of power. Additional regional administrative reforms can result in the closing of the existing regional commissions for the status of women.

In the early years of the transition, the state had put forth several declarations and decrees. However, they were not successfully implemented due to lack of finance and negligence. For instance, though the ‘Ministry of Labour and Social Development’ formulated contemporary goals and targets for state gender policy, including human development, development of democracy, and promoting sustainable development under its ‘Gender Strategy of the Russian Federation’ policy document. It had the potential to provide the political and legal basis for state policy on women’s issues, enhancement of women’s status, overcoming gender discrimination and achieving gender equality in all spheres of life. However, it could not get approval due to financial budgeting issues.

In the ‘Medium-term program of socio-economic development in the Russian Federation (2005-2008)’, gender issues were overlooked. There were no gender-sensitive indicators in the ‘Consolidated Report on Outcomes and Key Tasks of RF Government activities’. The apparent gender-asymmetric matters such as low life expectancy at birth and inadequate labour remuneration have been accounted in this document deprived of any regard to the differences between men and women (Human Development Report Russian Federation 2005:60). It has been observed that in the period report between 2008-2009, the Russian Federation enumerated detailed and thorough lists of legal instruments such as laws, decrees, resolutions, and by-laws adopted to prohibit discrimination against all categories of the Russian society. However, in that report, there was no gender-related documents nor any documents with an element of gender. It indicates that gender equality goals are not amongst the priority tasks of the state as gender issues have been long ignored (Consortium of Women’s Non-Governmental Associations 2010:6).

From the year 2005 onwards, the state withdrew both declarations and actions. Instead, gender issues are being dropped from the government's socio-economic priorities and are considered only within the pretext of child and family issues. At both the federal and regional levels, policymakers view protection of women only as a social protection of motherhood and reproductive rights rather than the improvement of women's status and provision of equal opportunities. There is a lack of any substantial task regarding gender equality (Human Development Report Russian Federation 2005:60).

Presently, inadequate women's representation at leadership and decision-making level has resulted in the lower prioritisation of 'women's problems'. The only department, i.e. 'Department for Medical and Social Problems of the Family' under 'the Ministry of Health and Social Development', that was given the responsibility of implementing gender-oriented policy, has been obliterated. At present, the 'Department of Social Welfare' is the only existing state structure in the Ministry which has been given the directives to handle women's issues as well as gender issues. However, implementation of directives and decrees are largely made optional. For example, in 2003, a group of Deputies of the third State Duma introduced a draft law entitled 'On state guarantees of equal rights and freedoms of men and women and equal opportunities for their realization', and a 'National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Russia' was formulated in 2005. However, none of these initiatives underwent any further development beyond being drafted in papers stating lack of financial budget. However, a large part of budget expenses "are allocated institutions and industries dominated by men, e.g., in foreign affairs, army, defence, space, nuclear energy, and mining, giving social expenditures less priority" (Zakirova 2014: 205).

Most of the legal frameworks in support of women offer just theoretical claims to gender equality and the prohibition of gender discrimination. There is a lack of state structures and mechanisms for the actual realisation of women's rights. Women could not find any precedent based on which legal action against violations of equality and gender discrimination can be sought. The provisions of equality in the constitution, labour code and other legal documents need review and expansion as gender issues such as domestic violence; the state does not address gender discrimination (Human Development Report for the Russian Federation 2005: 59).

Despite Russia's commitment to the UN Millennium Developmental Goals to 'promote gender equality and empower women', women in Russia are yet to achieve gender equality. The political participation of women remains low. Only three women serve as cabinet ministers out of thirty ministers, only 13.56 percent women serves in the State Duma while 17.06 percent serves in the Council of the Federation (Election Guide 2016). In the private sector, women constitute only three percentage of personnel at the decision-making level and only eight percentage of executives on corporate boards (Zakirova 2014: 203). The gender pay gap in Russia remains about 37 percent (Atencio and Posadas 2015:2).

Nevertheless, as a part of long-term planning, Russia has committed to abide by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) within which the fifth goal is to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". It has become crucial to end all forms of gender discrimination against women to accelerate sustainable development. Empowerment of women and girls results in a multiplier effect, it drives the socio-economic growth of the country. Therefore, the aim of SDGs to bring forth socio-economic development by eliminating all forms discrimination against women and girls, to end barriers to equal access to

jobs, sexual violence and exploitation, and unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work (United Nations Development Programme 2018). Therefore, within this context as Russia has ratified to SDGs, there is a prospect for implementation of gender equality laws not only through legal declarations but in practice too.

Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Position

Women's position and status in the political sphere is crucial for the overall development of women. It represents women's position at the decision-making bodies. The political representation of women serves as a channel for women to voice out their concerns and issues. It results in the better prioritisation of 'women's problems'. At present, there is a poor representation of women in the political sphere. There are only three women cabinet ministers out of thirty ministers; only sixty-one women serve in the State Duma (13.56 percent), and twenty-nine serves in the Council of the Federation (17.06 percent) (Election Guide 2016). In the private sector, women constitute only three percenta of personnel at the decision-making level and only eight percent of executives on corporate boards (Zakirova 2014: 203). In the World classification of the share of women in national parliaments (2013), Russia ranks at 96th position.

Women's position was slightly better during the Soviet times due to legislative protection and empowerment policies. Since the Soviet times, women's organisation such as Zhenotdel were established to promote women's participation in the political sphere. For example, women were encouraged to participate in politics through official quotas at the level of 30 percent. Though, the highest body of political power, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union mainly consisted of men. However, the political representations of women in other governmental institutions provided them

better access to education, employment, promotion, and participation in social, cultural, and political activities. Though there has been an increase in women's representation in the political sphere, the current status of women's in a leadership position is low. The number of women members in the State Duma decreased from 35 percent to 6 percent in between 1991 to 2012 (Ibid: 204).

Such a massive decline of women in political representations is worrisome. It is essential that an adequate number of women get political representation because being in the decision-making structures, women leaders will be able to protect and promote women's issues such as family, motherhood, childcare and social protection. According to the questionnaire submitted by Russia to the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (2004), it was reported that the state has put forth laws to support women's participation in the political sphere. It states that the 2003 elections have shown improvements of women's participation such that nearly 105 of the members in Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation were women, it was an increase in 2 percent from the 1999 election in which only 8 percent of women were elected to the Federal Assembly. The report states that all the political parties nominated women candidates. Such encouraging representation of women was as a result of the positive outcome of the decree, 'On political parties', which was passed in 2001, along with the efforts of women NGOs. Additionally, parliamentary hearings on the bill, 'On state guarantees of equal rights and freedoms for men and women and opportunities for their realisation in the Russian Federation', as well as the support of the Federal government of the bill has proved fruitful in enabling political parties to nominate women candidates (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women 2004:1).

Attitudinal Change in Women

As Russia embraced neoliberalism, it was hoped to bring about the economic stability of the country which in turn would bring out socio-economic improvements for the women. However, that hope was soon to wane. The neoliberal transformation instead created substantial national and class inequality as well as gender inequality. Due to lack of employment opportunities and demographic crisis in Russia, the state started to employ policies such as maternity leaves and part-time employment. The goals of these policies were to reinforce the importance of women's role to child-bearing and primary care-takers and also to keep them away from the labour market (Teplova 2007:286).

The policy-makers in Russia and society, in general, promoted the idea of 'bringing women back to home' to contain the problem of "social disintegration, growing unemployment, tension in the labour market and resolve the problem of demographic crisis" (Teplova 2007: 291). It resulted in a growth of a traditional policy of appropriation of the role of women to look after families and child. Hence, provisions of creches and day care facilities has been reduced. The number of childcare institutions decreased to 53.3 thousand in 2000, as compared to 87.9 thousand in 1990. The number of communities with state nurseries also decreased to 34 percent in 2000 from 55.2 percent in 1994. The quality of childcare facilities also declined in the subsequent years after transition. The private employers and enterprises supported the idea of providing long maternity and parental leaves to encourage women to leave the workforce at least temporarily. Hence, "maternity and parental leave, together with the contraction of child care, are part of a set of policies designed to encourage women to leave the labour force and have children" (Teplova 2005:23). Since the Soviet's time, "women were valued primarily as mothers and domestic workers and then as workers of the so-called female jobs. Their education, employment and social

profile were regarded as an appendage to managing the home front” (Usha 2005:162).

As a result of such policies, several women started to give priority to familial responsibilities. Hence, the society instead experienced ‘patriarchal renaissance’ as the practice of traditional gender norms became more prominent. Women’s organisations could not do much to help women as they discouraged to pursue gender research. The restrictions on women’s movement made them marginalised. Adding to their woe is the lack of common goals and objectives which made common women lost their faith in them. Hence, the neo-traditional gendered political discourses flourished which made women rethink their goals and responsibilities. As a result of persisting gender discrimination, many women considered ‘return to home’ as a better choice than pursuing gender equality goals.

As per the study of Zdravomyslova (2003), surprisingly 55 percent of the women respondents expressed their desire to attend to traditional gender roles, they accepted that it was in their “manifest destiny” to take of their home and family. Additionally, “58 percent of the women declared that husband should be the earner in the family, while the wife must be a good wife and mother” (as cited in Teplova 2007:301). It was also found out that many women in Russia hold the opinion that being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for a paying job. Such data indicates that women are beginning to prefer to stay at home rather than work. The earlier experience of relative equality in the Soviet’s time has given way to traditional gender roles in the event of neoliberal transformation. Such change in an attitude of women is alarming because it is a deviant from the ideology of ‘women as workers’ which existed during the Soviet times.

In a survey conducted in 2000, only “49.5 percent of women stated that men and women have an equal role in the society” (Hardwick 2014). It indicates women are yet to experience equality in Russia. In the event of a transition, women’s situation has become worse. Not only they are more prone to lose employment opportunities but also, they face several kinds of discrimination at the workplace such as wage discrimination, sexual harassment, inability to obtain a higher position at work. Hence, many women who had experienced the Soviet policy of dual responsibilities of women to balance domestic life and professional work welcomed the move to traditional roles of women’s role as mother and caretaker. Many women have given up the dream of equality.

The deeply imbedded social norms within the society of gendered roles have not transformed despite the change in the economic structure of the state. In the absence of platforms such as women’s organisations, it is difficult for women to voice out their opinions as they are stigmatised as abnormal or shunned. In a study conducted by Andrea Mazzarino, “many Russian businesswomen and female entrepreneurs said that they struggle to compete against widespread beliefs of ‘socially appropriate’ behaviour of women in a domain construed as male” (Hardwick 2014). Women are still supposed to be not fit for leadership positions and hence, women in Russia still do not have any say on welfare policies, discrimination policies of the companies or against the objectification of women in the media.

According to Michele Rivkin-Fish (2010), it needs much courage for women to articulate notions of autonomy and a concept of women’s interests unrelated to women’s role as mothers. Therefore, Russian women are choosing to occupy positions behind the scenes and make more pragmatic contributions rather than being stigmatised. Women have adapted to unequal treatment as they are

accustomed to official rhetoric of equality. Hence, today many women are changing their attitudes towards being economically empowered. They are prioritising their domestic roles than economic roles.

Conclusion

Gender equality issues are inherent in Russia's social, political and economic culture. In order to change society's outlook towards gender issues, there is a need to review the society's ideological practices and create awareness. Therefore, the role of the state is crucial in addressing women's issue. Merely bringing forth declarations and decrees in support of women's empowerment and equality will not solve gender issues. There is a need for legal mechanism solely focusing on women's issues, as currently, the state is providing minimal attention to issues of equality of sexes. There is no legislation on discrimination except in the labour code. Many of the legal frameworks are passed but not implemented due to financial budgeting issues. The current national mechanism for gender equality lacks power and financial resources; its functions are basically reduced to consulting and coordinating. Despite budgetary issues, it is crucial to introduce gender-responsive budgeting using participatory approaches (a partnership of both local and state government). Additionally, due to lack of women at executive decision position, the budget expenditures has become gendered in itself. Therefore, performance-oriented budgeting is crucial in Russia for the federal budget to yields results and plan accordingly.

The state needs to put forth strong regulations to eliminate gender segregation in higher education as well as in the labour market to achieve just socio-economic society. There is a clear need for more women in leadership positions especially in politics and labour market who can lobby for women's rights. Additionally, a systematic change in society's view of gender roles should be carried out through

awareness programs. It is crucial to eradicating gender discrimination and gender stereotypes from the society so that human capital of both the genders can be utilised to the fullest for the socio-economic development of the country. In order to achieve all these, genuine political will on the part of the government is necessary.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Russia is undergoing transformation based on the principles of neoliberalism that has emerged as a hegemonic policy model after the Soviet disintegration and end of cold war. Neoliberal transformation generated a range of social consequences such as poverty, inequality, unemployment and other social insecurities. This multifaceted issues in contemporary Russia have gender implications in the social, political and economic arenas. The neoliberal transition resulted in Russia's integration with the global economy. Being part of the rapidly evolving and globalising economic environment, reforms in higher education, as well as the labour market, became necessary. Hence, the global neoliberal discourse developed as the basis of the modern Russian educational policy as well as labour market policy. However, it resulted in social inequality and gender segregation.

During the Soviet period, the state policies encouraged women's participation in higher education and labour force in order to achieve socialist goals. Women were encouraged to work because of the loss of males during wars thereby leading to demographic imbalance, i.e. the female population was more than the male population. Women were educated and trained to take over jobs which earlier were male preserve. However, they were not freed from domestic responsibilities and they experienced 'double burden'. The Soviet method of solving women question, therefore, produced 'gender paradox'. The socio-economic system of present Russia is shaped by the legacy of Soviet gender order and post-Soviet Neoliberal transformation.

In modern Russia, women have surpassed men in higher education because of high proportion of female population i.e. total female population in Russia is 78.6 thousand million against 67.9 thousand million males (Federal State Statistics Service 2017). Therefore, the higher proportion of the female population has translated to increasing participation in higher education. This phenomenon is also reflected in the labour market. Though, there is an enormous share of women in higher education and labour market. Yet, the gender gap is prevalent in both these spheres.

In response to market demands, radical neoliberal reforms in higher education were implemented. It resulted in the significant restructuring of the higher education system. Higher education became institutionalised and turned into commercial enterprise and demand driven. The earlier centralised norms of higher education were withdrawn, universities were granted financial autonomy, privatisation of higher education was encouraged. The new paradigm of higher education became associated with concepts such as ‘educational market’, ‘educational service’, ‘commodity’, ‘consumer choice’, ‘competition’. Fee-programs and tuition fees are being introduced transforming education as an economic service and developed along the lines of consumers and service providers. As discussed in the previous chapters, fees were introduced in the female educational disciplines while male educational disciplines were exempted from fees. The federal budget became biased towards male education.

In the neoliberal era, the commodification of higher education significantly impacted the higher education system. Education has developed into a private good with a strong emphasis on ‘individuality’; individuals are responsible for

their choices of education and the knowledge and skills they acquire. The traditional educational culture of intellectual enquiry and debate has taken a back step, while education has been employed with economic value.

Earlier in the Soviet's period, the public enjoyed state-guaranteed egalitarian distribution of education. Education was treated as a 'public good' and was 'free-of-charge'. However, gender segregation of disciplines existed during the Soviet times which percolated to modern Russia. In contemporary Russia, the focus of higher education has shifted towards fulfilling the market demands. Subjects such as advertising, engineering, marketing, management, science and technology which are traditionally male disciplines gained importance. While the value of traditional female disciplines such as arts, humanities and social studies reduced. As a result of gender segregation of educational disciplines, there is an increasing number of female graduates lacking technical knowledge and skills essential in the market economy. Consequently, the high level of education attained by women became inapplicable in the market economy. Women are not able to get quality employment and are mostly confined in the low-ranking professions. However, no progressive steps have been taken to eradicate the patriarchal norms and culture prevailing in the society which continuously undermines women's ability to attain education in engineering, technical, and natural science subjects. Besides, there are no gender-specific policies in support of women in professional, information technology and science subjects which attracts huge demands in the knowledge economy.

In the labour market sector, the state has withdrawn its control over the economy giving free reign to private sectors. Privatisation replaced the earlier

system of centralised norms of employment, wages and social benefits. The private employers got unrestricted control and authority over the market. They employ discriminatory practices in hiring, wages and promotion. Furthermore, employers take into consideration gender and age rather than education and merit. In order to avoid costs associated with maternity benefits and leaves, women are mostly employed as part-time and contract workers. Therefore, the human capital potential of women is not fully utilised.

Although women's labour force participation is quite high in Russia comparing to other countries. Women are mainly employed in the feminised sector such as health, education and services. Even within the feminised sector, they are employed at the lower paid professions. The economic condition and increasing unemployment compels women to take up low paying jobs. Besides, the patriarchal norms ingrained in the society reduces women's expectations from their job. Traditionally, women in Russia are encouraged to work. It is a socially accepted standard for women to participate in bringing extra income for the family to enjoy the necessary level of consumption and prosperity. However, the social order of the society requires women to put their families first then professional work. Therefore, women emphasise on stability of income rather than getting level wage or status as men; the wage of married working woman is considered as a supplementary income. Even today, women are guided by such social norms when they look for jobs.

The constitution and labour code prohibits discrimination in employment opportunities and wages. However, the law merely exist in paper without proper implementation. Women regardless of having higher qualifications are

paid lesser than men. Appalling, the gender pay gap in the Russian Federation is twice as high as compared to OECD countries. The average earnings of men are about 30 percent higher than women in Russia (OECD Employment Outlook edition 2016). It has been reported that the “gender pay gap in the Russian Federation is amongst the highest of high-income countries”. If both men and women were employed in the same occupation “the gap in pay would be 37 percent” (Atencio and Posadas 2015:19).

Though the constitution of Russia supports equality of men and women, gender discrimination issues are not addressed in the constitution. As a signatory of the UN conventions on gender equality, the state has come up with numerous frameworks and law such as formulation of new labour code in accordance to ‘ILO Convention No. 156’ in 2001; ‘On political parties’ to support and improve women’s representation in political parties in 2001; ‘A National Plan of Actions to Improve the Status of Women and their Role in Society, 1997-2000 and 2001-2005’. However, these frameworks were not successfully implemented due to lack of financial budget. Moreover, the state lacked monitoring and policy review mechanisms for the actual implementation of women’s rights, nor there is any precedent basis on which legal action against violations of equality and gender discrimination can be carried out.

Unfortunately, at present gender issues have been dropped off the government’s socio-economic priorities and are considered under the domain of child and family issues. The Consortium of Women’s Non-Governmental Associations (2010) states that in the last periodic report (2008-2009), the Russian Federation enumerated detailed and thorough lists of legal

instruments such as laws, decrees, resolutions and by-laws adopted to prohibit discrimination against all categories of the Russian society. However, there was no gender-related documents or any documents with an element of gender. Gender equality goals are not amongst the priority tasks of the state as gender issues have been long ignored. At present, the state has given up both declarations and actions on gender issues. Most of the legal frameworks in support of women offer mere theoretical claims to gender equality and the prohibition of gender discrimination. It is interesting to note that in the Russian society, feminism is still considered as a foreign concept and is not well-received. It was primarily due to the traditional beliefs that Russian women have achieved equality with men. Only in recent times, the feminist ideology has gained importance with the rise of women NGOs, feminist groups who brought up the gender discrimination and inequality issues.

Neoliberalism was projected to open employment opportunities and bring about social and economic development. The supporters of neoliberalism welcomed the liberalisation of the market “in to to” without considering the Soviet’s history. However, neoliberalism did not achieve its objective. In the process of economic transition, the place of female labour is further relegated. The earlier experience of equality and protection is weakened while capitalist characteristics have come to the fore. There is a resurgence of conservative views on gender role as a result of lack of government’s regulation and support. In addition, there are numerous discriminatory practices which hamper women’s opportunity to achieve quality employment. A phenomenon of ‘patriarchal renaissance’ is taking place in contemporary Russia; wherein women are considered second to men in every sphere of life. Modernisation and employment opportunities were anticipated to bring about women’s

empowerment and emancipation from traditional subordinate roles. On the contrary, the Soviet achievement and protection towards women in the past have been replaced by the market norms. Thus, reducing the space for women to achieve success.

Women's increasing participation in higher education and labour market looks impressive at the surface. However, a careful study indicates the neoliberal policies are pro-men. The tradition of genderisation of disciplines which existed during the Soviet's time reproduced or recurring in modern Russia. It resulted in a disparity in the attainment of quality employment. Women in Russia despite attaining higher education are yet to attain equality in the labour market. The current social construction of female labour as lower in status, wage and skill has produced social inequalities and created constraints for women to improve their labour market outcomes in the neoliberal era. The neoliberal transformation in higher education and the labour market has not materialised in gender equality. In fact, the structural inequality and the legacy of Soviet gender paradox reproduced gender inequality and segregation with unequal opportunity and outcomes, making women return to the traditional household roles, despite their higher education. Thus, the hypothesis is proved.

The major findings of the study are enlisted below.

1. Higher education is increasingly being commodified. It has transformed from 'public good' to 'private good'.
2. Biased federal funding towards male education.
3. Increasing gender segregation of choice of study resulting in increasing gender segregation of occupation.

4. Men were primary heads of enterprises during the Soviet's time. In the event of transition, they have retained the position as heads and managers and have become owners and rulers of privatisation.
5. Increasing patriarchal norms and gender division of roles in the society. Poor representation of women in leadership positions in both governmental bodies as well as in the private sectors. This under-representation of women at decision-making position has resulted in the lower prioritisation of 'women's problems'.
6. Prevalence of 'dual burden' of family and professional work: Women have to juggle between domestic work and professional work. Thereby, affecting their efficiency and productivity at workplace.
7. Increasing gender discrimination, sexual harassment and stereotyping at workplace. Women are considered inefficient and unproductive. Their qualification and skills are often undermined while hiring, they are mostly employed in the lower position and are also paid lower.
8. A phenomenon of 'new poor' has become popular in the Russian Federation. 'New poor' are the category of people living in poverty despite having jobs. Majority of women in Russia falls under this category of 'new poor' because their poor wages are not sufficient for living an adequate lifestyle.

Some of the emerging trends as a result of the intersection of higher education and the labour market are:

1. The feminisation of higher education due to a mismatch between education and skills acquired by women and market requirements. Therefore, women are unable to attain quality employment.

2. The feminisation of lower-paid occupations due to increasing gender segregation of occupation and sectors of the economy. Sectors such as education, healthcare, trade and services are considered female sectors. Women are mainly confined to these sectors, even within these sectors, women are confined to lower-paid occupations. Occupational mobility to other sectors has been difficult for women.
3. Feminisation of poverty as women are the ones who have been primarily affected by the phenomenon of 'new poor'. Though they are employed, their income is not sufficient to provide for their needs.

Gender inequality cannot be eliminated by merely increasing women's access to higher education and labour market participation. A balance in job opportunity for arts and humanities as well science and technical education is a must for the socio-economic development of the country. The state needs to implement progressive gender mainstreaming policies to empower women and promote gender equality norms. A systemic change in higher education policies and 'informed choice' of career opportunities is necessary during the early years of education.

The practice of gender segregation of discipline of study and occupations should be eliminated. As gender segregation leads to exclusion and marginalization of women in profession or position generating high income and social prestige. Furthermore, a suitable implementation of 'anti-discriminatory' policies in both higher education and the labour market is essential. In this manner, the human-capital potential of both the genders can be properly utilised which in turn will result in socio-economic equity. Moreover, women organisations and NGOs should work towards framing an

appealing ideology regarding women rights and issues. A change in the cultural norms about gender roles is necessary for the overall development of the Russian society. Without a change in the socialising process and a change in gender norms, convergence in higher education will be a challenge.

Some suggestive measures to improve women's higher education and labour market participation are as follows:

1. Align higher education curricula to fit the emerging market demands for the skilled labour force.
2. Abolish the culture of gender segregation of disciplines and discriminatory practices in higher education while promote equitable and inclusive higher education.
3. Irrespective of the discipline of study, curricula should include gender-sensitive programs as well as human value papers.
4. Curricula need to be updated every three to five years according to the changing needs of the economy.
5. Engage in unbiased funding for both female and male education.
6. Proper career guidance at an early age of education.
7. Open market prospects/job opportunities for arts, humanities and social science subjects.
8. Employ anti-discriminatory practices of hiring and promotion and promote the culture of equal job opportunities through competence and merit rather than age and sex.
9. Implement the policy of 'equal pay for equal work'. The practice of gender discriminatory wages in dominant female professions should be eliminated while raising the significance and the status of positions occupied by women.

10. Abolish gender segregation of occupation and industry while promoting labour mobility across occupation and industry.
11. It should be made mandatory for organisations to provide provisions of daycare and nurseries.
12. A separate governmental structure/mechanism should be established focusing on gender issues. It should look into the proper formulation, implementation and execution of gender policies. Within it, a central grievance monitoring cell should be established. The grievance cell should constitute both male and female members to avoid biased outcomes.
13. Every educational institution, as well as professional organisation, should have a grievance cell reporting to the central grievance cell. They should also hold gender sensitisation programs every quarterly or half-yearly.
14. Adequate federal budget should be allocated for implementation and execution of gender-sensitive policies.
15. Women NGOs and organizations should be encouraged to sensitise the public about gender issues. They should be given more leverage in their functions.

By providing equal access to all disciplines of higher education and the elimination of gender discriminatory practices in hiring. It will provide equal opportunities for both men and women to participate in the labour market and enjoy equal wages and benefits. This will raise the status of women in the social as well as leadership positions. It, in turn, will lead to equal and just society where a person can compete and progress by one's competence and merit rather than gender.

This thesis has come to the conclusion that higher education influences the labour market outcomes in the neoliberal era in Russia. Higher education helps the job seekers to get a gainful employment that improve the standard of living. It has also found out that the nature of higher education is limited by social and cultural norms prevalent in the society which has resulted in gender inequality outcomes in the labour market. Despite women achieved higher education, their labour force participation in top jobs remains limited. The old gender issues still prevails. This study has given a general perspective about the Russian Federation. However, Russia is a vast country with regional disparities. The extent of gender-related issues faced by women in urban regions and rural regions would be different, leaving it open for future research.

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