

INTEGRATION OF ROMANI WOMEN ON THE LABOR MARKET

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Abstract: This paper proposes a brief analysis of the problems Romani women are facing when they want to access a job. It is a fact that, in Romania, Romani women who work are so few that we can even say that they are invisible. In order to be able to intervene on this status quo we believe it would be useful, beforehand, to know what exactly is causing this to happen.

Key words: occupation, Romani women, job offers.

Introduction

The occupancy rate emerging from relatively recent studies shows that women in our country are employed at a rate of over 42%, whereas Romani women are employed at a rate of only up to 15% (Cosima at al., 2008, Zatwarnicka-Madura, 2014).

Analysing the kind of work that Romani women do we can say that the work performed by them falls within the secondary segment of the labor market, an area where social protection of workers is low and worker abuse happens with high frequency. It is especially about temporary occupations, or even the so-called illegal work. Possible explanations are related to the low level of education and obtained qualifications, but also to the fact that the Romani mostly live in rural, economically underdeveloped areas and due to low incomes can not afford getting hired in a neighboring settlement-a town (SOROS, 2008).

An alarming percentage of 34.6% can be found among Romani women who are stating that they do housework, living to a great extent in rural areas, and this high percentage is an indicative of the crucial role that self-consumption (eating what one breeds/produces) still holds in Romani households (SOROS).

Another source of data on the position of Romani women on the labor market is the RPP study which underlines the fact that largely Romani women self-declare as housewives or perform illegal, casual work or they even work by the day. (in agriculture, neighbors' households, as domestic workers, etc.) (RPP, 2006).

These sketchy data, the mere analysis of the types of activities they participate in, their low income, their difficult access to the labor market and, last, but not least, the differential treatment Romani women are subjected to, all these entitle us to say that gender and ethnic discrimination converge towards increasing vulnerability of Romani women on the labor market (INCSMPS, 2007, Zatwarnicka-Madura, 2011).

Constantly fueled by national and international news the negative response to the Romany ethny and the Romani woman is still heavily tributary to stereotypes.

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Under these conditions, the presence of Romani women in the public space has always been a controversial topic, stressing the traditional elements of their lives and their antisocial acts, which ultimately led to an image that does not match the identity of the Romani woman. But this phenomenon is neither the result of last years, nor of Romania's EU integration, but it rather originates in a much more remote period, having historical implications (Achim, 1998).

Romanian society's perception on the Romani woman must be analyzed in terms of how they built their image and precepts and the national context that lay behind the construction of these images. Among the contributions of the national literature of the 19th century which could have replicated or invented the reality we name the works of Radu Rosetti, Gheorghe Sion, Dimitrie Dan, Adalbert Gheboră etc.

The various situations the Romani women appeared in, starting with witches, flower girls, beggars, servants etc, still appear today. Images of Romani women can also be found in paintings, photographs, illustrations, jokes reflecting personal views of the author in relation to the subject. All these images were passed on over time the same pattern of the Romani woman. Inherited through literature, newspapers of the time, images (paintings, pictures of famous authors, stamps, etc.), these representations have created a series of stereotypes of the Romani woman (PRIV).

Relying on information only from the imaginary of those past times (a.n. the 19th century) without having access to records on these women's experiences, the general perception has stayed the same as the one produces by the time's literati.

We pointed out at the beginning that Romani women's invisibility in the public life and especially on the labor market has its roots in a Romanian historical time, namely the slavery, which left strong influences on the representation of the Romani women in the collective consciousness. Whether they were slaves or not, Romani women were assigned over time a number of essential features, that became their social representations.

"There are some typologies of Romani women who are represented in most of the works which influenced the way they are seen today. On the one hand, there are the slave women of the landowners, humble, obedient, having no power of decision over their own lives, and on the other hand, the witches, the free/easy women who do not follow the social conventions. In all these works these images appeared as two extremes which are present today, too, in the collective consciousness.

Romani women appear in various situations: future tellers, flower girls, artists full of erotism (playing various instruments) but also women overwhelmed with worries and responsibilities. An important role in the Romanian folklore is played by the witch "gipsy woman". Witchcraft is, for that matter, the main occupation that has been attributed to the Romani woman for centuries. The literary works abound with some of the most picturesque and exotic descriptions to uncover an image of the Romani women in bound with the natural, with the evil".

If we take into account the context of that era, which required women in society moral conduct, chastity, virtue, obedience to permanently remind them about both

the sin of disobedience, and their condition of women without reason, driven by feelings and who, therefore, must be controlled, these women who did not comply with social norms must have been severely punished. Moral conduct, considered a "given" of women, was violated by the Romani women, who held the pipes in the corner of their lips, who were half naked (nursing their children in squares) and had occupations considered less moral or appropriate seen through the lenses of those times.

In conclusion we can assert that the problems of Romani women do not end with getting upper education and qualifications or by accessing a job, but become a new source of marginalization and disadvantage, of differential treatment from school and work mates, heads, beneficiaries, clients etc.

In order to change the perception of the majority as far as the Romani ethny is concerned, and particularly the Romani woman, it is necessary on the one hand to promote the values and household work performed by Romani women within the ethny and, secondly, to promote Roma women in mass media - professionally successful models.

The image of Romani women in the Romanian society must change and promoting models of Romani women as successful professional, will contribute to building a positive image, leading ultimately to the creation of a dignifying working environment for all employees. Carrying out the assumed role requires involvement of trade unions structures, civil society and the media in promoting equality between women and men on the labor market and supporting the legitimate interests of many Romani women (PRIV).

Some of the steps taken to fight discrimination and also to support Romanies, Romanian citizens, are the allocation in pre-university and university level education of positions for Romani students, or the allocation of special grants to facilitate them schooling.

Among the projects and activities that the "1 Decembrie 1918" University - as beneficiary or partner- has developed and in which there have been promoted or involved the Romani communities, we enlist a few, as presented to the community by the local media:

1. Debate on integration of Roma women on the labor market. On April 18th, 2013 at Alba Iulia there was held a new debate initiated by the Association Pakiv Romania on improving access of Romani women to the labor market. Along with those from Pakiv there were involved Ionela Gavrilă - University of Alba Iulia, Ovidiu Negrea Oprean - AS 2001 Assoc., Stefan Rusu - SM Speromax Association Alba Iulia, Zsolt Grigorut - CJ White, Valentin tuxedo - DGASP Alba, Anca Camp - Pro Youth Association, Marcela Serban - Alba Prefecture, Gabriela Muresan - Orthodox Archdiocese of Alba Iulia, Emil Comsa - ANTREC Romania, representatives of companies and journalists. At the end of the meeting, the President of Pakiv, Gruia Bumbu, said: "It is important to know what is the point of view of the authorities, of the civil society and the business environment in order to improve this model that we want to generate. We have talked about how we can

strengthen, economically, the Romani community. We have discussed the role and responsibility of the Romani communities in bringing a contribution to the national economy. After debate today, we could say that there is a desire to reach a strategy, a series of proposals for legislative changes through which the social economy to become a reality in Romania. We have also talked about how disadvantaged communities, people with disabilities, people who leave detention, Romani women, young people of any kind and other disadvantaged people may participate in the national economy. Let me add the fact that in Alba Iulia final preparations are being made to establish a cooperative. At Targu Jiu is already working the first cooperative in the country" (INFO).

2. Within "The POSDRU project *Development of specific training programs to increase social inclusion in order to improve access to the labor market*, there took place the closing of the training program for 25 Romani women or women who recently became unemployed due to the economic crisis - identified as vulnerable and at risk of social exclusion. The training program consisted of two courses: "Anti-discrimination strategies and human rights" and "Fundamental concepts of information and communication technology".

The purpose of the training was to increase employment opportunities, retraining or further training of Romani women or women who recently became unemployed due to the economic crisis. Through the selection methodology there was guaranteed access to training to women with acute social integration and training needs, even to those with only a few school classes.

Classes were held in Alba Iulia between September 15th 2012- December 15th 2012 every weekend, Fridays and Saturdays, and witnessed a high attendance throughout the three months. The trainers of the two courses, specialized teachers of the University "1 Decembrie 1918" managed by using interactive methodology to motivate trainees to attend and perform, so that at the final evaluation over a third of them attained maximum scores in both subjects.

The evaluation was conducted in compliance with legislation on equality of opportunity and treatment between men and women in employment and labor law, equal opportunities and non-discrimination in use.

The project POSDRU/96/6.2/S/49743 "Development of specific training programs to increase social inclusion in order to improve access to the labour market" will be a new series of training for Romani women and women who recently became unemployed - starting with January 2013" (PRIV).

3. **Job Fair.** Over 150 people looking for a job participated between 7th to 9th of September, to the Job Fair organized by the Association Pakiv Romania in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection and County Employment Agency in Alba, at Alba Parc Hotel in Alba Iulia.

The event was attended by over 100 Romani women in Alba County who have successfully completed integrated professional training programs or benefitted from the services of employment workshop and were looking forward to be given

the opportunity to show their desire to work, their efficiency and competitiveness on the labor market.

There were 11 employees in the following areas that presented their job offers: tourism, construction, communications, sales, banking, office equipment, in addition, five organizations gave Job Fair participants the opportunity to attend qualifications course in areas such as tourism, social services, construction, trade, light industry, for which the arrangement of 16 booths being necessary.

The objective of this event was both to bring face to face supply and demand for jobs on the labor market in Alba county, and to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities on the labor market for Romani women. The event was attended by the great public and people looking for a job in Alba county. The Job Fair was organized within the FEMROM project (INFO).

"Lobby and advocacy at the local level to promote the Romani woman in the public life with active participation in the electoral process, prevention and control over gender discrimination and competition in terms of equality between men and women, Europeanization of gender policies in the Roma movement will have as major outcomes introducing the issue of Romanies women on the agendas of local institutions and their empowerment to provide equal opportunities to access public services and in the same time increase self-esteem and self-confidence of the representatives of the Romani minority. On the medium and long term it will result in having Romani women who will be referred to as positive models. The Romani woman is an important factor in the mobilization of Romani communities in order to implement public policies focused on Romanies. The functional model of involvement of the Romani woman in public policies at the local level multiplied regionally, centralized and adapted in national strategies for the Romani can become the interested centralising factor for implementing and monitoring policies focused on Romani communities (ALBA24).

With the hope that in our University we can prepare young professionals (sociologists, social workers, school and pre-school teachers, magistrates and lawyers, economists, etc.) to promote the principles of non-discrimination and social inclusion policies for all types of disadvantaged categories, we express our confidence that a society in which the Romani woman to be appreciated at her true value can be built in a reasonable time if you are willing to make a common effort.

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INTEGRACJA RUMUŃSKICH KOBIET NA RYNKU PRACY

Streszczenie: Niniejszy artykuł proponuje krótką analizę problemów, przed którymi stoją rumuńskie kobiety, gdy chcą zdobyć pracę. Faktem jest, że w Rumunii, kobiet, które pracują jest tak mało, że możemy nawet powiedzieć, że są one niewidoczne. Aby móc interweniować w ten status quo wierzymy, że przydatne będzie wiedzieć z wyprzedzeniem, co dokładnie jest przyczyną takiego stanu rzeczy.

Słowa kluczowe: zawód, kobiety rumuńskie, oferty pracy.

罗姆妇女在劳动市场上的整合

摘要: 本文提出罗姆妇女在当他们想要访问作业时所面对的问题的简要的分析。它是一个事实，在罗马尼亚，罗姆妇女的工作是如此之少我们甚至可以说他们是不可见。为了能够对此现状作出干预，我们相信它将是有效的事先要知道到底什么造成这种情况发生

关键词: 占领，罗姆妇女工作机会