

WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS OF SERBIA

Sreten JELIC¹, Milica VASIC², Tatjana JOVANOVIĆ³

¹ PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Belgrade, Serbia,
email: sjelic@agrif.bg.ac.rs

² msc, PhD student, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Belgrade, Serbia,
email: micikav1991@gmail.com

³ PhD, Assistant, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Belgrade, Serbia,
email: tanja.j@agrif.bg.ac.rs

Abstract

Position woman in the rural environment has always been difficult and inextricably linked to her role in family. This was a critical factor determining its status and rights. When it comes to this and its economic dependency status in the second half of the 20th century, women are emancipated. These changes have influenced the position of women in family, relationship between sexes, interpersonal relations. The family changes its scope, functions and form. A family in the middle of the 20th century in rural areas counted dozens of its members, but today this type of family has almost disappeared. The average family in Serbia today has 2.9 members. There is an increase in the number of people living alone, an increase in incomplete families, a decline in birth rates, and a smaller number of members. Women in rural areas realize their economic role in a specific way. Position rural woman is special, but also of special social significance. Women in the village were, and still are, a marginalized social group that is still insufficiently known. Woman living in a family living and family has a more favorable social position, she is an active participant in the production and the owner of household.

Key words: rural area, women, Serbia, family, village;

Introduction

Women in Serbia make 51.3% of the total population. Observed by age, female population are more numerous, while in younger population, men are numerically dominant. Women are on average older than men in 2.7 years. The most represented are in the category of dependents, followed by women whose source of income comes from pensions, scholarships and social benefits. Geographically, women are more mobile than men, most women moved to a place of permanent residence from another place (Vukmirović, 2014, p. 10).

Women in rural areas plays an important role in economic survival of their family and community, for which they do not receive any significant acknowledgment for their investing efforts. Women in the village were are a marginalized social group that is still insufficiently known. Their contribution are very high in agricultural production, but also in rural communities it is not visible, nor recognized, and their individual position is often unsecured and unsatisfactory. An important factor that influences the revival of the village and the rural development as a whole. The promotion of the position of women in the village has multiple significance: demographic revival of villages, development of rural tourism, reduction of rural poverty in rural areas, improvement of standards and living conditions in rural areas, diversification activities, maintenance and reproduction of tradition and more others.

Rural areas are gaining in importance first of all because of the need for more balanced development of a country or region, a prerequisite for general development. Rural areas are

a perfect ground for the progress and investments of certain investors. Often the factor of underdevelopment of these areas is more than challenging for investors of significant and crucial reasons. Village is increasingly investing in projects in the fields of agriculture, cattle breeding, cooperatives, and in recent times tourism or some other activity.

Employment of women in village is becoming an increasingly important issue. It is common knowledge that a certain part of women's population from the village does not use the opportunity to report and use the assistance provided by the National Employment Service. Also, one should mention the educational structure of women in the village, where the older female population is less educated than men, while in recent times this situation is reversed. Changes in ownership, legal regulations, health and social security, as well as in the mobility of population, has a negative impact on women and men living in the countryside and who are engaged in agriculture.

The rapid pace of unfavorable changes and the impoverishment of a large part in rural population marginalizes rural women in addition to exposing them to increased risks of violence and endangering health. The biological reproduction of the rural population, with low fertility rates, also reflects the unfavorable position of women in the countryside. Intensive aging of the rural population, due to the differences in the mortality rate of women and men, mainly female population, exposes an additional risk of poverty to the old woman and their single households.

Materials and methods

The aim of the paper is to analyze and present basic indicators and information on the situation of women in rural areas. Women in rural areas are a significant factor in the functioning of life. Different sources of data were used. It was used descriptive method and the method of comparison. The position of women in the village must be improved and raised to a higher level.

Research results

In our traditional society there was a series of elaborated cultural patterns that expressed the authority and domination of men over female members. If we want to look at the position of women in the traditional society in the past, taking into account its obligations, question of the difficulty of her life in these conditions is posed. Historically, with traditional perceptions, the life of the female population in the country took place by making older girls and girls a large part they dealt with manual work and with their mother prepared for their future role-wives, mothers and housewives. Another girl left her family and went to her husband's house, where from the moment of her arrival she occupied the lowest place in the family hierarchy. Often happened that she entered the new family as a twenty-member, with the least right to vote. This position was expressed in form of unconditional obedience to all men and older women. As the youngest, the snake she took to the husband, the devotees and the father-in-law she was cleaning shoes and she was obliged to help all women in all jobs. Out of the women and girls, she was expected to have great shyness, values, kindness, obedience and dedication to the family. Based on the position of the woman in our patriarchal culture, we can conclude that the control of women's behavior is carried out on several levels, such as: a) eco, b) social and c) ritual.

When it comes to economic control, it is related to the legal status of women in our traditional society. In legal terms, women were always considered a minor, her father was represented before the law, and then her husband was married. Social limitation of women's behavior implied control of movement, limitation of publicity, no right to make decisions, and the like.

Rituals represent a symbolic expression of the needs of a community and from there encourages the ritual control of women. Woman gave a role that is essential for the well-being of the entire community, and that is through the perseverance, perseverance and moral beauty enriched by the entire society. Different causes led to the formation of a particular model of a woman characterized as a "semi-supernatural type". Women of this type are lagging behind like women of a patriarchal type, but they are no longer in the same position as rural women. A semi-supernatural woman began to abstain from traditional subjugation, but she was not ready for the right position of the woman, she could not identify. The spread of society led to a situation in which more and more women had to earn money for life, either because of their own sustenance, or because of the additional income for the domestic economy.

Although in a traditional society, male and female spheres were formally separated, most of the jobs were carried out together. Revaluation of women's traditional roles in civil society means that they turned out to be less valuable than other social roles. There were some social spheres in which women traditionally had no access.

Position of a woman in the rural environment has always been difficult and inextricably linked to her role in the family. This was a decisive factor determining its status and rights. When it comes to this and its economic dependency status in the second half of the 20th century, women are emancipated. These changes have influenced for position of women in family, relationship between the sexes, interpersonal relations. Family changes its scope, functions and form. A family in the middle of the 20th century in rural areas counted dozens of its members, but today this type of family has almost disappeared. Average family in Serbia today has 2.9 members. There is an increase in the number of people living alone, there is an increase in incomplete families, a decrease in births and a smaller number of family members.

Women in rural areas realize their economic role in a specific way. A direct social organizational framework in which a woman in the rural environment does this is the family, that is, the household. Households and families coincide and their production takes place, consumption and family life. All deviations from this are exceptions and are not typical for rural economy. Family mediates business as a primary community. Production relations are based on the family division of labor. It transmits each segment and every phase of concrete work and integrates it into the family unit. All work, regardless of the gender structure and generation, is integrated into the family (Stojanov, 2004, p. 238)

Reducing the agricultural and overall active agricultural population, first of all, young farmers and the lagging behind in education indicates a reduction in the size and qualification structure of the labor force in agriculture in rural areas. Educational level of the agricultural population is still low. In rural areas, 3-4 times more illiterate than in urban areas. The number of illiterate women is higher in relation to the male population.

The problem of starting a marriage and family by young rural inhabitants is already recognized as factors that endanger the natural reproduction of rural environments and population in them. These problems arise not only because of the migration of young people from rural to urban areas, where women's youth are especially dominant. This process is significant in the whole of family and economic relations and interdependence among residents living in rural areas. Family in the rural environment, especially the peasant family, is always at the same time economically productive. This direct permeation of the family and economic factor on the holding has a major influence on the mutual transformation of both the model of family and family relations as well as economic existential activities and their character (Milić, 1997, p. 119).

Improving situation of rural women can be summarized as follows: increasing income, labor productivity, social security, raising educational levels, equating the rights of

individual farmers with the rights of workers in the industry, and most importantly, the new social valuation of the work farmers (Dilić, 1979, p. 14) .

Mostly female jobs are considered vegetation and gardening, preservation and cultivation of livestock and livestock, as well as processing of dairy products. Thus, a rural woman appears in the role of a farmer, but also in the role of a housewife. The function of a woman is not exhausted in her function of biological reproduction, that is, in the sense of the partial carrier of a certain function, because it would be contrary to social development and the building of a versatile personality and its many diverse roles, the real extent and importance of changing the position of a rural woman must be studied in within the framework of the overall relations and processes that take place both in the modern village and in the society itself (Milić, 1979, p. 31).

Political emancipation of a woman tells us about her subordinate position in the family. In political meetings in the village only the heads of households are present, because the woman is almost completely thrown out of the public sphere and is reduced to a private sphere within the home and the family where her only place is. This is out of reach as a candidate for the appropriate electoral bodies, but even when it is sporadically elected to these functions it does not perform them with sufficient energies. In recent times, there have bee In rural areas, the mature and elderly are dominated. The largest share in total rural population has an age group of 30-49 years (25.22%), followed by a category of 56-64 years old (23.21%), and the worrying fact is that one fifth of the total rural population make people older from 65 years old. Continuous aging of the Serbian population has been present for a long period of time, and is one of the major problems in the country. The level of mortality is manifested through longer life expectancy of female population than male population. The decrease in proportion of male population has intensified in the interim period of 1991-2011. According to the Population Census 2011, the male population is 48.69% and the female population is 51.31% of the total population of the country. Inequality in the structure of the population towards the gender at the age of 15-64. Year may be related to gender differences, migratory tendencies of the population, especially the mobility of the population in relation to the village village and the differences in mortality.n minor changes in the issue, since the women from the village have recently been engaged.

Table 1. Structure of population by gender in rural area, in Serbia, 2011

Type of settlement	Year	Total	Gender				Average age		
			Male	%	Female	%	Total	Male	Female
Rural	2011	2914990	1460071	50,08	1454919	49,02	43,6	42,6	44,9

Source: Census of Population, Households and Housing 2011 in the Republic of Serbia, Population of Serbia at the beginning of the 21st century, RZS, Belgrade 2015, p.162

In Serbia, changes in the gender structure of the entire population were taking place in order to reduce the difference in the number of men and women. The 2011 Census results show significant regional differences in the gender structure of the population. In a large part of the municipalities, women are more numerous than men. Migration as a factor in the formation of the full structure of the entire population was of particular importance, especially for Serbia, especially in the period 1991-2011. years.

In other settlements according to the population census in 2011, the share of male population in relation to women is higher. The structure of the population by age and

gender shows that the population is continuously decreasing for up to 29 years, and the population of both sexes after 50 years of age is growing. The above features speak about the increasing participation of the elderly in other settlements.

Table 2. Age structure of female population in other settlements in Serbia, 2011

Type of settlement	Gender	Total population	The share of the age group in the total population					Average age
			0-14	15-39	40-64	65 and more	80 and more	
Rural	Female	1454919	13,5	28,2	35,3	22,9	5,5	44,9

Source: Census of Population, Households and Flats 2011, in the Republic of Serbia, Population, Age and Gender, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2012, p.42 and the calculation of the author

Table 3. Age structure of female population in other settlements by regions in Serbia, 2011

Rural area		Belgrade region		Region of Vojvodine		Region Shumadije and West Serbia		Region of South and East Serbia	
Total population/female		Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
Number of people		314596	157770	785078	394103	1068149	531288	747167	371758
The share of the age group in the total population%	0-14								
	15-39	15,0	14,6	14,3	13,8	14,1	13,8	12,8	12,4
	40-64	32,9	31,6	31,1	29,2	29,3	27,9	27,7	26,2
	65 and more	36,3	36,4	37,3	36,5	36,0	35,0	35,4	34,0
	80 and more	15,8	17,4	17,3	20,5	20,6	23,3	24,1	27,4
Average age in years		3,1	3,8	3,4	4,5	4,7	5,7	5,6	6,9
Average age in years		41,4	42,4	42,3	43,8	43,7	45	45,7	47,1

Source: Same, p.42,64,132,372 and the author's account

The data in Table 3 indicate the differences between regions in the structure of the female population by age group in other settlements. It is clearly seen that the highest average age of women in the South and East of Serbia, where it is also the smallest share of the female population aged 14 years and the largest share of the population older than 65 years and more, with the emphasis on the fact that the largest share of women older than 80 years compared to other regions. Most women in rural areas are on the territory of Shumadija and Western Serbia, while the least in other areas of the Belgrade region.

The participation of women without education or primary education in the countryside is higher than in urban areas. In addition to poverty, early marriages and pregnancy, there are reasons for terminating schooling among girls. Among women who did not complete high

school, the main reason for this was family pressure to stay and work in the household or farm, while in some cases the reason was the traditionalist attitude families that they do not need a higher level of education. Also important reasons are lack of money, early marriage, and family care. Regarding highly educated women, they are more oriented towards acquiring knowledge and advancement in the educational plan. Educational capital of rural women is low, and opportunities for acquiring additional knowledge and skills are extremely scarce. Since the environment is not incentive, the motivation for additional education, so women are more inclined to adopt skills that can be learned through inertia through their immediate social networks.

Based on many research, women in rural areas have a desire to survive in their communities, but some conditions are met: the possibility of gaining work experience and qualifications, opportunities for local education and training, employment opportunities nearby, developed local transport and developed network of preschool institutions and institutions for the elderly.

Table 4. Employed and unemployed women by age group and type of settlement in Serbia, 2014

Female		2014	
		Urban	Rural
15-24 years	Employed	17699	22520
	Unemployed	22359	19108
25-64 years	Employed	650120	365116
	Unemployed	162206	77661
64+ years	Employed	5453	37868
	Unemployed	-	-

Source: Labor Force Survey in the Republic of Serbia in 2014, the Republic of Serbia, Republika Srpska Institute of Statistics, Bulletin 599, p 29

Young women are largely unwilling to stay in rural communities or engage in agriculture in family farms. Women in rural areas are rarely property owners, they are rarely in the position of holders of the holding, that is, they rarely have the role of deciding on agricultural production and the role of responsibility for the economic risks of farm business for these reasons, and there are fewer women working in agriculture. The largest number of employed and active women in urban areas is aged 35-44 and are engaged in business in industrial centers or service activities.

Today, at the level of elementary and secondary education, gender inequality is almost eliminated in the majority population and is maintained only in marginalized social groups, at least when it comes to the inclusion of women's children in schooling processes. In recent years, in higher education, women's population recorded an even greater share of men. However, despite these trends, educational opportunities are not the same for all categories of women. Women in rural areas, as well as women from certain minority groups, have been significantly deprived of their ability to attain high educational levels.

One of the most important aspects of gender inequality, which is particularly significant from the point of view of the analysis of the situation of women in the country, is property inequalities. Women are in the status of assistant household members and are usually not the owners of the houses they live in, they do not own land, nor do they have the means of

production. Only one in ten households live in a house owned by a female member. Only 16% of women own a country. Material inequalities are largely the consequence of patriarchal patterns of inheritance of property of parents in which female heirs are significantly excluded from inheritance. Women have limited access to financial resources of the household. The official data of the Republic Geodetic Authority do not provide precise insights into ownership of land. In the total number of land plots in all cadastral municipalities in Serbia, only 36% of persons were registered on these plots. Among the enrolled persons, only 29.9% is registered with a unique registration number of citizens, on the basis of which it is possible to distinguish persons by gender. Finally, within the number of persons enrolled in land plots with registered only 31% of women are registered. Property inequality is clearly seen in the aspect of ownership of production assets. It represents an important basis on which the organization of agricultural production on the family farm is established (Babović, Vuković, 2008).

Among rural women there are more inactive and unemployed compared to men 55% of women versus 39% of men. There is a significant participation of employees in non-agricultural sectors. 20% of women and 34% of men, and the participation of women in agricultural jobs is high and it amounts to 56.6%. Employment is mostly done within households and a large number of women have the status of an assistant household member.

Woman who lives in the countryside in family has a better social position, she is holding an active participant in the production and carrier operations performed in the household. The most important role of women is maternity, parenting, nursing and raising children and the functions of a woman as a mother. A woman also plays a role in the education of children and in their education, performs housekeeping and the function of an agricultural producer. Woman is the primary holder of jobs in the rural household, and the household is a unit of consumption.

Conclusions

The possibilities of improving the position of women, as well as the improvement of rural communities in general, are conditioned both on the resources and on the way of life in the countryside, as they are frameworks within which concrete activities and development policies should be applied.

Women in the countryside, as part of the population on semi-productive clothing, remain mostly outside the influence of positive social and economic changes. Women must be guaranteed to use all benefits of social protection and social care, should be provided with the use of health care services and family planning services, women should be able to access agricultural loans and facilities and facilitate employment and self-employment. Situation of women in the countryside is unfavorable, and access to services for establishing economic participation is limited. Female population in the village is very different educational and age groups. Different forms of policy should improve and facilitate this type of migration. This type of migration can contribute to the development of the village and to affect gender equality.

Educational capital of rural women is low, and the opportunities for acquiring additional knowledge and skills are extremely scarce, under the pressure of jobs and obligations of rural women are poorly motivated to perform more actively in the labor market. Women in the village earn less income for the household than for men, but a large number of women contribute family budget. Women in villages rarely go to visit a doctor. Almost half go to doctors only when they are ill. Among the rural population there is not enough widespread awareness of need for prevention.

It is necessary to emphasize that the position of women in the country in terms of their freedom and the right to free choice of life priorities changes, because the entire society changes, especially the concept of patriarchal families. Certainly, big problem is irrelevant evaluation of the efforts and work of women in farms, because they often work until 15h, but no one records them and does not receive special acknowledgments for this. Women in rural areas are increasingly becoming self-employed in the form of tourism and hospitality, and they have significant successes and results in this field. They can be very important actors and drivers of the development of rural areas.

References

1. Babovic, M. (2007). Position of a woman in the labor market in Serbia, UNDP, Belgrade.
2. Babovic, M., Vuković, O. (2008). Women in the countryside as assisting members of agricultural households: position, role and social rights, UNDP, Belgrade.
3. Blagojevic, M. (2010). Women in the village of Vojvodina, Provincial Institute for Gender Equality in Vojvodina.
4. Bogdanov, N. (2007). Small rural households in Serbia and rural non-agricultural economics, Belgrade.
5. Census of population, households and flats in 2011 in the Republic of Serbia, Population of Serbia at the beginning of the 21st century, ur. Vladimir Nikitovic, RZS, Republic of Serbia, Belgrade 2015
6. Census of Population, Households and Flats 2011, in the Republic of Serbia, Population, Schooling, Literacy and Computer Literacy, Republic Statistical Office, Belgrade 2013.
7. Wertheimer-Baletic, A (1999) . Population and development, Mate, Library of Economic Thought, Zagreb.
8. First, R. (1979). Women in rural and agrarian development of Yugoslavia, Sociology of the village (63/64), Zagreb.
9. Labor force survey in Republic of Serbia 2014, Republic of Serbia, Republic Institute for Statistics, Bulletin 599.
10. Jelic, S., Jovanovic, T. (2013). Institutions for culture as factors of regional rural development. Sociological Yearbook, Journal of the Sociological Society of Republika Srpska, no. 8, p. 257-274.
11. Milic, A. (1997). Modernization of the rural family as the conditions for survival of young people in the countryside and economic development ", Summary of the III International Scientific Meeting" Vlasinski meetings 97 ", Mladi i selo, Vlasotince.
12. Milic, A. (1979). Women in the countryside – Farm and / or housekeeper, Sociology of the village (63/64), Zagreb.
13. Milic, A. (1994). Women, Politics, Family, Institute for Political Studies, Belgrade.
14. Population, Household and Housing Census 2011 in the Republic of Serbia, Population, Age and Gender, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade 2012.
15. Stojanov, M. (2004) .Sociology of village collectives, Matica Srpska and Institute for Sociology of Village Development, Novi Sad – Belgrade.
16. Vukmirovic, D. (2014). Women and Men in the Republic of Serbia, Republic Institute for Statistics, Belgrade.

17. Milic, A. (1979). Women in the countryside – Farm and / or housekeeper, Sociology of the village (63/64), Zagreb.
18. Milic, A. (1994). Women, Politics, Family, Institute for Political Studies, Belgrade.
19. Population, Household and Housing Census 2011 in the Republic of Serbia, Population, Age and Gender, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade 2012.
20. Stojanov, M. (2004) .Sociology of village collectives, Matica Srpska and Institute for Sociology of Village Development, Novi Sad – Belgrade.
21. Vukmirovic, D. (2014). Women and Men in the Republic of Serbia, Republic Institute for Statistics, Belgrade.