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Scientific Journal
Warsaw University of Life Sciences – SGGW

**PROBLEMS
OF WORLD
AGRICULTURE**
Volume 1 (XVI)

Warsaw University of Life Sciences Press
Warszawa 2007

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Unemployment and its problems in the Grodno Region

Abstract. Article is devoted to studying of unemployment as a negative social and economic phenomenon in the life of a society. As the growth of the given parameter conducts to the shortage of produce. The structure of the unemployed according to the sex both in Grodno region, and across Belarus specifies prevalence of 'female' unemployment. A problem there is employment of youth. The disturbing tendency is traced at studying the structure of the age of the unemployed: the greatest share of the unemployed falls at the most productive age of 20-29 and 30-49 years. In the small regional centers the rate of unemployment is higher than in the large cities. This is connected with an absence of workplaces, backwardness of the real sector of economy, a weak level of development of social services. Therefore the state policy of employment aspires to provide equal opportunities to all physically fit citizens of Belarus, gives social guarantees and indemnifications to the unemployed, etc.

Key words: unemployment, employment

Unemployment is a social and economic problem touching tens of thousands of people. Unemployment is revealed in negative social consequences: falling of the social status of a person in a society; loss of vital prospect of a worker and his family, and sometimes also his will to live; decline of moral foundations and break of the family. In some cases, the person with high business qualities, mental abilities, but broken and suppressed by struggles of life, loses interest in struggling for career growth and survival. Unemployment is a complex social and economic phenomenon of public life whose consequences are expressed not only in private life, but also influences economy as a whole. The main 'price' of unemployment is the shortage of produce. Increase of the natural rate of unemployment by 1 % reduces the real Gross Domestic Product by 2.5% [The law... 2007].

Physically fit residents of the Republic of Belarus at the able-bodied age (women till 55 years, men till 60 years) who have no work, are not engaged in enterprise activity, are not full time students do not do military service and are registered in the public service of employment are considered the unemployed [The law... 2004].

Unemployment can be divided into two groups. The registered unemployed are those citizens who are registered in the service of employment. According to the institute of sociology, their share in an the total number of the unemployed makes one third. In the structure of this group the unemployed women make up two thirds and men - one third. The second group of the unemployed is the most various, it includes citizens unregistered in the bodies of employment concern, their share in the total number of the country makes two thirds the share of men being two thirds, and that of women one third. The latter group comprises:

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- those temporarily dismissed and temporarily unemployed, but who are ready to start new work and expect to take it no more than 30 days;
- people who are not included in labour force; they are those who have no work and do not meet the requirements of the search of work; it is supposed, that these people do not have orientation to the search of work in the labour market, they do not know 'what they want';
- people who really would like to work, but have for some reasons abandoned the search; they are so-called the despaired to find work.

Another category of people who are not employed are the people who are not included in the category of labour force [Bordacheva 2004].

The basic result of functioning of labour is employment. As an economic category it expresses relations of production concerning inclusion of an employee in a certain concrete labour activity with the purpose of meeting the labour demand. For the period of 1990 – 2005 in the Grodno area the branch structure of employment has essentially changed, especially in agriculture. So, with a decrease of the total number of employed by 4 %, the number employed in agriculture has been reduced by 28.4 % and unemployment only by 0.8 %. In the republic these data are as follows: 1.7%, 44.5% and 2.6% accordingly [A statistical... 2005 and 2006].

The statistics show that women prevail among the unemployed both in the republic as a whole, and in the Grodno area (table 1). It means that, first, Belarus unemployment has the 'female face' and in the region it is higher than on the average in the republic. During the analyzed period the unemployment has increased from 64.8% up to 74.0% [A statistical... 2006; Belarus... 2006].

Managers in some cases prefer to employ men because women ought to be given paid maternity leave and sick leave. The statistics testify that women trade and sexual slavery endangers, first of all, the unemployed who look for higher earnings and better life.

Table 1. Structure of the unemployed population by sex

Year	Structure, %				
	total	women		men	
		republic	Grodno region	republic	Grodno region
1995	100	64.3	65.4	35.7	34.6
1999	100	64.2	67.7	35.8	32.3
2000	100	60.7	65.5	39.3	34.5
2001	100	60.3	64.8	39.7	35.2
2002	100	63.3	68.5	36.7	31.5
2003	100	66.1	68.2	33.9	31.8
2005	100	69.3	74.0	30.7	26.0

Source: [A statistical... 2006]

The second feature of unemployment is its concentration among the youth. The most unprotected are the graduates of high schools, specialized secondary educational institutions and schools. The state spends huge money on training students of high schools, at the same time it can not provide them with work places after graduation from

educational institutions. It shows that planning of students training in higher and specialized secondary educational institutions does not meet the requirement for them (table 2).

In our opinion a high level of the unemployment among graduates of higher and secondary schools and special educational institutions is substantially connected with the absence of the service which would deal with problems of making a scientific forecast for preparation of future experts and defining the optimum ratio of the needs of economy to the quantity of applicants.

Table 2. Structure of the unemployed according to the age, %

Year	Total	Age (years)							
		16 – 20		20 – 29		30 – 39		50 and more (senior)	
		Republic	Grodno region	Republic	Grodno region	Republic	Grodno region	Republic	Grodno region
1995	100	14.3	13.8	35.7	37.9	44.0	42.9	6.0	5.8
1999	100	19.8	18.2	33.1	32.8	40.2	42.5	6.9	6.5
2000	100	22.0	20.8	31.9	31.0	38.5	41.6	7.6	7.1
2001	100	21.4	27.8	31.1	30.0	39.4	34.6	8.1	7.6
2002	100	18.1	17.5	30.4	29.6	41.7	44.0	9.8	9.1
2003	100	15.1	14.9	30.8	31.2	43.7	44.4	10.4	9.9
2005	100	16.2	16.4	30.2	29.2	40.3	42.7	10.6	11.5

Source: [A statistical... 2006]

The structure of the unemployed according to the age shows, first of all, that no essential differences in the rate of unemployment in the country as a whole and in the Grodno region exist; second, the greatest share of the unemployed falls at the most productive age of 20 – 29 and 30 – 49 years. Among the jobless of different educational levels for the analyzed period of 1995 – 2005 a well defined tendency of the change in unemployment structure is not traced. In 1995, during a period of economic growth in the country and in the region, the level of the unemployed with higher education made up 9.6% and 8.8 % accordingly. In 2005, during a period of steady economic growth, the share of the unemployed increased in comparison with 1995 and reached 10.3% in the republic and 9.9% in the Grodno region [A statistical... 2006; Belarus... 2006].

The analysis of the structure of the unemployment owed to a dismissal from work over the survey period shows that most of the unemployed were those dismissed from work at their own desire. Our investigations have shown that the main reason of dismissals at one's own will (up to 60 %) was the unsatisfactory wages. As for the other reasons the working conditions (15%) came in the first place. The rest of 25% refer to the unfriendliness of colleagues, the disappointment with work, the change of residence etc.

Now the problem of the unemployment is in the city more sharp than in the country. So, in 2004 in cities of the republic the rate of unemployment made up 1.9%, and in the countryside 1.6 %. In the modern conditions the system of employment has essentially changed as a result of influence of a scientific and technical progress, resources of the state, a development of business, changes in 'the human factor' itself. In the labour markets, both in the country on the whole and in the agrarian sector, the competition connected with general improvement of the economic situation in agriculture has become complicated due

to the occurrence of new trades, prestigious workplaces, an essential change of working conditions of work itself and of the 'old' trades.

In small regional centers the rate of unemployment is higher than in cities due to an absence of workplaces, a backwardness of the real sector of economy, a weak level of social services. Therefore the state policy of employment is based on the following principles [The law... 2004]:

- maintenance of equal opportunities to all physically fit citizens of Belarus irrespective of their race, sex, the attitude to religion, age, political convictions, nationality and social status in the realization of the right to work;
- giving social guarantees and payments to the unemployed;
- maintenance of the labour initiative of citizens;
- assistance and encouragement in the development of their productive and creative abilities;
- maintenance of the measures for prevention of unemployment;
- acceptance of additional measures in assisting in the employment of disabled citizens;
- maintenance of social protection in the field of employment, carrying out social actions of employment of citizens wishing to work;
- coordination of activity in the field of employment with the economic and social spheres;
- participation of trade unions, associations (unions) of businessmen, labour collectives and their formations in the development, realization and control over the fulfillment of measures in the employment maintenance in cooperation with the state bodies;
- international cooperation in the problems of employment, including professional activity of citizens of Belarus abroad and labour activity of foreign citizens in Belarus.

One of the forms of unemployment is latent. In his time Karl Marks observed a relative overpopulation in the countryside. The unemployed were the ruined peasants, who had no work, and those countrymen who had small lots of land which could not provide subsistence. The modern economic theory, besides of the agricultural overpopulation, includes into the reasons the excessive number of workers engaged in manufacturing, which now demands smaller number of workers. Workers who are not registered in bodies of employment are included into the latent form of unemployment too, being outside official statistics.

The basic source of assistance in the search of work and employment is the Service of Employment. Services given to the population by the Public Service of Employment are free of charge. The professional adviser should offer some possible and accessible variants of the most suitable trade choices with respect to the seeker's state of health and demands of the local labour market. After special testing the adviser will help to define professional suitability for this or that trade. In the Employment Center it is possible to receive information on free workplaces and vacancies of employees. After a loss of work and employment a person receives in the Employment Center a social support according to the Law of Belarus 'About employment of the population of Belarus' [The law... 2004]. If necessary the expert on the organizations of vocational training will inform on the opportunities and conditions of free-of-charge vocational training, retraining or other

chances of improvement of professional skills. The Center of Employment can provide an information on the opportunity of resettlement in the countryside and being granted work and residence, the order and conditions of receiving compensatory payments and compensation of the expenses for traveling. A consultation about the order and conditions of receiving the financial help in the form of grants and loans from the State Fund of Assistance of Employment for the establishment of an own business enterprise can be provided as well.

Consequences of unemployment are visible not only in the private life, but also influence the economy as a whole. The main 'price' of unemployment is a decrease of production and gross national product. An increase in the unemployment rate reduces the real volume of gross national product. An increase of the natural rate of unemployment by 1%, reduces the real gross national product by 2.5% in comparison to the potential gross national product (the volume of gross national product under conditions of full employment)[The law... 2007].

Thus, today an overwhelming majority of unemployed is made up of women, youth, invalids and countrymen. A special feature of the Byelorussian employment program for 2007 is that it completely takes into account the structure of unemployment and is directed to the provision of job security to the above mentioned groups [Bestvitski 2007]. The program is directed to a stimulation of the employment policy concerning villages and small towns. Regional programs of employment should include specific proposals concerning the creation of new workplaces, the prospects of development in a given sphere, the volumes of investment resources, the opening of new production plants. The village has always remained and remains the true keeper of national traditions, the Belorussian culture and language. Therefore it is necessary to save up and keep the countryside as a source of revival of national crafts. And, first of all, it is necessary to interest the youth in the renewal and the development of national traditional crafts: embroidery, pottery and smithery .

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