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photo by Umida Akhmedova, Uzbekistan

Discrimination is just like radiation. It has neither color, nor smell. You can live with it for some time, but then you just die, morally if not physically. Those who survived, had to follow the requests of the evolution: to get gills, or to go blind.

It's a scary, but a very strong metaphor. The global, centuries-long discrimination, that had turned into a part of human culture, made women mutate. They grew high heels and learned how to use makeup. They discovered solutions on how to live with men, exploiting and parasitizing the latter. Because of this evolution, women keep screening off their kitchens and children's rooms, saying that these are the places men are not always allowed to enter.

But the most scary is that the culture seems to be killing the organ that measures pressure against us. At the place where we are supposed to have dignity, we now have the feeling of guiltiness, or the thirst for revenge.

We also get the knowledge of how to live this life - bended down, languidly smiling and lipsticked.

Where have we come in the circumstances of this evolution?

It is very hard to correct those destructive tendencies of our civilization, but it is even more difficult to lose the habit of bending down and keeping that lipsticked smile on your face..

Diana Petriashvili,
Georgia

a la guerre comme a la guerre

ANYTHING FOR SUCCESSFUL CAREER EXCEPT FOR SEX REASSIGNMENT SURGERY

I would feel absolutely perfect about my biological gender, if it would not hamper the development of my career. I have been working for only seven years, and during this short period of time, I was many times denied to undertake a job only because I was a woman. It was twice that the refusal was motivated directly. Here is the brief story about how it happened.

- I prefer men, - the female director of a media project was speaking stiffly and unfriendly.

- What a coincidence, - I answered, - I also do... in certain circumstances. But why are you rejecting my candidacy?

- The project envisages plenty of trips; the candidate will have to travel to the regions, to do some emergency work, - the director seemed to be annoyed.

- Well, I know all that! I do travel a lot, and generally work in the emergency mode... Have you seen my resume?

The vacancy was occupied by a friend of mine. He had far less work experience and, what is the most important, he knew no foreign languages. Knowledge of English was obligatory, as listed in the job announcement.

Later I was told that the media project director gave even clearer explanation of why I was not accepted:

- This job is not for the womenfolk...And all their menstruations.

Here it is, the selection criteria.

Other time I was refused from quite logical promotion at my work place. My employee, who seemed to be okay about my biological gender during three years, suddenly rejected my candidacy, once there appeared a vacancy.

- It is out of question, - he said tossing my resume into the trash bin.

- Excuse me?! - I entered the boss's room, ousting his secretary, - why?!

He seemed very nervous.

- It is a very difficult job. The person we chose will be the face of the company...

- What's wrong with my face?

- ...working overtime, traveling a lot...

VOICE:

Recently, a friend of mine tried to get a job at a company, where her acquaintance worked. He listed several obligations, such as education and work experience, and my friend replied: "Great! I meet all the requirements!" But the acquaintance responded: "Is that you, who wanted to get the job?! No, they don't need girls here." He added that she was free to try, but none of women were accepted as far as he could remember.

I got completely mad.

- Don't forget to mention menstruations, dear friend, - I said bitterly.

- I am sure you'll demand maternity leave as soon as you get this job!

My marriage was a secret that I shared with my male colleagues.

- And so, who is on that position now? - I asked ominously.

- David, - secretary replied quietly after long silence.

- Who?!

David, a kind idler, was a part-time intern. All he did, was sharing information he watched at the Discovery channel, and inviting co-workers for beer every evening.

I slammed the door, but entered boss's room on the next morning again. I said I would sue him in the court for gender discrimination.

I would like to believe that this threat was exactly what helped me to obtain the job. Despite the employers spent over ten years in the post-Soviet countries, he was a properly informed foreigner.

However, in reality there were none of the candidates for that job except for me. David was out of question.



Why do you always turn your backs to us, sirs, when we begin speaking about professional growth, business or politics?
photo by Galina Petriashvili, Georgia

WORLD

Global Media Monitoring proves: NO GENDER BALANCE in the world's media

but some of the countries seem to be much better than the general background, which shows that changes are possible



What is the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP)?

The Global Media Monitoring Project was born out of the 1994 international Bangkok conference on "Women Empowering Communication" organised by WACC in conjunction with two other international women's networks, the International Women's Tribune Centre and Isis International, Manila.

The first GMMP took place on 18 January 1995 and was organised by the NGO MediaWatch Canada. Over 15,000 news stories were analysed by hundreds of volunteers in 71 countries.

In 2000, five years after the first GMMP, the WACC Women's Programme coordinated a more extensive and qualitative GMMP study.

GMMP 2000 aimed not only to assess changes in worldwide representations of women and men by the media since 1995, but also to improve and build upon the original study by involving more organisations in the research and by making the study more contextual.

The actual monitoring day on 1st February 2000 generated tremendous excitement and solidarity among the hundreds of participating groups in 70 countries which generated over 50,000 data records from some 16,000 news stories.

For one day in 1995 and again in 2000, men and women in 70 countries came together to scrutinise the portrayal of women and men by the world news by monitoring stories in newspapers, TV and radio.

On 16th February 2005, the experience was repeated in 76 countries

GMMP 2005 is co-ordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), an international NGO which promotes communication for social change, in collaboration with Margaret Gallagher, consultant for the project and the data analyst, Media Monitoring Project (MMP), South Africa.

The data for GMMP 2005 was collected through the collective voluntary effort of hundreds of organizations including gender and media activists, grassroots communication groups, academics and students of communication, media professionals, journalists associations, alternative media networks and church groups.

How many media sources monitored around the world?

12,893 news items on television, radio and in newspapers



photo by Galina Petriashvili, Georgia

Why focused on the news media?

News media is a key source of information for the general public

Media-generated information influences perceptions and understanding about what happens in the world. However, the news media selects what is covered, how it is covered, the time allotted to each item and the order in which they are presented

These editorial choices are often made from select viewpoints and experiences and do not necessarily offer a "window on the world" but rather express the priorities and values of those who make the editorial choices "News media owners and news editors are overwhelmingly male and they routinely decide what news women should hear and read. What is the impact on all of us when the news is constantly reported from a male point of view? Keep in mind that media leaders are not just leaders in that industry, but have the power to shape society's attitudes."

Why focused on gender?

Women make up 52% of the world's population - but only make up a tiny fraction of the world's news story subjects.

- On one day in 1995, women were 17% of news subjects
- Five years later, women were only 18% of news subjects worldwide

In the subsequent years, these figures have been supported by research at the international, national and regional level

Research over the last 30 years supports the findings of GMMP 1995, 2000 and 2005.

Whilst some countries perform better than others, these figures show that everyone can do better to ensure women are fairly represented in and through news media Don't women have a story to tell?



IN GEORGIA

GMMP work within the frameworks of the GMMP-2005, was implemented by the GenderMediaCaucasus journalists' Association. According to the methodics, worked out for every country and defining the number of national medias to monitor, there were 2 TV channels, (Rustavi 2 and The 1st National), 1 radio channel (The 1st Channel) and 3 newspapers (24 saati, Dghe and Resonansi) monitored in Georgia.

Volunteers' team:

*Tsitsino Julukhidze,
Diana Petriashvili,
Maya Goshadze,
Maka Ldokova,
Lali Nikolava,
Galina Petriashvili*



The Who Makes the News Campaign seeks to promote gender equality in the media. To do so the campaign is challenging leaders of the news media, editors, media owners and journalists worldwide to show their commitment to this issue by taking substantial and immediate action to ensure that the news media represents women and men in a fair and balanced way.

Additionally, WACC and its partners worldwide join with UNESCO in offering a challenge to all media producing daily news to give editorial responsibility to women editors

and journalists to direct the news on 8th March 2006, International Women's Day.

This March 8th gesture of goodwill by media management is considered a first step towards promoting gender equality in and through the media in both media generation and coverage. Three Global Weeks of Action on Gender and the Media is supported by UNESCO and UNIFEM.

What are the goals of "Who Makes The News?"

16th February - 8th March 2006

IN GEORGIA THREE GLOBAL WEEKS EVENTS:

Who takes part?

Monitoring team, national journalists, editors, media managers, women NGO activists

How was it?

16 February

The start of presentation in OSI national Women network Program office. The findings of The Global Media Monitoring Project and the Who Makes the News? Campaign presentations.

Participants: Monitoring team, local journalists, women NGO activists

17 February

Work Meeting of Women's NGO Media Group members and experts from Estonia, Round Table Women's NGO members Reet Laja and Leena Blum: planning of Media Group activities within the frameworks of local elections in Georgia (planned for the end of 2006), preparing of media support to women candidates.

The findings of The Global Media Monitoring Project and the Who Makes the News? Campaign presentations.

18 February

Working Meeting with women leaders from 11 regions of Georgia. Planning and consultations regarding the local elections in 2006. Discussions on cooperation between regional NGOs and journalists.

21 February

Seminar for Radio journalists from South Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan) including Tskhinvali and Nagorny Karabakh conflict zones participants.

The findings of The Global Media Monitoring Project and the Who Makes the News? Campaign presentations.

21 February

Sexism in the Parliament of Georgia. Press Conference. Organized by Women NGO Initiative Group regarding the parliament discussion on Domestic Violence draft law. Women's NGOs protest against some MPs' sexism language during Parliament hearings.

23 February

Business Lunch for Organization Group for Women's NGOs Coalition's International Conference (scheduled for May, 2006). Participants: Organization Group members, experts partners from Estonia Reet Laja and Leena Blum. Planning of the Conference media support.

24 February

Who Makes the News? Campaign Weekly Meeting for young journalists in GenderMediaCaucasus Journalists' Association office. The findings of The Global Media Monitoring Project and the Who Makes the News? Campaign presentations.

1 March - 8 March

The National Week on Gender Equality organized by UNDP.

7 March

Final press-conference on gender and media organized by GenderMediaCaucasus Journalists' Association in collaboration with News Georgia Informational Agency.

Tamara HOVNATANYAN,
Armenia

around us

OPEN YOUR EYES AND SEE!

the majority of women do not even recognize THAT THEY ARE DISCRIMINATION VICTIMS

Do we face discrimination? This question again appeared at a round table discussion, with power structures' representatives participating there. As the discussion on whether women should be let in state management was over, one of the participants, an experienced gender problems analyst, said: "I would never think that I would have to describe existence of discrimination not only in remotest villages, but at the governmental level as well. It is not for the first time, when I have to request from the state officials to forget about their xenophobia, if they decide to participate in the meetings like this."

Each of us can recall dozens of meetings that turned into a discussion of whether there is discrimination in our society, or it is only made up by those who undermine the customs of the Armenian family. As a rule, at these discussions, the sides simply do not hear each other, and do not change their opinions. However, even a properly prepared audience sometimes comes to strange conclusions. For example, at one of the recent discussions I started, my colleagues said that women themselves are in charge for the discrimination against them. Here is what experts said:

I think, the problem is that we let others discriminate us. We voluntarily refuse from social activeness, motivating it by our family duties, and by the care about children. While sometimes it is enough only to set a direct question, saying "I have to do my job." That is my personal experience, for quite a long time I was responsible for home duties only, until I managed to change the situation. As a result, the discrimination against me stopped.

Armine A.,
Gorisi branch of the Association
of Women with University Education

Women create obstacles themselves, and then start thinking how to overcome the difficulties. The majority of women does not even think that they are facing the discrimination. I am sure that the discrimination is being preserved by the efforts of women, mechanically. Men are likely to let women develop themselves socially and professionally, while women continue being hesitated...

Armine K.,
Teacher, Vanadzor Institute of Pedagogy

The discrimination, of course, exists, but it's a hidden discrimination. If we analyze the situation a little bit, it becomes obvious: the obstacles against professional growth, preferential attitude towards male candidates, disparaging attitude towards women's ability to be a proper decision-maker. The most recent example could be about one of

our party activists, who ran for the mayor's position in her hometown. Everything seemed to be fine, until it turned out that she was a strong competitor for male candidates. The male candidates, in their turn, simultaneously hinted to the electorate that the mayorship is a man's job. She had to hear comments like this: "Well, we are so sorry that you are a woman..."

Lilit Z.,
candidate of historic science

In general, people consider that there is no discrimination. The recognition of discrimination appears only when you ask concrete questions, for instance this one: "Where are all those smart and educated women that failed to reach even a minor professional success?" Many people are likely to bring a silly argument saying that our men are very polite and delicate with women, which, according to them, proves that there is no discrimination. But all of us can witness men's 'delicacy' at the parliament, where there are only 5% of women.

Sofia B.,
Vanadzor Center of Gender Studies

Women discriminate other women by their mistrust. This mistrust is the exact reason why the local politics and state management system is predominantly represented by men. Women, who mistrust other women are exactly those who elect men.

Yelena V.,
Head of History Department,
Gumri Institute of Pedagogy

APROPOS

ACCORDING TO THE PUBLIC OPINION POLL,
held in Armenia by IFES,

only 14.8% of men and 8.5% of women agreed to the widely spread stereotype that "politics is not a women's business." 13.5% of men and 10.6% of women said they somehow agreed with the statement. 38.3% of men and 46.9% of women responded they absolutely disagreed, while 30.8% of men and 30.2% of women said they somewhat disagreed with the statement. The poll results proved that, from one hand, the stereotype is not as strong as it seems, and from the other hand, it shows that women are as much subjected to this stereotype, as men.

Alma Bekturganova Andersen,
Kazakhstan/Denmark

think major

MOSQUE and CHURCH

WHOSE PURPOSE BEHIND THE STANDOFF?



Right across from the Islamic Culture Center, with Mosque on its territory, there is the Protestant Church. Whose Purpose Behind their Standoff?

photo by Alma Bekturganova Andersen

Despite I live in Denmark, I've never seen the Prophet Muhammad cartoons, that shocked the entire world. The circulation of the newspaper that published them was not as significant as many would think. My family does not even read *Jyllands Posten*, we are subscribed for other newspapers that expressed their protest against alike publications back in September 2005. These newspapers published an open letter of 12 Danish culture activists, long before the Muslim society demanded apologies from Denmark. In a democratic country, alike conflicts are supposed to be resolved through democratic methods. Today, when I see the burning Danish flag, I feel really sad and sorry. I feel sorry for the people who helps foreigners to get integrated to the local society, who teaches them the language, and pays them allowances. Tiny Denmark collects huge amounts of money aimed to help the countries with the transitional economy; it provides aid to Palestine and its citizens, besides others. It is hard to imagine that an entire nation should be responsible for the mistakes made by certain representatives of the nation.

My husband's daughters go to school where the studies are cancelled on each Muslim holiday. I think, this could be a significant gesture of honor towards the part of Denmark's citizens. Just to compare: in Kazakhstan, the Muslim country of my homeland, the

Ramadan Holiday became an official day-off this year only. There could be plenty of examples like this in other countries. I am glad that the Muslim Culture Center of Orhus city, the second biggest in Denmark, had organized an action calling its residents to stay united and not to follow provocations. In the school, my son goes to; there were plenty of Muslim kids who received SMS-messages from the leader of Danish Muslim society, saying that the majority of Danish people condemn the cartoons publication by the newspapers.

There is God and you with your faith. But also there always appear some people who want to become intermediates.

In the life, there are certain moments when you want to clarify your interrelation with God. In my life, it happened when my mother died. She used to repeat: "bury me as Muslims do. I was raised by Kazakhs, they helped me to survive, when I was left alone being four years old. I feel sorry that I won't be able to meet my parents after my death, but there is no other choice."

My mom was Russian, she even was a Communist, and a very socially active person. We buried her in accordance to all necessary Muslim traditions. Only after all ceremonies, I went to the church with my

Christian friend and asked her to light a candle for my mom. I really wanted her to meet her parents. It irritated my brother, he said mom really did not want me to go to the church, and that he saw her in his dream saying it. If she didn't like what I did, why did not I dreamt about her?

Many years after that, mom's sister told me: "It is okay that you buried Iraida in the Muslim way. We also prayed for her. God is one."

Me and my son have a special good-night ritual; it's a phrase: "read the night pray."

It is Arabian pray; many years ago my mom's former mother-in law used to read it. Later I taught this pray my son. The most surprising is that he learned it by heart in two evenings, when he was only five years old; despite neither me nor him understand a single

word in the pray.

From the other side of the room, there is an orthodox pray on the wall. I got it from my friend's mom, when we were leaving for Denmark from Kazakhstan. This is also the part of our culture, and our life.

Who am I? A Muslim, Christian Orthodox, or an atheist? I grew up in the Soviet times, and I was not taught any particular worship. The commandment I had to follow was universal for any worship. The main thing was to live in love and equality. And I do not believe that God would divide people in some particular groups. These differences were made up by those who wants to be an intermediate between the God and the people.

Kanat ALIPOVA,
Kazakhstan

roles

WEAKER BLAMED BY STRONGER

DO NOT BE WEAK, RESIST!

It is eight p.m. and I hear my kids shouting: "Hey mom, here is the news program you wanted to watch!"

There is a new akim in our district, and the media thoroughly watches his actions, judging wither he is a strong leader. Akim is young and energetic, he travels within the city a lot, visitis every district and talks to the regular people. It is nice and pleasant to see that the new akim pays so much attention to the city. All of us want some positive change.

"He seems to be a good akim," I say to my self, but then add critically, "well, but here remain all these terrible garbage cans in front of each house. Why don't they take care of it, finally?"

The news broadcast shows young akim and other officials who accompany him. All of them are men, except for one woman, the head of city district administration. She is the only female leader of this range in our city. The officials stand at the garbage can listening to the sharp rebuke by the akim. He suddenly turnes his head to the woman and orders her... to stand by the garbage. Video cameras are focused on the woman, who was just told by the city akim that the carbage can would be, from now on, her working place.

I could not go asleep for a while, trying to imagine myself in alike situation. How could I be so humble, so mute, and so much ready for any humiliation? Actually, she was not

even supposed to be accused in that disgraceful garbage situation. According to the previous media reports, the leadership of the district communal service, headed by the relative of deputy akim, misappropriated money alloted for the city accomplishment. After these reports, the entire staff of the service resigned, and only this one woman stayed at her position. Definitely, she was not the main person in charge for the situation, but none of the men felt like sharing her guilt. And none of them came to the defense of her. I think, nobody even considered that there was something wrong about this mise en scene.

I opened a political science hand-book, found the term "discrimination," and read: Discrimination can be implemented openly, in a rude and direct form, which is typical of fascist and racist regimes." Wow. And so, what is the regime we are facing? Where have we come with our young and energetic newly appointed akim?



The problem is that someone misappropriated the funds aimed to be spent for taking care of the garbage situation photo sent by the author

Maria OSIPOVA
Belarus

matrimonial

WATCHING OUR BEDROOMS

something the state really likes to do

As I turned 45 and left behind two divorces, I began dreaming about a foreign husband. Disappointed with local Romeos, spoiled by gentle attitude of my European friends and mistrusting Internet, I decided to address to the marriage agency. But I even discovered additional troubles on the way to my happiness. Last March, the president of Belarus Republic issued the decree On Certain Measures Preventing Human Trafficking. According to the document, since June 1, 2005, the activities of the local marriage agencies became the subject of licensing by the interior ministry. Thus, the lawenforcement bodies received practically unlimited access to the marriage agencies' information on local brides, their foreign husbands-to-be and on the travel of both. In fact, my home country legalized its right to see what is going on in my bedroom.

Of course, the local media discussed the problem widely. The participants of a TV-show (predominantly men) even voiced their concern about the lack of patriotism of those women who marry abroad. Another surprise appeared right after the New Year. On January 26, the Ministers' Council decree came into effect. The decree now regulates the order of accepting, registration, and spreading of marriage and dating announcements. Henceforth, a dating advert can be published only after a citizen writes corresponding apply and indicates his or hers passport details.

I decided to address to a friend of mine, who lives in the Netherlands. I had to explain the situation and to invite myself to her house. She replied:

"Come whenever you want. But please do not write to me about all that exploitation. You know it yourself - if 10 out of 100 internationally married women are extremely unhappy about their current life, it is their fault, as they chose the very first variant. These new actions have only one purpose: not to let people abroad. The state bodies do not have any right to decide whom you marry and who do you sleep with." Certainly, from the legal point of view there should be some regulations for the marriage agencies; if I pay for the service, I want to have a guarantee that the agency is not involved in the criminal activities. But even so, I simply do not understand the reason why my country distorts every good idea. In other countries, police gets interested in the activities of a marriage agency only in the case of some criminal developments. The police will never consider the possibility of holding a candle in your bedroom.

We discussed the topic for several days, me and my friend. The big deal was not about my decision to get married again, but about the degree of permissibility, defined by the state.

By my profession, I had to work as a consultant with several young Swedish men, visiting Belarus, for quite a long period of time. Discussing necessary topics, we walked in the city streets and oftentimes entered cafes. Back then, there was neither Decree, nor Resolution; but I definitely felt that state's attention towards me. It is hard to imagine what happens if the wish to regulate the citizens' private life becomes legal.



Thanks a lot for your attention, but we do not really need it.

photo by Tamara Khamitsevich, Belarus

Lubov Shtileva,
Russia

action!

BASTIONS FALL

it took activists five days to remove sexist banner

In Murmansk, on the Five Corners Square, there appeared an advertisement of a joint action of Investsberbank and Beethoven, the home equipment store. A sexy half-naked lady, displayed at the advertisement said: "We give it to anyone!" (and the title of an advertised bank credit).

The Coordination Council of Kola Peninsula Women's Congress addressed to the Beethoven store administration requesting the removal of the sexist banner. The company seemed not to understand the claims of the Congress. Answering the phone call, the head of advertisement department said she saw nothing reprehensible in the advertisement, and that the problem was about "morbid imagination of the women's movement."

On February 7, 2006, the Coordination Council made a decision to implement gender expertise of the advertisement, that would follow their appeal to the court. Late on February 7, the Congress e-mailed gender experts, journalists and leaders of women's organizations from different regions of Russia requesting help and consultation. In the morning of February 8, the congress received more than a dozen of detailed replies and recommendations from Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and other Russian cities.

On the same day, Congress received a phone call from Tatyana Kalyasnikova, the journalist of Polyarnaya Pravda, the oldest newspaper in Murmansk. As it turned out, the scandalous advertisement in the center of Murmansk shocked many of the newspaper's journalists.

On Feb. 9, the newspaper's most popular edition published a story entitled "Why do the solid companies need the shocking advertisement?"

One more day passed, and the banner was removed. The Kola Peninsula Women's Congress would like to thank everybody who responded to their appeal (Anna Temkina and Nadezhda Ilyinskaya from Saint -Petersbur; Svetlana Aivazova, Oksana Kazakova, Nadezhda Khvorova, Galina Grishina, Larisa Fedorova, Ludmila Kabanova, Olga Zdravomislova and Irina Gorshkova from Moscow; Yelena Larionova and Tatyana Kalyasnikova from Murmansk; Galina Petriashvili from Tbilisi) and provided the Congress with invaluable informational and consultative support. The Kola Peninsula Women's Congress plans to continue its work against sexism in advertisement and local media.



"We give it to anyone," says the huge advertisement banner. It was a good trainer for joint actions against sexism.

photo by Yuri Chernopyatov, Russia

Rano BOBOJANOVA,
Tajikistan

gloom

**SHE THINKS:
I AM OBLIGED
TO BE THE ONLY
PROVIDER,
AS SHE MARRIED ME**

*I do want to earn,
but there is no job for me*

IN A MARDIKOR'S WORDS

"It got warmer. Maybe I will be lucky with the job today. Every morning, when I go to the mardikor market, I pray, asking God to help me with the job. But nothing ever happens," Anvar, a skinny guy, shares his problems with me.

"I am young, only 27 years old. I have a wife and a four-years-old daughter. I graduated from the law school, but failed to find a job. There are plenty of guys like me around. My wife also has a higher degree, but she stays at home taking care of the daughter."

Mardikor, an unofficial Eastern market of cheap market exists for many centuries. Generally, men are those who offeservices; some of these men are professional workers, others are those who do not have any special skills and come to mardikor to find someone who needs help in lifting weight, to dig ground or alike. The translation for the word "mardikor" is "a man for work," "unskilled laborer." Generally, a mardikor earns some 10 - 25 somon (approximately 3-8 dollars).

Every morning, the mardikor of Khudjand gets very crowded. Every newly arrived car is surrounded by some 30 people, offering their services. There are plenty of men, who came to this place from distant mountainous regions; but not all of them will be lucky today.

Anvar says:

"I live here, in this town, while many other guys have to stay at their relatives' houses or to rent an apartment jointly. In spring and summer they might live in chaikhanas. There is not much working here, the most difficult is the waiting for someone who might need you. Days go by, you come home without any earned money and suffer other kind of miseries. I don't know much about who made up that role for a man, but my wife demands from me to bring money. "You married me," she says, "you are obliged to take care of me now." I would be happy to follow these demands, but I just can't. There is no job here. Maybe, I should go to Russia, but I have nobody there, and I know that it is even more difficult to get a job at the place you don't belong to."

The number of labor migrants from Tajikistan to Russian Federation varies between 800 thousand and 1.5 million persons, according to different sources.

Anvar:

"It is very difficult to be a man, but women do not understand it. You know, sometimes I just feel like committing suicide, I am only afraid of God.

In the first three months of 2005, only in the Soghdi district of Tajikistan, 66 suicide cases were registered. 40 of them were men.

"Men are unlikely to share their problems, as they are afraid to lose their social influence," GÜLRÜKHSOR, women's crisis center's executive director Dilbar Ismoylova commented. According to her, there is an urgent necessity to create family crisis centers, that would help men to stop feeling desperate. Ismoylova also said that there are a lot of man aged 30-50, who addressed to her organization, asking for help to overcome depression.

Anvar says:

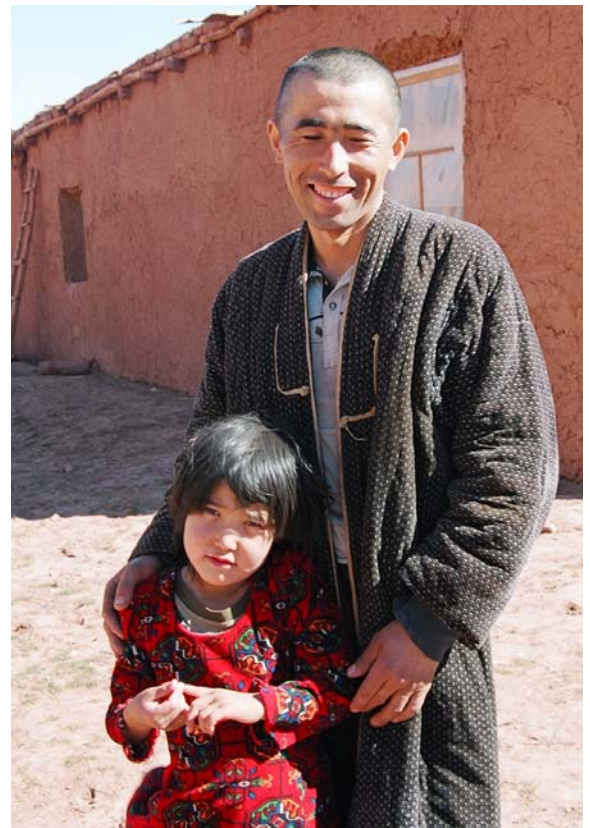
"Something I hate the most is that my wife claims about me to her mother. My mother in law, in her turn, tells me that I am not a man, as I fail to take a proper care of my family. Life used to be better, when I worked as mini-bus driver; I used to make 40-50 somony daily (\$ 13-16), I was able to assist financially to my relatives and the relatives of my wife. But three years ago, I had a car crash and had to sell the mini-bus."

Anvar says his wife does not want to work, saying that he is the only person in their family who is responsible for earning money.

Unofficial data of Gender Studies Center based in Soghdi district points out that 65% of women want to have both, a family and a job; 10% want to develop their career, while 25 % of women want to live on their husband's earnings.

"There are many of those, who believe that the violence is aplicable to women only," Bakhtier Ashurov, the judge of the local district court says, "but as my experience shows, there are plenty of couples that decided to divorce as a result of pressure by mothers-in-law. In general, women fail to find a common language, which is very difficult for a husband, who finds himself unable to choose between his mother and wife.

Anvar keeps hoping that his wife will understand him someday and that he will be lucky with the job. He goes to the mardikor market everyday.



Mardikor smiles sadly
photo by Umida Akhmedova, Uzbekistan

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