

Women's Situation in Mongolia of Post-socialism - Increasing high-educated women –

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Mongolia is located in central Asia and faces to China and Russia. Its area is approximately 1.57 million km², and its population is 3 million (statistics in January 2015). Mongolia had been maintaining socialist system for 70 years since 1924 as the second socialistic state, namely “Mongolian People’s Republic” after the Soviet Union. Being affected by Perestroika of the Soviet Union and the fall of Berlin Wall, however, democratization movement spread in Mongolia as well in early 1920’s. In 1990 the first election was held with multi-party system, the Mongolian Constitution was stipulated in 1992 and the nation was renamed as “Mongolia.” The state system has changed into capitalism from socialism and started to pursue market economy.

A series of economic difficulties were found during the transition period of market economy. There arose serious social issues which gave several influence on people’s life, especially on women’s. Unemployment rate elevated, divorce rate as well as the number of household headed by women increased. Domestic violence and violence against women also became serious problem. But on the other hand, there has been such good impact that women’s education level has been improved, women’s career as specialists has advanced and women have become economically independent.

I would like to mention about the enhancement of Mongolian women’s education during transition period of market economy. Women’s ratio to the population of Mongolia is 51.7% and to the labor force is 50.4%. In socialism era, the ideology included gender equality and that both men and women work outside, so women’s social participation was common and both of married couple work outside. Women’s education level was rapidly improved after shifting to market economy. According to the statistics, 70% of university students are women; 64% of university graduates and 66% of diploma acquisition are women. Furthermore, in society, for example, women’s ratio working in education sector is: 95.7% of kindergarten and nursery teachers; 80.3% of elementary and secondary school teachers; 62.5% of college teachers and 53.4% of university professors. Other statistics show that 33.1% of women earn more than their husbands do and 25.6% of women earn as much as their husbands.

It is believed that women’s high education is partly due to the nomadic lifestyle and way of thinking. Many male Mongolians easily live with various jobs including physical labor, but in order for women to gain economic stability and opportunities, it is believed that high education is only one solution. That is why parents attach greater importance on girls’ education than boys’ and send girls to higher school. Furthermore, based on the deep-rooted perception that “men’s job is nomadism,” parents train their sons nomadism and let them remain local, meanwhile give higher education to daughters so as to allow them to work other than nomadism. This background accelerate women’s higher education, but the problem is men’s low awareness

of education. This has caused decreasing marriage rate. More number of women do not get married, because they are not able to find a partner who had received same level of education, while increasing number of women go for international marriage.

