A Contemporary Overview Labour Market of Kazakhstan

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1. INTRODUCTION

By many scholars it is stated that Kazakhstan will be one of the most biggest countries of the World.¹ The geography of this country is equal to the European Union and it is placed at the center of the geopolitical structure of the Middle East. The country’s agricultural potential is high and it has rich national resources. At the same time Kazakhstan has highly developed industry. Heavy industry and infrastructure of the country are heritage of the Soviet Union. Nowadays many countries make investments, in different levels, to modernize the industrial facilities of the country. Between 1991-2006 the direct foreign investment amount of the country was over the 13 billion dollars. (Фомин, 2006: 7) According to the World Bank data, between 2006-2010 this amount was 49,16 billion dollars. (World Bank; http://www.worldbank.org.kz/, 23.12.2011)

From nineties, orientation to the free market economy has been put forward requirement of a new formation and it has been seen the shortages in some areas of the economy.² Kazakh population has been forced to make transition from centre to periphery. So, instead of classical steppe live, they have passed to working areas which require intensive education process. However, parallel to the new investments which made in industry, the deficit of qualified labourforce of the economy has not satisfied yet.

After the independence of the country, new developments were seen in the area of employment and immigrant. In the mean of employment, due to the policy of prefering Kazakh origins to employ, Russian origin people, who composed qualified labour force of the country, offended and migration to Russia accelerated.³ (Гайдар, 2010: 347–348)

In this paper, it is explained the existing situation of the Kazakhstan labour market after the Soviet Union dissolution and it is focused actual labour force problems.

1. A general overview on the developments of labour market after Soviet Union

The most important development in the global mean is the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the last two decade. After Soviet Union, more than ten independent countries were established.⁴ The dissolution process of this super power became very fast. The structural organization⁵ which based on complementary, caused many structural problems after

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² Russians, Germans and the like worked in central and developed cities of Kazakhstan during the Soviet Union, on the other hand Kazakhs in general worked intensively in jobs that require less technical skills in rural areas.

³ Family relations, benefit networks and “cüz” which is defined as clan relation, gained importance in the work life.

⁴ The number of countries which emerged from Soviet Union are (2012) fifteen. These countries are: Russia, Belarus, Ukrainia, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia.

⁵ For example; cultivating of cotton in Kazakh S.S.C., while founding weaving mills in Uzbek S.S.C.
dissolution. For example deficiency of coordination between former Soviet Republics, a sudden grow of the economic problems and dissolution of economic bonds. (Бандман, 1996: 20)

In the labour market of Soviet republics, ethnic diversity which parallel to the production relations, constituted as Soviet policy and has continued its effects until today. With the collapse of Nomenklatura which determined and planned the structure of labour during Soviet times, it lost its function and in the new era instead of Nomenklatura, high class administrators were elected with regarding ethnic origin in accordance to the unitary structure. In all Soviet Republics, ethnic relations which caused to the ethnic conflicts, became very bad day by day. (Шеретов, 2003: 181)

In Soviet Republics, public effects of the discrimination to Russian language increased, collapse effects of the Soviet system caused different results for rich and poor masses, so huge masses who became desperate, preferred to immigrate. This situation, between republics which became independent, caused to the refugee problem. The same case, can be seen for labour market. With the developments, the immigration capacity for business became in high levels. All these public and political tensions, became an economic crisis for these countries and especially for Kazakhstan. (Терещенко, 1993: 126)

After the dissolution of the Soviets, with the economic crisis, in the Kazakhstan labour market viewed serious problems. In this period, according to the demography specialised the 10% of the population lived under hunger limit, the effect of poverty became more intense in some regions. In this process not giving enough importance to the natural problems, caused to the increase of problems. For example, around to the Aral Sea in which it can be seen natural problems, with increase of the amount of salt, agricultural and animal farming ratios decreased and parallel to this case the number of poor people became between 300,000- 1,000,000. Because of these, in sixties regional imbalances and employment became important problems. (1.Статистический пресс-бюллетень, No3.- Алматы: Казинформцентр, 1994)

Poverty was not regionally, it could be seen across to the country. For example in 1993, in the whole country poverty ratio was 50%, while according to the State’s data it was 10%. (1.Статистический пресс-бюллетень, No3.- Алматы: Казинформцентр, 1994)

The employment ratio of the Kazakhstan, in the first years of the independence was different from the Russia Federation in some points. For example in 1989 the number of Musulmans (except Tatars which their 70.6% were in the agricultural part) in agriculture was 48%. (Uludağ, 1992: 281) In the sectoral distribution of the country, agriculture had a dominant role and because of this, life standards were low. (Бейсенов, 1993: 123)

6 During central government it was formed a list of administrative managers and technocrats. All decisions were taken by these people. The name of this class was defined ‘nomenklatura’. For more information V. Olivier Roy, (2009), “Yeni Orta Asya ya da Ulusların İmal Edilişi”, Metis Edition, Istanbul.

7 In the Middle East it was seen ethnic conflicts because of economic reasons. In the last (2010, April) case of Kyrgyzstan (Nisan 2010) was seen ethnic conflicts again basically because of economic reasons. In the business life of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbeks are very effective. So, Uzbeks are called “Jews of the Middle East” by Kirghizs. This effectiveness of Uzbeks in Kirghiz market, provoked Kirghiz people. And, during these conflicts nearly 150 Uzbeks were died.


9 In 1989 the population ratio of Kazakhs in Kazakhstan was 39.7% , 6.500.000. (Uludağ, 1992: 280)

10 From May of 1994 the minimum wage has been 560 Tenge in throughout of Kazakhstan. While monthly minimum wage average was 560 Tenge, while in rural areas this wage has increased to 257. In 1994, average living expenses of a family with four members was 1170. So, this example explains that wages were not enough to bring life standards to minimum level.
2. THE EMPLOYMENT MARKET OF THE KAZAKHSTAN

3. Kazakhstan between the Commonwealth of Independent States, except Russia, is the only labour force migration receiver. According to the analysts, the reason of this case causes from giving importance to the production of high value added goods and services. (Zorlu, 2008: 12) So, country creates new employment possibilities for labours.

![Graph-1: Министерство труда и социальной защиты населения. (2011), “Республики Казахстан у. Современное состояние рынка труда в. Республике Казахстан и меры по обеспечению занятости целевых групп населения”, Астана, п.2](image)

The employment and labour force of the Kazakhstan labour market, according to the data between 1999-2010, was in positive trend and the result of this situation the unemployment numbers and ratios declined. Especially in the second chart it can be seen the high value of the 1999, dissolution in the economical area after independence and the negative ways of increased unemployment and contraction in employment which is the result of the trauma caused by reconstruction process, however after 1999 it can be observed a positive development in the labour market.

11 In 1991 Russia, Ukrania and Belarus signed the Creation Agreement on the creation of CIS in Belovejskaya Puşşa. In 1993, Georgia and respectively countries as Azerbaijan, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizistan, Moldova, Uzbekhistan, Tajikistan, Russian Federation and Ukrania joined to CIS de facto. (Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimih Gasudarstv, http://www.ln.mid.ru/nsrsng.nsf/8c21fbc45f12ec6d432569e700419ef3/c5363bace1a0db03c3257235004505e5?Open Document Erişim tarihi: 30.12.2011)
As it can be seen in the forward chart, the unemployment ratio of Kazakhstan decreased steadily in the last decade. For 1999, unemployment ratio was 13.5%, but in 2009 this ratio decreased to 6.6% and in 2010 August was 5.7%. The unemployment numbers in 1999 were 950 thousand, in 2004 were 658.8 thousand and in 2010 these numbers decreased to the 496.5 thousand. The employment ratio has increased steadily (32%). In 1999 nearly 6.1 billion people employed, with a steady increasement this number became more than 8.1 billion people. In the last twelve years, the number of employed people has increased nearly two billion people.

In 2010, to regulate the labour market of the country (to constitute State programme), it was held a series of conferences in the new capital Astana. In that conference which name was “Global Crise and Kazakhstan National Programme to overcome with Global Crise”, some reports about the problems of labour force and social security were presented. In the concept of two main decision which were taken in that conference (Saidov, 2010: 7), decreasing unemployment and providing the involvement of workers to the social security became preferred aims. In this context it is understood that, to decrease social problems, unemployment ratios are decreased and to prevent informal labour market, the concept of social security is extended. With this approach, Kazakh authorities initially wants to hold under the control the informal labour market.

In this concept, it is aimed to prepare a plan which includes the year 2020. Between the strategical aims of the country it is put forward that, with the participation of Kazakh diaspora which is 1.2 billion in the other countries, by migrating to the Kazakhstan and participating to the labour force, until 2020 the unemployment ratio decrease to the under 5%.

The actual labour market problems of the country, are frequently argued and tried to find solutions by private sector. The CEO of the Kazakhstan Consulting Firm Groups, Gulzara Mauletdin, evaluates the situation of the labour market: “The priority demand of the labour force is qualified personnel and new investors who can provide employment. People who know economy, firstly learned to have financial power, it is needed to manage financial market. And everybody should use this power for correct resources. This equality should indicate life standarts of workers. Here, we should decide important and priority strategies and together we should do something… deciding to what to do where and why should do, can gain confidence to the investors. With the increasement of investments and market confidence, labour force problems of the Kazakhstan will decrease.” (Вечерние новости, 2010: 18)

Beside of overcoming the difficulties, these are emphasized: for becoming successful of the new world order it is needed to ensure new paradigms which are freedoms in the area of economy and policy. General belief that being succesful of the country only can be ensured to answer its needs, by Kazakh investors. In awareness of the economic investments in new restructuring should be organized for answering needs and expectations.
3. THE WAGES OF REGIONS

One of the indicators of the healthy functioning of working life is wage levels. During Soviet Union period, central government was paying to every worker equal pay. However, this system caused the laziness of the people and contributed the development of collapse of the system. In time of Soviet Unions, to all professions, without looking to their regions, gained similar salaries. For example a barber who was working in Almatı and another barber who was working in Kentav gained the same salary. With the free market it can be seen regional differences of the wages.

According to the regions (Graphic 3 Level 1), the lowest wage is paid in Jambıl, North Kazakhstan and Akmola state with average 70.000, which is lower than Tenge’s wages. In Atrav and Mangistan, wages are higher other than other regions. In the regions in which it can be observed high wages, there are intensely petroil, mine and organized industrial zones. Whether capital of the country changed from Almatı to Astana, it can not be seen an important wage difference between these two cities. In that case, existence of institutional structures and partially existence of industrial infrastructure in Almatı, which causes from the period of Tsar, are important factors. So, even if city has lost its advantage of being the capital, already presents an economic potential.

Organizational and institutional structure, which come from the reshape of the economical forms, will cause more mobilization of the market and increase the popularity of the new profession areas. Because of this, the quality of the labour force will develop, wage levels will get better. In the list of the most highest - paying professions of the country, mining comes the first for many years, then wages paying for gas and oil experts are very high. However, wages of oil and mining engineers are almost in the saturation point. Banking profession is also indicated as between increasing popularity, however reflection of the global crisis in 2010, average wages of banking sector workers decreased from 140.500 Tenge to 73.900 Tenge. In Kazakhstan job consulting, construction, telecommunication, information technology, marketing, economy, accounting, design, engineering and law jobs became popular. This steady and high level growth performance revealed continous increase in money reserves and wages and improved social welfare level. According to the accounts, between

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**Graphic-3** Level 1: Kazakistan Cumhuriyeti İstatistik Kurumu verileri kullanılarak hazırlanmıştır. www.stat.kz (Erişim tarihi: 08.12.2011)

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12 Level 1: Describes the administrative division of states in the across of country.

13 One dollar = 147.89 Tenge. (By October,2011.) Reference: Natsionalniy Bank Respibliki Kazakstan: Kazaskomu Tenge”; http://www.nationalbank.kz/, (Access Date: 01.01.2012)

4. WORKING LIFE AND SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

After independence, in Kazakhstan it is needed a reform of social security system and so many reforms were done to modernize the social security system of Soviet Union which was shaped according to the socialist policies.

In the concept of 2030 National Development Program, that focuse on social development, to resolve social security problems it is emphasized to implicate new social security policies.(Назарбаев, 1993: 23,31) According to the Kazakhstan Social Security Code it is indicated that ; “ each person is under the reciprocal responsibility of society and government.” With the reforms it is aimed to increase net wage levels by decreasing taxes. By 2008, 30% of the average social security contributions are excluded for employers. (www.enbek.gov.kz, 13.05.2011) For families that their income is under the minimum wage, it is started poverty insurance implications. Between 2005- 2010 for giving good education for children of poor families, it is begun “Bolaşak (Future) Programme”. If it is summarized shortly, to empower social justice principle , concept of social protection possibilities are increased. (Василенко, 1998: 41–63)

It is worked to increase the life standarts of huge public masses and it is reorganized social helps, unemployment compensation, pension system, health and education system. In this concept it is worked as a priority to empower economy. (Василенко, 1998: 41–63)

The orientation of the workforce from public to private, that it is noted as the basic specialities of the transition term in terms of market, has significant the restriction of the job security. However, during the Soviet Union period everybody was accepted under the social security system and it was done consumption subventions as transfer of liquid. So, with the help of the public enterprises, social services and social helps were realized. In Kazakhstan, with the acceptance of the budget code in 1999, in the area of social security important changes are realized. “Before the acceptance of the budget code, by 1998 the system of social help types were extremely complex. In the system there were 47 categories of social help recipients and 202 types of discount. However, in the new system these numbers change to 14 social help types and while the categories of the social help is decreased, their concepts are expanded.” (Туран, 2006: 94, 95)

In the new period, this policy is left behind and it is passed to the social welfare system. So, this policy decreased public expenditures. These practices which it is seen in the transition period, caused orientation of the reinforcement of social spends, by changing the political idea with the positive impact of oil incomes to the economy. However, it can not be said that there is a dramatic increasement. For example, during the transition period the share of the education and health expenses was 6.1% (1992), in 1999 this ratio became 6.5%, later in ten years barely reached to 7% (2010). (Туран, 2006: 89, 125)

It is possible to divide social security system according to the establishment of Kazakhstan Government Social Security Fund, in 2004. Although the first Social Reform Code14 is released in 1997, until 2004 because of the problems of old system, pensions15 were barely paid or they were not paid. With the practice of the new system, social security premiums gathered in this fund and it is ensured to get under the coverage of retired, disability, industrial accident and maternity funds. (Государственный фонд социального страхования, 2011: 3–7)

In the new formation of the social security system, it is regulated complimentary retirement funds and transformed into the three steps system. The first step includes; rights that ensures to all citizens and helps as maternity, disability and the like. In the second step, rights that are ensured with the pass of cumulative retirement system, are formed. In the third step, according to the citizens’ wants, it is aimed to evaluate voluntary savings, by increasing social premium interruptions. So, it is purposely to increase the incomes that people take from the social security foundations, as in the level of the developed countries. (Курманов, 2010: 3–4)

5. LABOUR MIGRATION İN KAZAKHSTAN

Today Post- Soviet States, differentiate between them according to their economic and social structures.16 Also, international labour force market, accordingly the quality and quantity of human potential and social and economic

14 With this reform, it is started to make premium deduction and is transferred to the insurance fund.

15 In the concept of pension insurance, pension age is 55 for women and 61.

16 For example the economic concept of the neighbor country Uzbekhistan is weak about the adaptation talent of global economy, while economy policy of Kazakhstan is more open. In the economy of Uzbekhistan it is applied gradual
development level, encounter with different migration cases. (Chulanova, 2007: 6-9) Nowadays Russia is the most economically developed country of the region and this country is an attractive center for old Soyuz (Union) originated labours. After Russia, in Kazakhstan became an other attractive area.17

With the enhanced employment possibilities, Kazakhstan attracts attention of the citizens of developing countries. Labour force with Kazakhstan origin, as transit and destination country, orients to countries that have powerful and big economies, mainly to neighbours (Russia and CIS), European countries, Japan, China and United States. (Chulanova, 2007) According to the United Nations experts, Kazakhstan takes place in the 15. place between the countries with the intensity of migration. So, country has problems linked with labour force.

According to the Kazakhstan migration datas, the migration profile of Kazakhstan can be analyzed in two different categories as, CIS countries and other countries. In this concept from CIS to Kazakhstan in 1999, 39.461 people were migrated. However this number in 2009 was 32.075 and 2010 became 33.857. According to these data, it can be said that migration from CIS to Kazakhstan decreased steadily between these years. Amongst, the number of people migrated between 1999-2010, (in 1999 the number of Russian people was 26.719 and Uzbek people’s number was 7.215, in 2009 the number of Russian was 8.939 and Uzbek was 18.790, in 2010 the number of Russian was 8.232 and Uzbek was 21.117.) were formed the most intensive groups. The number of Russian that came to Russia decreased, however Ukbezks increased. People who migrate from Kazakhstan firstly prefered to go Russia. In 1999, among immigrants 108.115 of them migrated to Russia, 4.656 of them to Belarus and 3.080 of them to Ukraina. In 2010, 705 of them to Belarus, 23.490 of them to Russia, 318 of them to Uzbekstan and 258 of them to Ukraina. (Kazakhstann Demografiyalık Zhılnamalıgı, 2011: 577)

In 1999, the number of people who migrate from CIS to Kazakhstan was 1.859, however in 2009 was 9.410 and in 2010 was 8.139. In 1999 people who came from Germany and Mongolia became the first, however in 2009 and 2010 Chinese and Mongolian people became the first.18 In 1999, the number of people who migrate from Kazakhstan to foreign countries was 44.707, in 2009 was 2.258 and in 2010 decreased to 1.584. During first period, immigration to foreign countries was very intensive and especially people migrated to Israel and Germany.19 Because of this immigration possibly caused by immigrants origined from German and Jewish. This migration action were especially realized in first years after independence, because indepence of the country had a positive effect on freedom of travel, but also it is caused by the negative effects of economic collapse and reformation process. Certainly, it can not be ignored the motherland missing and relative height of welfare level of these countries. Thus, the fast decrease of the migration to foreign countries, verifies this opinion.

In 2010, it is stated that labour force increased 19.5% according to the previous year and 54% of the immigrants were women. Among immigrants 23.8% were under 15 years old. According to the international migration data, average migration to Kazakhstan between 2010-2015 is expected to be net 1.2 per thousand. (International Organization for Migration; http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/kazakhstan, 17.12.2011)

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17 Kazakhstan with economic growth, annual average of 9%-10%, has a place between first fifteen dynamic developing countries; this dynamic structure encourages the transformation of the country as a center of attraction. The GDP of the Kazakhstan, despite the crisis, increased to 7%. (International Monetary Fund, 2011: 74)

18 In 1999; 507 of them came from Germany, 437 of them came from Mongolia, 145 of them came from China ve 95 of them came from Turkey; in 2009, 4.645 of them came from China, 3.501 of them came from Mongolia, 386 of them came from Germany ve 217 of them came from Turkey; in 2010 4.020 of them came from China, 2.606 of them came from Mongolia, 366 of them came from Germany and 285 of them came from Turkey. (Kazakhstann Demografiyalık Zhılnamalıgı, 2011: 577)

19 In 1999, 40.862 people went to Germany, 1.585 people went to Israel, 609 people went to USA, 332 people went to Canada, 277 people went to Greece; in 2010, 973 people went to Germany, 173 people went to USA, 145 people went to Canada and 90 people went to Israel. (Kazakhstann Demografiyalık Zhılnamalıgı, 2011: 577).
When compare with other neighbour countries, the economic condition of Kazakhstan seems better and this case make country’s position as center of attraction. However, expect this attraction, formation, that is done by nationalization, caused to lose importance of ethnic groups and increased the migration to their motherlands. During Soviet Union, Russians who were formed nearly half of the Kazakhstan population and it is estimated that after 1990 nearly 2.5 billion20 Russians left the country.

There is another thing to explain migration action to Kazakhstan. However it has not reflected yet. It is called “Oralmans”21 that means to call immigrant Kazakh origin people by an encouragement management. These efforts are known but there is not a healthy data to show the number of people who returned to the country as a result of this work. (Садовская, 2001: 107)

There is a limited legal frame for foreign employment and so, many immigrant worker work irregularly and except of social security. Government in the middle of 2006, did new regulations for specific categories of immigrant labour force. (International Organization for Migration, 2011) However, it can not be declared that these attempts become successful to legalize the statues of immigrant labours and get into the legal protection.

Conclusion

Kazakhstan, during the soviet Union had huge area, low population density and intensely Russian origin people were living there. After the dissolution of Soviet Union, country had a systematic collapse. However, rich natural resources, created advantage to skip financial problems in short and few volatility. In terms of political and economic steps to be taken were showed a slow development during the transition from socialism to market economy, whereas gainings that are provided by economic richness of the country provided low the opponents factors.

Kazakhstan promises to be an important country in 21. Century. Unemployment rates are low across the country. Parallel to this, there is a developing labour market in the country. However workers are not satisfied from wages and unemployment compensations. There are structural problems on labour law and syndication issue. Also, the quantity of the minimum wage, which is nearly 110 dolars, beside the costs decrease for employers, create dissatisfaction among employees. While increasing the integration of the country economy to global economy, the quality of problems on work life differentiates. Existing work force is needs education in world standarts. Income distribution injustice, across the region, still continues.

Kazakhstan make renews the social security system that is taken over from old system. Resource formation is a big problem for system and it is provided with premium payments of citizens and employers. Kazakhstan by increasing the social helps for citizens, works for being a modern welfare country.

Labour migration profile of the country is extremely interesting. Because of the richness of natural resources and the need for technic workforce become an attractive center. Informal employment is common among migrant workers. Nearly all forms of illegal labour migration can be seen in that country. Kazakhstan, is a transition area for labour immigrant who migrate to Europe and South East Asia. Kazakhstan, especially accepts codes to encourage returns of Kazakh Diaspora (Oralmans). This situation increases migration mobility of the country.

Although Kazakhstan’s steps through few volume free market, evaluating rationally the natural richesnesses for the country's future, make possible to realize aims to take high positions of Kazakh people and State in the 21. century

6. REFERENCES


20 Bkz., International Organization for Migration, 2011: op.cit..

21 The “Oralmans” locution is used for people who are ethnically Kazakh but live outside of their motherland. Kazakh Government created a project that is named “ Migration with Nur” between the years 2009-11, to call Oralmans back. With this project it is aimed to came back the Kazakh Diaspora which are located in 40 countries of the world (In Uzbekhistan 1 billion, In China 1,5 billion, in Russia 0,5 billion, in Turkmkenistan 100 thousand, in Mongolia 80 thousand, in Krguzhistan 45 thousand. The number of Kazakhs which are living in Turkey, Iran and Afganistan are not known) Programma, (2008), “Nurlı Köş’ na 2009–2011 godi”, Utverjdena, postanovleniem Pravitelstva Respubliki Kazakhstan ot “2” Dekabry, No: 1126.


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