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CONTEMPORARY AND TRADITIONAL IN THE LIFE OF A RURAL WOMAN

SUMMARY
Given the importance of the woman on the farm, her role in the countryside is often unfairly neglected. The aim of this paper is to examine the social and socio-economic status of women in rural areas, based on the conducted research. The paper is dedicated to October 15 - Day of Rural Women.

Surveys were conducted in the municipalities of Pljevlja and Kolašin. An interview method was used in order to collect data. Survey results show that rural women play a role both as housewives and as workers on their own farms. It originates from the nature of rural family, which simultaneously emerges both as a consumer unit-household and a production unit-farm. Respondents' answers testify to small but visible improvements in the position of rural women in the surveyed area. Due to the traditional gender roles that involve caring for children and the elderly, solely by doing housework, women are left with little room for independent activities, education and employment outside the home. The survey showed that the respondents were not familiar with the celebration of International Day of Rural Women - October 15th. In this regard, it is necessary to work on its popularization in order to strengthen the social and economic position of rural women.

Key words: rural woman, farm, household, agriculture.

INTRODUCTION
Within the concept of neo-endogenous rural development, special attention is paid to empowering the so-called vulnerable social groups. Due to the nature of family and social roles and positions, they also include rural women (Cvejić, Babović, Petrović, Bogdanov, Vuković, 2010). Social vulnerability of rural women arises both from the characteristics of the rural social structure and features of the rural gender regime, which is manifested in gender-defined roles, positions, relationships and (self) perceptions of both women and men (Čikić, 2016). Therefore, it is very important to raise a question what are the opportunities of rural women to participate in all three forms of reproduction of family farms, and which factors shape them (Cikic, 2016).

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A rural woman performs the function of a housewife in difficult circumstances because she is burdened with work in agricultural production. It has two economic functions: in the area of consumption and in the field of production. This arises from the nature of the rural family, which at the same time appears as a consumer unit-household and as a production unit-farm (Dimković, 1979). Due to traditionally gender roles that involve raising children and helping the elderly, exclusively doing housework, not owning land or other financial resources, and performing agricultural and additional activities to increase the home budget, women are left with little room for independent economic activities, education and employment outside the home. (Barada, Ćop, Kučer, 2012). Some authors consider that ordinary women's activities could be a basis of rural local economy development, because the existing way of life has provided women with the knowledge of their own community needs and skills that could be used in local service industries, food production intended for the market, tourism, work from home, environmental protection, etc. (Hazl et al. 2011). The women in the villages declare themselves to be unemployed despite the fact that they contribute greatly to the household budget by participating in both permanent and occasional farm jobs. Their daily lives encompassed with economic work activities and their employment exceeds the limits of formal employment becoming daily activities of women (Šikić-Mičanović, 2012). Most of the researches to date confirm the continuity of disadvantaged family and social status of rural women. It is reflected in the lack of chances to manage their own lives and participate in the political and social life of the community (Korać, 1991; Rajković, 2009). Unfavourable social status is reflected in the daily struggle with a low material standard (Rajković, 2009; Babović, Vuković, 2008), in addition to the difficulties in harmonizing family and work responsibilities due to an underdeveloped institutional support system (Blagojević, 2010). Therefore, it is not surprising that women in the countryside still see the meaning of their existence mainly in the family, even more closely caring for children (Korać, 1991). The most recent researches indicate the diversification of the family and social position of rural women depending on their education, work activity, age (Čikić, 2016). Women graduated from high and higher school are significantly more satisfied with the quality of their lives, and among younger rural women, there are ones who see their interest and show a willingness to enter into entrepreneurship and association (Bogdanov et al., 2011).

Family farms are a specific element of rural social structure, as they are characterized by the unity of family life, production, consumption and housing (Čikić, 2016). Farming and farm life are not considered to be a desirable lifestyle (Bendin, 2009; Sokić, 2005), few girls from farms are ready to stay and even fewer are ready to come to the farms (First-Dilić, 1973). High and non-agricultural education is considered to be the best ticket to escape from agriculture and countryside, which in the conditions of limited social vitality and social unattractiveness of the village appears as one of the life aspirations among young people in the village (Marković-Krstić, 2005; Stojanov, 1988). The
education of young (rural) women is also a prerequisite for their better positioning in the labour market, therefore it can be considered as a modern form of dowry (Čikić, 2016).

The remains of the classic Montenegrin patriarchal family still exist in the Montenegrin village today. The woman is still sought after somewhere as a „workforce“, as an „economic unit“, as a „reproductive unit“ for the production of children, especially sons („happiness“) (Vujačić, 1973). Rural areas are in many ways specific to urban areas and deserve special attention. In the process of transition, the village, which was insufficiently in the focus of development policies even in socialism, becomes even more marginalized and women in the village have become invisible (Blagojević, 2009).

The position of rural women who form a special social category is subject to all general international and national documents regulating women's rights. Recognizing the crucial role and contribution of rural women, on December 18, 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 62/136 establishing the International Day of Rural Women, i.e. International Day of Countryside Women. The aim was to emphasize the importance of the role of rural women in the production of food and the fight against poverty in the world. Given the importance of the issue, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) dedicated its 56th session in 2012 to empowering rural women and their role in reducing poverty and hunger (Barada, Chop, Kučer, 2012). The first International Day for Rural Women was celebrated on October 15, 2008.

Bearing in mind that October 15th - Day of Rural Women is approaching, this work is dedicated to that day and should contribute to its popularization, as well as to the improvement of the position of women in rural areas of Montenegro.

At the national level, obeying women's rights in rural areas is guaranteed by the highest legal act - the Constitution of Montenegro. The international framework includes: the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Advancement of Women in Rural Areas, Recommendation of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly on the Advancement of Women in the Country (Program for improving the employability of women in rural areas of Montenegro, 2013).

The aim of the paper is to examine the social and socio-economic status of women in rural areas on the basis of the conducted research.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS**

An interview method was used to collect the data. The purpose of the interview is to gather very clear, precise and quantitative answers to the given topic (Janičijević, 2014). A few interview questions form a Likert-type scale. The Likert scale stands out for its simplicity, economy of construction and frequency of application (Prpić, 2005). The focus of the interview is on the role and position
of the female population in the household economy viewed through the prism of social and ethical norms. The official data of the Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT) in addition to scientific and professional papers dealt with this issue were used in drafting this paper. Statistical tables and area charts were used for displaying the data. Desk research method and a comparison method were used for displaying data in the paper. The survey was conducted in the municipalities of Pljevlja and Kolašin. In a sample of 20 respondents, 50% of them were located in Kolašin and 50% in Pljevlja.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Agricultural employment of women in Montenegro accounts for a small fraction of their total employment (less than 4%), and women make up one third of the agricultural workforce. The position of women in the countryside is a result of the position of women in society as a whole, the position of agriculture as an economic branch, the demographic situation, and position of rural areas in relation to urban areas (Blagojević, 2009). Considering that engaging in agriculture is an important basis for the existence of a still significant number of women, it is necessary to improve their agricultural employment. The reasons for the low interest of women to remain in rural communities are as follows: women in rural areas are rarely owners of property, they are rarely in the position of head of the household, ie. less often they have the role of deciding on agricultural production and the role of responsibility for the economic risks of doing business on the farm (Despotović et al. 2015). According to the Agriculture Census, women account for only 12.87% of the holders of family farms. Out of 48,824 holders of family farms, 16,228 holders are over 65 years of age or older, with a share of 33.24% (Table 1.). Holders of farms are usually older men.

| Age                      | Total workforce | Farm holders |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
|                          | members | share | members | share | male | female |
| TOTAL                    | 98341    | 100,0 | 48824   | 42538 | 6286 |
| Under the age of 2       | 6717    | 6,80  | 344     | 307   | 37   |
| Between the age of 24 and 34 | 11340    | 11,50 | 2387    | 2228  | 159  |
| Between the age 35 and 44 | 15675    | 15,90 | 5993    | 5540  | 453  |
| Between the age 45 and 54 | 21562    | 21,90 | 11675   | 10769 | 906  |
| Between the age 55 and 64 | 19849    | 20,20 | 12197   | 10657 | 1540 |
| 65 and elder             | 23198   | 23,60 | 16228   | 13037 | 3191 |

Source: Agricultural Census 2010, Farm structure

In order to maximize human resources in rural communities and revitalize the local economy, participation of women is necessary. Many studies show that the inclusion of women in the local economy on an equal footing is rapidly reducing poverty and contributing to development (Gender and Sustainable Development, 2008).
The study involved interviewees from the age of twenty to over 65. In this regard, an attempt was made to cover a wide range of working age. Interviewees at the level of 40% were equally interviewed between the ages of 36-50 and 51-65. Participation of interviewees aged 26 to 35 and over 65, was at the level of 10% each. The interviewees mostly graduated primary school (55%), while 45% completed high school. Rural elementary schools played a major role in educating farmers. With the reform of 1952, an elementary school in the period of 8 years became a compulsory basic school (Petak, 1988). The marital status of interviewees in the households surveyed is as follows: 70% married, 20% widowed, 5% unmarried and 5% divorced. They mainly live in two- and five-member households (60%), in households with six or more members 20%, four-member 10%, three-member 5% and one-member 5%. Most of the respondents 86% live independently with their family, while 40% live in a community with the extended family. Only 25% of the interviewees are owners of the house where they live, while 75% do not own real estate. The reasons why the interviewees decided to engage in agriculture are presented in the Chart 1.

Chart 1. Determining factors for farming

| Reason                        | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Inability to attend school    | 25%        |
| Inheritance                   | 5%         |
| Marriage                      | 50%        |
| Inability to find employment  | 5%         |
| Profit                        | 15%        |

Source: Results of the interviews performed by the author

Marriages are cited by interviewees between the ages of 36 and 65 as the most important reason for farming. Of the total number of respondents who are married, the most significant reason for farming is 44% of those aged 36 to 50, 33% of the ages 51-65, and 22.22% of those over 65 years old. Inability to attend school is the second most important reason for farming, for respondents aged between 36 to 50 years, as well as for respondents aged 51 to 65. Education states as another important socio-cultural factor for participation of women in biological reproduction of family farms (Čikić, 2017). The characteristics of the

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2 Independent family implies life in the community of spouses and their children, while the extended family refers to the life in the community where beside the closest relatives also reside (father in-law, mother in-law, brother and sister in-law and etc.)
educational structure of rural women are one of the main indicators of a change in their family and social status, that is, the transformation of the rural gender regime. This particularly refers to the category of young women, given that their educational structure has significantly approximated to the educational structure of young women in cities (Bubalo-Živković, Lukić, 2015). The lower level of formal qualifications makes women less competitive in the labour market, which hinders their employment opportunities (Čikić, 2017).

When asked if they were the owners of the land, 60% of the interviewees stated that they did not own it, while 40% replied positively. Ownership is an important socio-economic factor because it "implies" a position and role of a woman in the economic and social reproduction of farms (Čikić, 2017). The respondents who answered that they were the owners of the land were the widows and younger respondents who inherited the land. Research conducted by him (Čikić, 2017), he states that a woman as the owner of the land and the formal title holder of the estate appears most often in the case of absenteeism of the male heirs. 85% of respondents have their own income from (selling cheese, fruit, handicrafts, etc.). Respondents are mostly health insured through their husbands, while 35% have their own agricultural insurance. Each of the respondents would not advise daughters to stay in the village. The views expressed by the respondents indicate that they are still in a subordinate position in the family, especially from the standpoint of decision making and business decision making. Farming as an economic and business unit is a source of income, the amount of which depends on making adequate business decisions. The level of participation of the respondents in the business decisions in the households is shown in Chart 2.

Chart 2. Level of participation in decision making in the household

![Chart](image)

Source: Results of the interviews performed by the author

The majority of respondents (40%) participate slightly in making business decisions, although in reality a woman is the main and basic “work force” on the farm, with many duties and obligations, without adequate rights and decision-
making (Dimković, 1979). 85% of female respondents participate in the allocation of the home budget, yet 15% do not. The result obtained is consistent with the fact that the rural woman performs the function of housewife. The influence of the rural woman in determining the structure of expenditures contributes to the reconstruction of single-family homes, the purchase of furniture, etc., as well as the improvement of living conditions (Dimković, 1979).

Impossibility of finding an employment in rural areas and limited availability of public services (education, social care, health care, etc.) are the causes of migration from rural to urban areas (Bradeš et al., 2018). A woman as an agricultural producer is most often employed on a farm that is attached to her household and forms the basis of her family's economic existence (Grebo, 1966). Chart 3. shows the respondents' answers to the question "Would you move out of your village"?

Chart 3. Would you move out of your village

| Reason                        | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| I don’t know                  | 5%         |
| I would for better paid job   | 10%        |
| I would for children’s education and perspective | 20%       |
| I would on the first occasion | 25%        |
| I never thought about that    | 15%        |
| I would never                  | 25%        |

Source: Results of the interviews performed by the author

A quarter of the respondents want to move out of the village on the first occasion, while the same number would never leave the village. The education of rural women is a prerequisite for their better positioning in the labour market, therefore leaving the countryside appears as one of their life aspirations (Čikić, 2017).

Most interviewees have completed elementary and high school. Economic empowerment of rural women involves investing in oneself or developing skills to open up new business opportunities. However, the length of working days of rural women leaves them no room for further training (Bradeš et al., 2018). Chart 4. shows the respondents' answers to the question if they would have liked to attend the courses.
Theoretically, during the working day or week, after the completion of work and fulfilment of obligations of wife, mother, housewife and farmer, the rural woman has some time to freely dispose of it. Its rational spending raises the level of education, thus leisure and spare time contribute to mental and physical recreation of an exhausted organism. Celebration and seasonality characterize opportunities for leisure activities. There are factors that reduce a woman's chances of meaningful leisure use. These are: tradition and real opportunities for the use of certain educational and cultural content (Dimković, 1979).

Rural areas where road infrastructure surveys were conducted are favourable, as 60% of respondents stated that the village has an asphalt road, while telecommunications infrastructure (mobile telephony, TV signal, cable signal) is fully represented on all farms.

Social inclusion was explored through a question relating to membership of agricultural producers’ associations, cultural arts societies, sports societies and non-governmental organizations, Chart 5.
Interviewees stated that they were not members of any association (70%), while 30% stated that they were members of an association of agricultural producers. Social norms are the pressure that rural women obey. Customs of the past and habits do not allow a rural woman to enjoy social activities. Knitting, embroidery, and similar jobs are considered jobs that give a woman rest from hard work, and visits to relatives, neighbours, and friends are still the primary forms of leisure (Dimković, 1979).

In order to observe the position of the respondents regarding the use of vacations, the question was asked: "Have you had an opportunity to rest in: a spa, at sea, in the mountains and to visit some farms in the surrounding area?" Answers to the questions are shown in the Chart 6.

Chart 6. Have you had an opportunity to rest

| Source: Results of the interviews performed by the author |

The answers show that 80% of the interviewees had the opportunity to use the holiday (40% at sea, 40% in the spa), while 20% of the respondents did not have the opportunity to take the time to rest. None of the respondents visited the mountain or any farm in the area.

Some of the respondents' personal views on the position of women in their village were originally conveyed and read as follows:

| "If you work you will earn"; | "We are respected "; |
| It is hard, especially for elderly"; | "We are appreciated"; |
| "Difficult and troublesome"; | "It's enough work," |
| "Work from dawn to dark"; | "Commitment to work"; |
| "Better than my mother, but still difficult - no rest"; | "Solid"; |
| "Much easier than before"; | "Neglected"; |
| “Monotonous - all the same”; | “Subordinate”; |
| “Solitude kills”; | "Good"; |
| “Desolation”; | "From time to time"; |
| "There is no one else"; | “Average”; |
| "Day and night work"; | "Currenty good”; |
| | "Bad before"; |
| | "Pretty good". |
These views are the result of different experiences of the respondents. Regardless of the generational affiliation of the interviewees, they notice an improvement in the position of women compared to earlier. Respondents' answers testify to small but visible improvements in the position of rural women in the surveyed area.

When asked “do they know what October 15 is celebrating”, no respondent knew the answer. The purpose of celebrating International Day of Rural Women is to remind all actors of society of the large but still unacknowledged role of rural women, as well as the need to constantly improve their living conditions. New sustainable development goals include gender equality and women's empowerment. The aim is to double agricultural productivity and the income of small producers, especially women. Women are important for the success of almost all sustainable development goals (Ban Ki Mun, 2013). In order to improve the role of women in rural areas, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Montenegro is actively participating in the celebration of October 15th - International Day of Rural Women.

CONCLUSION

The factors that determine a position of a woman in the countryside are the following: level of education, income level of the farm, level of agricultural development and position of woman in society, and in general, etc. The role of a woman is often unjustifiably reduced to a role in biological reproduction. The village woman represents the pillar of the farm, without which the transformation and modernization of the village cannot be carried out. Particular progress would be made by raising the general education of the rural woman.

The results of the research show that position of the woman on the farm is changing and that women have a certain power in the business decision-making process. Marriage is still cited as the most important reason for farming by women aged 36 to 65 and at the same age state the inability to attend school. The characteristics of the educational structure of rural women are one of the main indicators of a change in their family and social status, that is, a transformation of the rural gender regime. Education arises as a prerequisite for introduction and expanding of innovation on the farms, which would result in creating favourable socio-economic conditions, thereby indirectly improving the position of rural women.

Socio-social inclusion of the respondents was assessed through a question related to membership of agricultural associations, cultural arts societies, sports societies and non-governmental organizations. Most of the respondents, 70%, are not involved in any organization or in social activities.

When asked about the perception of one's position, the answers are very diverse and the result of their personal experiences. Nevertheless, it is noted that, regardless of their generational affiliation, the respondents notice an improvement in the position of women in relation to older generations.
Respondents’ answers testify to small but visible improvement in the position of rural women in the surveyed area.

Bearing in mind that International Day of Rural Women is celebrated on October 15th, the respondents were asked “Do you know what is celebrated on October 15th?” None of the respondents knew what was being celebrated that day. Negative responses indicate the need to take action to affirm this date, which would have broader societal relevance and be one of a number of necessary steps for positioning rural women in society.

Obtained data show that the position of the rural woman is better today than in the previous period, but that it is necessary to work on providing the necessary knowledge and skills of rural women, promoting, networking and advocating their interests.

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