



The Position of Women in Kosovo-Perspectives and Socio-Economic Challenges

Dardan Lajci¹, Gani Asllani¹, Gentiana Gega², Simon Grima^{3*}

¹ Faculty of Law, University "Haxhi Zeka", Peja 10.000, Kosovo

² Faculty of Business, University "Haxhi Zeka", Peja 10.000, Kosovo

³ Department of Insurance and Risk Management, Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy, University of Malta, Msida MSD2080, Malta

Corresponding Author Email: simon.grima@um.edu.mt

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ABSTRACT

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This research aims to analyse the current levels of women's participation in public social, economic, and political life and their position in decision-making processes in Kosovo. The paper deals with aspects related to the social perspective of women in society and the development of Albanian customary Law in Kosovo. To conduct this analysis, a descriptive analysis was conducted and statistics were presented in percentages. This study highlights the thoughts and evaluations of prominent Albanian anthropology contemporary researchers. Focusing on relevant aspects of Albanian ethnocultural life, this study highlights women's importance in building a family, working, and social interaction. Women play a vital role in today's society; they obtain the best education and possess many skills and qualifications through which they provide satisfactory results in many dimensions. In addition, women have managed to occupy prestigious positions, lead, and be part of state institutions despite their challenges due to their lack of representation in decision-making positions. They now do not feel inferior to men, manage to make important decisions, and are even elected, as is the case of Kosovo, as a country's president. Furthermore, this study explores the status of women in society through the lens of codification of customary law, "The Code of Leke Dukagjini", as well as the socio-cultural, economic, and social changes in women's rights today in Kosovo.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, feminist ideas have spread widely but have not yet transformed sociology in the way feminists had hoped [1]. Women—as researchers, teachers, and scholars—are increasingly involved in the academic circles where sociology is practised. The organisation, "Sociologists for Women in Society", founded in 1971 (a branch of the American Sociological Association for the Cause of Women), has made an important contribution to the emancipation of women. It is considered that a large percentage of women already hold positions in professional associations in this field [2].

Through the lens of current feminist theory, this study examines the fundamental inquiry of what actions are being taken to address the needs and concerns of women and provides four responses to this inquiry. Primarily, women's positions and experiences diverge from those of men in comparable circumstances. It is commonly observed that women's status is not only distinct but also characterised by a lower level of privilege or disadvantage compared to men. Also, it is crucial to comprehend the status of women in the context of a clear-cut power dynamic between males and females. Furthermore, women's encounters with transformation, inequity, and subjugation differ based on their placement within the social framework of structural oppression or vectors of oppression and privilege, such as

socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, age, emotional state, marital status, and geographical location. Nevertheless, within the realm of scholarly discourse, there is an extensive exploration of the proposition that human biology has a role in shaping certain social distinctions between males and females. Typically, feminists have strongly opposed socio-biology [3]. Feminist theory develops ideas about human life that position women as objects and subjects, authors and knowers. While the product of feminist theory has expanded, typically associated with social movements from reforms to restrictions, the contemporary phase of the feminist school shows a self-reliant expansion, regardless of new social conservative currents [4].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Regarding the literature review, many authors have addressed topics similar to those addressed in this study. Specifically, Berishaj [5] addressed the topic with his book "Sworn Virgins, Life Between Obligation and Sacrifice" where the difficult position of women in society is described. Also, the report "Employment Status of Women and Girls in Albania and Kosovo, with Best Practices from the Region" prepared by the "Gender Alliance for Development Center" is of particular importance since it addresses the development of

better policies for gender equality concerning education, increased investment in formal education and its quality by creating equal opportunities for both genders, as well as the development of better policies concerning the labour market and the economic, political, social and leadership empowerment of women to promote greater economic growth [6]. The authors Pacukaj et al. [7] have focused on the calculation of the gender inequality index about some important indicators that reflect gender inequality in social, economic, political and educational level indicators. Also, more recently, contemporary authors treat the role of the main economic and social indicators in the development of a country as the primary way government policies promote economic growth. This literature includes not only socio-economic status but also divorce, legislation, code, mores, customs, the position of women, family relations, and population exodus. The other provided sources from the Statistics Agency of Kosovo, the Agency for Gender Equality, the Ombudsman, USAID Reports, and OSCE have analysed the laws of Kosovo that deal with the interaction of women in society to come up with concrete data results between women's practical life, law and economy.

3. METHODOLOGY

To realise this research, a combined methodology, quantitative and qualitative methods, were used. This study relied on quantitative methodology to explore the social situation of women, who reported on their social situation and position through the questionnaire. The questionnaire sheds light on the position of women in the family and society. In this regard, data was collected on the level of education and employment. These characteristics are meaningful for our study because they help us understand more broadly the situation in which these women live. In addition, this helps us to make clearer connections between concepts such as the influence of the level of education, employment, and obligations for children and the family.

On the other hand, the qualitative method was used in the study to enrich it with other data based on the personal experiences of women. For this, interviews and data collected from small focus groups were used as our instruments. Several influencing factors are evident regarding the situation in which these women are found.

Research question: Has the role and position of women in the family and the Kosovar society improved?

Hypothesis 1. The position of women in Kosovo depends mostly on the socio-economic situation of the country and the space and possibility of integration in society.

Hypothesis 2. The empowerment of women in society remains a challenge based on several aspects: the right to make choices in life, to have the power to control their lives inside and outside the home, to be financially independent, to be treated with dignity and respect and enjoy all the same rights as men.

4. ALBANIAN CUSTOMARY LAW AND THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

In the dictionary of the Albanian language, the definition of

the word “kanun” (Eng. code, canon) is “a collection of unwritten laws and norms, inherited from generation to generation, that reflect the economic and social situation of past periods and that in their time protected the interests of classes and strata of certain social; the totality of customary law norms” [8]. The Code of Leke Dukagjin was implemented in the Dukagjin district of Shkodra and Kosovo. It was collected and codified by Shtjefën Gjeçovi (Franciscan friar). The Code of Leke Dukagjin was published in full in 1933 and was divided into 12 books and 1263 articles divided according to different subjects. This code sometimes had a mixture of moral and legal norms or canonical and customary law. Also, a special role was given to the legal position of the church, marriage, and the relationship between husband and wife. The canonical norms have given the woman a degraded status and denigrating treatment. However, social reality has proven that the issue of the status of women in the family was not an unfinished and unchanged act. The status of a woman as a “bride” and the status of a woman as a “mother, grandmother, and mother-in-law” had many differences.

The woman's role was a secondary role in making important decisions for the family. In contrast, the role of the mother in the family's daily life in general had a wider treatment and scope. Many lines of songs also evidence the great role of mothers in the family - be they of the epic or lyrical genre. Such contents are not absent in the genres of popular Albanian melodic songs that have survived the times - not so much because of any artistic value, but precisely because of the articulation of the contents they reflect - especially the boy's relationship with the mother, not in childhood and adolescence, but right after the son's marriage, through lyrics such as “two of the best women I have, o my friends, I love them very much, like my eyes, the first is my mother, the second is you...” etc. In the section devoted exclusively to the history of customary law, called Albanian customary law, the authors assume that this right is a product of the people, emphasising the authorship of customary norms.

The “Albanian customary law” is an unwritten popular law, transmitted from generation to generation by oral tradition, that has served to regulate legal relations in the country. It was created by the people, who poured their philosophy, mindset, and wisdom into it. “Albanian customary law” is “a magnificent legal monument and a very important part of the cultural heritage of the Albanian people” [9]. The main principles of customary Law are listed as equality of people by blood, personal honour, hospitality, and faith [10]. Therefore, it should be noted that the Code of Leke Dukagjini and customary law were important for the time they were implemented, but since the period of the creation of the Albanian state, especially after 1928, when the drafting of modern Albanian legislation in the various legal fields, the code generally finds its place only in national historical archives and museums.

Also, in conclusion, it is worth mentioning that the preservation of good Albanian customs such as trust and hospitality in the modern context is comparable to the rules of contract law and those of public international law, that the contracts, respectively the various agreements of the parties must be respected according to the principle “Pacta sunt servanda” (agreements must be kept). On the other hand, when it comes to hospitality, it would be valid today to advance the tourism sector, where the old Albanian rule would also apply that the “House belongs to God and a friend”.

At the same time, it would be said that Kosovo “belongs to

God and a friend” [11]. In Albanian folk poetry, the woman symbolised life, continuity, beauty, sacrifice, wonder, and greatness. The authors of the Albanian “Renaissance”, especially Naim Frasheri, Sami Frasheri, and Vaso Pasha, were the first who, through their poems, tried to portray the female figure beyond the canonical tradition. According to Sami Frasheri in the poem "Women", the progress of human society depends on women's education.

5. LEGISLATION IN KOSOVO - WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND PRACTICAL LIFE

The legal framework of Kosovo establishes a solid foundation for promoting and bolstering women's involvement in the labour force and leadership roles. It vigorously advocates for the idea of gender equality. The law on gender equality aims to safeguard and promote equal rights between genders as a core principle of Kosovo's democratic progress. It seeks to ensure equal opportunities for both women and men to participate in political, economic, social, cultural, and all other aspects of society (Article 1.1). The labour law, which was ratified by the Assembly of Kosovo in November 2010, became effective in January 2011. Article 5 of this Law explicitly forbids any kind of job discrimination, encompassing gender-based discrimination as well. Certain articles of this law provide explanatory circumstances for employed women in specific circumstances. For instance, according to Article 17, the employer is not allowed to arrange for activities such as pregnancy or maternity leave to be carried out in a location other than the employee's house without their explicit approval. Furthermore, the legislation explicitly forbids pregnant women and nursing mothers from engaging in night shifts (as stated in Article 27). Additionally, any form of employment that is deemed detrimental to the well-being of either the mother or the child is strictly prohibited (as outlined in Article 46).

These legal sanctions provide a mitigating factor for working women to maintain their careers while still fulfilling their responsibilities as moms. While several nations in the area and Europe, like Macedonia, Serbia, Sweden, and others, give supplementary support to employed mothers, the legislation in Kosovo fails to ensure complete pay coverage during maternity leave. During this duration, the employee receives 70 percent of her income for the initial six months and 50 percent for the subsequent three months. However, for the remaining three months, she is entitled to receive no money at all (as per Article 49). Another significant legislation that promotes women's involvement in the workforce is the Law on the Support of Small and Medium-sized firms. This law specifically prioritises small and medium-sized firms led by women by offering support programmes through the small and medium enterprise support programmes (Article 7).

5.1 Institutional mechanisms for promoting women's participation in decision-making positions in Kosovo

Furthermore, the Kosovar legislature has enacted other legislation that have an indirect impact on gender equality in both public life and professional relationships. The purpose of these laws is to promote women's engagement in public life and facilitate their involvement in social progress, while simultaneously safeguarding their fundamental rights. Some examples are the law on inheritance, the law on reproductive

health, and the law on termination of pregnancy. The representation of women in top positions in both public and commercial organisations is still inadequate. One provision of the election legislation stipulates that women must make up 30 percent of the legislature at both the national and municipal levels. However, there is currently no legislation that establishes a similar standard for other organisations. According to a survey conducted by the Balkan Policy Research Group [12], the proportion of women in decision-making positions grew from 9.8% in 2017 to 11.9% in 2018 [12].

Additional mechanisms exist within the executive branch, including initiatives specifically targeting the attainment of gender equality. The mechanisms involved in promoting gender equality in Kosovo include the Agency for Gender Equality in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the Institution of Ombudsperson (IAP) - Unit for Gender Equality, officers for gender equality in the ministries, and the Interministerial Council for Gender Equality. Furthermore, on a local scale, there are institutional systems aimed at attaining gender equality, including officials responsible for promoting gender equality within municipalities and municipal committees dedicated to addressing gender equality issues. The Women's Empowerment in Politics and Decision-Making Programme (FGPV) aims to assist individuals, regardless of gender, who are prepared to face challenges and assume a more significant role in promoting equal opportunities and enabling women to become leaders in political and decision-making spheres. The programme aims to promote the continuous development, effective implementation, and advancement of legislation and programme policies by political parties and public and private institutions. The goal is to eliminate discrimination and reduce barriers resulting from gender-based prejudices and stereotypes [13]. The FGPV will implement various measures, such as adherence to legal and constitutional norms, international conventions promoting gender-based civil rights, citizen mobilisation, advocacy actions, monitoring, capacity building, study visits, and other actions organised within specific strategies. These measures are aimed at promoting gender integration and democratic principles, with the ultimate goal of ensuring equal rights for all. Hence, it is imperative for the government to collaborate and furnish accurate data and recorded information pertaining to the employment statistics of both genders in executive and supervisory roles [7].

When examining the data for the ministry and municipality separately, women in decision-making roles in the ministry primarily advocated for the advancement of women in decision-making positions. On the other hand, women in municipalities emphasised the importance of providing training in management and leadership, according to the Agency for Gender Equality [14].

5.2 The role and importance of the institution of the people's advocate in Kosovo in support of the gender equality

The Ombudsman is an autonomous entity entrusted with the responsibility of investigating reported human rights infringements committed by public entities in Kosovo. The People's Advocate asserts that despite diligent endeavours and implemented steps to promote the status of women, gender disparity continues to persist in our society. This disparity manifests itself in the extent to which women are involved in

the distribution of money through inheritance, their involvement in the workforce, their engagement in political life and decision-making, their access to education and healthcare, and their allocation of obligations within the family. The impediments and difficulties in achieving gender equality were prominently highlighted during the previous year (2021) amidst the COVID-19 epidemic. According to the grievances lodged with the Ombudsman, women face more disadvantages than males when it comes to work and advancing in their careers. Gender inequality pervades both the public and private spheres. The underreporting of gender discrimination cases can be attributed to the inadequate acknowledgment of rights and the limited court experience in handling discrimination cases [15]. The IAP can play a crucial role in assisting victims of domestic abuse by resolving shortcomings in the enforcement of the Law on protection from domestic violence, which adversely impacts the rights of domestic violence victims. In addition, within the framework of the functioning of rights, there exists a system of regular courts, including the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, and the Basic Courts (along with 20 branches that operate under the jurisdiction of the basic courts across Kosovo). The principle of equality before the courts requires that all individuals be treated impartially, without any form of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, language, religion, political views, nationality, social background, community affiliation, wealth, economic status, sexual orientation, birth, disability, or any other personal characteristic [16].

6. THE POSITION OF THE WOMEN IN THE FAMILY

In the discourse of different ideologies, the family is the first to be seriously threatened by danger, moral slippage, and social disorientation [17]. The position of women in the family is still not at a satisfactory level, although it has improved in recent years. Most women lack a secure economic perspective because very few women decide to open a personal business or create economic independence within the family.

Therefore, women in this environment have increased responsibilities and difficulties caring for children against social deviations. According to Maloku [18] cited in study of Giddens [19], in the transition phase, which the study are currently going through, Kosovar society is facing several chaotic situations of social life (suicides, prostitution, family violence, corruption, organised crime, and nepotism). In the social sciences, the family can be defined as "a social group characterised by common coexistence, economic cooperation, and reproduction" [19].

"The deliberate and planned way of pursuing parenting and the love and time they felt they could give to a child is in their ideals of family life" [20]. The participation of women after the Second World War until the 90s was very limited. In this period, there was only one newspaper, "Rilindja" [21]. This newspaper, through the writings of the time, raised the position of women in society, and the emancipation of women now had much better treatment.

Whereas, now women most often spend their free time with their family, then watch movies or series on TV or the Internet, use social networks such as Viber, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, hang out with friends, listen to music, do nothing special/relax, search/surf the Internet. Unfortunately, the activities related to acquiring knowledge and skills, volunteerism, creative work, sports, and visiting cultural-

entertainment events are in the negative interval of the axis, as activities that are rarely practised. Younger women, as well as those from urban environments, practice different activities. A woman's financial situation is related to her position at home and equality with her husband/partner. Women who are married/or live with their partner rarely use paid help or help from someone else for house maintenance, child care, or care for the elderly/sick. The status of women within the family and their function as mothers has seen significant and transformative shifts in the modern family.

In modern families, both the husband and wife have equal rights and responsibilities in terms of personal and property rights, as well as in exercising parental duty both during and after marriage.

6.1 Empowerment of women reduces domestic violence/empowering women also reduces poverty

Sometimes, the money earned by the male member of the family is not enough to meet the family's requirements. Women's increased income helps the family escape the poverty trap. Women are always participating in the process of national development, although to a limited extent. They are making the nation proud with their outstanding performances in almost every field, including medical science, social service, engineering, etc. [22].

Among the main causes of domestic violence are economic causes and deviant behaviour of any of the partners [23]. The Ombudsman has a crucial responsibility in overseeing the state's activities in safeguarding victims of domestic abuse. Within this framework, it diligently observed the actions implemented during the duration of the epidemic. Consequently, on December 10, 2021, the Institution of the Ombudsman released a special report titled "Health Emergency and the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Human Rights in the Republic of Kosovo", which specifically addressed the issue of domestic violence in Kosovo during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. Based on this analysis, there is evidence indicating a rise in incidents of domestic violence among the epidemic.

Based on the data supplied by the Kosovo Police, there were 1915 registered cases in 2019, 2069 registered cases in 2020, and a further increase to 2456 registered cases in 2021. Based on the statistics from the Statistics Agency of Kosovo, in 2019, a total of 17,577 new marriages were officially registered, while 815 couples went through a divorce. The rise in divorce rates has also contributed to the growth in the proportion of households that are separated. In 2020, Eurostat's latest study indicates that there were a total of 195.4 million homes inside the European Union (EU) [24]. The presence of financial instability has a direct impact on both the delivery of services and the psychological well-being of women and children who have experienced domestic abuse. Furthermore, another obstacle has been the consistent lack of cooperation between the shelter and other organisations. Gender stereotypes are the result and, at the same time, the reason for deeply embedded views, values, norms, and prejudices [25]. Stereotypes of what characteristics are "masculine" include characteristics and values such as competitiveness, courage, toughness, aggressiveness, and activity, while "feminine" is usually treated as cooperation, intimidation, tolerance, passivity, and gentleness [26]. Two types of gender stereotypes are highlighted as disturbing, according to the European Court of Human Rights case law in discrimination cases [27]. The first

group of stereotypes and prejudices are based on the idea of the superiority of men and the inferiority of women, while the second group, the mother as a figure who provides care for the children and the older members of the family, and the father as a person who earns and financially provides for the family.

6.2 The right of property inheritance

However, according to the law, men and women have equal rights. Again, in reality, due to the culture of inherited inheritance, the participation of women in inheritance is very small. According to the Kosovo Statistics Agency, in 2017, women-owned only 20% (percent) of capital property and land [28]. An important development occurred on April 19, 2021, with the amendment and completion of Administrative Guidance 03/2016. This measure aims to promote the registration of joint real estate in the names of both spouses. Notably, the implementation period of this measure has been extended for six years from the date it came into effect. The objective of this affirmative policy was to enhance women's ability to obtain and register property in their own name, with the aim of expediting the attainment of gender equality in terms of property rights.

7. GENDERED EMPLOYMENT

Women's economic empowerment through appropriate educational programs, continuous training, employment and entrepreneurship is necessary for society. At present, worldwide policies embraced in Albania and Kosovo are focusing on increasing awareness of women's indisputable role in the development and future of society.

Figure 1 and Table 1 present the employment category by gender. In 2019, of the entire population of working age, 28.2% were employed. The employment rate was no higher for men than for women: 43.0% of men of working age were employed compared to 13.3% of women also of working age. In 2020, of the entire working-age population, 29.1% were employed, and the employment rate was higher for men than for women: 44.0% of working-age men were employed compared to 14.1% of women also of working age.

In this context, the study has analysed the data from the Kosovo Statistics Agency (ASK), which has published the results of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) for the first quarter (Q1) of 2021. According to the results, two-thirds of Kosovo's population is working-age. The working-age population includes those aged 15-64. In the first quarter of 2021, the employment rate will be 29.3%, the unemployment rate will be 25.8%, and the inactivity rate will be 60.5% [29].

While 30.0% of the entire working-age population was employed, the employment rate was higher for men than for women: 44.0% of working-age men were employed compared to 16.0% of working-age women. Compared to the previous quarter (Q1-2021) of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Kosovo, there was an increase in the employment rate by 0.7%, with a 1.2% increase observed for men and a 0.1% increase for women. Looking at the same period in the previous year (Q2-2020) of the VET in Kosovo, the employment rate increased by 5.9%, with a 7.8% increase for men and a 3.9% increase for women.

Employment status - in the second quarter of 2021, 78.5% of employed persons were employees, 8.4% were self-employed with other employees, 10.4% were self-employed

with no other employees, and 2.7% were workers' family members. The majority of employed women had employee status (87.9% compared to 75.1% for men) [30].

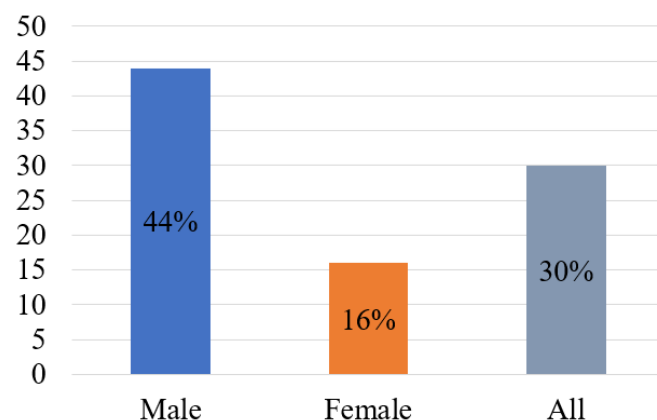


Figure 1. Employment rate by gender

Source: Kosovo Statistics Agency, Labor Force Survey Q1 2021, October 2021

Table 1. Employment status by gender (%)

Kosovo	Male	Female	Total
Employment status (in thousands)			
Employee	203.072	86.854	289.926
Self-employed with employees	27.028	3.830	30.858
Self-employed without employees	32.524	5.830	38.334
Unpaid family worker	7.818	2.261	10.079
Total	270.442	98.755	369.197
Participation of status category in general employment (%)			
Employee	75.1	87.9	78.5
Self-employed with employees	10.0	3.9	8.4
Self-employed without employees	12.0	5.9	10.4
Unpaid family worker	2.9	2.3	2.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Kosovo Statistics Agency, 2021

8. RESEARCH RESULTS

Although there are some favourable laws in place to promote gender equality and processes have been formed to achieve gender parity in workplaces and decision-making bodies, Kosovo's institutions and society still face significant obstacles in attaining complete equality. The representation of female employees in governmental and private organisations in Kosovo remains disproportionate to the gender distribution of the population.

Despite notable advancements in this domain, the representation of women in decision-making roles remains disproportionately low. In order to comprehend the current state of gender equality and the role of women in the workplace and decision-making, the study provides the findings of a study conducted on a sample of 250 participants. The participants consist of staff from 43 governmental institutions and 4 private institutions, covering the full region of the Dukagjini Plain in the western portion of Kosovo. Meanwhile, the gender structure of the respondents is 65% female and 35% male. The instruments used are questionnaires and interviews. Some women not affected by divorce were also interviewed in an open-ended interview.

This was done to see how they perceive the position of their friends and how sensitive they are to this problem.

In general, women enjoy good treatment from family and society in Kosovo, although their engagement in public-political and social life still proves challenging (see Figure 2).

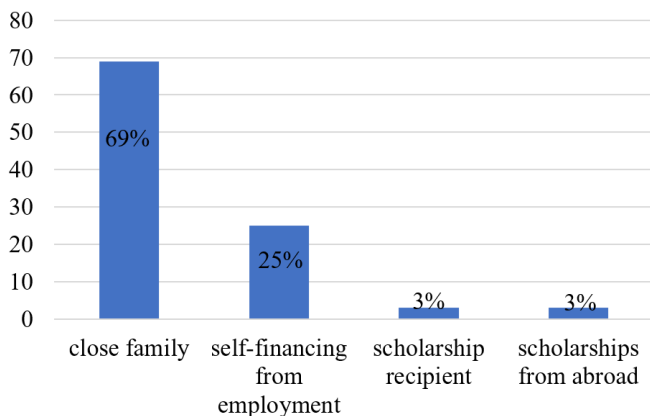


Figure 2. Financial supporters during education
Source: Data processed by authors (2023)

The family remains the main supporter of education. This is what 69% of the respondents stated. However, the number of those forced to work to cover their education expenses is not small (about 25%). As beneficiaries of the scholarship for education both inside and outside the country, they are almost 6% of the respondents. Meanwhile, the participants in the focus group say that institutions can also support employees in further education, and the number of scholarships should be increased (see Figure 3).

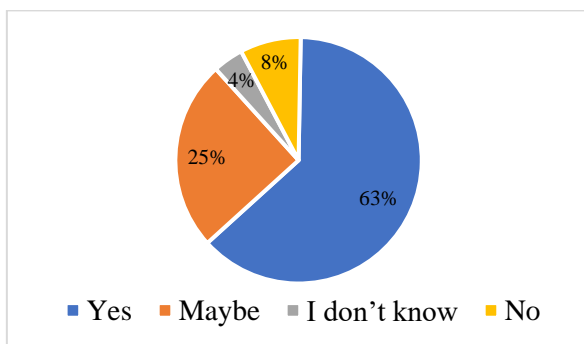


Figure 3. The implementation of the labour law creates favourable conditions for the employment of women
Source: Data processed by authors (2023)

Adopting the new labour law by the Assembly of Kosovo is seen as an opportunity to improve the position of employed women and workers in general without gender differences. Nearly 63% of respondents believe that the new labour law will create favourable conditions for employed women, while 25% of respondents expressed doubts about the implementation of this law, thus joining 8% of those who are completely sceptical about the implementation of this law. However, not everyone shares such an optimistic view. Some of the surveyed participants believe that the implementation of labour laws differs between the private and public sectors. Often, in the private sector, the minimum norms of the law are applied or not applied even to their minimum extent. Institutions, in this case, the labour inspectorate, should be more active and take into account discrimination based on

gender, especially in the private sector (see Figure 4).

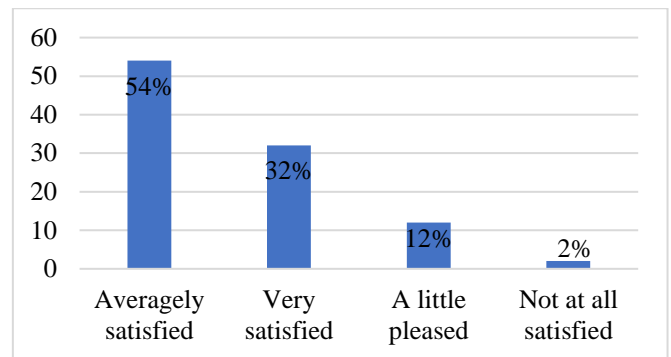


Figure 4. How satisfied are you with the conditions and circumstances of employment?
Source: Data processed by authors (2023)

However, the conditions and circumstances of employment seem to be satisfactory to some extent. About 54% of the interviewees expressed that they are moderately satisfied with the opportunities offered by the institution, and about 32% are very satisfied. Meanwhile, 14% are little or not at all satisfied with employment opportunities. In general, the working conditions seem to be satisfactory for the employees.

Although still unsatisfactory, the percentage of women employed in public and private institutions has improved.

For practical analysis purposes, the institutions are divided into two groups: public and private. Public institutions comprise all the institutions where the research was carried out, such as ministries, various government agencies, the local municipal level, etc. Private enterprises, international organisations, and NGOs have been introduced in the private sector. Also, to refer to statistics and sectors in more detail, see Figure 5, "Sectors and work experience".

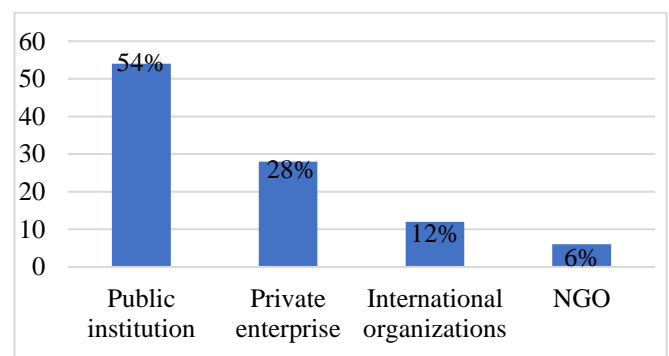


Figure 5. Sectors and work experience
Source: Data processed by authors (2023)

The sector where women have been more successful in securing a job remains the public sector. According to the research, 54% of women work in the public sector, while 28% of employed women are in the private sector. Also, a sector where women have succeeded in securing a job is international organisations, where about 12% of women work, while the non-governmental sector, which is usually assumed to offer greater opportunities for women, employs only about 6% of women.

Among the biggest difficulties that women encounter during the development of their careers, the respondents listed nepotism, lack of institutional support, political influence, family obligations, stereotypes, discrimination, etc. However,

other reasons are also mentioned, such as recruitment procedures, stressful work, tradition/mentality, etc. The percentage seems to be distributed among the categories, but it is important to note that nepotism has the highest value, 24%.

The same answers also come from the participants in the focus group, where nepotism and political influences are expressed the most, followed by stereotypes and prejudices. If not treated seriously, this social phenomenon can lead to the rise of discrimination and contribute to the decline of efforts for equal opportunities (see Figure 6).

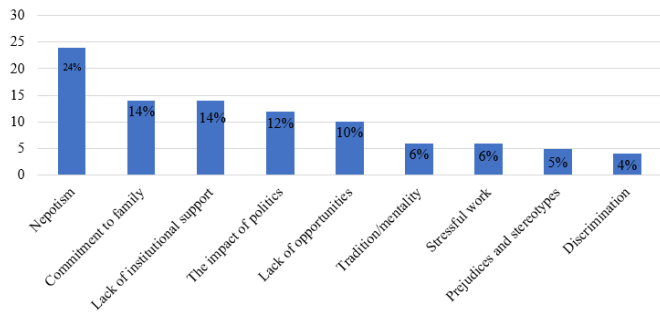


Figure 6. Main challenges in career advancement
Source: Data processed by authors (2023)

Another important factor is the social circle, which is not seen to be any obstacle in the development and perspective of women. Over 65% claim that the social circle is not an obstacle, while 35% think it is an obstacle (see Figure 7).

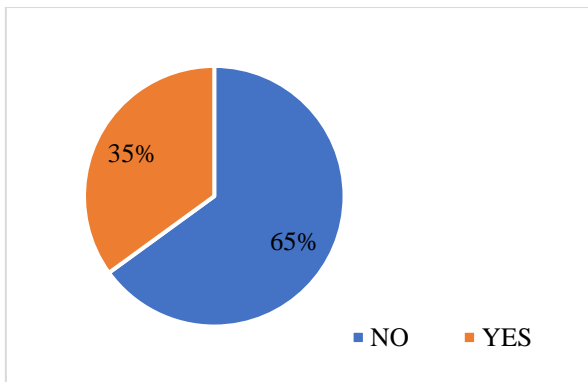


Figure 7. Does the corporate environment affect the development and perspective of women?
Source: Data processed by authors (2023)

9. CONCLUSIONS

Kosovo has built its legislation based on equality and diversity standards as values to respect and promote human rights and freedoms. However, the low percentage of women's participation in politics and decision-making does not coincide with the percentage of women in society. From the local to the national level, women are underrepresented in most leadership positions, whether elected, civil service, or private sector positions. As well, support for women's education is very important. Concrete actions should be taken to open more public nurseries, but also within institutions, for the care of children to harmonise professional and personal life since women are reluctant to engage more in their careers due to their obligations to many family members. Women's forums

should be made functional and strengthened to play an active role in increasing the participation of women in political parties, increasing the representation of women in decision-making positions, and activating women in politics.

It is necessary to promote democratisation within political parties, which would affect the provision of greater space and opportunities for the promotion of women in decision-making positions. Organising activities for exchanging experiences with countries with a good representation of women in political parties to exchange experiences and learn from successful cases; providing space in the media for women engaged in politics, not only during election campaigns but also throughout the year.

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