

# Discrimination of women in the private sector

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## Abstract

Our research on the topic set forth, "Discrimination of women in the private sector" has resulted in a detailed picture of the role and place of women in the overall socio-economic and political life in post-war Kosovo, by emphasising the problem of the employment process and other current problems, which women face on daily basis.

Women, who constitute half of humanity, since the beginning of the era of patriarchy have faced discrimination, in social as well as economic and political aspects, and since then appeared barriers to their career development. This problem is present even today, in almost all countries of the world and is not peculiar only for Kosovo, however the problem in Kosovo appears to be more acute. This kind of discrimination comes as a result of various "reasons": religious, social and cultural. In subsequent periods, especially during the last decade, women's participation in everyday life has begun to improve in all sectors of life, however it is still far from the desirable one.

Our findings, which helped the completion of this research, lead us to conclude that women have been, are and continue to be discriminated against in all walks of life and so it will be, until the woman does not realise that her fate is in her own

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hands, namely not to ask a man to free space for her, but to fight in order to conquer it herself;

**Key words:** discrimination; equality; gender; gender equality;

## 1. Introduction

The gender inequality in the allocation of senior positions has also a theoretical explanation. According to the social dominance theory, there are institutional level contributors that help in gender inequality. These contributors influence to further strengthen and maintain the existing inequality of groups. However, the theory explains that these contributors are so deeply rooted in the structures of society that they are no longer seen by the society (Online-Theory of Social Domination, 2017).

In sectors and institutions that are dominated by men, the latter compile vacancy announcements in order to attract the attention of the men only - that eventually helps to preserve gender inequality, keeping women outside areas which are led by men (the dominant group) (Gaucher, Friesen, and Kay, 2011, p. 111).

Any research, first of all, has certain premises which in the meantime become clear and constitute the basis of that research. Of course, we too, before we started our research, we defined beforehand objectives, namely our goal, which we would realise on basis of our findings (results) and we would reach certain conclusions regarding the topic under consideration. The main purpose of this research is to identify methods to be used in order to improve the position of women in the private sector. Secondary purposes of this are:

To assess whether the level of education affects the position of women in business, to assess whether the Labor Law has an effect, the manner of the effect and how strong is the effect on the position of women to do business and to identify whether they are discriminated against in the employment manner, in the salary and whether they are satisfied with their work.

## 2. Methodology

The methodology used in this research is based on gathering information from direct interviews with 120 employees working in private businesses and in the scientific literature based on the subject of study. The

survey was conducted by sampling and was carried out in 2 regions of Kosovo, Prishtina and Ferizaj, visiting two major shopping centres and four Medical Polyclinics, which have more than 10 employees. The average age of employees is 28 years, mainly with secondary school education and bachelor degree. The research was conducted in the period December, 2016 - January, 2017

The hypothesis of the research and the expected results are: The clear biological differences affect the discrimination against women in the private sector, the level of female education in comparison to the men, also affects their discrimination, the Labor Law does not affect the discrimination of women in the private sector, the manner of employment, differences in salary and job satisfaction does not affect the discrimination against women in the private sector.

### **3. Interpretation of Results**

It is already known that the human society consists of male and female, women and men, girls and boys. There are clear biological differences between them, i.e. differences carried from birth, and these differences have originated in the early stages of the human genesis, the zygote. Therefore we can also say that "sex is determined by biological, natural factors or attributes, i.e. born". Taking into account these biological differences between the sexes, different theories arise regarding their different social, psychological and economic "differences". So, theories arise which "proved" the men as more intelligent, stronger, and therefore "naturally" more dominant, based on gender inequality which of course is in favour of men, hence this world, human society must be managed by them.

Differences begin from toys that are bought for children, as through them we understand that boys are being prepared by parents for their role outside the house, whereas the girls for a life that takes place inside the house.

Throughout their lives, men and women are pressured to behave as required by the gender differences with a social nature. Therefore men are encouraged to be more active, more decision-makers, more leaders, whereas girls are asked to be more submissive, laconic and serve to others.

For women, it is usually thought that they should play a reproductive role, raise and care for children, the elderly, the disabled, to cook and do the housework, whereas the production activities are reserved for men.

Not just once the scientists, prominent professors and distinguished personalities have tried to explain social laws using the biological laws. Something like that can be said for Brooks, a biology professor at the University of John Hopkins, who in 1883 published the book "Heritage Law", a biological analysis between women and men, where Brooks stated that: "... the male element constitutes the origin, while the female element constitutes recurrence."

These ideas of biological determination, embrace the idea that politics and economy cannot solve the issue of placement of women in the position of the ruled.

In order to oppose these concepts, according to which the position of women in society by her biological construction and as such should not be changed, feminists of 60s-70s worked out the difference between "sex" and "gender", attributing to "sex" something defined by biological attributes, whereas to "gender" something which is gained from social, economic and political circumstances. Therefore, according to them only sex is something determined biologically, whereas gender, or rather how much an individual will be more female or male, depends on the socio-economic and political conditions and circumstances. Simone de Beauvoir said that "Human is not born a woman, but becomes one."

Therefore, biological differences do not affect the discrimination against women except in jobs that require great physical strength.

Regarding the second hypothesis, which has to do with the women's level of education in comparison to male education, this research showed that women comprise more than 50% of unemployed with low-education (no education or just elementary education). Most of the vacancies for low-education persons are filled by men, this because these jobs usually require physical skills, for example in construction, and this may be one of the causes for male domination compared to women in the jobs that require low-education. In addition, this situation also results from the fact that women in general are less educated than men.

**Table 1:** Unemployment data by level of education

Kosovo	Men	Women	Total
SELF-EMPLOYED WITHOUT OTHER EMPLOYEES (%)			
No education	0.4	4.3	1.1
Elementary	32.0	67.3	38.2
Secondary vocational education	33.3	14.8	30.1
Secondary school gymnasium	27.5	12.3	24.9
Tertiary	6.8	1.4	5.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
UNPAID FAMILY WORKERS (%)			
No education	0.3	0.0	0.2
Elementary	32.2	51.3	36.0
Secondary vocational education	37.5	28.5	35.7
Secondary school gymnasium	23.6	15.0	21.9
Tertiary	6.4	5.3	6.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Source:** Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Series 5: Social Statistics, Labor Force Survey 2016

**Table 2:** Illiterates by sex and age group (Population 15+) in %

Age group	Women	Men	Total
15-24	0.5	0.4	0.4
25-34	1.8	0.4	1.1
35-44	3.5	0.9	2.3
45-54	9.1	3.8	6.4
55-64	22.3	9.2	15.9
65+	55.7	25	41.5
Total	9.9	4.7	7.3

**Source:** Demographic, Social and Reproductive Health Survey in Kosovo, 2009

The women from rural areas carry the greatest burden of this serious situation in terms of gender equality in Kosovo. Less than a quarter of them participate in the labor market and women make up only 6% of business owners. Despite a qualitative legislation against discrimination adopted by the Assembly, compared to men, only a small part of them are elected in public office, a high percentage of them that amounts to an unacceptable level are illiterate, one quarter (23%) are anaemic and many of them are victims of domestic violence. (Human Development Report in Kosovo 2010)

The third hypothesis has to do with the Law on Labor, respectively the Article 49 of the Law on Labor regulates the issue of maternity leave, stating: "An employed woman is entitled to **12 months** of maternity leave. For the first 6 months of maternity leave payment is made by the employer with a compensation of 70% of the basic salary, whereas for the following 3 months the maternity leave is paid by the Government with a compensation of 50% of the average salary in Kosovo. The employed woman shall have the right, upon this Law, to extend her maternity leave also for other three (3) months without payment." Until the entry into force of this Law, under UNMIK Regulation, the employed woman was entitled to "at least **12 weeks** of paid maternity leave after childbirth. This leave is

recognised as a working period and is paid by the employer at a rate of *not less than 2/3* of the woman employee income."

- With the new Law on Labor the employed women benefited in terms of leave duration and compensation.
- The payment by employer for 6 months is expected to have problems in implementation because for small businesses this is very costly and unjust, since the government pays only 50% of the the salary whereas the business pays 70%. On the other hand, for large private businesses, allegedly paid leave does not present financial difficulties.
- Also with this Law, businesses have begun to reconsider positions of women and their employment policies, being more selective when hiring new staff, and there are companies which started to apply one-month contracts for their employees, even though the Law on Labor is not clear whether one-month contracts are allowed or not, stating only that the contract for a specific task cannot be longer than 120 days within a year.
- After the adoption of the new Law on Labor, there were two specific cases, where "x" woman employee in a corporate was chosen the employee of the year, and at the award ceremony the owners were informed that she was pregnant and she was dismissed.
- And another case where the woman employee did not return to work after the end of maternity leave with the excuse from the owner that she had used the opportunity to get pregnant after the New Law was adopted!

The last hypothesis aims on explaining the manner of employment, salary and satisfaction that the work they do brings to them. In regards to the the way used to get their working position, out of 120 respondents we received the following answers:

- a) through job advertisement 15;
- b) through connections 87;
- c) offering money reward 18.

Presented in a table, it will look like this:

**Table 3:** The way the job position is acquired

The way	No.	%
Through job advertisement	15	12.5
Through connections	87	72.5
Offering money reward	18	15
Total	120	100

**Source:** Face to face interviews with 120 employees

From the table above, we may see that the majority of employee women in the private sector got their job positions mainly through connections and by offering money reward, the lowest number of job employment happened through job advertisements. So, we may say that job advertisement way of hiring, at least so far, is neglected by employers.

In regards to the question we asked them, whether women employed in the private sector feel discriminated in respect to salary they receive we received the following data:

- a) only 7 of them or 5.33% responded 'no because I earn enough',
- b) 67 of them or 55.33% responded 'yes, because I am not being paid enough' and
- c) 46 or 38.33% of them responded 'a lot, because my payment is too low'.

From the results obtained to this question we see that the majority of women employees in the private sector are not satisfied with the salaries earned.

**Table 4:** The rate of satisfaction of women employed with their salary

Are you satisfied with your salary	Number	%
Yes, because I earn enough	7	5.84
No, because I am not paid enough	67	55.83
No, because I am poorly paid	46	38.33
Total	120	100

**Source:** Face to face interviews with 120 employees

While in regards to how much pleasure you get from the work you do, we have received the following answers: a) in 12 cases the answer was ‘it gives me pleasure because I do the work what I am trained to do’; b) in 70 cases the answer was ‘it does not give me pleasure, but I am obliged to do it’, and c) 38 women responded ‘I am satisfied because I earn a salary’. The chart below provides for the following information:

**Figure 1:** How satisfied are women employed with the work they do



**Source:** Face to face interviews with 120 employees

#### 4. Conclusion

From the results obtained, we see that Kosovar women, despite the adoption of high quality laws in the Kosovo Assembly, such as the Law on Labor, Law on protection from discrimination, Law on Competition, etc., which clearly define the role and position of women, i.e. they "disable" gender discrimination of women in daily life, in the field we see that the opposite happens, hence women continue to be discriminated and deprived of many rights, be that their fundamental rights, such as the right to work because these good and quality laws are not implemented, in brief they remain only written on paper.

From the results obtained it may be concluded that:

1. Private employers in Kosovo still preserve relics of primitive patriarchal mentality, considering that women and men are biologically "destined" for certain professions;
2. The unsatisfactory education of Kosovar women greatly affects the employment of women in the private sector, where women mostly are satisfied with a High School education, as the thought that female is born for biological reproduction and not for economic and scientific achievements is embedded in Kosovar mentality;
3. Laws adopted from the Assembly of Kosovo are quality laws in regards to the role and position of women in Kosovar society, however their lack of implementation in daily life significantly has an impact in the unsatisfactory level of employment and the real position women should have;
4. The salary of women employees in the private sector is not even close to meet their demands, nevertheless they seem to be "satisfied", because they have managed to have a job and this enables them somehow to enjoy the social life, compared to many other women who have little or no such a life at all. However, the way they are employed, the level of salary for the work they perform is similar to those of their male colleagues and in this regard they do not seem to be discriminated.

From all this, we may conclude that Kosovar women are discriminated in many respects, but nevertheless the more neuralgic one is the hiring process, as an element of ensuring the level of independence, so the issue

for discussion is as follows: what is to be done to improve the rate of female employment?

We believe that the laws adopted in the Assembly are a good basis to achieve this objective, but nevertheless a greater control of the level of their implementation in practice and sanctioning of all the items avoiding their application is needed.

Certainly the primary role in achieving this objective remains with Kosovar females who should be consistent in their demands to conquer the position they are entitled to, be that in employment sphere or other spheres of life, anywhere women face barriers and attempts to narrow her sphere of action.

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