

## WOMEN, DECISION-MAKING AND GENDER EQUALITY

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**Abstract:** The inclusion of women in the decision-making process, but also any area, sets the shape of the society and state we want to have and build on. Empowering the women, does not mean empowering the individual but rather the entire society and state.

The purpose of this study is to analyse the inclusion of women in the decision-making process at the central level (Government, Assembly, Presidency) and local level (municipalities) in Kosovo. The research aims to argue the importance of the women in decision-making process, to prove the woman has a key role in the society, economy and politics.

The research was conducted by using the secondary data which are a result of the reports obtained by relevant institutions, the results by other research studies, annual reports, publications, magazines, internet, etc.

Whilst the role of the decision-making process of women in the family is relatively good, her participation in the decision-making processes in the institutions and public life still remains at an unsatisfactory level. The participation of the women in the decision-making processes in Kosovo was discussed many times in the past. But, it has been very little improved. Albanian women have had a massive contribution in the society, in educating new generations, therefore it should be supported and initiatives that aim at advancing the role of the women in the institutions should be taken.

The study will provide beneficial information for entrepreneurs, policy makers, practitioners, researchers and educators. However, in order to have committed and motivated women, the governance should be trusted to them, should be offered the chance for an attractive and not boring job, the opportunity of acceptance and not rejection, and be awarded for their contribution.

**Keywords:** Decision-making, the role of the women, governance, decision-making in Kosovo, equal opportunities.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

“You educate a woman; you educate a generation.” It was the American leader Brigham Young that is quoted saying this in 1847 for the first time and in this way increasing the voice on the need for equal education of men and women. The education, according to him, is the power to think clearly, the power to act well in the world's work, and the power to appreciate life.

Even though in regard to gender representation at the decision-making level Kosovo is listed as the seventeenth in the world, the labor market situation still remains a challenge that requires massive commitment of the local and international factors.

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The establishing of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations in 1946, the guidelines were created for the first time to improve the situation of women in economic, political, social, cultural and education areas. The UN Charter of 1945 called for the end of discrimination against women on grounds of race, gender, language or religion. (Momsen 1991; Bhadra 2001).

The Earth Summit of Rio (1992), Vienna Conference (1993), Paris Conference (1995) included the concerns for women human rights such as environment, education, health, access and control on resources. However, to date, the woman equality in most part of the worlds is much smaller than promised (Momsen 1991, UNFPA 2007).

Goetz and Nyamu Musembi (2008) observed the presence of two usual assumptions of women's voice in the literature. The first one is that the access and presence of women will allow them have a real impact in the public decisions. The second is that the influenced women will defend the issues of concern for women, including gender equality.

One of the reasons for the difference in the salaries between man and woman is the gender inequality which forces women to work less, especially in the Southern World that are too often limited due to cultural and societal norms (UN Women, 2015).

In Western social democracies, center-left and social parties have spurred huge increases in women's representation in national parliaments, even in the absence of quotas. In Sub-Saharan Africa, on the other hand, women's activism around quotas in post-conflict political negotiations has been critical (**Krook, 2010**).

The need for strengthening the women and for increasing their participation in the decision-making process was foreseen with The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly<sup>107</sup>

### 3. WOMEN IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Policies to accelerate the process of gender equality and promote women's empowerment are at the center of debate in many countries around the world. Gender equality is a top priority, not only because equality between men and women is in itself an important development goal, but also because women's economic participation is "part of the growth and stability equation".<sup>108</sup>

Even though the women represent over the half of the population and have the talent, human capital and equal productivity with men, global economy would benefit for the increase of women's participation in labour market. The lack of women in the managing positions is contrary to the talent-utilisation strategy for business and performance promotion.<sup>109</sup>

The assessment of the unemployment rate among women in Kosovo is 56.9%, compared to 40.7% of unemployment among men. Only 35% of women actively participate in the labor market. Sub-representation of women in the formal labor market is partly due to the unequal access of women to education. Women usually have no access to assets, including property. In accordance with cultural norms such assets are managed by men within their families. Insufficient access to employment, property, and family finances puts women in an unsafe position, thus increasing the lack of decision-making power within their families.<sup>110</sup> Many women feel excluded from the decision-making processes simply because they are women.

Two laws that have been adopted from the Kosovo institutions are the Law on Gender Equality<sup>111</sup> and the Law against Discrimination.<sup>112</sup> These two laws make the key framework for gender equality and women empowerment. The Law on Gender Equality sets quota of 40 percent of representation of one gender in specific areas of the society. On the other hand, the Law against discrimination stipulates penalties for private and legal persons that violate its provisions.

But in reality the women does not enjoy the same rights as men. This inequality is evident in many societal and economic areas of life. Women generally are not present in the decision-making processes in the political parties. Women do not represent 40% of the decision-making positions as stipulated in the Law on Gender Equality<sup>113</sup>. The women are still largely dependant on the quota of 30% to obtain their seats at the Kosovo Assembly and municipal assemblies.

The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo guarantees gender equality as a fundamental value of society and provides equal opportunities for women and men in all political, economic, social and cultural spheres.<sup>114</sup>

The new Gender Action Plan aims at concentrating the efforts of all sides of the EU (EEAS, Delegations, Commission services and Member States) in four main areas: one horizontal for changing the institutional culture, and three thematic areas: psychological and physical integrity of women and girls, their economic and social rights, and voice and participation.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> UN Women "Women in Power & Decision-Making "(2015)

<sup>108</sup> International Monetary Fund: Annual Report 2014: From Stabilization to Sustainable Growth, Washington DC 2014, International Monetary Fund.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> <http://www.womensnetwork.org/?FaqeID=28>

<sup>111</sup> [http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2004\\_2\\_al.pdf](http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2004_2_al.pdf)

<sup>112</sup> [http://www.gazetazrtare.com/e-gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=77&Itemid=28](http://www.gazetazrtare.com/e-gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=77&Itemid=28)

<sup>113</sup> <http://www.assembly-kosova.org/?cid=1.191.103> Kosovo Gender Equality Law It was adopted by the Assembly: 19.02.2004

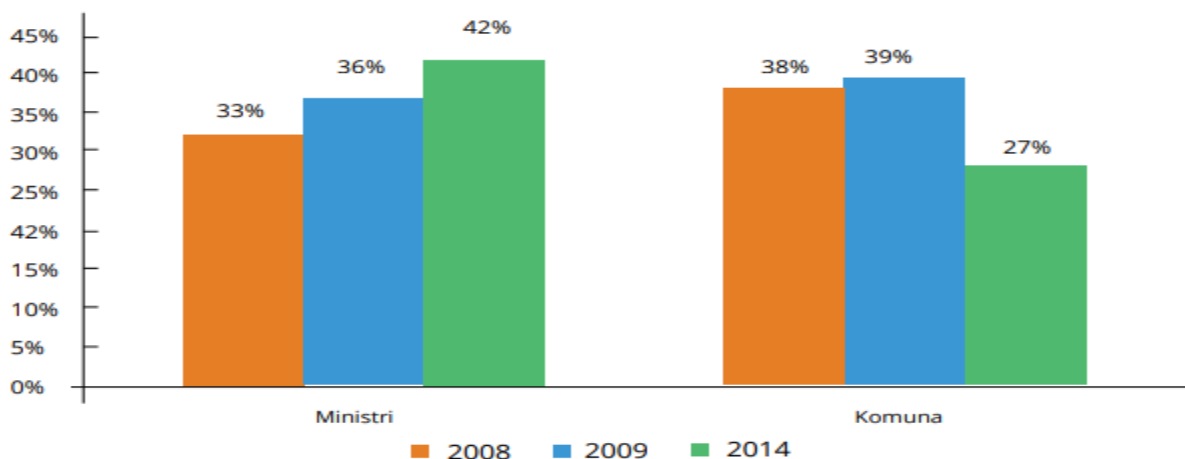
<sup>114</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Article. 7 (f.2), obtained from:

<http://www.mkrsks.org/repository/docs/Kushtetuta.e.Republikes.se.Kosoves.pdf>.

<sup>115</sup> The new EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020

The presented data shows that the participation of women in the total number of employees has increased at the central level whereas decreased at the municipal level from 2009 to 2014 (diagram 1). At the level of ministries the quota of 40 percent has increased while it is far from the goal at the municipal level.

**Diagram 1:** The participation of women in the total number of employees throughout the years in the ministries and municipalities.



**Source:** MPA may 2014, whereas for the years 2008 and 2009 from the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE), 2011 (Report on the research “Women in the working process and decision-making in Kosovo”).

Employed by the gender structure at the central level are: 18,509 men or 64.01%, and 10,406 or 35.99 %.<sup>116</sup>

Label	No. of Employees	%
Men	18,509	64
Females	10,406	36
Total	28,915	100

**Source:** MPA, May 2014 <https://map.rks-gov.net/>

While, according to gender structure, at the municipal level: there are 23,480 men or 56.70%, 16,365 women or 39.52 %, and the category that have no data in regard to gender structure is 1,566 or 3.78 %.

Label	No. of Employees	%
Men	23,480	56.70
Females	16,365	39.52
No data	1,566	3.78
Total	41,411	100

**Source:** MPA, may 2014 <https://map.rks-gov.net/>

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The lack of integration in the best way of women/women in the legal framework, inflexible working shifts, roles and traditional gender norms affects the professional division. Political affiliation also affects women's and men's access to promotion and participation in decision-making. Women have fewer opportunities for training, fewer opportunities for networking and exchange. Women realize fewer trips, which includes allowances than men. All of these are some of the biggest problems that are present in the society. Due to this there is a need for more work in advancing women in decision-making positions.

The participation of women in the total number of employees over the years in the ministries and municipalities experienced changes over the years. In the ministries, there has been an increase from 33% in 2008 to 42% in 2014,

<sup>116</sup> <https://map.rks-gov.net/getattachment/353fccc3-1a25-4918-a615-3ff48ddf6194/Struktura-gjinore-dhe-etnike-e-te-punesuarve-ne-sh.aspx>

while at the municipal level it has decreased from 38% in 2008 to 27% in 2014. Among the main reasons why women are not being offered equal opportunities is the belief that men are the best leader and that women have no political support. Based on these findings, these recommendations can follow:

- An improvement of policies towards gender equality and equal representation of women and men at all decision-making levels.
- Use of social, written, electronic media to promote women.
- Women should strive for greater engagement in political parties, but also in all other spheres of life.
- It is recommended that penalties are imposed by authorities against violators.
- Also new regulations to be drafted for systematization of jobs for increasing the level of gender equality in public and private institutions.

5.

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