



CHAPTER 5



Violence and Abuse

Violence in the variety of its forms remains a crucial problem for modern society. In many countries women are the most frequent victims of violence. Azerbaijan is no exception. However, unlike others, the citizens of Azerbaijan were subjected to violence as the result of the military conflict over Nagorny-Kharabah and the occupation of the part of their country's territory. As a result of the military conflict in and around the Nagorny-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a large number of current peaceful citizens of Azerbaijan (including hundreds of thousands of women) became victims of violence and were forced to flee as refugees and IDPs. Violence as the violation of human rights is often central for the situations of hostage taking, banishment from homelands, and destruction of the normal lifestyle. Azerbaijani citizens were subjected to all of these in the course of this conflict. Women make up a significant part of the total of 100,000 injured and 50,000 disabled by the military conflict in and around the Nagorny-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Refugee and IDP women experienced enormous emotional stress, which, according to expert evaluation, had features of reactive or permanent mental disorder, because they witnessed atrocities, the annihilation of 900 communities, over 130,000 houses and over 1,600 educational, cultural and healthcare

facilities, as well as a multitude of irreplaceable material losses and death of their loved ones. Hundreds of women and children were taken hostages. 73% of refugee women and 83.67% of IDP women thought that the conflict adversely affected their physical health. Outcomes of the present study show that 93.33% of female refugees and 100% of internally displaced women view the conflict in and around the Nagorny-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan as an act of immense psychological pressure causing severe emotional stress. It should be emphasized that Azerbaijani women became one of the first women in post-WWII Europe, and the first women in the former USSR to become victims of brutal ethnic cleansing.

In this context, one may speak of physical, social and psychological violence to which refugee and IDP women were subjected. Women who found themselves in an unnatural, social stratum of refugees, deprived of their everyday living environment, job and social standing, living under constant psychological pressure, which, by definition, cannot be fully relieved even by the most comprehensive national aid programme.

Furthermore, on the one hand, refugee and IDP status with unclear future prospects generates a certain dependency in the female setting; on the other hand, for various reasons,

these women often become subjected to various forms of social or moral discrimination. Many male refugees and IDPs also indicated they suffered from serious health problems and emotional disorders caused by post-traumatic stress syndrome. The survey showed that the level of family violence among refugees and IDPs was 7% higher than in other environments. Apparently, the process of social and psychological adaptation of refugee and IDP women is not an issue to be solved within one or two generations: The solution to this problem lies in the political realm - the peaceful settlement of the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan and resettlement of the displaced in their original homes.

The military conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan however, adversely affected the mental and physical health of not only refugees and IDPs, but also the Azerbaijani people as a whole. Irretrievable losses of 20,000 dead and 4,866 missing, enormous for a small country, could not fail to affect Azerbaijani women who had family members and relations among those. During the occupation of Azerbaijan's territories, women and children were taken hostage by the enemy.

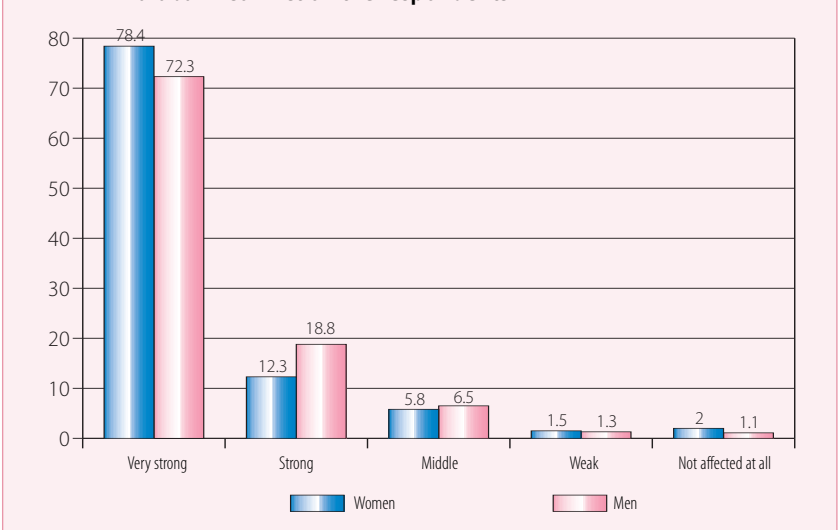
The war had strong psychological, physical, economic and social consequences for a high proportion of survey respondents including those not directly involved in it. 91.1% of the male respondents and 90.7% of the female respondents considered the psychological impact of the conflict "very strong" and "strong" (Figure 5.1).

The economic consequences of the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan affected all segments of society. 55.2% of male and 31.3% of female respondents stated that they experienced economic problems due to the conflict (See Figure 5.2).

5.1 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence (i.e. violence by family members or marriage partners) is one of the most common forms of violence. Domestic violence is a complex phenomenon with numerous manifestations. Any family member can become a victim of domestic violence, but particularly women are more frequently subject to various kinds of violence. Even though women are commonly victims of

Figure 5.1: The frequency distribution of the psychological effect of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the respondents



violence, they themselves may also be exerting physical punishment on their children, as well as other weaker members of the family. These are due to patriarchal attitudes that can sometimes be extended to bodily control of the subordinate, whether it be a woman, or children, or in rare cases men.

Domestic violence is the most common type of violence against women in Azerbaijan, but only 7% of women subjected to such violence considered it a factor aggravating their family life.¹³⁵ An expert from the Constitutional Court believed that domestic violence was a very important problem that impedes the democratization of society; another expert in a women's programme said she saw no mechanisms to prevent or resist violence and protect its victims.

The Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan contains articles which attribute responsibility

Figure 5.2: The frequency distribution of the economic effect of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the respondents





for crimes committed in the family by relatives.¹³⁶ However the punishment for violence in marital relations is not specifically stipulated. Article 151 of the Family Code punishes the use of financial or property assets as threats for sexual coercion.¹³⁷ Even though there are some basic predicaments, experts still draw attention to the lack of necessary targeted legislation to punish domestic violence. An expert from an International Organisation said: "There is no law on domestic violence in our country, though we need one very much, since it [domestic violence] is very common, and women often become victims. Laws related to domestic violence exist in many countries. Domestic violence is a serious problem, that's why there must be special programmes on violence prevention."¹³⁸

Another expert argues that preventive measures were much more effective in Soviet times since people considered the Communist Party as a reliable place to complain. She said, "I would like to draw attention to the past. In the Soviet times, if a man committed violence against a woman, she had the right to complain to the [Communist] Party leadership. Her complaint was taken seriously and necessary measures were taken. So men were afraid to commit any crime against women and understood that domestic violence was not the right thing to do."¹³⁹

In Azerbaijan, as in many other countries,¹⁴⁰ it is quite difficult to have an accurate account of

domestic violence, since the only cases are those reported by the victim herself or a witness to the act of violence. Most cases of domestic violence are not reported due to certain social and psychological reasons. Victims go to law-enforcement agencies only when there are serious consequences, such as actual and grievous bodily harm or even death. Assault and battery, intimidation and threats (even if they are perpetrated systematically), forced sexual contact, economic oppression and other types of "latent" violence are kept in the house and remain "invisible" to the public.

For a better understanding of violence, one should uncover the motives behind it. Violence is based on structures of social domination which are deeply rooted in the society and become distinctly apparent in the family. Obtaining a comprehensive conception of violence without taking into account the social and psychological factors that predetermine the readiness to resort to aggression is impossible.

Most focus group participants did not talk about domestic violence in their own families; rather they considered it another person's problem. This can be explained by the fact that family life is considered confidential and private, characterized as a "dark forest" and a "bag full of secrets".

Only one woman, whose husband had passed away talked about her personal experience: "Beating is not good. I was beaten too. Once I went to see my mother without [my husband's] permission. My husband came home, saw that I wasn't there, and came over to my father's house to take me back home. He behaved as usual there. But when we returned home, he asked me why I left without his permission and beat me. My husband has died; however, when I go to his grave, I still recall how he beat me then. Of course, it is all behind now, but I myself was at fault then."¹⁴¹ Even in this case, the woman did not blame her husband while recalling a cruel beating, but blamed herself for going to see her parents without his permission.

Focus group discussions showed that participants considered only physical assault as a form of domestic violence, but often did not consider criminal prosecution or resorting to legal means possible. An IDP woman said, "If a woman tells the neighbours, or any outsider about it [beating] or goes to court, people will

start gossiping about her. People will spread rumours, even if she is innocent. A woman should be able to protect herself."¹⁴²

Most male and female participants of the focus groups did not approve of domestic violence and often argued that they mainly originated from economic problems which resulted in disputes within the family. One young man from Baku said, "This [domestic violence] derives from economic problems. There are discussions, emotional stress and these harm family relations. They do not respect each other. A man cannot control himself and commits violence."¹⁴³ However, one should also mention that domestic violence is considered "legitimate" in some cases by both men and women. A male participant of the focus groups said, "If a woman makes a mistake, a man can beat her up."¹⁴⁴ Another supported this statement arguing, "Sometimes words are not enough for a woman. She wants to do whatever she wants. If a man cannot find any other solution, he can slap her one or two times. But it is not proper to beat her up severely or kill her."¹⁴⁵

It is also possible, although rarely, to hear a woman approve of domestic violence under "excusable" situations. One woman said, "Generally domestic violence is not approved. No one can say that it is good. If a husband does not take care of his wife, he can neither insult her nor beat her up. But we should look at why it [domestic violence] occurs. If a man encounters a bad situation (infidelity) and only slaps his wife, this cannot be considered as a bad thing."¹⁴⁶ As long as domestic violence is legitimized and approved of particularly by women, it will be even harder to prevent.

One expert argued that, "Most important is that both women and men, and especially

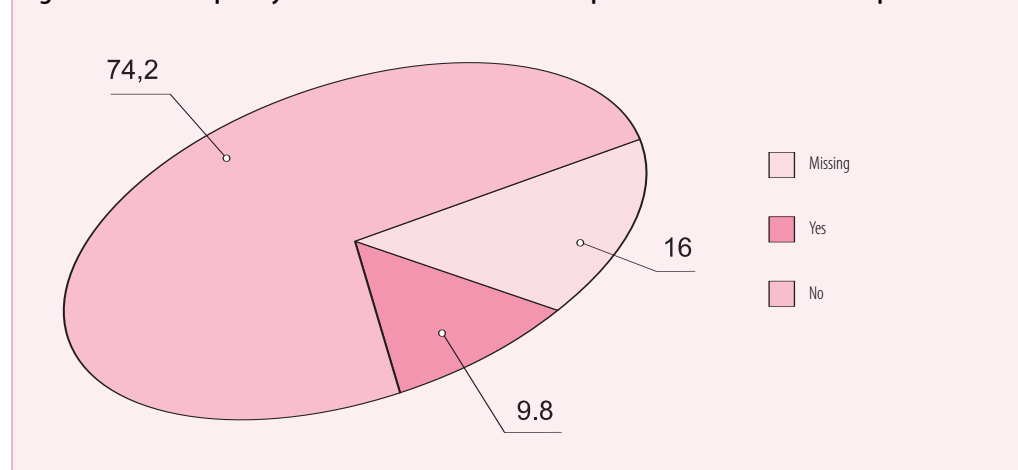
children suffer from it. Causes of violence are varied. For example: birth of female children in the family, male substance abuse, husband's adultery, financial and social problems and misunderstandings."¹⁴⁷

In order to reveal the cases of domestic violence, respondents were asked whether they beat their spouses or not. As can be seen in Figure 5.4, 74.2% of respondents claimed that they did not beat their spouses, whereas only 9.8% answer "yes". One should also note that due to the sensitivity of the issue, people might have preferred not to answer honestly.

On the issue of whether domestic violence can be approved under justifiable conditions, women and men differ radically in their attitudes. Survey results shows that 62.6% of women do not approve of domestic violence under any circumstances (including 29% who strongly disagree) whereas only 37.8% of men think women should not be beaten for any reason. The statements of focus groups are close to survey results. Nearly half of participants speak strongly against wife-battering, calling it a "social evil" and a "crime" that the government must combat it as well as protect the victims. At the same time, the other almost-half of them argue that beating of a wife by her husband is a private family business and nobody should interfere.

Both the respondents in the survey and focus groups overtly or covertly accepted the existence of domestic violence. Respondents were asked whether there were "acceptable" reasons for domestic violence. Infidelity of a woman was considered the most reasonable motive behind the act of domestic violence. 76% of men and 61.7% of women approved of domestic violence in the case of adultery. 14%

Figure 5.4: The frequency distribution on whether a respondent ever beat his/her spouse



of men and 10.3% of women claimed that if a woman did not accept sexual relations with her husband, then the man had the right to beat her.

Another reason used to justify domestic violence was the deficiency of childcare by women. 12.1% of men and 8.1% of women agree that if a woman neglected childcare, her husband could punish her by beating. Only 4.5% of women and 2.2% of men considered domestic violence as punishment if a wife overspends money. Overcooking was not considered as an acceptable reason for battery by both men and women (4.2% and 3.7% women respectively.)

Identifying actual reasons for violence is not always possible. It often is rooted in existing social norms and attitudes. Experts have given the hypothetical case of a family where the husband is unemployed and unable to solve the family's economic problems; the wife is employed and does not obey her husband. This may provoke domestic violence. According to focus group participants, such situations often provoke acts of violence not only against women, but also other family members (frequently children).

The psychological mechanism at work here is an intra-personal conflict when the ideal "self" that corresponds to society's traditional gender expectations is faced with a reality that demonstrates the person's social helplessness. This situation may be called a crisis of the gender stereotype and is manifested through emotional frustration, stress and aggressive behaviour. The stereotype of the man as the breadwinner and the head of the family asserts the necessity of a man's control over resources and unquestionable obedience of family

members. The man's inability to perform the requirements of this stereotype leads to violence as a destructive way of self-affirmation.

Many survey respondents and experts claimed that major causes of domestic violence were male unemployment and poverty, which created an atmosphere of hopelessness and despair and provoked family conflicts. A gender expert stated, "I would say that unemployment is a major cause of violence. If a man has no job, conflicts and fights arise in the family, women become subjected to violence and verbal abuse, the number of divorce cases increases".¹⁴⁸ At the same time, poverty and the low chance of finding work on her own leaves a woman with no choice. A female participant of the focus group noted, "Some women cannot leave, because children at home are hungry. They have no way other than to put up with and endure everything".¹⁴⁹ It is therefore widely believed that there is a correlation between the employment status of men and the use of physical force.

Figure 5.6 illustrates that 25.1% of unemployed men claimed that they used physical violence to punish their wives, whereas 19.9% of the employed men beat their wives.

One male respondent of the focus groups explained, "Unemployed men spend much time at home. In these situations relations are spoiled, conflicts and fights arise very often. Although a man is not supposed to lift his hand to a woman, a woman should not be subjected to violence, irritation, apprehension and aggression caused by unemployment".¹⁵⁰ To conclude, male unemployment was considered to be one of the important factors in the escalation of domestic violence. Wives became victims of men who had lost their jobs, because they experienced depression and aggression caused by their threatened status as household head.

5.2 VIOLENCE AND LIVING STANDARDS

According to the survey, the likelihood of becoming a victim of physical violence was higher for women in households with aggregate family income levels of 46 AZN - 70 AZN (i.e. lower than the minimum consumption level). Domestic violence is less common in families with high incomes. The survey showed that women in households with an aggregate monthly income of over 200 AZN are least likely to suffer from domestic violence.

Figure 5.6: The frequency distribution of the employment status of men perpetrating domestic violence

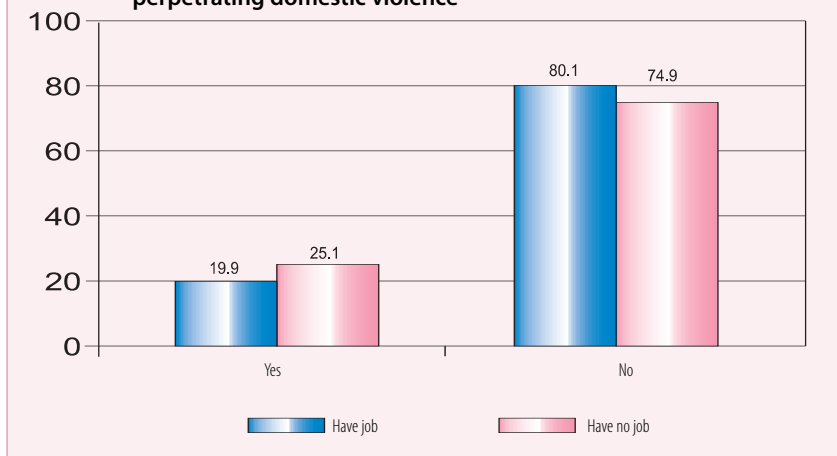
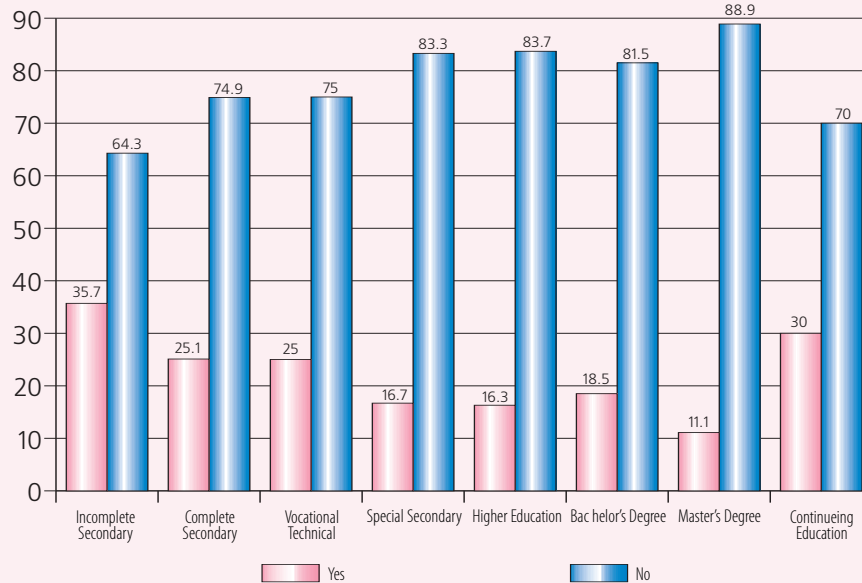


Figure 5.7: The frequency distribution of the education level of men committing domestic violence

Taking into consideration the low number of male respondents with primary education, the frequency distribution of responses for this category is not displayed in Figure 5.7

These families have more likelihood that both spouses are educated, and minor economic problems, household chores and childcare problems are alleviated by third parties. However, we also have to take into account that if the income is generated by the husband, financially the dependence of a woman on her husband and, consequently, degree of her obedience to him may become stronger. It is possible to suggest that it is not simply a gender inequality that acts as a catalyst leading to domestic violence but rather the combination of gender inequality and the change in the power balance and distribution of resources between the family members. Families free from all types of violence were usually more egalitarian, where resources and authority were distributed equally between spouses.

Out-migration of a husband, while maintaining a certain financial wellbeing of the family, may affect a woman who stayed in the family of her in-laws. There are incidences where in-laws exert violence on their daughters-in-law or sisters-in-law. An expert in women's issues shared her observations, saying, "Many men leave for Russia in search of jobs, create a new family there and forget about the previous one. When the man is gone for a long time, his mother may turn the daughter-in-law out of the house. Women come to us with these types of problems very often."¹⁵¹ In one of the focus groups it is also expressed that there are cases where the mother-in-law beats the daughter-in-law when the husband leaves.¹⁵² Such incidences

were strongly disapproved both by male (88.71%) and female (95.5%) respondents, which was directly correlated to the educational level of the respondent.

5.3 SOCIAL DETERMINANTS IMPACTING VIOLENCE

The correlation between educational attainment and domestic violence is rather ambiguous. Research shows that men with the low level of education are least inclined to domestic violence. It may be related to the fact that these people, doomed to low-paid work, have diminished personal demands and self-esteem, which makes them indifferent in family relations. The least number of female victims of physical violence are among women with tertiary and incomplete tertiary education and women whose husbands are more educated than themselves. However, it should be noted that domestic violence is more related to the difference in their education levels than to the level of education for each one of them.

The patterns of domestic violence significantly changes with men's advancement up the "educational ladder". Figure 5.7 shows that men with secondary education were more often inclined to use violence against their wives (25.1%) compared to men with higher education (16.3%).

Both men and women who had higher educations tended to disapprove of domestic violence whatever the reasons behind such

acts were. The survey data revealed that educated men and women dramatically differed from less educated. 64.3% of women with bachelor's degrees disapproved of domestic violence whatever the reason might be, whereas woman with primary and secondary educations seemed to be more tolerant of violence with a rate of 55.2% and 33.4% respectively. Thus the increasing level of education would contribute to the elimination of domestic violence and the internalization of egalitarian values.

Survey data does not reveal the correlation between the type of respondents' marital relations and their attitude to domestic violence, particularly wife battery. The number of respondents with types of marital relations other than officially registered marriage (such as religious marriage or common-law marriage, etc) is not sufficient for statistically reliable conclusions. However it is clear that women who never married more often object to the domestic violence (73.5%) than married women (60.3%). Among the bachelors those objecting to violence constitute 41.7% which is more than among the married men (36.9%). At the same time almost one third of the bachelors (31.3%) agreed only partially. Obviously, regardless of marital status, men compared to women are less inclined to condemn husband's violence toward his wife. It should be noted that after getting married both men and women become more accepting of domestic violence.

Rural women suffered from violence most often between ages 21-30 (24.14%), whilst between 31 and 40, violence decreased to 16.09%. The 21-30 cohort was the most vulnerable group in married life. They probably did not have children, had fewer economic means and were under strong patriarchal control from the entire family. The highest percentage of violence against urban women was at ages 41-50 (26.61%), the lowest at ages 21-30 (21.77%). On the contrary in urban areas this age set may be the most modernized and open to egalitarian attitudes, so they were not likely to tolerate violence.

Among men there was no marked trend in degree of perpetrating violence. The percentage of men in the youngest age group (ages 18-24), who thought that a husband had the right to beat his wife "punishing her for a mistake", was not lower than that for other age groups. An alarming tendency was traced in the position of 27.67% of single, never married,

young men who already had positive attitudes to domestic violence. This may indicate that attitudes on physical violence in families will not change in the near future, and that the new generation of husbands may also commit violence against their wives, just as their predecessors.

Parties to domestic violence often place their attitude to violence in the context of religious and cultural traditions. A tradition may be used to justify, as well as to condemn violence. Responses to this question revealed that only 25% of respondents believed that religion legitimized violence as a reaction to a wife's disobedience of a husband, whereas 56.6% of the survey sample thought that religion gave no grounds to justify violence under any conditions.

5.4 ASSISTANCE FOR THE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: WHERE TO GO?

Women remain helpless when they are the victims of domestic violence, they can at best call for help from relatives. 50% of respondents believed that a wife should dutifully endure beatings and insults, which indicated that women were either not aware of their right to complain to authorities, did not trust their effectiveness or were afraid of filing a complaint due to social pressure. All respondents regardless of sex did not know that a woman could hire a lawyer to protect her rights. Only 5.2% of men and 8.2% of women acknowledged that a woman could call the police to help in the case of domestic violence. The help of neighbours, friends, and psychologists was predominantly rejected, with only 2.1% of women willing to appeal to them. Less than 1.3% of female victims of domestic violence among the respondents were ready to appeal to local authorities to defend their rights.

47.5% of women and 33.6% of men believed that in the case of physical violence women should call for the help of relatives only. 34.2% of women believed that women should not call anyone for help, and virtually every second man was convinced that no one should be informed about domestic violence.

Most of the respondents argued that there were various reasons why public institutions' help was not sought in cases of domestic violence. The most common reason was that, it was socially unacceptable. Not only would the

husband consider this as a violation of privacy, but also other family members, including the women's own family, could view this as revealing family secrets. Thus, women face losing their support systems. Moreover, if women lack social security, and do not have personal income, their only option may be to stay with their husbands. Involving public institutions may make the situation worse. Especially in cases where there is not an adequate institutional set up, such as safe houses for women or eviction order capacity for men, then there is no choice but to advise women on a "peaceful solution" (i.e. going back to the husband). It is clear from the survey data that institutional solutions, such as shelters for women experiencing domestic violence or empowering women's NGOs, should be sought.

We see that domestic violence was only partly condemned by men and women. It is important that the more the education of the respondent the less their approval is. This demonstrates that much is to be achieved by education. However, there is an urgent need for institutional remedies in the meantime.

5.5 SEXUAL HARRASMENT

Statistics on sexual harassment are scarce. Some women's NGOs collect information on sexual harassment at work and in tertiary education institutions, but it is not enough to depict a real picture. A taboo about the topic was well revealed in focus group discussions. Focus group participants were reluctant to talk about the sexual harassment, noting their lack of information on the subject. The number of focus group statements had also sharply shrunk. Based on statements of focus group members, sexual harassment was uncommon in the countryside, to the degree that it was often barred from discussion.

In focus groups, both men and women living in rural areas emphasized the fact that they worked together in the same work place like "brothers and sisters" and sexual harassment was identified as an "unseen" problem and associated with urban life.

Undoubtedly, the closer circle of contacts, relative transparency of interactions in rural areas and strict regulation of behaviour by rules of communal life constricts opportunities for committing such actions outside the house. However, it should not be considered as non-existent. Upon moving to the city, to

the situation of anonymity and urgency of the job search, prohibitions frequently no longer work, and earlier forbidden behaviour becomes viewed as permissible.

Both male and female respondents particularly emphasized two factors in relation to the cases of sexual harassment: a woman's initiative to encourage and/or to avoid sexual harassment and economic problems facilitating sexual harassment.

The respondents believed that women are the main instigators of sexual harassment. One of the female respondents in the focus groups stated, "If woman behaves well, if she would not attract a man with her looks and behaviour, a man would not treat her badly. If she seems interested, dresses attractively and behaves in an inappropriate way, then one cannot blame the man"¹⁵³

The most important consequence of sexual harassment is the exclusion of woman from the labour market. The majority of female respondents argued that women had to quit work if they faced sexual harassment. They also emphasized the fact that this was not always possible due to economic hardship: "If there was a case of sexual harassment, a woman should quit work. There is no other way. But in some cases a woman has to live with it due to the fact that they are without choice. In case she quits the job, her children will go hungry"¹⁵⁴

Respondents were asked their views on the following statement: "If women work outside the home, then they are susceptible to sexual harassment". Approximately half of all respondents (50.2% among women and 47.3% among men) disagreed with the statement. Only 19.9% among female respondents and 23.6% among male respondents supported it. These results allow us to conclude that the considerable part of survey sample does not consider woman's extended presence in public space and work in mixed gender environments as a threat to her security and reason to keep her from being employed outside home.

Another aspect directly related to cases of sexual harassment is employers' discrimination when hiring female employees. Most female participants noted that some sought "young" and "beautiful" girls in their job advertisement. One respondent said, "In towns they hire young, beautiful women for work. The purpose is clear"¹⁵⁵ One male respondent argued that

In 2003 Azerbaijan acceded to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol 14. The National Plan on Combating Trafficking in Persons was issued in May 2004. The Law on Counteracting Trafficking in Persons was enacted in June 2005, followed by the Presidential Decree signing it into force. Three articles were added to the Criminal Code, providing a criminal penalty for human trafficking, forced labour and unauthorized disclosure of confidential information about victims of trafficking.

A national programme has been developed stipulating the establishment of a rehabilitation centre for trafficking victims, where they will be provided with medical and psychological assistance. Measures to combat trafficking are taken on a national level.

businesses were particularly looking to employ young girls and women and the government had to take serious measures against it. Men also emphasized the fact that sexual harassment could be avoided if the woman wants it: "Women should not create the necessary conditions to face this problem. Women should not encourage such incidents with her attitudes and her looks. While dealing with it she should do it in a very secretive way. Otherwise, there would be severe consequences for her"¹⁵⁶

5.6 HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND PROSTITUTION

According to the data of Ministry of the Interior, in 2004-2005 in Azerbaijan there were 275 registered criminal cases related to human trafficking, whereby criminal proceedings were instituted against 269 persons. Still, the Ministry does not consider the situation as threatening to become a serious problem. Nevertheless, due to geographic location, there is a great threat of using Azerbaijani territory for human trafficking and the main victims are women and children. According to available official information, victims of human trafficking in Azerbaijan are mainly women and children. Victims are also trafficked to Azerbaijan from other countries. According to the Ministry of the Interior, trafficking routes from Azerbaijan lead to Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and other countries.

Official data reveals that cases of human trafficking are registered in the entire country, but the largest number of trafficking victims in 2005 was in the city of Sumgayit, followed by the cities of Ganja and Gazakh.

According to the survey, 24.48% of women and 10.2% of men in Ganja believed that trafficking cases had become more frequent within the past three years. 36% of women and 38.4% of men in Sumgayit thought that trafficking had increased. On the other hand, almost 50% of women surveyed in the districts of Salyan, Sheki, Yardimli, Astara, Gedebe, Aghstafa, Gusar and Guba had never heard of the trafficking problem, with men from the same districts showing a somewhat higher rate of unawareness on this issue

Probably, rumours about victims accidentally or deliberately involved in trafficking are more discussed in women's circles. A female respondent in Khirdalan (village near Baku) said, "Trafficking is linked to the criminal world. I know, I witnessed that there are gangs

engaged in trafficking"¹⁵⁷ Men living in the same areas did not even notice the phenomenon. The only area of the capital where men were aware of increased trafficking cases was Yasamal (58.1%).

Internally displaced female participants of a focus group in the Imishli District emphasized that taking urgent measures was necessary to combat factors causing the appearance of these negative phenomena: "Our girls and women are engaged in prostitution in Dubai [United Arab Emirates]. If everybody had a place to live and a job, who would need to take this slippery path?"¹⁵⁸ A male respondent in the Sabirabad District stated, "The opening of the borders and unemployment adversely affected women. Women who left in search of a job became victims of trafficking"¹⁵⁹

The difficulty of finding employment, departure of men in search of jobs, insufficient social assistance to unwed mothers were considered major causes of the increase in prostitution. A female respondent in the Khatai district of Baku said, "If the government provides a woman with a job that pays a good salary, then a woman with two or three kids at home would not have to go to Dubai and engage in that [prostitution]"¹⁶⁰. A young male respondent from Baku said, "If their (women's) husbands, families take care of them they would not leave for prostitution. Prostitution is quite frequent due to necessity and economic hardship"¹⁶¹ Some female participants of the focus groups identified prostitution as an "easy way" to overcome difficulties of economic burden. One woman said, "There are such cases in our village. I would rather call it a lack of personal integrity. It happens in all hard times. This is a test for women. Can a woman overcome such difficulties in a very easy way? Of course, not."¹⁶²

While in general prostitution was considered related to economic problems, the growth of violence, the spread of pornography and television programmes were considered unsuitable for "national traditions and mentality" and as "encouraging prostitution". The respondents believed that prostitution was on the increase. However, residents in Salyan, Shamakhi, Ismayilli, Aghsu and Sheki, both men and women, had no clear opinion about the growth of prostitution in their respective districts. A female focus group participant in Sheki said, "There were one or two illegal houses [brothels] in the district. But law-enforcement authorities closed them

down and arrested the men and women involved. Since then prostitution is not typical for our region".¹⁶³ According to male and female respondents, in the last three years prostitution had grown most in Jalilabad (46.7% and 14.3% respectively), Lenkaran (53.3% and 50.0%) and Yasamal district of Baku (45.2% and 72.7%). An opposite tendency was seen in Goradiz, which was under occupation, 16% of men and 12% of women believed that prostitution has significantly decreased.

The respondents treated women engaged in prostitution with severity and intolerance. Penal, not educational measures dominated as frequently mentioned in focus groups. The aggression with which the public treats prostitution dooms women engaged in it to public aversion. Most women were in favour of taking even cruel measures against prostitution. One female respondent stated, "If a woman went into prostitution, she must be killed, because she stains the reputation of the entire family". Some even argued that prostitutes should be "burned" or "killed" so that "it would be a lesson for the others". A number of men supported these statements: "The punishment for prostitutes is death. A father or a brother with proper honour would never allow such a woman to be in the family. Such a woman is a shame for the whole generation."¹⁶⁴

Not all men agreed on the ways to punish prostitution. It was also possible, although not very often, to hear some statements like: "The problem of prostitution arises due to low living standards and economic need. There is a proverb: a true man is not the one that turns an angel into a prostitute, but the one that turns a prostitute into an angel. It means everyone can make a mistake. If a woman makes a mistake, a man is not supposed to make a tragedy out of it, but he has to make her understand. If he divorces her, he will provide yet another prostitute from her to the society."¹⁶⁵

A national programme has been developed stipulating the establishment of a rehabilitation centre for trafficking victims, where they will be provided with medical and psychological assistance. Measures to combat trafficking are taken on the national level.

Azerbaijan ratified all basic international documents in the field of the rights of women, including their protection against violence, compelled prostitution and trafficking. Under national legislation criminal punishments up to life imprisonment for such crimes as slavery on a sexual basis, sexual prosecution, rape and compulsion to prostitution are stipulated.



CHAPTER 6



Social Life

6.1 POLITICAL ACTIVITY

The integration of women into social and political activities is one of the core elements of democratization. However, the experience shows that the development of democratic institutions in the countries living through the transition period is not always accompanied by the growth of women's social activism and the increase of representation in the elected government bodies. Azerbaijan is not an exception: in the transition period women's representation in political and associational life has considerably decreased. The striking example of it is a sharp decrease of the female deputies in Milli Mejlis (Parliament): In the Soviet Parliament (Ali Sovet) women constituted 40% of all deputies; in 1992 Milli Mejlis of the independent Azerbaijan Republic there were only 6% of female MPs. The situation changed in 1995 when the share of women deputies in a new Parliament increased to 12%. This proportion remained the same in the 2000 Parliamentary elections.

Out of 2,327 candidates who applied to the Central Election Commission as parliamentary candidates in November 2005, 90% were men and 10% women. Out of those applications 2,063 were accepted and officially registered, 89.7% were men and 10.3% were women. As a result of the 2005 Parliamentary elections, female deputies constitute 11,2% of the

parliament. A wide-ranging election campaign was held before the elections, during which gender issues were brought up by many female and some male candidates. Possibly that was among the factors that influenced the steadfast development in the gender balance at the following stages of the election campaign. In general these changes were positive for the achievement of gender equality: the share of female candidates/deputies increased from 9.9% to 11,2% respectively. These changes may indicate, on the one hand, that the competition was weaker for the female candidates than for the male candidates (which is not a positive fact for women) and, on the other hand, that the electorate tends to favour female candidates (which is pragmatically valuable from the gender perspective and encouraging in terms of society's gender sensitivity).

Experts from the Parliament, the international organisations, and the national NGOs emphasized their concern over women's decreasing participation in political life and their under-representation in administrative positions.¹⁶⁶ They explain the situation it by: first, elimination of the Soviet system of quotas; second, the growth of patriarchal attitudes in the society; third, the lack of affirmative action assisting the increase of women's representation in the government bodies; fourth, the popularity of the idea that men do not want to share their power with women.

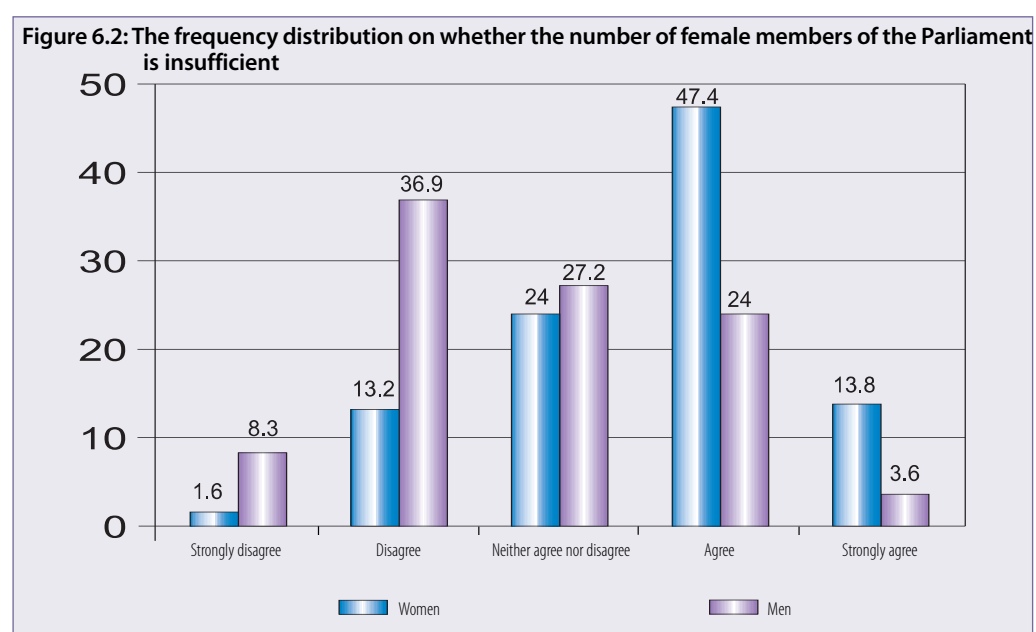
In order to identify the attitude of respondents to using quotas as a means for reaching gender equality the following question was asked in the survey: "Should quotas be set in order to have more women represented in parliament"? The answers were as follows: 51.3% of women and 21.7% of men agreed on the implementation of the quota system for the parliamentary elections, whereas 22.1% of women and 35.7% of men were against and 26.6% of women and 42.6% of men were undecided in their judgement. It is easy to notice that the system of quotas and, consequently the positive discrimination of women were favoured only by a small proportion of male respondents. Discussions in focus groups and interviews with the experts confirmed the survey results. On the issue of whether there should be campaigns to increase the number of women in administration, one male Member of Parliament said, "In my opinion, it is not proper to force someone to have a position. Of course, high authorities should be concerned about this. But the initiative has to come from women themselves and their activities. They have to make themselves approved through their skills"¹⁶⁷

Experts (both male and female) actively engaged in politics argued that women's participation in politics could be increased through benefiting from existing opportunities and close cooperation among interested parties. According to a female Member of Parliament, "In Azerbaijan all the necessary conditions for development exist. I'm not saying that all women should be involved in politics, simply that the existing opportunities should be used correctly"¹⁶⁸ One male deputy emphasized a woman's own

initiative in gaining greater representation in politics.

At the same time survey participants in general demonstrated the support for women's political activity. The respondents were asked to express their opinion on the following statement "Women should be more active at the forthcoming Parliamentary elections" (November 2005). The majority of men and women supported the statement. Only 12% of women and 27.2% of men were against. What is striking here is that men were more in favour of women's participation in politics (73.5%) than women (50.2%). Almost 1/5 of the female respondents (18.7%) and 16% of male respondents strongly agreed (highest support to the suggested statement) that women should actively participate in the parliamentary elections. Furthermore, it can be said that people who have a higher education were more open to the idea that women should be more active in the elections (63%).

Respondents of the survey were also asked whether there were a sufficient number of woman deputies in parliament. Figure 6.2 shows that only 27.6% of male respondents considered that the representation of women in parliament was not satisfactory; for 61.2% of women, representation was far from satisfying. In terms of educational background, 34.5% of respondents who disagreed with the statement were primary school graduates and 48.1% of people who had higher educations underlined the fact that women's representation in the parliament was not adequate.



Male and female attitudes towards women's participation in politics varied, delineated between those who favoured a woman's roles as mother and wife and those who were for their participation in public life. Those male respondents against women's participation in politics mainly referred to the importance of women's household duties and their 'mission' as predominantly mothers and wives. One male respondent said, "A woman should take care of her family and household. Politics is a male job. Our traditions also dictate this division of labour".¹⁶⁹ Another young man approved of this view, saying, "The main responsibility of a woman is to be a mother and educate her children. This is a superior task than dealing with politics. They cannot be political leaders. It is better that they not be. It is better that they remain housewives".¹⁷⁰ A number of women's attitudes were in accordance with these men. A female respondent stated, "Politics is difficult. A woman already has a lot of responsibilities. If she engages in politics she would not be able to fulfil her family duties. She would try to divide herself into two and both would remain incomplete. If a woman is a mother, it is better for her to raise her children".¹⁷¹ Another woman said, "A woman has her own place within the family and society. She has to be one who functions as secondary and assistant. She can be a man's friend, support, assistant and adviser. But the man has to be the head of the family and so must he be of the state".¹⁷²

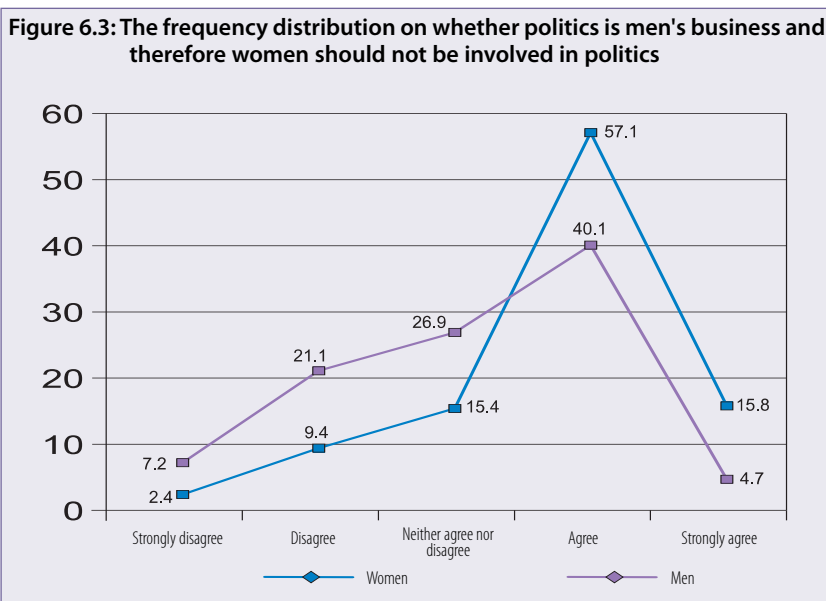
It should be noted that not all men and women share these views. One man from Tovuz said, "Today there are a number of female presidents in the world. I really like this. Women become ministers, such as Tansu Çiller,

Benazir Bhutto, Condoleezza Rice, and this is good. Unfortunately, the number of such women is quite limited in our country. Today there is no female minister. Intellectual women with the ability to speak for themselves should be in the parliament.... If such women dealt with politics, politics would be cleaner and more humanistic".¹⁷³

Although politics was predominantly defined as a male activity, a significant majority of the men and women disagreed with the statement that "politics is a man's business and therefore women should not be involved in it". The survey data demonstrates that women contested this statement more than men. Figure 6.3 shows that 72.9% of female respondents did not consider politics a male domain and believed that women's involvement should not be restricted, whereas this figure was 44.8% for men. This contradicted men's attitudes towards women's activity in the parliamentary elections described above.

Those in favour of increasing the participation of women in politics emphasized characteristics attributed to femininity. Women, it was argued, could bring stability, peace and friendship to politics. One man stated, "The more women dealt in politics, the more peace there would be. If they worked in higher positions, there would be friendship in international affairs. Women work more for peace than men".¹⁷⁴ Women also emphasize "female" characteristics as being polite, just and compromising: "Men tend to be inclined towards force and harassment. When they cannot find a way to solve a problem, they go for disputes and wars. However, women are more polite. Since they favour peace and security, they can find more peaceful solutions".¹⁷⁵ One female respondent highlighted the "peaceful and compromising" nature of women saying "women are born politicians. A woman deals in politics with her children, between her daughter and son and among her neighbours, ensuring that there are no disputes. She should always behave in such a way that there would be no disputes and should work for consensus".¹⁷⁶ This assumption that women have innate political ability may also be a gender stereotype even if a positive one for women.

The extent to which the stereotypes of male and female qualities and their compatibility (or incompatibility) with women's participation in politics are internalized by the respondents becomes especially clear when the limitation of women's political activity is also justified by the respondents with the reference to the qualities



'essential for women's nature'. 'Weakness' and 'fragility' are listed in this case as typical 'female qualities' that, according to some respondents, render women incapable of working in political sphere. Politics are often seen as "dirty", "full of struggles" and "hard to deal with". One male respondent from Gedabey stated, "You know women are fragile. But politics is about struggle and this struggle does not like fragility. Women have to be brave and strong to deal with politics".¹⁷⁷ One woman from Sheki said, "Women are not interested in politics voluntarily since it is difficult and time-consuming. To work in NGOs is relatively easy. Politics require cold blood and prudence. One should be calm. It is no secret that women may lose out in politics since they are compassionate".¹⁷⁸

For society members political and social activity is one of the channels of legitimate participation in making the decisions important for their community. The survey results demonstrated that apart from the difficulties in finding an opportunity to fully participate in social and political life women often encounter in these areas of social activity the 'glass ceiling' stopping their progress towards the higher management positions.

The respondents were asked to express their opinion on the following statement: "There are opportunities for developing women's leadership experience". 45.3% of women and 55.2% of men agreed, while 32.8% of female and 13.6% of male respondents disagreed. Opinions regarding this question were analyzed according to the educational level of the respondents and age groups. The results showed that the greater the respondent's level of education, the greater their optimism regarding the possibility for women to develop leadership skills. 23.1% of primary school graduates agreed with the statement; this rate increased to 53% among technical school graduates and 52.3% among those with higher education. Moreover, younger people tended to be more optimistic in evaluating this indicator.

The discussions in focus groups showed that women often considered their lack of political participation to be an outcome of men's disapproval of women in higher management positions and governing bodies. A female respondent commented, "Their husbands would restrict them. A lot of men do not approve of women in administrative posts or of their engagement in politics. These are closed-minded people and they are jealous".¹⁷⁹ An NGO director said, "In general, there are

many leadership indicators; as far as the difference is concerned (between men's and women's leadership) there are differences in their characteristics and qualities. In most cases, women cannot stand rigid conditions of leadership. The financial resources of most women for maintaining their organisations are generally weaker".¹⁸⁰

The majority of male and female respondents valued professional experience over gender. According to survey results, 81.2% of women and 76.4% of men agreed with the statement "to work in government bodies, professional experience is more important than the sex of an applicant"; whereas only 8.8% of female and 8.6% of male participants disagreed. However, experts frequently noted that men were often favoured during recruitment into administrative positions. A representative from the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan explained, "Unfortunately, when women are nominated to certain positions, men discriminate between men and women, because they do not consider a woman in the post as a possibility. Women should not be promoted only because they are women. Women need to be twice as courageous as men for society to accept them. They should be able to prove that they are professional in their area. For this they should have a strong character and will".¹⁸¹ The head of an NGO reinforced this statement saying, "society is used to seeing a man as a leader. This is a stereotype; women in today's society are facing these stereotypes and doing their best to prove themselves as managers or directors".¹⁸²

Attitudes towards woman's participation in politics are informed by traditional gender roles and the dominance of public-private distinctions and its internalization by both men and women. Women not only suffer from the gender roles attributed to them but also from stereotypes associating them with "weakness" and "powerlessness". However, most respondents' positive attitudes to women's participation in politics can be considered as promising-especially regarding equal representation and opening up new channels to increase women's participation in political life.

6.2 NON GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS: THIRD SECTOR

In Azerbaijan in recent years there has been some advancement in the development of the NGO sector and its activities cover different

facets of public life. The third sector should be valued for its role in balancing the realization of women and men's potential in society and contributing to the progress of the country together with state and government. According to official data, there are currently 2,200 officially registered NGOs in the country, of which 67 are women's organisations, which mainly address the problems of women and the protection of their rights.

Only 4.6% of women and 3.7% of men among the survey respondents were engaged in civil society activity. Few survey respondents were members of NGOs. A number of reasons can be cited for the lack of interest and representation in civil society. First, little awareness has been created of NGO activities and their roles in society. Second, the activities of most NGOs are limited to the capital city and they often do not have regional branches. Consequently, fewer projects are conducted in the regions. Third, civil society in independent Azerbaijan is very different to the Soviet era. Some researchers argue that "What may have been called 'civil society' in the Soviet period was in fact the social organisations formed under the initiative, guidance, and control of the Communist Party. These organisations did not constitute a basis for civil society as they lacked autonomy".¹⁸³

The survey demonstrated that, some respondents may be unaware of what 'NGO' means or have mistaken notions of what it is. The majority of focus group participants said that NGOs were mainly based in Baku. Therefore in the periphery, civil society formation was even slower. One man from Agstafa said, "Today NGOs in Azerbaijan do a lot of work, their number is increasing and they are becoming active. They can be useful to anyone. People make their problems heard and search for solutions through NGOs. Unfortunately, most NGOs are in Baku. In the regions, NGOs are either less developed or there are none".¹⁸⁴

The concentration of civil society activity in the capital (Baku) can be explained by NGOs' closeness to international organisations which are the main funding-providers for NGO work and better technical facilities. Regional NGOs have limited access to financial resources and lack the skills required for working with international donors (such as speaking English, writing project proposals and using the Internet). One expert supported this argument saying, "The infrastructures of NGOs based in the capital are more developed. As the foreign

donor organisations are based in Baku their connections with the regions are sometimes very difficult. Baku NGOs are more active".¹⁸⁵ Public opinion is only just being formed in the regions about what an NGO is, as they have almost no access to Internet, or only in a few places. According to another expert, "In the regions in the past they did not even know what 'NGO' means. Even though they know more now there are still no professional NGOs in the regions".

However, the situation seems to be changing since there is an increase in international funding directed at regional civil society activity. Some NGOs located in Baku have initiated the establishment of "resource centres" which aim at providing information, guidance and assistance for regional NGOs. One head of a women's NGO said, "There are active regions such as Lenkaran, Khachmaz, Guba, Ganja, Gazakh. there is ongoing work and activity in places where there are Resource Centres".¹⁸⁶

Women look for ways to gain freedom of choice and be involved in the political and economic life of society, whether spontaneously or intentionally, finding opportunities to be more active in different areas of social life. Civil society is actively developing and appears to be a new sphere where women's participation increases. Women's organisations consider women their supporters, rely on women to defend their interests and raise awareness among them. Although there is a significant increase in women's participation in civil society activity as chairs and members of NGOs, their status as leaders is not always secured.

Although an easing in civil society activity in recent years in Azerbaijan should be noted, the above mentioned problems common for women as well as for men decrease the speed of this process particularly in the regions. However, apart from the obstacles common for everyone, women have to deal with certain specific problems. One of them is the negative perception of a woman's leaving home and becoming involved in social activities mainly typical for the regions. Deep-rooted tradition hangs over their heads like the sword of Damocles. According to experts, the presumption that the household is the main place for women still persists in the society. One female expert said, "Some people think that women should sit at home, do only housekeeping, and not work. The old traditional rules were like this and if we do not follow them we lose the status of being

Azerbaijani". According to one male expert, "women themselves impede women's progressing to the fore of activities, because active and advancing women often are subjects of gossip that is mainly spread by women, not men. They gossip about men whose wives work in good positions, they say, 'look at him: he thinks he is a man!'"

Yet some men consider NGO activity suitable for women since it is considered "a domain of female activity", "not directly related to politics", "including 'light jobs'" and "leaving more time for women's household duties". One male respondent in a focus group in Sumgayit noted, "Women can be more successful in NGOs, because men prioritize politics and administrative duties more than NGO activity. That is why women are more active in NGOs."¹⁸⁷ Another man supported this argument, saying that men were more successful in politics whereas women in NGOs.¹⁸⁸ It can be argued that civil society is seen as a legitimate sphere for women to be actively involved without challenging their roles in the private life.

The legal framework ensuring male and female equality was praised by most of the experts. Some still argued the need for improvement. Experts from local NGOs often emphasize the problems of implementation rather than the impediments related to national legislation. One NGO representative explained the problems in the implementation of legislation thus: "decrees and decisions should be implemented. There should also be a supervision mechanism.... Officials, who implement these decrees and decisions, should know what gender means. If they do not know what it is, they cannot work effectively and see it as secondary.....officials do not know that gender is not just women's caprice. This is not about women asking for jobs".¹⁸⁹

Another NGO representative noted, "There is a legal framework for equal treatment of citizens regardless of their gender. But they are not provided with equal opportunities".¹⁹⁰ The existence of proper legislation becomes ineffective if not fully implemented and respected. The vast majority of respondents and experts proposed holding an awareness-raising campaign concerning women's rights and duties. Increasing women's representation in civil society, creating awareness of women's problems and the propagation of gender equality by civil society actors would contribute to the formation of democratic society.

6.3 LOCAL POLITICS: LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT BODIES (MUNICIPALITIES)

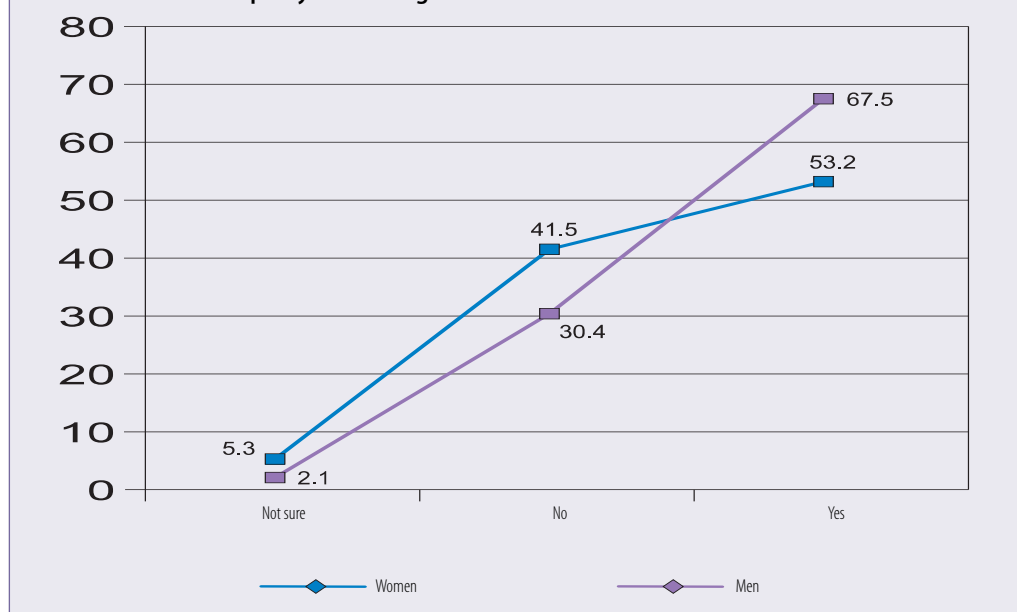
In July 1999 the National Parliament passed laws on municipal elections and on the status of municipalities, based on these laws. According to this law, municipalities are local self-government bodies formed as a new type of body in Azerbaijan. The second municipal elections were held in 2004. At present out of 20,346 members of municipal councils, 95.9% are male and 4.1% are female.¹⁹¹ These figures reveal a low degree of women's representation in the municipality system.

Survey data revealed that there was a strong indifference amongst women to the municipal elections compared to Parliamentary elections. Women were less active in municipal elections compared to men. The survey shows that 66.1% of male respondents participated in the municipal elections whereas women's participation was 56.7 %.

Female respondents constituted a majority of those who had limited information about the functions and duties of municipalities. Figure 6.6 shows that almost half of women (46.8%) had limited information about municipalities. There are a number of reasons behind women's lack of information and consequent absence of interest in the activities of local administrations. First, some women do not have information on their political rights and civil liberties. Second, women's active participation in politics remains rather limited and only a few women ran in the elections. As a result, there is a lack of women capable of becoming a role model in this sphere. Focus group participants also explained the low level of women's representation in local administration as due to insufficient and insignificant work conducted by municipalities and clashes between regional executive authorities and municipalities.

The opportunity of benefiting from the potential of municipalities to solve most daily problems is still underestimated by rural inhabitants. Even though women (and men) expressed the most acute problems in the regions as bad roads, lack of services such as gas, electricity, drinking water, weak social protection and unemployment, they still do not associate the solution of these problems with local government. More than half of the respondents did not see any improvement in services after the municipalities were

Figure 6.6: The frequency distribution on whether the respondents know who the chairperson of the municipality in their region is



established. More women than men expressed discontent with municipal activities. Women are more sensitive to the supply of such services since they are primary consumers of gas, electricity and water in household activities. Such disillusionment can be a reason for the lack of interest among women. Very few men and women saw any improvement in the quality of services (See Table 6.1).

In the focus group discussions, male participants presented general complaints about the lack of regular supply of water, gas and electricity. At the same time the women participants of the focus group discussions held in Barda District brought specific examples: shortage of water for land irrigation, absence of market for selling products, and impossibility to buy firewood. IDP participants of the focus group discussions in the Gayidish village of Fuzuli District noted that "We need no aid - let us return to our lands, we will do our own work."¹⁹²

One way of increasing women's involvement with the municipality and local politics could be having greater female representation in municipal councils. As can be seen from Figure 6.7, the majority of women (59.2%) agreed that there should be more women in local councils, while 52% of men disagreed with more women's participation in local administration. If there were more women in local councils this would probably lead to improvement of municipal services for women, as well as possibly increased women's participation in politics.

Research done in other countries have indicated that there is a great potential to improve municipal services through women's participation, because women are primary consumers of the services provided such as water and electricity. Although there are also some municipalities headed by women in various regions of Azerbaijan, the number is not sufficient. Moreover, during local elections the

Table 6.1: The frequency distribution of the respondents' attitudes to the municipalities

Activities	Fully disagree		Disagree		Partially agree		Agree		Fully agree	
	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men
1. Our street became cleaner after the establishment of municipalities	15.9	13.6	40.2	39.2	29.1	28.4	14.3	18.1	0.5	0.7
2. Power-cuts have been reduced	12.3	11.3	35.2	26.8	33.2	30.2	19.2	30.9	0.1	0.8
3. Gas supply improved	33.0	30.7	36.8	29.1	16.2	22.1	13.6	17.7	0.4	0.4
4. Drinking water supply improved	14.4	14.9	42.2	35.1	24.6	22.5	18.1	26.9	0.7	0.6
5. Conditions of roads improved	14.7	13.1	39.1	34	28.1	31.3	17.4	20.9	0.7	0.7
6. Conditions for land-reclamation improved	7.0	12.3	18.2	14.5	70.5	65.7	4.2	7.1	0.1	0.4

gender problems in the regions and/or specific demands by women were rarely mentioned.

Women's involvement in local politics is essential not only for their political representation but also for generating solutions to the problems of daily lives. Policy-making to achieve gender equality will be more relevant if the solutions are informed by women's insights and initiatives..

6.4 MEDIA

Although there are no official statistics on women's employment in the media sector, one can observe that their representation remains limited. For example: TV programme commentators are predominantly men whereas women particularly work as reporters. There are women who work as newscasters on television but most programmes on debates and discussions are led by men. However, it should be mentioned that a number of highly topical shows are prepared and hosted by women.

Issues related to gender equality and the promotion of gender awareness are narrowly covered by mass media. Programmes for women concentrate more on their domestic work or beauty and medical treatment and as well as the commercials served to maintain the existing gender stereotypes.

Television was stated as the main source of information by all focus group participants regardless of gender. The results were not so different for the survey respondents. 90.5% of men and 92.3% of women stated their main source of information was television.

Very small portion of respondents (7%) is receiving information from newspapers and magazines. The majority of survey participants however considered these information sources to be excessively expensive. The respondents stressed low efficiency of the radio as a source of information, because it 'mainly focuses on broadcasting songs and advertises singers!'. The access to the Internet was limited due to the lack of personal computers in the regions. Focus group participants underlined the importance of local newspaper and television and the creation of community centres in their regions. They also persistently pointed out that computers should be provided in the local centres.

Respondents were asked about which of these media channels gave more information on gender equality and women's issues. 73.9% of

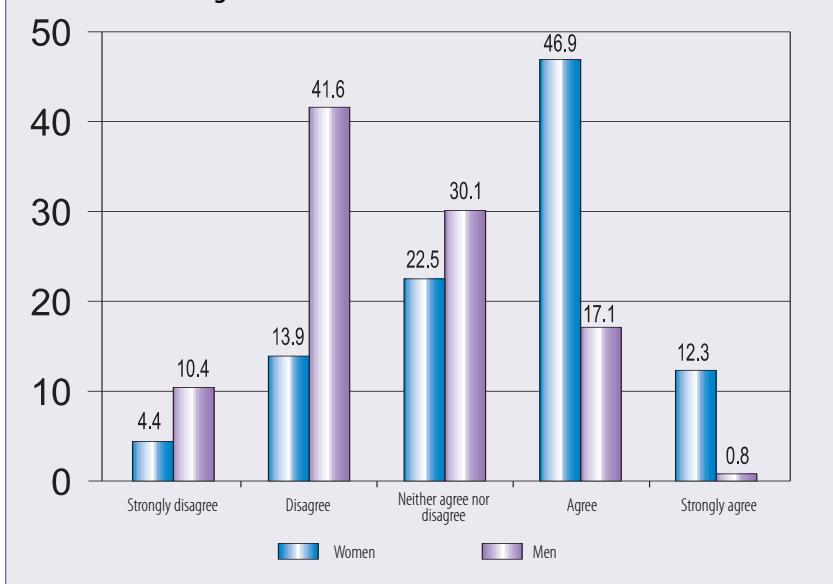
women and 73.2% of men pointed out that they mainly received (albeit scarce) information on gender related issues from television. 47.1% of female respondents and 43.9% of male respondents agreed with the statement that "Media affects the formation of gender-consciousness and creation of gender awareness" (See Figure 6.8). 12.2% of men and 10.3% of women considered that there was no media influence in creating gender consciousness and awareness. The share of respondents partly agreeing with the statement was unusually high (42.5% women and 43.9% men).

The survey data also showed that respondents (77.7% of women and 47.3% of men) would like television channels, including private channels, to show more women's programmes. The female respondents protested against women being represented in television shows mainly as cooks and wanted the TV to focus more on women's role in social life..

According to the survey results, with the increase in women's educational level their support of gender oriented women's programmes also strengthened. 32.1% of women who did not complete secondary education wanted more special programmes for women, compared to 57.1% among the women with bachelor's degrees.. We may conclude that the higher level of education results in women's increased interest in their rights. Obviously better general education will enhance the capacity of both men and women to learn and understand, as well as critically examine the existing gender problems.



Figure 6.7: The frequency distribution on whether there should be more women in local government





6.5 RELIGION

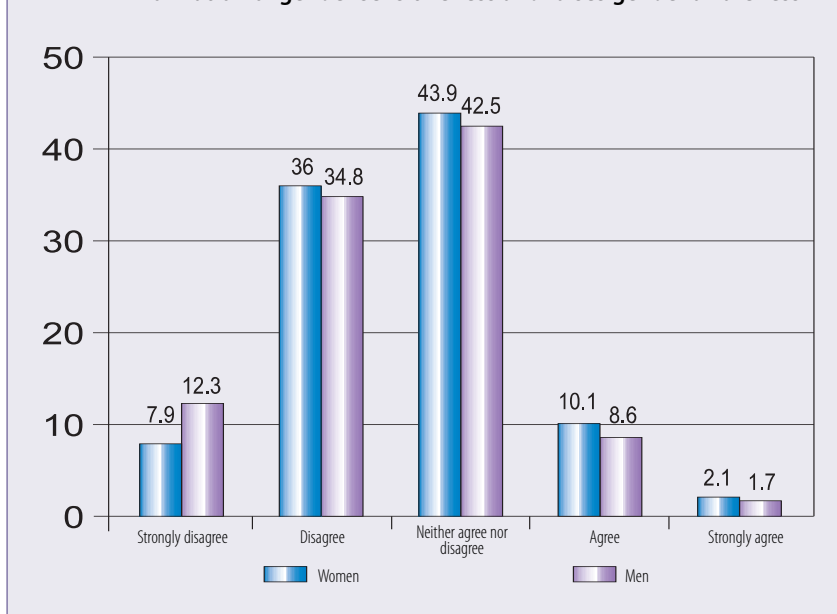
Azerbaijan is a country with a multi-confessional population where the religious differences rarely provided a basis for armed conflicts.

Under Soviet rule practicing religion remained limited due to a severe ideological restrictions and intense anti-religious propaganda. As a result there was a lack of information on religion, a huge number of religious sites was destroyed and the few existing religious ministers often did not receive any special education. Nevertheless Azerbaijanis in general preserved the adherence to religious

values. After the demise of the Soviet control over the ideology, Azerbaijani society witnessed a rapid growth of popular interest in religion (proliferation of mosques, building and restoration of churches and synagogues, creation of religious educational institutions and publication of religious newspapers and books). According to Azerbaijan's "Law on the Freedom of Belief", everyone has an equal right to choose his or her religion or be an atheist. Azerbaijan is a secular state, however, all local religions and especially Islam (majority of country's population are Muslims) are officially recognized as an important part of national heritage and the culture of peaceful coexistence between religions is considered a valuable characteristic of Azerbaijani society.

The survey results demonstrated that the majority of participants considered religion an important element of their personal identity (78.3%). Among both female and male respondents those who considered themselves "religious" constituted the majority: 69.7% and 66.4% respectively. Those who considered themselves "strongly religious" constituted 9.2% among women and 11.4% among men. The share of 'religious' (as well as "strongly religious") people among female and male respondents was very close (see Figure 6.10). However, discussions in the focus groups revealed that in general women were thought of as being the ones who believed in and practiced religion more. Both male and female participants noted that religious requirements were often performed by women since they had more "free time" and they were mainly at home.

Figure 6.8: The frequency distribution on whether the media influences the formation of gender sensitiveness and raises gender awareness



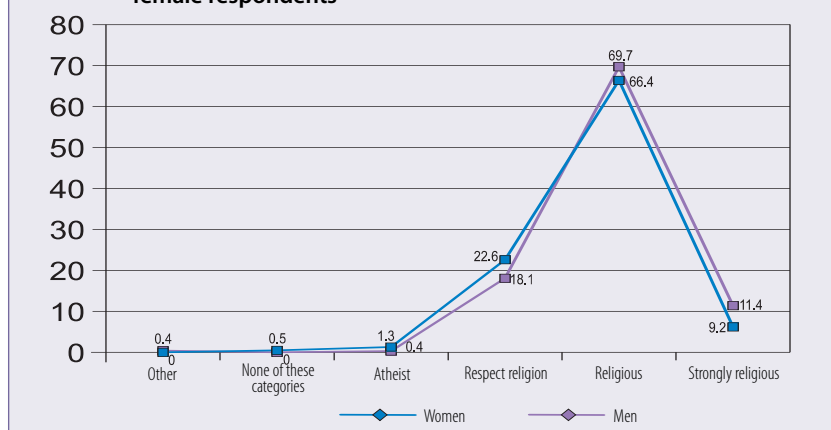
More than half of the survey sample (56.4%) agreed that strongly religious women could bring a positive impact into public life. This opinion, however, was more popular among male respondents (62.3%) than female respondents (50.6%). Women also constituted a majority among the group of respondents that disagreed with this opinion. We could suggest that the alternative definition of femininity and new standards of “morally sound” public behaviour actively propagated by the religious part of the society in contemporary Azerbaijan were rejected by certain groups of Azerbaijani women as an imposition of alien values.

The analysis of focus group discussions revealed that religion, particularly Islam, was used by both men and women in order to justify or challenge the limitations imposed on women's participation in social life. Active participation of Muslim women in public life was brought up by a female focus group discussant as proof that Islam did not impose significant limitations on women's social life. “It does not matter that their heads are covered...In Arabic countries women drive cars, work in top positions and defend their own rights”¹⁹³ Some male participants of the focus groups expressed opinions supporting the limitations of women's participation in politics with reference to Islam: “According to Islamic ideology women should not be involved in politics”¹⁹⁴. Others, while admitting that religion did provide some restrictions, insisted that these restrictions were gender symmetrical: “Religion provides restrictions for both men and women.”¹⁹⁵ However, most focus group participants did not view religion as a source of limitation; instead they viewed the restrictions as a way to “personal purification”, “consolidation of justice” and “integrity”.

In order to reveal respondents' attitudes to the relationship between religious beliefs and limiting women's participation in social life, their views were further explored via the following statement: “According to our religion a woman can participate in public life if her husband permits” Approximately half of the male and female respondents agreed with this, 53.3% and 54.8% respectively. However 20.8% of women and 14.8% of men disagreed with the statement and even larger portion of respondents (24.4% of women and 31.9% of men) were reluctant in their response.

Thus, the interpretation of religious norms that makes women's social activity dependent on

Figure 6.10: The frequency distribution of the level of religiosity among male and female respondents



their husband's permission and reinforces patriarchal obedience was supported by a little more than a half of male and female respondents. Other half including those reluctant, clearly, had a different view. Undoubtedly, it is within this particular group of survey sample (smaller it may be) that we are to look for those capable and willing to challenge male domination in family decision-making. These are the forces in the society that are also more likely to help establishing democratic relations in the family as well as developing women's personal independence.

CONCLUSIONS

Humankind has entered the 3rd Millennium with an overwhelming desire for security and equality. Today, this wish is reinforced by the consensus of most nations on the common fundamental principles of peaceful coexistence. United in their assessment of the current situation and future trends, the people of the world have accepted the universal value of humanitarian and democratic principles that form the basis of human rights: the right to be different, the right to have a decent life, the right to personal self-actualization and cultural identity, the right to develop and to be free from violence.

The assessment of Azerbaijan's progress on this path, conducted in the context of the study of gender relations, has confirmed that the issue of gender, while universal in its origin, is also dependent on cultural and temporal factors. In particular, this problem has a number of manifestations in Azerbaijan that are shaped by its history, politics and economics.

In Azerbaijan's state and public discourse there is gender equality. On the one hand, the state guarantees basic principles of gender equality, and also provides mechanisms to ensure that this equality is practiced in life. The most recent Law on Gender Equality adopted by the Parliament is a very important indicator of such determination. On the other hand, despite the significant obstacles presented by gender stereotypes, Azerbaijani society, in general, is quite tolerant to the idea of gender equality.

The idea of gender equality in Azerbaijan has historical roots extending far back into the country's past. The pre-Soviet period is characterized by certain developments in this area. Soviet gender policies announced the protection of women's rights and ensured equal access to education and participation in labour force regardless of gender. However, while facilitating the dissemination of egalitarian ideals it reinforced gender equality only formally.

In today's Azerbaijani society, the state is facing new challenges. The most important problems relate to the transition economy and politics, as well as the unresolved armed conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan which led to part of the country's territory being occupied and one tenth of the country's population being displaced. The country is also in the process of nation-building, and family and gender are two of the core issues that define Azerbaijan's national identity.

The country has major potential for growth with natural resources, including oil and gas, and significant human potential- a young and vibrant population. Azerbaijan has taken numerous steps towards democratization. Moreover, the state and civil society recognize that gender equality is an important pre-condition for further development.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is fully committed to international norms on gender equality and to women's human rights. It has ratified the CEDAW and submits reports to relevant agencies on implementation of the Convention; and other required documents as a party to the Council of Europe and OSCE. However, in Azerbaijan, like in many other countries, there is a discrepancy between legislative laws and their realization (de facto and de jure). Despite equality of men and women declared in the Constitution and other legal documents including the recent Law on Gender Equality, there is still considerable gender inequality in many spheres of social life, politics and economy. As the laws and the rules of public conduct in Azerbaijan are fairly egalitarian, source of these dispositions and inequalities should be sought in private life and interpersonal relations.

This was confirmed through the current study which has aimed at examining gender attitudes among people of different ages, education level, religiosity, and financial and social status. The results of the survey demonstrated that gender attitudes vary in many facets of life. They tend to be passed from generation to generation, and are altering due to gradually changing circumstances in families, communities, neighbourhoods and civil society in general. In the

situation of rapid changes or dramatic transformation of life priorities, individuals suffer from intrapersonal and interpersonal changes which often require special policies to remedy. The survey allowed the identification of the characteristics of social groups supporting the changes in gender relations and those resistant to it.

The survey showed that gender statistics methodology is well developed in Azerbaijan, however, there is a drastic need for official statistics on domestic violence, sexual harassment, human trafficking, and also for the data on political and electoral activities to be disaggregated by sex. This, surely, is a serious obstacle in establishing the real picture of the gender situation in the country.

The following are the main conclusions made on the basis of the survey results:

Employment and Living Conditions

The transition to a market economy and the problems associated with economic transformation (such as the high level of unemployment, low-income jobs and decreasing living standards) result in a severe economic crisis for both men and women. Traditional gender roles also constitute yet another burden in women's lives since their perceptions either prohibit or restrict female engagement in economic activity and decrease the number of their choices. Women feel the negative impact of having many children on their economic activity, while for men, this factor is statistically insignificant. Nevertheless, attitudes to female economic activity are challenged by an urgent need for women to generate income, particularly when men are unemployed. Increasingly women's participation in the economic sector will definitely contribute to their empowerment, as well as the elimination of their dependency on men. Changing the economic circumstances, though, might result in challenging the male's dominance over the family and introduce more equitable relationships within the family.

Gender disparity with regard to labour market outcomes reflects the inequality of business opportunities for men and women. In agriculture, strict gender division of labour persists. Despite the fact that, the survey respondents view land reform as a positive socio-economic act benefiting both men and women, women are not only deprived of agricultural means (such as land and credit), but they also have neither knowledge nor skills in this area. Women tend to be left out of the developing sphere of private ownership in general and particularly in agriculture. As the private labour market is expanding, and private enterprise is driving economic development, a key feature of inequality in economic opportunities has become gender insensitivity, particularly in obtaining credit.

Female unemployment is higher than male unemployment. The male "breadwinner" and female "homemaker" roles are mostly internalized by all members of the society, which has been reflected in the jobs believed to be suitable for men and women. A clear differentiation between male and female jobs is evident. However, the opinion that female jobs should be compatible with their duties as homemakers and mothers is mostly supported by men rather than women. At the same time, men and women are unanimous in their estimation of the ideal job for men being those that enable them to fulfil their breadwinning and household head life strategy (provide plenty of income and lead to prestige and status in society). Such a differentiation has been reflected in the wage gaps between gender groups. Women are not only in sectors that generate low incomes, but there is also a high risk that they will be continuing in these occupations. However, the survey results indicated that the more educated a man or woman was, the more likelihood they had of being employed.

Education

Majority of respondents shared a high regard for education as a source of knowledge and social capital for both female and male. The analysis identified particular stages of the education route at which, according to prevalent gender attitudes, female students were expected to drop out while their male peers were encouraged to continue their education. The survey demonstrated that gender attitudes constituted one of the key factors affecting the gender gap in accessing various stages of education. The gender gap is particularly strong on the level of higher education. The persisting stereotypes of gendered professions were also evident among respondents, a fact which influenced education and career choices. At the same time, gender attitudes with regard to the specific aspects of education varied depending on the age, gender, religion, income and education level of respondents.

Drawing upon this, the survey provided an important means of identifying categories of respondents more likely to become a source of limitation for female educational development, as well as those more vocal in challenging gender-biased stereotypes in education. Without any doubt, gender equality in accessing and pursuing education, can contribute to eliminating gender inequality, forming more egalitarian intra-family relations and increasing women's participation in social life through their empowerment. However, the survey results suggested that, although the vast majority of respondents had secondary or higher education, a significant gender prejudice still existed when it came to girls' educational development, choice of professional training and free access to information (specifically Internet). Thus, it becomes apparent that greater access to education itself can not solve the problem of inequality. In order to understand the reasons behind the persistence of biased gender attitudes in the society, there is a need for the analysis of gender stereotypes reproduced and disseminated within the system of education itself.

Health

Problems related to healthcare and the lack of regular health checks is decreasing the standard of living for both men and women. Respondents think that insufficient income and unemployment are the major sources of healthcare problems. Although the national legislation guarantees healthcare for all citizens regardless of sex, the problems of reproductive health are more often associated with women than with men. Female reproductive health emerges as another issue demonstrating that a woman becomes partially subordinated to male decisions and patriarchal values. Women seem to have less control even over their own bodies (a conclusion supported by data on the reproductive health and domestic violence).

Family and Marriage

The Azerbaijani family is significantly inclined towards patriarchy in terms of expectations from men and women, stereotypes about male and female roles, gender-biased divisions of labour, and attitudes to male and female employment. Deeply rooted cultural norms provide a basis for justifying traditional gender roles and facilitating their internalization by both sides. However, the direction of change will be determined by developments in the economic sphere.

As an outcome of this survey we have discovered the profile of gender attitudes in private life. Family is an important asset of Azerbaijani society. It is the source of solidarity, networking and support systems. So the main challenge in front of the Azerbaijani state, civil society and the citizens now is to improve gender equality within the family without violating intra-family harmony and national identity.

Families in Azerbaijan bear very contradictory characteristics in themselves. On the one hand, the Azerbaijani family is open to rapid transformation and change, for example the sizes of the families are decreasing and the vast majority of families are nuclear. On the other hand, the gender division of labour and authority in the families are rather traditional and look resistant to change. There is a hard core stereotypical gender division of labour and almost a consensus on the "ideal" role models for men as the primary breadwinner and women as the homemaker.

Despite 70 years of Soviet female labour force participation, women and especially men argued that women's participation in public life was considered to be of minimal value if any. Even though, the more educated a woman was, the more she supported women's participation in the labour force. However, most women expected men to be the breadwinner. The resistance to change in family affairs is also related to the fact that family traditions are also considered to be an important signifier of Azerbaijani identity and there is little questioning of the non-egalitarian gender relations within the family. This legitimizes patriarchy, opens little room for change and disguises many potential problems.

There is a strong need for state and NGO action to help the Azerbaijani family adapt more egalitarian gender relations without necessarily violating the strength and solidarity of family relations, so that each individual can fully develop and participate in their public roles.

Violence

Violence in Azerbaijan is, first of all, derives from the military conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Besides, there is a large group in Azerbaijan

consisting of hundreds of thousands of women who, as a result of the conflict, became victims of violence and were forced to flee from the places of their origin as refugees or IDPs.

Domestic violence is the most common type of violence against women in Azerbaijan, but a small percentage of women try to protect themselves. Most women do not disclose information about incidents of violence beyond their families.

Women remain helpless when they are victims of domestic violence, they can, at best, call relatives for help. This also indicates that women are not aware of their right to complain to authorities, do not trust the authorities' effectiveness, or are afraid of filing a complaint due to social pressure. Domestic violence is less common in families with high incomes. According to the survey, the likelihood of becoming a victim of physical violence is higher for women in households with aggregate family income level lower than the minimum consumption level.

Families free from all types of violence are usually more egalitarian, where resources and authority are distributed equally between spouses. Gender inequality, when a man has sole control over material resources and decision-making in the family, thus remains the primary cause of violence. Domestic violence is only partly condemned by men and women. There is an important qualification that the more the respondents were educated, the less they approved of violence, which shows the paramount role of education in the perception of violence. However, since education will take time, there is an urgent need for introducing institutional remedies in the meanwhile.

If domestic violence incidents occur everywhere (both in urban and rural areas), the incidents of sexual harassment are mainly expressed by urban respondents since social control is tighter and acquaintances are common in small rural communities.

Social Life

Women's participation in social and political life is determined by a common acceptance and approval of existing gender roles often based on tradition. Women suffer not only from the gender roles attributed to them, but also from stereotypes associating them with "weakness" and "powerlessness". Restrictions often originate from stereotypes associated with female roles in private life and men's superior position in decision-making, both in family and public life. At the present moment, women's participation and representation in politics and civil society is far from sufficient. However, some tendencies to eliminate gender-biased attitudes are also observed, particularly among the educated population. Most respondents' positive attitudes to women's participation in politics can be considered promising, especially regarding equal representation and for opening new channels to increase women's participation in political life. This can be considered a promising trend for gender equality, if supported by increasing awareness and consciousness-raising which can be initiated by the state, civil society actors and the media.

In general, we may conclude that gender behaviour in Azerbaijan, as everywhere in the world, is conditioned by stereotypes learned at the very early stages of individual development. They determine sex-role identification revealed through the psychological mindset, emotional attitudes, and gender-specific behaviour patterns at further stages of an individual's development. The model of behaviour, the role practiced since early childhood subsequently regulates interactions between men and women in the society. Gender relations, as an integral part of the social behaviour model, are quite inertial, but they possess a significant change potential and, along with the entire model, are subjected to serious trials by rapidly changing socio-political and economic realities, accelerated urbanization and trends toward globalization. Intellectual and religious factors also play a significant role in these changes. Extended opportunities stimulating individual development are crucial for such changes.

This study shows that Azerbaijan has significantly progressed towards forming a legislative framework of gender equality, taken steps towards institutionalization of solutions to the gender problem and clarified gender policy. Nevertheless, problems in the areas that are not immediately related to gender, such as water supply, sanitary conditions, access to primary healthcare, availability of child care or any other forms of the required care, poor infrastructure in education and social services and so forth do have serious repercussions for gender. As emphasized by Beijing + 10, the state must render adequate services in these areas and must take actions to avoid transferring the burden onto households, because in such cases the onus

is usually placed on women. However, the unresolved conflict, hundreds of thousands of refugees and IDPs, the consequences of the economic crisis and destruction of social safety nets subsequent to the collapse of the Soviet Union created the new hurdles and invigorated patriarchal social structures. The difficult process of national and state reaffirmation has also impacted these developments.

Nevertheless, specific achievements in gender development do not diminish the need to elaborate the state programme for ensuring gender equality in all areas of public life and for relieving gender-induced tensions in intra-family relations. In a practical sense, we should be talking of working out real mechanisms that would promote equalization in decision-making capabilities; equal participation in governmental and political institutions; elimination of discriminatory practices in labour policy and employment; poverty reduction; prevention of violence; gender education; and lessening the negative impact of environmental problems on health and life expectancy. Efforts of the government and non-governmental organisations should be coordinated to complement each other in order to achieve bona fide positive results in these areas. This coordination may be aided by the realization of the gender-oriented national budget, on the one hand, and coordinated allocation of international organisations' resources for gender-oriented purposes, on the other.

The findings of this survey have been matched against international priorities for achieving gender equality, stated in the UN milestone documents, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Millennium Declaration. Based on this comparison, the study makes policy recommendations, which, if implemented, could contribute to further development and the attainment of peace, thereby bringing Azerbaijan within reach of genuine gender equality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Report generates two sets of recommendations:

1. to take immediate steps to strengthen attitudes for promoting gender equality in society
2. to adopt longer-term policy measures to enhance gender equality

I. Immediate Steps to Strengthen Attitudes for Promoting Gender Equality:

1. Initiate public debate on the state of gender attitudes in Azerbaijan drawing on the findings of the Report (e.g. launch of the Report, TV and radio programmes, newspaper articles, town hall meetings, Parliamentary discussions, public debates and round-table discussions).
2. Establish a broad-based gender balanced task force on this issue with representation from government, academicians, civil society (NGOs, mass media), and religious organisations led by an eminent person in society.
3. Review the findings of the Report and the thoughts expressed in the public debates in order to develop, implement and monitor a campaign to strengthen attitudes for promoting gender equality.
4. Conduct research into the mechanisms by which the attitudes continue to be transferred in the education system, media, workplace and social interactions.
5. Conduct a national campaign to strengthen attitudes for promoting gender equality by focusing on and working through institutions that shape opinions, values and attitudes (e.g. education system, media, religious organisations).
6. Explore the feasibility of raising funds to finance this campaign from the Government of Azerbaijan, UNDP and other donors.
7. Monitoring of above mentioned activities.

II. Longer-term Policy Measures to Enhance Gender Equality:

1. A new national action plan on gender equality should be developed. This plan should be drafted with the widest participation possible, including civil society (academicians, gender experts, and NGOs). The plan should incorporate international best practices, as well as draw on national experiences. Such a plan should aim to change gender inequalities in public life, as well as the culture to impact the gender attitudes and roles. The action plan should have gender indicators and benchmarks.
2. Programmes should be designed to inform the public about international treaties and commitments related to gender issues, including CEDAW, the Millennium Declaration, and the Beijing Platform for Action, etc.
3. The State should be made more gender sensitive. The following measures can be adopted in this respect:
 - a) Appoint an ombudsperson on gender equality;
 - b) Introduce the practice of gender assessment into the process of drafting laws, including the Annual State Budget;
 - c) Institute the monitoring of the enforcement of laws related to gender equality;
 - d) Build the capacity of Members of Parliament on gender issues in order to develop effective and sustainable gender-sensitive initiatives.
4. Secularization is very important for gender equality. A genuine secular society is not anti-religious since it guarantees the right of all people to practice their religious beliefs. However, many groups may want to use religion, cultural heritage, national and ethnic identity for political power, as well as domination of women. Secularism should be enforced in all areas to prevent fundamentalists from controlling women's lives on a wide variety of issues ranging from their reproductive rights to the use of the Internet.
5. Statistical institutions should be supported to perform gender disaggregating of all quantitative and qualitative statistical data to be included in all statistical publications.

Employment and Living Conditions:

1. In the area of macro-economy:
 - a) Gender issues and their analysis should be incorporated into macro-economic policies, including the State Programme for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development;
 - b) National policies and corresponding budget processes should be gender-sensitized, and their implementation should be monitored;
 - c) Policies of government agencies and departments should be coordinated by using gender audits;
 - d) Household surveys, such as living standards and labour force participation, should be designed to show local specificities and needs.
2. On Labour Force Participation:
 - a) Actions should be developed to reduce gender asymmetry in occupational choice by encouraging women to enter fields of science and technology, including the enhancement of ICT literacy and skills;
 - b) To effectively integrate women into the labour market, centres should be established to render technical, financial and social support for professional development and retraining women (especially women from vulnerable population groups);
 - c) Training programmes should be organized for men and women whose professional qualifications do not meet the current economic demand;
 - d) In order to promote labour participation of women, child-care (day-care) facilities should be provided.
3. On employment and poverty:
 - a) Generating jobs should be a priority with the special care given to women as they constitute the majority of the unemployed;
 - b) The vital security net should be bolstered, including unemployment insurance, social assistance, and legal aid. Targeted financial assistance should be provided to female heads of households, and IDP and refugee women;
 - c) Rural women constitute an important part of the unemployed and economically vulnerable. Support should be extended to them to help their self-actualization and satisfy their special needs.
4. Informal economy and entrepreneurship:
 - a) A national programme for female entrepreneurship should be developed, including strengthening the legal framework for micro-financing for women, as well as credit unions. Within this framework, a plan for allocating a certain share of privatization funds should be considered;
 - b) Women should be encouraged to help each other by the enhancement of women's business associations;
 - c) Women's entrepreneurial skills can be enhanced by training them in business development.
 - d) The development of e-commerce and e-government is to be facilitated by men and women and teach them how to access markets through these new technologies.

Education:

1. Curriculum development and content of education:
 - a) Gender assessment of instructional materials including text books, teaching aids etc, has to be done so that gender stereotypes are eliminated;
 - b) Teachers have to be gender sensitized, so that they will not be reproducing gender stereotypes in the classroom;
 - c) Gender problems and awareness material can be integrated into the school curriculum. One important opportunity can be to include human development classes (including gender issues) as a part of social science courses.
2. Regarding equal opportunities in education:
 - a) Girls and boys should be encouraged to have education in non-stereotypical occupations. Areas that are considered appropriate for girls should be provided higher income to make them more attractive for boys as well. Girls should be encouraged to enter technical fields by affirmative action, especially with scholarships;
 - b) Women should be encouraged to be educated in new areas, at all skill levels. Amongst such areas that may have a future for women, we can cite the tourism industry, services that require language skills, media, graphic design, sales, and marketing. Even in traditional female skills, such as carpet weaving, training should incorporate new products and enhance innovative skills;

- c) Girls and boys should be motivated for high achievement in education. Students and their parents should be gender sensitized to break the gender stereotypes in education. Gender counselling in schools can be a very important help in this respect.
3. Information and Communication Technologies:
- a) Equal access for both boys and girls to Internet and information technologies are very important so that the present inequalities should not be replicated in the future. Thus, it is very important to develop special programmes for parents to combat their negative perceptions of the threats posed by the Internet to girls;
 - b) The cost of Internet access should be reduced and availability should be increased to international standards by increasing competition amongst Internet Service Providers. Programmes should be developed to ensure cheap access to ICT and educational opportunities for women of all ages regardless of place of residence. Internet infrastructure should be developed throughout the country and it should be accessible for all, including rural women. This would allow women to use ICT to enhance the quality and content of their activities.

Health:

1. General Health:
- a) A national programme of public healthcare can be drafted based on sociological data to incorporate differentiated demands of gender groups. In this programme special provisions should be given to primary and preventive healthcare services;
 - b) After careful consideration of family household budgets and their capacity meet health expenses, a national health insurance, which is affordable for all, should be designed and implemented.
2. Reproductive Health:
- a) Courses on comprehensive sex education should be designed for integration into school curricula, employing media for wider dissemination;
 - b) A campaign should be developed to sensitize the population (especially men since the survey shows that in Azerbaijan they are the primary authority on birth control) on selective abortion, highlighting its human rights aspects, as well as health hazards. This is very important for healthy reproduction of the society;
 - c) Quality of natal services should be improved and public awareness of equal and free access to them should be raised;
 - d) It is important to extend health services to women and children by opening up new healthcare centres in the regions and rural areas. Consider incorporating reproductive care units within these services. The healthcare centres should also have HIV/AIDS information units.

Marriage and Family:

1. Creation and strengthening of the institutional mechanisms for family support:
- a) Regular research should be conducted to compare access of men and women to resources, and the division of labour and authority within the family, so that the potential for positive change and resistance can be traced;
 - b) Considering the outcomes of survey data and other studies, government should consider targeted social assistance, where differentiated gender needs are integrated into the scheme. Programmes of social assistance, social services and social security (pensions) for various special family circumstances (single parent families; families of divorced and remarried parents; grandmothers and grandfathers as heads of households with orphaned children; families that include orphans whose parents died of HIV/AIDS and other diseases) should be developed. In this respect, programmes for compensation of housework can be considered, where there can be (partial) economic and/or social security benefits;
 - c) Family services, including counselling for intra-family disputes, legal advice, child-care advice, and basic information dissemination should be available for all. Activities of municipalities in solving family related problems and encouraging them to establish centres should be considered;
 - d) The Registrar offices should introduce the practice of informing would-be couples on the possibility of executing a marriage contract, giving legal consultancy on family affairs and doing a blood test to inform them about their physical health, particularly about sexually transmitted diseases.

2. Intra-family relations should be improved as:
 - a) The basis for a happy family and marital relationship can only be on the basis of an egalitarian understanding of the division of labour with each one of the partners fulfilling their individual needs. There therefore have to be programmes to improve intra-family harmony. The media and education system should challenge the gender stereotypical division of labour, and consider introducing more egalitarian power relations;
 - b) Men should be encouraged to contribute to housework and especially to parental responsibilities. Parental child-care leave systems should be introduced and men should be encouraged to actively take part in it.

Violence:

1. At the level of conflict resolution:
 - a) The IDPs and refugees should be recognized as constituting an important section of the economically, socially and psychologically vulnerable part of the society.
 - b) A significant proportion of the survey respondents thought that women could help build peace. This opportunity should be used and women should be encouraged to be integrated into the peace process.
2. Trafficking:
 - a) Advocacy programmes should be developed to alert - by using media - the public and vulnerable groups (e.g. young girls) to the problems of trafficking;
 - b) The control over implementation of anti-trafficking laws should be increased, as well as facilities of the law enforcement agencies including the police should be improved, relevant police services should receive gender training, more women should be encouraged to join the police force, and women working as police officers should be trained in methods to combat human trafficking and be actively involved in this problem.
 - c) Institutional frameworks to help and support the victims of trafficking and their families, including psychological rehabilitation shelters and retraining for re-entry into regular labour markets, should be established.
3. Domestic Violence:
 - a) Civil society can draft and lobby for the adoption of a law (statute) on violence against women (including domestic violence, and sexual harassment) and introduce regulatory acts for the protection of female victims of violence,
 - b) Efforts of various services should be coordinated to ensure a coherent joint approach to prevent gender violence by law enforcement agencies, courts, social services, crisis centres, psycho-neurological health facilities, public advocacy and women's organisations and educational institutions.
 - c) To combat domestic violence, media, government, NGOs and international organisations can be engaged in developing a long-term advocacy campaign, including education of families, as a preventive measure.

Social Life:

1. Improved participation of women in politics is a strong sign of democratization in the country and so it is recommended that:
 - a) Political parties should make firm public commitments to gender equality policies in their programmes and in manifestos, as well as calling women to take part in electoral campaigns;
 - b) To promote women in politics, diversified measures of affirmative action, including quotas should be considered by political parties, and the Parliament;
 - c) Women should be encouraged to be members of political parties. Opening up women's auxiliaries as integral parts of political parties could also be considered.
2. Local authorities are important for democratization not only since they provide services but also serve as schools for developing women's political skills. In this respect:
 - a) Local leadership courses for women should be encouraged;
 - b) Women's awareness of the potential of the local authorities, including the information on the services they provide, should be enhanced;
 - c) Local authorities should consider establishing women's councils/committees, so that women will have a better grasp of the municipality services and have a medium for development of participation.
3. Civil society development is the basis for all participation. In this respect:
 - a) NGO formation and promotion are very important. However, their capacity should be

enhanced with the necessary skills for effectiveness. Their participation in democratization should be actively sought.

- b) NGOs should be funded and encouraged to be active in the area of women's rights.
 - c) Women's leadership in NGOs should be promoted and, to achieve this, women should be trained not only in leadership skills but also in NGO organisation and sustainability.
4. The link between civil society and politics is largely through media which is very important in awareness-raising. In this respect, media should:
- a) Increase its coverage of gender issues, and improve gender sensitivity, discussing the problems, and solutions including the presentation of positive role models.
 - b) Conduct content and discourse analysis of media to reveal stereotypical and/or negative portrayal of gender groups. Adopt a gender neutral discourse, aimed at non-stereotypical presentation of gender roles and ensure gender balance in media management.

ANNEXES

Annex I Survey Methodology

The survey of gender attitudes aimed to reveal the existing gender perceptions, gender role models as well as gender relations in the society.

Gender Survey methodology was based on the following hypotheses:

- a gender survey is wider than a study of sex-role differences and involves an analysis of gender's social construction;
- the gender factor is traced through all personal and social interactions and is revealing of all forms of social activity at all levels of societal power relationships;
- gender relations are built on the basis of socially accepted gender role models of conduct and exhibited through gender attitudes, stereotypes, expectations and requirements made by the society on men and women;
- the gender role models of conduct define various kinds of self-identification, self-actualization and a personal level of social aspirations;

In accordance with the above hypotheses we determined the survey objects, topics and methods.

The survey object was the entire Azerbaijani society: population of all regions of the country with consideration given to their sex, age, occupation, ethnic and confessional affiliation, education level and residence (urban / rural). The study topics were gender relationships and specific forms of social activity of men and women that define them, as well as gender specificities of personal self-actualization. Methodologically, the survey was based on a multi-method triangulation, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods with data from different sources processed and acquired in various ways.

The survey was conducted according to a specially developed programme in two phases. During Phase 1, Survey Preparation, we identified sampling methodology, developed survey instruments, trained interviewers and conducted a pilot survey.

The main Phase 2, Survey Implementation, included fieldwork, i.e. (a) individual interviews in households; (b) focus group (focus group) discussions; (c) expert interviews, complemented by free (unstructured) conversations with experts; as well as data entry, processing and tabulation of the database for analysis.

It should be noted that because data was acquired from relatively independent sources, at later stages of the survey, we were able to use various comparison methods, including the technique of sequential triangulation, to arrive at more valid conclusions.

PHASE 1: SURVEY PREPARATION

Selection of the sampling methodology took into account the required key parameters such as sex and age and also availability of accessible information resources in the country.

Sampling was conducted on the basis of voters' lists, which already contained the two chief parameters, age and sex, as well as each voter's address. That way the survey team got over 6,000 potential respondents to give interviewers a chance to conduct a random sampling on their field routes. These lists were the key to surveying respondents in urban households (cities and towns with population over 1,000).

SAMPLING

A multi-step stratified sampling was used for surveying households. Appropriate statistical and mathematical calculations set the sample size at 1,500 with consideration given to uneven distribution of population between rural and urban areas. Typical error was estimated as minimal (2.7%).

Sampling was conducted in three steps.

1. Selection of cities and rural districts.

At this stage stratification allowed selection of primary sampling units (PSU), which, according to the standard procedure, were grouped in the first stratum prior to selection. PSU stratification was based on geography and administrative division of the country. PSUs were broken down by 10 zones (strata).

Table 1. PSU stratifications zones

	Strata	Share in total population, %	Respondents Selected
1.	Baku-Sumgayit	23.52	353
2.	Kur-Araz Lowlands	17.91	269
3.	Ganja-Gazakh	14.99	225
4.	Lower Karabakh	3.35	50
5.	Shirvan	4.13	62
6.	Guba-Gusar	5.71	85
7.	Sheki-Zagatala	6.53	98
8.	Lenkaran-Astara	9.75	146
9.	Nakhchivan AR	5.45	82
10.	IDPs	8.66	130
	Total	100	1.500

Residents of occupied districts were not included in the sampling. The IDP population of these districts was included in zones where they are currently settled. All PSUs were divided into strata by population size and the administrative status. The number of adult permanent residents for each zone was calculated in proportion to all adult population of Azerbaijan. PSUs were selected in each zone in relations to the calculated number of respondents for that zone. Questionnaires allotted for a given zone were evenly distributed among survey points within the zone.

PSU (cities, towns and rural settlements) were selected randomly with probability proportional to population size of each settlement. Three cities with populations over 200,000 (Baku, Ganja and Sumgayit) were included in the sample as independent units.

After stratification the sample comprised 100 PSUs, including:

- 3 large cities with populations over 200,000 (Baku, Ganja, Sumgayit)
- 21 cities, towns and villages with population ranging from 5,000 and 200,000
- 76 small towns and villages with population up to 5,000

2. Selection of survey points

Simple random sampling was used in cities and other urban settlements. The final sample included 125 survey points, one for each electoral constituency.

Selection of respondents

Respondents were selected by the criteria of age and sex. Age groups were taken in proportion to representation of various age groups in the total population; sex distribution in each stratum similarly corresponded to the general sex ratio (51% of women and 49% of men).

Focus group sampling

Determination of the number of focus groups in various regions was made in accordance with age/sex proportions of each region to a total population. Thus, we formed homogeneous focus groups in terms of age and sex parameters. A total of 80 focus groups were formed in 10 geographic zones, based on a parity basis, 40 focus groups for women and 40 focus groups for men. It is worth noting here that this focus groups exercise was the first extensive qualitative assessment of the gender situation in Azerbaijan.

Expert selection

To make known various gender situation assessments by persons with a high social or official status, prestige and a degree of influence on the socio-political situation in the country, we interviewed 54 experts, including representatives of international organisations that support gender programmes and women's development projects.

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Household survey questionnaire

This questionnaire was developed with a purpose of getting as deep and extensive information as feasible for further quantitative and qualitative analysis of the gender situation. The final version of the questionnaire included 16 sections, viz.:

- Section 1. Demographic and social identification of a respondent;
- Section 2. Living standards;
- Section 3. Economic life and work;
- Section 4. Education;
- Section 5. Health;
- Section 6. Social- family relations;
- Section 7. Violence;
- Section 8. Participation in public life;
- Section 9. Distribution of authority in a family;
- Section 10. Gender and peace;
- Section 11. Local government;
- Section 12. Gender and Mass Media;
- Section 13. Crime, trafficking, prostitution, drug abuse;
- Section 14. Labour migration and gender-related change of life style;
- Section 15. Young people and perspectives of gender equality development.

To ensure a unified approach to interviewing, we developed and used during the fieldwork the Interviewer Manual, which contained recommendations on interviewing technique and tactics as well as key terminology and definitions.

Focus groups discussion scenario

The scenario is a detailed instruction on organizing and holding focus group discussions, recommended topics and the format of recording focus group conclusions. The scenario included a set of topics (thematic blocks) corresponding to study objectives but also permitted using other themes that would help to reveal motives and internal mechanisms of establishing gender prescriptions and stereotypes, understand their sustainability and facilitate efforts for finding solutions to gender issues relevant for a given region of the country. The main themes varied depending on the residence status and attendant characteristic lifestyle features between urban, rural and IDP focus groups.

The thematic blocks of the focus group scenario roughly corresponded to sections of the household survey questionnaire. Questions were prepared for each thematic block to help steer the discussion in the desired direction. When formulating questions, preference was given to criteria such as clarity of understanding, neutrality, ease of evaluation, etc. Indirect (hidden) questions were asked, too. "Bridges" were laid between the thematic blocks to allow correlation of quantitative and qualitative data and make adequate outcomes during analysis.

Expert questionnaires

We developed questionnaires for each category of experts taking part in the study. The questionnaires contained the following discussion topics:

- 1) assessment of the current gender situation;
- 2) exposure of chief gender problems;
- 3) recommendations for solving these problems;
- 4) plans and actions to remove obstacles for gender development.

STAFF TRAINING

Our fieldwork team included only qualified interviewers and moderators, who, nevertheless, were subjected to intensively task-related training.

PILOTING AND INSTRUMENT CORRECTION

A pilot survey was conducted to test all survey instruments developed during the Survey Preparation phase and to allow interviewers / moderators gain experience using the instruments. Outcomes of the pilot survey were used to improve the questionnaires and the focus group scenario, which, in turn, facilitated survey implementation.

The household questionnaire was piloted in 10 randomly selected urban and rural households. The focus group scenario was piloted in 6 focus groups of 8-10 members. All discussions were audio taped and recorded by shorthand. Piloting showed that the selected methodology was appropriate for gaining quality deep information on the set topics.

PHASE 2. SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION

FIELDWORK

Household interviews

In accordance with set selection parameters, 1,500 interviews were administered to about the same number of female and male respondents in urban and rural households (both to permanent residents and IDPs). Interviews were face-to-face. Interviewers paid special attention to making a respondent feel at ease and allow him/her to freely respond to questions asked. Female interviewers talked to female respondents, and male interviewers talked to male respondents.

Focus groups discussions

Focus groups were held in 40 urban and 40 rural areas, with 10-12 participants per group. Their members were randomly selected from available database lists. Discussions were held in line with the scenarios as finalized after piloting and lasted from 2 to 3 hours.

Expert interviews

54 interviews were conducted with experts on the approved expert lists. Experts were Members of Parliament (Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan), central and local officials of the executive government, municipalities, representatives from international and local NGOs, media, and researchers.

DATA ENTRY AND PROCESSING. DATABASE FORMATION

Data was entered and processed with the help of SPSS Version 13. The questionnaires were coded in keeping with sociological regularity. The entry structure was commensurate to the questionnaire structure and covered various project-related areas. After establishing questions covering the above-mentioned and conformable areas, entered data was mathematically analysed.

Open questions were coded by utilizing various logical scaling methods: Laykert, Terstown, etc. Nominals, ordinal intervals and scaling were used. Thus, the data was processed and formed into statistical tables. Various statistical computation methods were used depending on the logical structure of each question.

Statistical analysis was conducted with utilization of elementary statistical parameters of analysis such as percentages, tables, variation frequencies, medians, averages, square deviation, dispersion, medians of interval series, minimum and maximum extremities, linear correlation, logical dependencies, regression models, etc.

Pearson's matrices, statistical methods of Kendall, Stuart and Spearman were used for computation, correlation and cross-tabulation. A resultant database was formed and cleaned. Logical trends afforded relevant correlations to be made simultaneously on several parameters, which allowed us to enrich the database and extend the scope of analysis.

Annex II

MAIN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS: HDI, GDI, GEM

According to statistical analysis, the Human Development Index (HDI) of Azerbaijan has been rising slowly but steadily since 1996. It reached 0.788 in 2005, compared with 0.746 in 2000. Correspondingly with HDI, the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) rose from 0.582 in 1997 to 0.772 in 2005. The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) stood at 0.402 in 2005.

One of the main conclusions from the results of the analysis of main development indicators in Azerbaijan is a striking disparity between high HDI figures (in particular, education attainment) and low per capita incomes. A comparatively lower GDI informs of higher relevance of this parameter for women and of gender asymmetry in remuneration as female salaries are only about 2/3 of male salaries.

It should be noted that computation of GDI and GEM is facing some difficulties as the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan is in the process of reforming the national statistical accounting system to meet international standards. Currently, there are gaps in gender statistics accounting, for example as concerns standardized indicators of women's participation in decision-making.

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Gender

The term gender is not used to describe the biological sexual characteristics by which we identify females and males but to encompass the socially defined sex roles, attitudes and values which communities and societies ascribe as appropriate for one sex or the other. The social relations of gender seeks to make apparent and explain the global asymmetry which appears in male/female relations in terms of sex roles in power sharing, decision-making, the division of labour, return to labour both within the household and in the society at large. Gender directs our attention to all the attributes acquired in the process of socialization; our self and group definitions, our sense of appropriate roles, values and behaviours and, above all, expected and acceptable interactions in relationships between women and men.

Gender analysis

The process of systematically identifying gender-based inequalities in women's and men's roles, needs, priorities, access to and control over resources within a specific context at a particular point in time. Gender analysis aims at contributing to understanding implications of planned interventions and their potential outcomes, taking into account the political, social and economic context within which these interventions are to be implemented, as well as available resources that are conducive to implementation.

Gender concentration

Is concerned with the sex composition of the workforce in an occupation or set of occupations. Whereas segregation refers to the separation of the two sexes across occupations, concentration refers to the representation of one sex within occupations.¹

Gender division of labour

Functions and responsibilities associated with or assigned to women's and men's gender roles. May imply that only men are involved in specific activities not carried out by women, and vice versa. Changes in socially constructed gender roles may lead to changes in activities, including both women and men carrying out the same activities.

Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)

A composite index measuring gender inequality in three basic dimensions of empowerment - economic participation and decision-making, political participation and decision-making and power over economic resources.

Gender equality

Socio-cultural norms, values, behaviour and attitudes that have implications whether, and to what extent, women and men have equal status in society, and enjoy the same rights, opportunities and choices.

Gender equity

Fairness and justice in allocation of resources, and in women's and men's access to and control over these resources.

Gender mainstreaming

The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned actions, legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. Effective gender mainstreaming requires investment in capability-building.

Gender-related Development Index (GDI)

A composite index measuring average achievement in the three basic dimensions captured in the Human Development Index - a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living - adjusted to account for inequalities between men and women.

Gender relations

Socially and culturally defined interactions between men and women influenced by prevailing norms and values. Asymmetrical gender relations

reflect the dominance of one gender over the other, which historically and universally tends to be men over women.

Gender role

The socially constructed role of women and men, and the social meaning that societies and communities give to women's and men's biological differences. These roles are influenced by political, economic, cultural, social, religious, ideological and environmental factors and may vary and are changeable over time, as well as from one culture, society and community to another.

Gender role stereotyping

The constant portrayal, such as in the media or in books, of women and men occupying social roles according to the traditional gender division of labour in a particular society. Such gender role stereotyping works to support and reinforce the traditional gender division of labour by portraying it as "normal" and "natural".

Gender-sensitive budget

Refers to a variety of processes and tools, which attempt to assess the impact of government budgets, mainly at national level, on different groups of men and women, through recognizing the ways in which gender relations underpin society and the economy. Gender-sensitive budget initiatives are not separate budgets for women. They include analysis of gender targeted allocations (e.g. special programmes targeting women); they disaggregate by gender the impact of mainstream expenditures across all sectors and services; and they review equal opportunities policies and allocations within government services.

Gender-sensitive monitoring indicators

Quantitative and qualitative sex-disaggregated indicators that measure the process through which programmes and projects contribute to achieving equal benefits for both women and men.

Gender tools

Operational tools that support the process of gender mainstreaming and, by implication, contribute to achieving gender equality and equity. Gender tools may include gender training, gender analysis, gender-sensitive advocacy, gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation, as well as gender-sensitive budgeting and auditing. Gender tools can be thematic-specific, e.g. HIV/AIDS, or sector-specific, e.g. education, health, agriculture.

Human Development Index (HDI)

A composite index measuring average achievement in the three basic dimensions of human development - a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living.

Internalisation

A term that is used in sociology, pedagogy and cultural studies and refers to the individual or group of individuals' appropriation of social values, norms, orientations, stereotypes that belong to people they interact with. As a result of internalization, the structures external to the individual or the group of individuals become the internal regulators of their behavior.

Marital status

The civil status of each individual in relation to the marriage laws or customs of the country, i.e. never married, married, widowed and not remarried, divorced and not remarried, married but legally separated, de facto union.

Women's empowerment

The process through which women are empowered economically, socially and politically which in turn contributes to achieving gender equality and gender equity.

* The glossary presents commonly used definitions in the United Nations System

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