



DOI: 10.54919/physics/55.2024.178o13

## Albania's path to Sustainable Development: A study on the identification and eliminating of "Harmful Practices"

**Esmeralda Kolaneci\***

University of Tirana

1010, 183 "Mother Tereza" Str., Tirana, Albania

**Erida Pejo**

University of Tirana

1010, 183 "Mother Tereza" Str., Tirana, Albania

### Abstract

**Relevance.** This study focuses on the identification and elimination of "harmful practices" in Albania, with a specific focus on early and forced marriages and gender-based violence.

**Purpose.** The research aims to understand how Albania, as a post-socialistic state with its own social, cultural, political, and challenges faced by Albania in achieving the objectives of sustainable development, both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The causes and consequences of these challenges are examined, as well as the strategies employed economic features, has integrated into the global trend of gender equality and women's empowerment.

**Methodology.** The study utilizes methods such as analysis, synthesis, induction, and analogy to explore the by the Albanian government to combat "harmful practices".

**Results.** The study finds that these practices have negative implications for the country, including poverty, limited access to education, and emigration of women. However, it also highlights the positive results of Albania's efforts to eliminate these practices, particularly in terms of gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women.

**Conclusions.** The findings of this study can serve as a valuable example for other countries and contribute to the global discourse on gender equality and women's rights. Additionally, the results can be used to compare contemporary periods with earlier times, highlighting the progress made in supporting girls and women's freedom from inequality, discrimination, and violence.

**Keywords:** gender equality; equal rights; early and forced marriages; gender-based violence; support services; data collection.

### Suggested Citation:

Kolaneci E, Pejo E. Albania's path to Sustainable Development: A study on the identification and eliminating of "Harmful Practices". *Sci Herald Uzhhorod Univ Ser Phys.* 2024;(55):1783-1791. DOI: 10.54919/physics/55.2024.178o13

\*Corresponding author



Copyright © The Author(s). This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

## Introduction

Since March 2023, it has become necessary to find out what challenges Albania faces on the way to fully achieving gender equality and expanding opportunities for girls and women, and how the state opposes them. Despite the fact that the Constitution of Albania states that both men and women are regarded as equal [1], there are still stereotypes that limit women's roles to raising children and doing housework. Additionally, for the past thirty years, there has been a belief that girls should get married as soon as possible, and education for women has been considered optional. If the causes and consequences of this problem are not analysed, it will continue to intensify, and the state will struggle to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5 for a long time.

In October 2023, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) completed its fifth report on Albania as part of the country's obligations under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) [2]. The report provides an assessment of Albania's progress in implementing the provisions of the convention and highlights the challenges and areas for improvement in achieving gender equality in the country. The report will serve as a basis for further dialogue and collaboration between the government of Albania and the CEDAW committee to address the identified issues and work towards the full realization of women's rights in the country. Experts praised Albania's efforts in the fight against human trafficking. At the current stage, it is considered a global problem. Albania adopted a national plan of action against the trade of humans [3]. The network of centres of the National Union based on the problems of victims of human trafficking was also created. Accordingly, it is necessary to analyse the successful steps taken by Albania in solving this problem, which can serve as an example for other countries. However, the problem is that, as of March 2023, inequality between men and women remains one of the most serious problems in Albania. It is believed that despite significant successes, the country has not yet achieved true gender equality [4].

It is a fact that violence against girls and women remains the most serious problem in Albania as of March 2023 [2]. Domestic violence has increased by more than 20% in the last five years [5]. Furthermore, the situation in the state related to the discrimination of girls and women has also worsened during the two-year period of the COVID-19 pandemic [2]. Additionally, as of June 2022, another complex problem in Albania was child and forced marriages. It is a fact that the issue wasn't under the control of the Albanian Institute of Statistics during the aforementioned period of the COVID-19 pandemic, which means that it may have been even worse than now [6]. Accordingly, it is important to analyse Albania's ways to eliminate "harmful practices" and to identify new ways of fighting against discrimination against girls and women. If Albanian society had paid attention to this problem earlier, then by 2023, there would not have been such a serious situation. Therefore, it is now necessary to involve it to a greater extent in overcoming harmful practices with the help of this research.

The problem of women and gender equality in Albania has been the subject of Albanian research over the past

three years. One study by Albanian researcher M. Musabelliu analysed the issue of violence against women in Albanian society, comparing it to the global situation as of March 2023 [7]. However, this study only focused on the challenge of abuse in society and did not address other "harmful practices" in the state. Therefore, it is necessary to compare violence against women with other challenges in Albanian society. Another study by M. Musabelliu examined the problem of gender inequality in Albania, including its causes and general data, such as domestic violence, as of February 2020 [8]. However, the analysis did not cover Albania's methods of eliminating gender inequality. Therefore, it is important to find out how the state is addressing this issue.

In a research study by V. Shakespeare, the influence of gender equality on income was analysed, specifically focusing on women's employment. However, the study did not address the causes of the challenges that Albanian women face in the workplace [9]. This makes it topical to analyse this problem among other harmful practices in Albania. In F. Griffiths's study devoted to the problem of parents and children with autism in Albania, the consequences of early and forced marriage were described [10]. However, the reasons for them were not investigated, which means that it is important to analyse the causes of this challenge in Albania. In E. Dhuli's research, which focused on the problem of women and men in Albania as of November 2021, different challenges in the field of gender equality in Albania, including early marriage and domestic violence, were described [11]. However, this situation was not compared with similar issues in other post-socialist countries. The research also did not cover Albania's methods of eliminating harmful practices.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the main obstacles that Albania faces on its way to achieving gender equality and expanding the rights of girls and women. The main tasks for achieving this purpose include establishing the causes and consequences of these obstacles, determining how the state combats these challenges, and comparing the experiences of Albania with other Balkan and post-Soviet countries, such as Greece, Bulgaria, and Ukraine.

## Materials and Methods

The research was based on the use of the analysis method, which made it possible to identify Albania's "harmful practices" and establish their causes and consequences based on previous studies related to the specified problem. Due to this, the method of synthesis was also relevant for the research, as it was necessary to combine separate aspects that concern Albania's challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5. This allowed for a comparison of the challenges faced by Albania with global challenges, as well as a comparison of the level of evolution of Albania's main challenges before and after the start of COVID-19. This analysis was also necessary to examine the issue of gender equality and ways of eliminating "harmful practices" in other Balkan and post-Soviet countries, such as Bulgaria, Greece, and Ukraine. The method of induction was necessary to determine the general approach of Albania to the elimination of "harmful practices" related to fulfilling the indicators of objective 5 of sustainable development. This involved analysing

Albania's struggle with individual manifestations of these practices, such as early and forced marriages and violence against women. The method of analogy allowed for conclusions to be drawn based on similarities between separate aspects that concern Albania's challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5.

The study utilized Albania's report under Article 68 of the Istanbul Convention, which was published on July 24, 2023. This report covered the period from July 2017 to December 2022 [12]. It enabled an analysis of Albania's efforts to combat violence against women and the changes that occurred in their approach to this issue. The study also relied on Albania's Evaluation Report on Preventing and Combating Women and Domestic Violence, which was issued on November 24, 2017 [13]. This report provided insight into Albania's methods of eliminating "harmful practices" and allowed for an analysis of their legislation. Additionally, the study was based on Albania's Fifth Report under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was received on January 20, 2021 [2]. This report helped determine the level of various issues in Albania, such as trafficking, representation of women in political and public life, equality before the law, rural women, marriage and family life, women's education, women's employment, and social and economic benefits.

Statistics on early marriages for 2022 were also utilized, which allowed for a comparison of the number of girls who got married at a young age in different years [6]. Finally, the study relied on the Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women [14]. This provided a comprehensive overview of the overall situation and the effects of violence on women's physical and mental health as of June 2013.

## **Results**

Albania has been actively working towards supporting gender equality and empowering women and girls for over thirty years. As of 2020, the Albanian Gender Equality Index stood at 60.4 [15]. It is worth noting that Albania was ahead of countries such as Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Croatia, Serbia, Poland, Germany, and Austria [16]. The success of Albania in achieving gender equality can be attributed to its better situation in terms of power dynamics compared to other countries [15]. In January 2020, Albania had the highest representation of females in parliament in the past three decades, and there was a gender balance within the government [16]. However, despite these achievements, there are still several challenges that need to be addressed in order to fully accomplish Sustainable Development Goal 5. These challenges include issues like child and forced marriages, gender-based violence, unequal participation in decision-making processes, discriminatory practices and laws in employment and education, and prevailing gender stereotypes [17].

Patriarchal customs still dominate Albanian society, with males being considered superior to females [18]. While the collapse of socialism in Albania led to the rise of democratic trends and principles, full gender equality has not been achieved due to lingering patriarchal remnants. This can be seen as one of the main causes of Albania's challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5. This issue is not unique to Albania, as post-socialist

countries globally also face similar challenges. For example, Bulgarian society and families still have strong patriarchal relations between males and females [19]. Ukraine also faces challenges in achieving gender equality due to patriarchal principles [20]. According to Albanian researcher M. Musabelliu, the respect for women in Albania has been undermined by the influence of the Ottoman Empire, which considered females inferior to males. Furthermore, current challenges in Albania are also influenced by principles of nationalism and the revival of traditionalism, which reflect the rules of the Ottoman Empire [8]. In the communist era, men and women were recognized as equal according to socialist principles [21]. Nevertheless, gender equality is primarily seen as a new global trend that has emerged in the modern world. Besides the aforementioned causes, Albania's "harmful practices" could also depend on inefficient legal responses, limited education, living in rural areas, conflicts with family members, and excessive alcohol consumption. For example, this concerns forced and child marriages [22].

Forced and child marriages were regarded as Albania's complex issue as of June 2022 [6]. It is the fact, that in 2019 twenty girls got married under age. In one year later this number was sixteen [12]. Child and forced marriages were more common phenomenon for girls living in rural areas or mountains. Beside this, Egyptian and Roman communities also preferred child marriage due to strong customs [22]. Forced and child marriages were regarded as a complex issue in Albania as of June 2022 [6]. It is a fact that in 2019, twenty girls were married under age. One year later, this number decreased to sixteen [12]. Child and forced marriages were more common among girls living in rural areas or mountains. Additionally, the Egyptian and Roma communities also preferred child marriage due to strong customs [22]. Exploitation and poverty were typical consequences of early marriages. Furthermore, young women from impoverished backgrounds were more vulnerable to having many children [18]. According to INSTAT 2002, the number of poor women giving birth to more than three children was 12 percent higher than the number of wealthy women [23]. Forced marriage may have caused various mental and physical health problems. Unwanted pregnancies were also a typical result. Moreover, it may have led to maternal-child mortality [9]. Forced marriage was often accompanied by women migrating. This phenomenon was common not only in Albania but also in Bulgaria, where it was even more affected by sexual violence and abuse than in Albanian society [24]. Therefore, another consequence of child and forced marriage was sexual abuse [11].

Gender-based violence was also regarded as one of the most complex issues in Albanian society [2]. As of February 2020, a total of 3,414 girls and women were reported as victims of any form of violence [8]. Mental health problems, such as stress and depression, were among the main consequences of domestic violence. Additionally, domestic violence had a negative influence on children. According to testimonies from affected Albanian mothers, their daughters and sons exhibited anger and aggression towards other adults and children. Sons, in particular, were more likely to imitate their father's behaviour and habits. Furthermore, children who were exposed to domestic violence towards their mothers may

have experienced difficulties in communication [25]. They were also more vulnerable to child trafficking compared to children who hadn't experienced the effects of domestic violence [26].

As mentioned earlier, the representation of women in the Albanian parliament was high as of January 2020. Albania's score in the domain of power, in general, was 60.9, which was higher than the EU-28's score of 51.9. This was primarily due to the higher representation of Albanian women in subdomains of economic power with 74.5 points and political power with 71.7 points. In contrast, the EU-28's scores on the subdomains of political and economic power were 55 and 43.6, respectively (Table 1). However, despite these achievements, as of January

2020, Albanian males still occupied more than 85 percent of positions in public organizations, indicating women's underrepresentation [15]. Additionally, Albania had a lower score than the EU-28 in the subdomain of social power, with 42.3 points compared to the EU-28's 58.2 points. Furthermore, according to the Fifth periodic report submitted by Albania under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2020: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Albania's objective for female representation in the political sphere was around fifty percent, but the actual representation of women was only 30 percent [2]. This lack of female representation in decision-making reinforced strong patriarchal principles, which was one of its main consequences.

**Table 1.** Gender equality index in the domain and sub-domains of power, Republic of Albania

	Power	Political	Economic	Social
EU-28	51.9	55	43.6	58.2
Al	60.9	71.7	74.5	42.3

As of January 2020, Albania's position in the domain of work was twenty-fifth out of thirty-one countries. This placed it ahead of countries such as Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Italy, and Greece. However, Albania was still behind Balkan countries such as Croatia, Bulgaria, and Serbia [15]. The achievements in the domain of work and power in Albania were uneven. In 2018, women held more positions than men in sectors such as education, human health, and social work. However, as of 2016, more than fifty percent of surveyed employees expressed dissatisfaction with their salaries [16]. This dissatisfaction was not specific to women alone. However, women still earned lower incomes compared to men [25]. This income disparity was seen as one of the major aspects of inequality in the workplace [27]. Additionally, women with lower levels of education tended to have lower incomes compared to women with higher education, which further contributed to the income gap. Women also traditionally held lower positions than men. Overall, the inequality in the workplace limited various opportunities for women, including self-development, further education, and rest.

In traditional patriarchal Albanian families, especially in remote areas, girls used to drop out of school at the age of 12-13, as they preferred early family life over education. However, limited economic empowerment was a consequence of lower education. Gender equality had a significant impact on the development of Albania's economy, as recognized by Albanian researchers in June 2014 [28]. In 2016, more than 300 interviewed women and men supported the idea that wives should sacrifice their careers for their families [25]. However, women more often disagreed with this notion compared to men. Moreover, there was a gap among females, with those who were married supporting this idea more than those who were not. Furthermore, women with higher education were less likely to be willing to sacrifice their careers for their families compared to women with lower education. This demonstrated the dominance of gender stereotypes in Albanian society, which reinforced gender inequality and limited opportunities for women. The main issue was that a significant number of women, due to the consequences of other "harmful practices", adhered to gender stereotypes in

Albania. These aforementioned "harmful practices" and their consequences are prevalent in other Balkan countries as well. For instance, as of 2015, 25 percent of women were victims of violence in Greece [24].

The Albanian government is strongly committed to eliminating "harmful practices" and has set a target of achieving this by 2030 [13]. This includes addressing challenges such as child and forced marriage. The minimum marriage age has been established by law [18]. However, in recent years, the government has not effectively regulated the elimination of marriage under the age of 18 as required by the law. It is possible that some early marriages have gone unregistered. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation. It is crucial for Albania to prioritize preventing young girls under the age of 18 from entering into early marriages. Albanian society needs to recognize the seriousness of the consequences of child and forced marriage. Each girl should take responsibility for her own self-development and education. The elimination of child marriage and its underlying causes should be integrated into all spheres, including education, social, religious, and political domains.

As of March 2023, the Albanian authorities have actively continued to focus on overcoming the serious issue of gender-based violence [7]. Significant legal improvements have been made, including support for women who have been violated by their abusers and the establishment of shelters and centres for victims [10]. However, despite these efforts, Albanian women continue to experience violence. Therefore, it is crucial for the Albanian authorities and society as a whole to prioritize the issue of overcoming gender-based violence. Additional amendments are needed to effectively eliminate sexual violence. In recent years, the state has made more efforts to combat domestic violence, and many Albanian women have found ways to overcome violence and its consequences [12]. These women should serve as role models for other abused girls, and the authorities should focus on promoting a deeper understanding of these issues through the mass media and other platforms. Women who have overcome gender-based violence should motivate others not to tolerate any form of abuse and to speak openly

about their experiences. The Albanian authorities should regularly monitor the extent to which women are willing to disclose the violence they have experienced through public surveys.

As mentioned above, gender-based violence is a serious issue in other Balkan and post-socialist countries. For example, Greece has been focused on addressing it for the past thirty years. The authorities have implemented a special national program and various measures to eliminate gender-based violence [29]. This includes the establishment of social and psychological support services, counselling centres, and shelters for victims. In Ukraine, the authorities have also actively supported the idea of eliminating gender-based violence [30]. The conflict with Russia has further exacerbated the problem. However, one of Ukraine's challenges in combating gender-based violence has been a lack of accommodation options for abused women who want to leave their abusers. This has been a longstanding issue for the past thirty years [31]. Many victims continue to live in the same house as their abusers due to a lack of safe alternatives [32]. It is crucial for the authorities in these countries to continue their efforts in addressing gender-based violence. This includes providing more resources and support for victims, raising awareness, and implementing effective policies to prevent and respond to violence. Collaborative efforts between governments, civil society organizations, and international partners are also essential in tackling this issue.

In general, the Albanian authorities need to work on changing societal views on gender equality and feminism. It is important to note that men and boys in Albania tend to adhere to gender stereotypes more than women [25]. Therefore, it is necessary to motivate Albanian males to challenge and overcome these stereotypes. This can be achieved through the use of special films, TV shows, and books that can have a significant impact on people's perceptions and attitudes. Additionally, Albanian men should be encouraged to recognize and appreciate the worth and capabilities of women. It is a fact that Albanian families often maintain a more patriarchal structure compared to families in other Balkan countries [24]. For instance, many married Albanian girls migrate from their home country to be with their husbands abroad. In contrast, the migration of Bulgarian women is often seen as an informal divorce. In conclusion, the elimination of gender stereotypes would greatly contribute to overcoming other challenges faced by Albania on its path towards achieving full gender equality.

## **Discussion**

The study was based on revealing the problem of Albania's challenges on its way to fully achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5. The causes of Albanian "harmful practices" were analysed. As a result, this study identified remnants of communist ideology as one of the main reasons for Albania's challenges.

In the result of M. Babovic's research on the issue of gender equality and labour migrations from Albania and Bulgaria to Greece, strong patriarchal traditions caused by socialism were also considered dominant in Bulgarian and Albanian society [24]. However, they were regarded as the reasons only for such an Albania's challenge as labour migration. Their consequences were not analysed. In the

result of this study, strong patriarchal traditions were regarded as main cause of other "harmful practices". In the course of this research, in the context of the impact of such a challenge as gender stereotypes on the Albanian society, the goal of emigration of the majority of women was established. It was also compared with the same problem in Bulgaria. In the study by E.A. Savela and A.S. Yaroshenko on the problem of gender policy in national police of Ukraine the influence of communist ideology on the current situation in Ukraine was confirmed [20], which was the similar to the result of this research. However, only aspects of gender politics were generally analysed, and separate Ukrainian "harmful practices" were not described. The issue of gender policy was also not compared with gender policy in other post-socialist countries, which was the result of this study.

The research of L.R. Nalivayko and I.O. Hrytsai, which focused on the features of gender policy in the context of democratization of society, was the analysis of the consequences of communist ideology [30]. It was regarded as the main reason for Ukraine's challenges which is similar to the results of this study. However, the authors only described Ukrainian features. In the result of the research of M. Musabelliu on the problem of gender inequality in Albania, the position of Albanian women in the Ottoman, communist, and modern eras was compared [8]. Nationalism was regarded as one of the causes of modern gender inequality. This study did not use that approach to the problem. Instead, gender equality was regarded as a global problem that arose in the modern world in the era of revival of nationalism and democratization. Other reasons for the Albanian challenges, which were not established by the aforementioned scholars, were also analysed. As a result of this study, the main challenges faced by Albania in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 were identified as child and forced marriages, gender-based violence, unequal participation in decision-making, discriminatory practices and laws related to employment or education, and gender stereotypes. Other studies did not describe all of these main "harmful practices" in Albania. In a study by S. Ertan and F. Yol on the global challenge of forced marriage, they identified similar causes and consequences, which align with the findings of this study [22].

The consequences of challenges such as gender-based violence, specifically domestic violence, were established in this research. Similar specifics of Albania's resistance to violence against women were analysed by M. Musabelliu in her research on the problem of women and abuse in Albanian society [7]. It was identified as a result of gender inequality in Albanian society. The effects of violence against women determined in this study were similar to those described in M. Musabelliu's research, except for its impact on the children of abused women, as it was determined that children usually did not feel its consequences. In a study by R.N. Haarr on the problem of domestic violence in Albania, the main types and features of domestic violence in the country were described, which aligned with the findings of this research [27]. The consequences of this challenge found by the author did not differ from those established in this study. However, the results were different regarding the impact of domestic violence on children's physical health, as it was determined

in this research that it did have an influence on their physical health. In research by I.O. Hrytsai on the mechanism of ensuring gender equality in Ukraine, the features of the fight against violence against women were described, and new methods were determined, which were similar to those established in this research [31].

As a result of the study by M. Dauti on public attitudes towards gender equality in Albania, the influence of gender stereotypes on the reinforcement of gender inequality in the country was identified [25]. This finding aligns with the results of this research, which also regarded gender stereotypes as the main factors that significantly impact the reinforcement of other challenges in Albania. In the aforementioned study, the problem of the impact of domestic violence on children was also analysed. However, the effects determined in that study differed from the findings of this research. M. Dauti highlighted the features of gender inequality in the field of work and household affairs, as well as the influence of gender stereotypes on it. This study also identified manifestations of discrimination against Albanian women in the domain of work and power, but the specific manifestations may have been different. It was found as a result of this study that gender stereotypes limited the opportunities of Albanian women, including their access to education and career growth. This study confirmed that gender equality has a significant impact on the development of the small Albanian economy. In the research by R.Z. Shehi and M. Imerai on the impact of European gender policy on Albanian economic development, the specifics of the connection between Albanian gender policy, the labour market, and economic growth were highlighted [28]. In this context, the great influence of gender equality on the development of the Albanian economy was confirmed in a similar manner.

To sum up, this study, like others dealing with the issue of gender equality in Albania, identifies the causes of Albania's challenges. The reasons established by the author were similar to those analysed by other researchers, with a few exceptions. The causes of Albania's challenges determined in this research were also similar to the causes of "harmful practices" in other post-socialist countries, as described in other studies. This research also analysed the consequences of Albania's challenges, including a comparison of their characteristics before and after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. While other scholars did not determine the implications of all of Albania's major challenges on its path to full gender equality, the implications highlighted by other researchers were similar to the implications of Albania's challenges determined in this study, except for the impact on children of abused women. This study also highlighted Albania's methods of eliminating "harmful practices" and compared them with efforts to address similar challenges in other Balkan and post-socialist countries. Other scholars did not analyse the methods of combating all of Albania's main "harmful practices" and did not compare this problem with the situation in other post-socialist countries. The perspective of further countering Albania's challenges established in this study partially coincides with the perspectives identified by other researchers.

## Conclusions

The main challenge facing Albania on its way to achieving full gender equality as of October 2023 includes forced and child marriage, gender-based violence, unequal participation in decision-making, discriminatory practices and laws, and gender stereotypes. The main reason for these challenges is determined to be the remnants of communist ideology in Albanian society. In other post-socialist countries, such as Bulgaria and Ukraine, gender inequality is also stimulated by strong patriarchal customs that dominated in the socialist era. Other factors contributing to Albania's "harmful practices" include the level of education, area of residence, family upbringing, and bad habits.

As a result of Albania's "harmful practices" related to fulfilling the indicators of objective 5 of sustainable development, Albanian women have limited opportunities for personal choices in their personal lives, self-realization, and education. They also experience various mental and physical health problems. Career growth and participation in the public life of the country also become challenges for them. Albania's "harmful practices" also have an impact on the behaviour and health of children of abused women. In other post-socialist countries, such as Greece, Bulgaria, and Ukraine, the challenges and their consequences on the way to achieving full gender equality are similar to those in Albania.

Albania has actively resisted challenges over the past thirty years. One of the main methods of struggle has been setting the minimum marriageable age for girls and boys, adopting legislative initiatives to combat domestic violence, supporting victims of domestic violence in leaving abusive households, and organizing shelters for women who have experienced any form of violence. Albania has also conducted public surveys to assess attitudes towards gender equality and the willingness of violence victims to speak out, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the situation regarding these challenges worsened during the pandemic, highlighting the need for deeper societal involvement in combating "harmful practices" in Albania. Gender equality should be prioritized in various spheres, such as political, social, educational, religious, and economic.

Gender stereotypes are indeed identified as one of the biggest challenges in Albania. To address this, Albania should focus on directing more efforts through mass media and educational materials to change societal views on gender equality and feminism. Similar methods of combating "harmful practices" have been employed in other post-socialist countries like Greece, Bulgaria, and Ukraine. However, it is noted that patriarchal traditions have remained more prevalent in Albanian families compared to Bulgarian ones over the past thirty years. The research conducted in Albania aimed to identify the main "harmful practices", determine their causes and consequences, analyse the state's resistance to challenges, establish future prospects, and compare Albania's situation with other Balkan and post-socialist countries. These tasks were accomplished to achieve the purpose of the study.

The results of the study are indeed significant in the context of comparing contemporary periods with earlier times in terms of women's rights and gender equality. It highlights the progress made in achieving freedom from

inequality, discrimination, and violence for girls and women in Albania. The findings can also provide insights for further research on how Albanian women personally counter gender inequality within their own households. This can shed light on the strategies and methods employed by women to challenge and overcome patriarchal norms and practices within their immediate environments. Understanding these personal methods can contribute to

the development of more effective interventions and policies to promote gender equality in Albania.

#### Acknowledgements

None.

#### Conflict of Interest

None.

#### References

- [1] Constitution of Albania. 2012. [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Albania\\_2012](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Albania_2012)
- [2] Fifth periodic report submitted by Albania under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2020: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. 2021. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3969183#record-files-collapse-header>
- [3] National Action Plan for the Fight Against Human Beings Trafficking 2021-2023. 2021. <https://tdh-albania.org/en/national-action-plan-fight-against-human-beings-trafficking-2021-2023>
- [4] Olivíe I, Gracia M. Is this the end of globalization (as we know it)? *Globalizat.* 2020;17(6):990-1007.
- [5] Choi S, de Souza NMF, Lind A, Parashar S, Prúgl E, Zalewski M. Woman, life, freedom. *Int Femin J Polit.* 2022;24(5):671-674.
- [6] Zero child marriages in Albania in 2022. 2023. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/zero-child-marriages-in-albania-in-2022/>
- [7] Musabelliu M. Albania social briefing: March 2023: The month of (lost) women in Albania. *Week Brief.* 2023;60(3). [https://china-cee.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023s03\\_Albania.pdf](https://china-cee.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023s03_Albania.pdf)
- [8] Musabelliu M. Albania social briefing: Albania and gender (in)equality. *Week Brief.* 2020;26(3). <https://china-cee.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2020s02Albania.pdf>
- [9] Shakespeare V. *Analysis of child care costs, effect on income budgetary and fiscal orientation on the gender solution.* Tirana: UN Women; 2022.
- [10] Griffiths F. *The Effects of Telehealth Training on parents of children with autism in Albania.* Brigham City: Brigham Young University; 2020.
- [11] Dhuli E. *Women and men in Albania 2021.* Tirana: INSTAT; 2021.
- [12] Report submitted by Albania pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 4 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (1st thematic evaluation round). 2023. <https://rm.coe.int/state-report-addressed-to-grevio-/1680ac0c69>
- [13] GREVIO's (Baseline) Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) ALBANIA. 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-s-baseline-evaluation-report-on-legislative-and-other-measures-/1680ad79b9>
- [14] World Health Organization. Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, exec. 2013. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564625>
- [15] Babovic M, Miluka J. *Gender Equality Index for the Republic of Albania 2020.* Tirana: Institute of Statistics; 2020.
- [16] Intersecting inequalities: Gender Equality Index. 2019. <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/intersecting-inequalities-gender-equality-index>
- [17] Tavassoli A, Soltani S, Jamali SM, Ale Ebrahim N. A research on violence against women: Are the trends growing. *Iran Rehabil J.* 2022;20(3):425-440.
- [18] Davila AL, Johnson L, Postmus JL. Examining the relationship between economic abuse and mental health among Latina intimate partner violence survivors in United States. *J Int Viol.* 2021;36(1-2):287-310.
- [19] Kapllanaj M, Pino S, Haxhiymeri E. Mother employment and the role of care services in Albania. *Euro Sci J.* 2020;12(5):129-139.
- [20] Savela EA, Yaroshenko AS. The issue of gender policy in the national police of Ukraine: Theoretical and legal aspect. *Precarpath Legal Herald.* 2020;3(28):181-185.
- [21] Williamson T, Wagstaff DL, Godwin J, Smith N. Mothering ideology: A qualitative exploration of mother's perceptions of navigating motherhood pressures and partner relationships. *Sex Role.* 2023;88:101-117.
- [22] Ertan S, Yol F. Forced marriage. In: *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Global Security Studies* (pp. 1-7). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan; 2019.
- [23] INSTAT. *Living standards measurement survey.* Tirana: Institute of Statistics; 2002.
- [24] Babovic M. *Gender Equality Index: Measuring progress in the Western Balkans 2023.* Vilnius: European Institute for Gender Equality; 2023.
- [25] Dauti M. *Public perceptions and attitudes towards gender equality in Albania.* Tirana: Majlinda Nishku; 2016.
- [26] Ngjela J, Xhaferri I, Qana N, Hyka J, Hawa S, Begotaraj E. The evolution of the family in the contemporary society: The case of Albania. *SCIREA J Health.* 2022;6(5):65-81.
- [27] Haarr RN. *Domestic violence in Albania: National population-based survey.* Tirana: INSTAT/UND; 2013.

- [28] Shehi RZ, Imeraj M. Impact of EU gender equality policy on Albanian economic development. *Academ J Interdis Stud*. 2014;3(3):146-152.
- [29] National programme on preventing and combating violence against women (2009-2013). 2015. <https://www.euromedwomen.foundation/pg/en/documents/view/4997/national-programme-on-preventing-and-combating-violence-against-women-20092013>
- [30] Nalivayko LR, Hrytsai IO. Gender policy in the system of determinants of the democratization of society: The Ukrainian dimension. In: *Legal Science of Ukraine: Current State, Challenges and Development Prospects* (pp. 82-97). Kharkiv: Pravo; 2021.
- [31] Hrytsai IO. *Mechanism for ensuring the principle of gender equality: Theory and practice*. Kyiv: Hi-Tech Press; 2018.
- [32] Balasynovych NO. Gender democracy: Peculiarities of institution in Ukraine. *POLITIKUS*. 2020;5:29-34.

## **Шлях Албанії до сталого розвитку: Дослідження щодо виявлення та усунення «шкідливих практик»**

**Есмеральда Коланечі**

Тиранський університет

1010, вул. «Мати Тереза», 183, Тирана, Албанія

**Еріда Пехо**

Тиранський університет

1010, вул. «Мати Тереза», 183, м. Тирана, Албанія

### **Анотація**

**Актуальність.** Це дослідження фокусується на виявленні та усуненні «шкідливих практик» в Албанії, з особливим акцентом на ранніх і примусових шлюбах та гендерно-обумовленому насильстві.

**Мета.** Дослідження має на меті зрозуміти, як Албанія, як постсоціалістична держава з власними соціальними, культурними, політичними та викликами, з якими стикається Албанія у досягненні цілей сталого розвитку, як до, так і після пандемії COVID-19. Розглядаються причини та наслідки цих викликів, а також стратегії, що застосовуються з урахуванням економічних особливостей, інтегровані у глобальний тренд гендерної рівності та розширення прав і можливостей жінок.

**Методологія.** У дослідженні використано такі методи, як аналіз, синтез, індукція та аналогія для вивчення заходів, які вживає уряд Албанії для боротьби зі «шкідливими практиками».

**Результати.** Дослідження показує, що така практика має негативні наслідки для країни, включаючи бідність, обмежений доступ до освіти та еміграцію жінок. Однак він також підкреслює позитивні результати зусиль Албанії щодо усунення цієї практики, зокрема щодо гендерної рівності та розширення прав і можливостей дівчат і жінок.

**Висновки.** Результати цього дослідження можуть послужити цінним прикладом для інших країн і зробити внесок у глобальний дискурс щодо гендерної рівності та прав жінок. Крім того, результати можна використовувати для порівняння сучасних періодів із попередніми, підкреслюючи прогрес, досягнутий у підтримці свободи дівчат і жінок від нерівності, дискримінації та насильства.

**Ключові слова:** гендерна рівність; рівні права; ранні та примусові шлюби; гендерне насильство; служби підтримки; збір даних.