



Azerbaijan Human Development Report 2007

**GENDER ATTITUDES IN AZERBAIJAN:
*TRENDS AND CHALLENGES***



This year's Azerbaijan Human Development Report focuses on gender trends and challenges in the country by presenting findings of the first national independent survey of gender attitudes ever conducted in Azerbaijan or any other CIS country. The Report aims to identify gender attitudes and analyse their impact on gender equality in the country, thereby stimulating public debate and encouraging national policy action for ensuring greater gender equality.

This Report has been produced by the United Nations Development Programme in collaboration with the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues of the Republic of Azerbaijan, with financial support from the Government of Norway.

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State Committee for Family,
Women and Children's Issues



Government of Norway



Azerbaijan

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This report presents findings of a gender attitudes survey conducted in November 2005. This survey was conducted in the whole country undertaken by a national research centre with the findings analysed by a team of national gender specialists and with the assistance of an international expert in gender and development. This is the first national independent survey of gender attitudes ever conducted in Azerbaijan and, we are led to believe, in the CIS. The main purpose was to identify gender attitudes and analyse their impact on gender equality in the country and develop policy recommendations. It is hoped that the survey results will be stimulating for conducting a public debate and encouraging policy action for ensuring greater gender equality in the country.

Equal rights for women and men are guaranteed under the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and national legislation based on it and coordinated with the international legal regulations. However, in many cases the legislation does not work or there is a lack of consistency in the implementation. As a result, the presence of gender disparities remains widespread in the country. Women, in particular IDP women, remain one of the most vulnerable groups-with higher unemployment and greater marginalization in economic activities due to lack of access to economic resources, (including credit, and land ownership), and their low participation in decision-making processes.

The gap between de jure and de facto gender equality is one of the major problems that Azerbaijan will have to address, particularly since this is as much a problem of social attitudes as it is a problem of good governance, specifically in the implementation of laws designed to protect the rights of women as human rights.

We wish to thank the State Committee for Family, Women, and Children's Issues of the Republic of Azerbaijan for their support as the principal government counterpart for the report. We are also very grateful to the Government of the Kingdom of Norway for their encouragement and financial support provided via the Royal Norwegian Embassy.

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FOREWORD

The world is rapidly changing. We too are changing. This “we” includes all of Azerbaijan and each of us as a part of its soul. The “we” is our past and future as well as our challenging present.

It is our fate that for centuries the destiny of Azerbaijan has been determined by geopolitical coordinates. This land is not only a crossroads of cultures, political ideas and religions, and adjacent ethnicities. This is also a place where they peacefully co-exist, generating unique cultural diversity which is semantically polymorphous, and forming a society with its own distinct culture and behavioural standards as well as inward and outward attitudes. Tolerance and humanism, faith in people and in love, individual quests for the truth and desire for unity take priority in national value system of Azerbaijan.

What are the relationships of men and women in our society? Which social attitudes and injunctions influence them? What are the historical evidence and the future prospects of these relationships? How can stereotypical perceptions of femininity and masculinity, ingrained traditions, set social norms that prescribe standard male and female behaviour, be adjusted to the pace of social changes? What shall we take with us into the future, and what is best left behind in the past?

Finding constructive answers to these questions is essential, because gender equality, recognising the individual-regardless of sex-as the central figure of societal progress, can precisely set the nation on a long and thorny path to democratisation and determine the trajectory of the nation's sustainable development.

The present National Human Development Report pursues only one goal: presenting a gender panorama and gender discourse of contemporary Azerbaijan without intentionally covering up or obscuring any germane issues. This discourse reflects cultural capital of the Azerbaijani people which has accumulated over the millennia, challenges of the past decades, economic and political changes and hardships of a continued military aggression and the occupation of 1/5 of the country's territory, with having an effect of varied form and magnitude influence on women and men.

In the age of expanding globalization, erasing borders, interacting civilizations and traditions, we shall endeavour to safeguard all the positive elements of gender relationships maintained by successive generations of the Azerbaijani people. We shall be able to preserve these time-tested ethical values and norms and integrate in the changing realities of the world.

We support the conception of human development which identifies human potential as the keystone of development and views economic growth as a means and not the end of progress. However the effective realization of this vision depends on the success in establishing gender equality-i.e. implementing gender-balanced government policies and developing gender-sensitive civil society, transforming gender equality into social reality. Only then will we have created favourable conditions for addressing the needs and developing the intellectual and personal capacities of every citizen, and only then will we be able to deliver a free 21st Century individual.

We will put forth our best efforts to achieve that.

Mehriban Aliyeva
President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation,
UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador,
Member of the Milli Mejlis (National Parliament)



FOREWORD

Achieving gender equality is one of the UN's highest priorities. Unless men and women are treated equally and have equal opportunity to participate in socio-economic life, the potential of half the population will not be fully utilized. Gender equality is therefore a necessary precondition for fully achieving human development. While it is true that women are generally the victims of gender inequality, it is also a fact that men have their own difficulties specific to their gender.

Azerbaijan has a proud record of enabling women to play a greater role in society. History shows that the first school for girls in the Muslim world was established in Baku and that the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was one of the first countries in the world to grant women the right to vote. This tradition of equality has continued since Azerbaijan became independent again in 1991 with the rights of women and men enshrined in the National Constitution and with Azerbaijan ratifying the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

In rapidly developing countries like Azerbaijan, particularly those undergoing transition to market economy and democracy, we can see that gender inequality is essentially 'a state of mind'. Consequently, we believe that one of the most important factors in improving gender equality is to understand gender attitudes and to use this information to enhance gender equality.

Taking the above mentioned into account, UNDP in close cooperation with the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues agreed that it was time to take stock of the state of gender equality in Azerbaijan by selecting the topic of gender attitudes as the subject of the 2007 Azerbaijan Human Development Report. Consequently, UNDP commissioned a local research centre to survey gender attitudes in the country and engaged a national consultant team guided by an international gender expert to analyse the survey findings. This report is not only important for Azerbaijan, but also can be a model for other countries in the region, since it is our understanding that this is the first survey of gender attitudes conducted in a CIS country.

We wish to thank the State Committee for Family, Women, and Children's Issues for their support as the principal government counterpart for the report. It is commendable that the Government, financially supported by UNDP and the Kingdom of Norway, has taken this very innovative approach of asking the Azerbaijani people what they think of gender. The State Committee is the UN's main Government partner on gender and has worked closely with UNDP and other UN entities in promoting gender equality. We look forward to continuing our cooperation with the State Committee in changing gender attitudes revealed in the survey that was jointly commissioned.

Special thanks should also be extended to all those who contributed to the implementation of the survey, particularly the 1,500 men and women of Azerbaijan who voluntarily participated in the survey and the hundreds of people who participated in the interviews conducted with focus and expert groups. Experts interviewed for the survey among them Members of Parliament, high ranking government officials, representatives of the national NGOs and the international organisations, and professionals from a variety of fields deserve our special gratitude.

I look forward to this report stimulating a public debate on the status of men and women in Azerbaijani society in order that the Azerbaijani people can decide for themselves how best to improve gender relations and roles for achieving greater progress in the country.



Bruno Pouezat
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Equality, peace and development are the main principles determining the progress of mankind which strives to build a harmonious society based on these principles and find a means to regulate human relations. At the end of the 20th century the international community, while formulating the most essential development goals of the new millennium, identified 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 - as a critical factor for developing democracy and achieving social justice and tolerance. Culture has a crucial role to play in this process, because cultural norms prescribe the framework regulating gender relations - relations of men and women - in their social functions, democracy, and achieving social justice and tolerance.

UNDP and the Government of Azerbaijan with the financial support of the Royal Government of Norway initiated the implementation of a survey of gender attitudes that would be a basis for 2007 National Human Development Report. The Report provides both qualitative and quantitative analysis of an independent survey of gender attitudes, and assesses gender potential as a principal condition for improving the quality of life. Gender relations and attitudes were chosen for the subject of this report to determine the processes that affect gender equality in a country that has a legal framework that complies with international standards and constitutionally recognizes the equality of the sexes.

Conducting a special research of gender attitudes in a conflict affected country is challenging in itself, and more so when that country is in transition from a totalitarian system to democracy, from a centralized to a market economy and from strictly regulated norms to freedom of will and the protection of human rights. As a result, the research revealed not only pressing issues, but also identified gender-sensitive phenomena in the system of social relations and exposed not only acute problems that are country-specific but also those that are more universal in character. The Report is based on the data collected through the survey of gender relations and gender attitudes but also uses the available statistical data from the official sources where appropriate.

To conform to research goals, a complex methodology was applied, including a countrywide survey targeting 1,500 respondents, interviews conducted in the respective 80 focus groups following predetermined scenarios, and in-depth interviews with more than 50 experts (e.g. government officials, public figures, representatives from non-governmental organisations, and gender specialists). It should be noted that because data was acquired from independent sources, in order to arrive at more valid conclusions, various comparative methods (including the technique of sequential triangulation) were used at later stages of the survey. The report reflects the survey data processed in the SPSS programme.

The Azerbaijan Human Development Report comprises six chapters, each of which depicts the most pressing issues in the Republic of Azerbaijan, a country that conforms to the internationally prioritized gender solutions. "Conclusions" and "Recommendations" are presented in separate sections. Survey methodology and Human Development Indices are given in Annexes. Additional information is placed in boxes. Tables, graphs and diagrams are used in the report as pictorial information.

The Introduction reviews the gender situation in Azerbaijan with a brief excursion into history, depicting the formation of gender relations in the country, specificities of their evolution in the conditions of the dominant communist ideology and in the post-Soviet period divided into a pre-Beijing phase and post-Beijing one.

Chapter One provides analysis on the national economy and living conditions and describes gender differences in the labour situation and employment structure directly or indirectly

affecting the economic development of the country, effects of labour migration (domestic and external) and the impact of labour migration on gender attitudes of men and women.

Chapter Two Describes and analyses the gender attitudes of the respondents and its influence on boys and girls access to various levels within the education system, choice of professional training and gender-specific limitations in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Special attention is given to revealing stereotypes of educational opportunities and their correlation to locale, income level, religiousness, and access to ICT.

Chapter Three describes the gender aspects of health problems, with an emphasis on reproductive health and selective abortion, and a particular focus on social norms regulating the attitudes to healthcare and preventive health practices. It also contains data reflecting the national healthcare system, the respective legislation in force, and potential for its development, as well as the information on ecological problems.

Chapter Four focuses on the analysis of family issues taking into consideration the high socio-cultural value of family in Azerbaijan. Special attention is attached to identifying the gender asymmetry in new family models. The chapter outlines a gap in gender stereotypes on the division of responsibility, decision-making, intra-family practices, and normative and factual behaviour.

Chapter Five reviews the situation with reference to violence, trafficking, and prostitution. Discussion of the problem of violence becomes especially acute for Azerbaijan since it is in the state of armed conflict, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) being forced to flee from their homes and subjected to personal violence and human rights violations. Correlation of the data made available by means of different methods and use of statistical and official data enabled the researchers to assess the interrelation of these phenomena from the perspectives of education, income, religion, etc.

Chapter Six describes the gender aspects of social relations, formation of civil society and political activity. The chapter separately reviews gender problems mirrored in the media.

Discussion of the above-mentioned issues is of vital importance in the context of formulating civil society in the post-Soviet period, identifying prospects for human development and preserving cultural identity in the conditions of intensive globalization, building a democratic government in the country that has a rich history which goes back thousands years and which obtained independence some fifteen years ago. The survey respondents' answers, experts' assessment and the way the people representing different strata in society perceive the present status of gender relationships have revealed varied gender attitudes and helped formulate a set of policy recommendations which could stimulate people to a more proactive attainment of gender balance in all spheres of social life.

The report highlights the key outcomes of the national attitudinal survey and provides conclusions and policy recommendations.

Conclusions are based on the survey results and utilize the outcomes produced through each of three data collection methods employed in the survey.

Recommendations are made separately and are based on the survey findings. They conform to the priorities identified in the area of poverty reduction and economic development of Azerbaijan, gender development strategies stipulated in the Millennium Development Goals, Beijing Platform for Action, and other respective international commitments.

The Annex provides further information on the survey methodology (**Annex I**) and describes the main human development indices, e.g. HDI, GDI, and GEM (**Annex II**).

The chapters of the present Report do not have identical structures, given the divergent character and status of the issues analysed in the different areas. The Report's editorial group tried to preserve the authentic version and style of the text provided by national contributors. As a result, each chapter has its own relative distinction, which makes it possible working with them separately and does not lessen the interest in using the Report material as a whole.

We hope the Report preparation process helped build national capacity in adequately understanding gender attitudes and conducting similar national attitude surveys and introduced the international experts to yet another of many ethno-culturally diverse forms of gender relations

To promote the use of surveys of gender attitudes in the CIS and facilitate the Report's dissemination in the region, the Report is published in Russian, in addition to Azerbaijani and English.

FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS

AZM	- Azerbaijani Manat (former local currency)
AZN*	- Azerbaijani New Manat
CIS	- Commonwealth of Independent States
CEDAW	- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
FG	- Focus Group
GDI	- Gender Development Index
GDP	- Gross Domestic Product
GEM	- Gender Empowerment Measure
HIV/AIDS	- Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HDI	- Human Development Index
ICT	- Information and Communication Technologies
IDP	- Internally Displaced Person
ILO	- International Labour Organisation
MDG	- Millennium Development Goal
MP	- Member of Parliament
NGO	- Non-Governmental Organisation
OSCE	- Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PSU	- Primary Sampling Units
SCFWCI	- State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues
SPSS	- Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSAC	- State Commission for the Admission of Students
UN	- United Nations
UNDP	- United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	- United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFEM	- United Nations Development Fund for Women
USSR	- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

* Re-denomination of the local currency. On 1 January 2006, a new Azerbaijani manat (AZN) was introduced at a value of 5,000 old manat (AZM). All AZM figures in the NHDR have been converted to AZN using this conversion rate. The official exchange rate of the AZN to the USD as of 1 January, 2007 was 0.8714.

INTRODUCTION

Azerbaijan is a country that is fully committed to gender equality and has openly declared such an undertaking in its constitution and all legal documents. Measures aimed at attaining gender equality are enumerated in the UN CEDAW, the UN Beijing Platform for Action and other international agreements and resolutions of international forums. The UN Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) open up new avenues for achieving gender equality.

The facilitation and invigoration of activities to implement global commitments, adopted by the Government of Azerbaijan in promoting gender equality and advancing the rights and opportunities of women, has a direct bearing on gender research in Azerbaijan. It is important to remember that the assessment of the current situation and the elaboration of measures for attaining gender equality are only effective if an integrated approach is used to address problems in any of the related areas. For instance, efforts to raise women's incomes can not be limited to legislative changes and better employment and labour market policies, but need to extend into eliminating gender inequality in education and encompass issues of legal competence, gender violence, cultural stereotypes and the division of labour within the family and, on the global scale, macroeconomic policy and global resource distribution. Then and only then will it be possible to advance gender equality, without which no genuine progress and development is sustained.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is an independent secular state in the Southern Caucasus, situated between Europe and Asia at the crossroads of the East-West trading routes, where just as in the distant past geopolitical interests, economic competition, and cultural contacts are bound tightly together.

Over the centuries, the territory that makes up present day Azerbaijan has witnessed the mutual enrichment of divergent ideas initiated by a range of civilizations, and the peaceful coexistence of differing religions and ethnic groups. Certainly, armed conflicts and clashes occurred, however, protracted wars were not typical for the region and the peoples settled on the territory of present day Azerbaijan have a culture of peaceful coexistence. Tolerance thus represents one of the most valuable features of Azerbaijanis.

The last decade of the 20th century, marked by national independence, and radical political, economic and social transformation, was challenging for Azerbaijan. At the same time as the country went through a massive transformation, Azerbaijan suffered from the armed conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan resulting in the occupation of 20% of Azerbaijani territory, with enormous material and human loss. Nearly one million people, forced to flee from their homelands, have become a new social stratum in Azerbaijani society. Thus, Azerbaijan entered the transition period torn by the military conflict that caused material damage in the billions of dollars in addition to the immeasurable loss of life and human suffering. Characteristic of countries in transition, the collapse of the economy, the drastic decline in production, the polar change in certain values-especially acute in Azerbaijan between 1990 and 1995-has reinforced the confrontation between societal groups, exacerbated problems of law and order and brought about questions concerning the preservation of the nation's human capital.

Having immense natural resources at its disposal, in the last ten years Azerbaijan has made a leap in economic development by increasing production facilities, mainly in the petroleum sector, decreasing inflation rates, promoting investment and regulating social structures. The unbiased assessment of the present situation would help in identifying critical points that define the development of human capital and promote societal integration, which, in turn, would define the contours of the nation's sustainable development as an equal member of the international community.

Understanding economic progress as a means for human development should be placed at the core of state policies, so that human needs and development potential take centre stage. However, the controversies and difficulties of formalizing social phenomena, the inertia of stereotypes, and the lack of awareness about the negative consequences of social actions may seriously impede such a placement. The UN-formulated MDGs should assist considerably in setting priorities and overcoming challenges.

Insight into and the forecasting of social processes is impossible without thoroughly assessing one of the social fundamentals: gender and the social disposition of women and men. Gender, as a concept rooted in sex but far outgrowing its origins, is applicable for analysing all human interactions, including forms of social existence: economy, culture, politics, art and interpersonal relations. The concept encompasses the complex of human attributes (i.e. age, ethnic and religious affiliation and social status). In this way, gender becomes one of the key systemic factors of social relations, as well as an explanation for a person's sexual identity; hence examining gender provides a way of exposing both the superficial and innate determinants of social existence, and relations between men and women in light of their individual differences and equality in rights.

Without attempting to predict final results of gender relations' development, we still need to reveal the main trends of the process, to find the heuristic and normative potentials of the humanistic transformation of culture that are most vividly presented in interactions between men and women. The harmonious partnership between men and women in public and personal life can be the ideal of social well-being. In practice, this means raising the entire culture to a higher level and directing emotional intelligence toward achieving an understanding between men and women for finding common solutions to political, social, familial, reproductive and other issues.

The study of gender relations in Azerbaijan has been conducted in various aspects; gender and gender issues have been highlighted in all annual national human development reports by UNDP. However, the purposeful and extensive study of gender attitudes and relations is conducted for the first time ever, aiming to achieve an unbiased assessment of the gender situation in Azerbaijan, detect major challenges and develop recommendations for overcoming the negative effects of the gender imbalance.

It is well known that gender attitudes define social roles, and are related to the division of labour and the rights and obligations of men and women. Such attitudes are bound to concepts that have developed over time, concepts that in Azerbaijan take a form of "true femininity" and "true masculinity". Among the traits of "true femininity", traits upon which women evaluated themselves and were being evaluated by the people around them, were specified virtues: chastity, grace, humility and love of their family. "True masculinity" calls for strength, courage and independence. The combination of these traits defines the ideal woman (mother, daughter, sister, wife) or man (father, son, brother, husband). Gender studies have shown that social notions about women's gender roles are not static. Professional responsibilities have been added to women's traditional family obligations, which have become a part of the social consciousness and are sanctioned by public opinion. Thus, the proverb "*Being a leader brings honour to a woman*"¹ is often used to express approval for a career woman.

HISTORY OF GENDER RELATIONS IN AZERBAIJAN

Analysing and adequately understanding the motives and mechanisms of social stereotyping which affect the ways and means of constructing gender relations in Azerbaijan are impossible without knowing their history. The relations between women and men in Azerbaijan bear the imprint of a multicultural environment that has been forming in the region for millennia. It is hard to discern these relations in any great detail very early in ancient times. Only folkloric sources such as legends and folktales, proverbs and sayings can indirectly attest to how they were constructed, how the society identified female and male roles, how

men and women related to each other as social actors and how they were viewed by society, and how they established themselves in society.

Monuments of Azerbaijan's spiritual culture bear testament to the extensive development of a matriarchate, the matriarchate of the Amazons-women who defended themselves in the same way as men and helped their patriarchal neighbours to fend off enemy attacks.² In Azerbaijan, the term "Amazon" is expressed through words meaning that women have the best of men's traits (e.g., *cəngavər qadın* (fearless woman)). The great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi (12th Century), described a meeting between Alexander the Great and Queen Nushaba, who ruled the city-state of Barda (which some regard as part of Amazonia) surrounded exclusively by women and was famed for her acumen, and stewardship of the state, as well as for a being brave fearless warrior, despite her preference to settle state matters peacefully.

The history of Azerbaijan has kept alive memories of not only those women who achieved fame as worthy companions to their illustrious sons, fathers and husbands (such as Sara Khatun, mother of the ruler Uzun Hasan; the latter's wife Despina Khatun; Shah Ismayil's daughter Mehinbanu Sultanım Khatun; Qatibe-khanum, wife of the ruler Qizil Arslan; Mehrijan-khanum, wife of Uzbek Khan; and Tutu Bike, wife of Fatali Khan, 18th century ruler, but also self-made women who were valued for their own achievements and virtues. There were fewer of them, to be sure, like Queen Tomris and the eminent poetesses Mehseti (12th Century) and Natavan (19th Century). That there were such women and that they were involved in public life and creative pursuits merits attention from the perspective of gender analysis-even more so, the fact that the nation's historical consciousness has surmounted the gender barrier to remember those women in proportion to their contributions.

Nevertheless, patriarchal dominance has widened the gap between men and women, chiefly by limiting women's public participation, restricting their personal freedom and rights, emphasizing their procreative function and turning women into objects of sexual desire. Thus, relations between men and women as depicted in the celebrated *Dede Qorqud* epos are quite controversial: there are many instances of denigration and mistreatment of women despite all their self-sacrifice. The most striking example of transforming female dominance into social norms motivated by patriarchy in the epos is the story of Seljan Khatun, who acts skilfully to save her beloved, Qanturali, from certain death in a ruthless battle. His plan to return the favour is to kill her, arguing that deliverance from battle by a woman is no better than death by a man's arrow. This seemingly illogical motive is justified by the need for male self-affirmation and the fear of social reprobation for "unmanly" conduct. The attitude of Seljan to Qanturali's decision, exhibiting humble acceptance of social requirements, attests to the durability of this attitude, which becomes an established social norm.

Still, women in *Dede Qorqud*, despite the centuries that stand between them and the present day, are surprisingly modern in their thought process and emotions. They share joys and hardships with their husbands and are not averse to taking part in public life. Not only do they take responsibility for their children and household matters, but they also often lead in defending their lands and country. Their intelligence and wisdom are in no way inferior to the men, but the women do not strive for public recognition, happy to bask in the glory of the men-husbands, fathers and sons.

Subsequent historical developments have reinforced social stereotypes built into male-female relationships, although a more detailed study of history shows that various and sometimes rather contradictory stereotypes have existed during one and the same historical eras, which is well reflected in folk proverbs and sayings, still popular to this day. On the one hand, a gender-neutral "A lion or a lioness is still a lion"³ (lion as a symbol of power, valour and noblesse), on the other hand, "A woman's chastity is a man's honour"⁴ and "Give me seven sons and a single daughter"⁵; with women in a clearly subjected position. In that sense, the saying

"Women, keep away from an effeminate man; men, from a masculine woman"⁶ is rather ambivalent: it reflects both a gender symmetrical attitude, underpinning the right to be different, but can also be a case of gender stereotyping that erects insurmountable barriers between men and women in realizing their social roles.

Confessional diversity in Azerbaijan has had a significant impact on setting gender relations and stereotypes, as every confession has affected its understanding of the world and the self in the world, its own daily routine, its ways of moulding a person, applicable to the people within the small geographical limits. In contrast to religious competition and confrontation elsewhere, Azerbaijan has induced a unique environment of religious tolerance and recognition of the right to be different.

Islam's establishment as the religion of the majority in Azerbaijan changed little in people's public lives. This laxity is evident in that the norms and injunctions of Shari'a law have never been very strictly or universally applied. A proposition related to the discussion in the Muslim faction made in 1907 by an Azerbaijani member of the Russian Duma to institute women's suffrage in Imperial Russia is evidence of this situation. His acts testify to the fact that the idea of equality, including gender equality, had made its way into public opinion. To put things in the proper perspective, it must be noted that the Shari'a regulates many legal issues -the presumption of gender equality (property rights in marriage and divorce, the right to self-defence, etc). Some situations are set aside for the special treatment of women: milder punishments for crimes committed by women and the execution of a man who rapes a woman. Islam does not limit women's educational opportunities or their career ambitions. Still, a postulate of women's ultimate submission to a man is incontrovertible; it sets the background for all transformations of their relative roles. Precisely because of that, advocacy for women's suffrage was not an isolated recognition of women's voting rights, but rather a key step in the public understanding of the equal social roles of the two sexes.

From then on the "equality of rights" in its European sense has been firmly placed in the context of the Oriental democracy and the Muslim way of life. This may have been conditioned by the advent of Cartesian instruction through the spread of Russian schools. Russian-type schools for boys had been around since the 1860s, whereas the first public Russian-Tatar (Muslim) school for girls was opened in 1901. (please check) These developments coincide with the first oil boom in Azerbaijan. Easily accessible petroleum reserves (it was often enough to dig a well anywhere in the vicinity of Baku to reach "black gold" that could then be scooped with a bucket like water) attracted foreigners who made quick fortunes. Local residents could also obtain wealth when they explored for oil with their limited capital.

Local oil barons invested some of their fortunes in public education by instituting scholarships for university education abroad (mostly for young men, but there were some young women as well: Shovkat Mammadova studied vocal arts in Italy), building schools (not only in Baku but also in other cities: Nakhchivan, Ordubad, Ganja, Nukha), inviting teachers from abroad, investing in literacy and enlightenment campaigns and attracting women into public activities. In 1901 (please check) Zeynalabdin Taghiyev, renowned oil tycoon-cum-philanthropist, established a school for Muslim girls, whilst his wife Sona-khanim Taghiyeva organized the Committee of Muslim Women. In 1911 Khadija Alibeyova began to publish the first women's magazine *Ishiq* ("Light").

By the establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1918 the nation's public opinion had advanced far enough to allow the Parliament to discuss male and female equality of rights at its first sessions. Planned elections to the Constituent Assembly of the Republic were preceded by legislation (The Statute of Elections of 1919) establishing full equality for men and women in suffrage and the right to be elected to the legislature (the highest legislative body in the Republic). Regretfully, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was short-lived and fell prey to the Bolsheviks.

The subsequent Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic was subject to strict Bolshevik ideology; the issue of equality was re-interpreted in the context of the women's movement that was to become a model for all countries of the East. The Soviet period⁷ (1920 - 1990) did not contribute fresh ideas on the subject but reinforced the legal framework of gender equality and positive discrimination of women. The reality, however, was one of mismatch between the full-fledged legal status of women and partial realization of their rights in practice. One of the principal achievements under the Soviet Union was the complete eradication of female illiteracy. With the support of government and Communist party organisations women were involved, involuntarily at times, in public life and production, even the most arduous fields of production, like the petroleum industry. For breaking down patriarchal stereotypes and the traditional mindset, the Soviet Union used quotas for women's representation at all levels of the power hierarchy and introduced preferences and exemptions in employment and education. As a result, in the four years between 1929 and 1933 the number of women in the productive economy increased five-fold. During the same period, the share of women in agricultural employment reached 37%.

Gender equality came to be seen as the "woman question" in the system of the Soviet political system. In February 1921 Soviet women who were not members of the Communist Party held their first convention in Baku; 68.8% of its delegates represented the capital and only 31.4% the provinces. The second convention was held only after 36 years, reflecting the complex destiny of the "woman question" within the framework of Soviet ideology. Numerous women's clubs and organisations (Women's Councils) strove to involve women into public life, and the party organisations vigilantly monitored their toeing the ideological line.

The onset of totalitarianism and Soviet voluntarism weakened the core idea of the "woman question", that is, the equality of rights, equal participation of women in decision-making and opportunities for self-expression. By making high but not decisive positions in the party and government administration open to women, the illusion of their equal participation in political life was created. In reality, the highest body of power in the Soviet Union, the Politburo (Political Bureau) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR never had more than one woman at a time amongst its more than 15 members. And in each republic, the situation was the same.

In Azerbaijan, with its ingrained family traditions, women felt overworked since they had to attend to both work and household while pre-school institutions and consumer services were underdeveloped (in comparison with the Baltic republics and Russia) and women had to carry the burden of family problems, placed on them by traditional social norms. With overwhelming pressure from the ruling ideology, women's involvement in public production and housework were sharply counterpoised, with the latter strongly devalued.

Transition from one socio-economic system to another exposed the entire structure of societal interactions with all its pressure points, charged with unpredictable conflicts and open and hidden controversies. The transition occurred in the background of the drastic economic crisis, instigated by the collapse of the Soviet societal relations and aggravated by the occupation of Azerbaijani territories. Two painfully novel problems engulfed Azerbaijan: poverty and military conflict. The old Soviet poor were joined by the "new" poor (the youth, the unemployed, the research personnel) and by the poorest: refugees and IDPs. Negative changes in the family structure caused by out-migration of the male population in search of jobs, a rise in parental mortality due to losses sustained in the military conflict and a surge in patriarchal attitudes have intensified the risk of poverty for women. Immediately, religious sects sprang up from various foreign countries to help people cope with many of these problems.

The post-Soviet crises and difficulties in overcoming them have become linked to an important degree with psychological factors. At the fore is the problem of the individual as the basic unit of society which encapsulates the spiritual and intellectual capital of the culture to which it belongs, a particle of the society that reflects its entire historical development.

This period saw principal changes in the system of gender relations, which from the point of gender analysis, can be broken down into two stages: the first, when women were pushed out of the production economy to tend to home and family, not resisting much (as a reaction to earlier overwork); and the second, when women, seeing economic problems in their families, tried to re-enter the labour force where they found a competitive environment with no more quotas and privileges for them and strong competition from men. Refugee and IDP women represented another big problem: they were cruelly stricken from normal life as their lands had been taken by force, houses were destroyed and their eco-cultural space lost. Endless losses-death of family members, disability of family providers, illnesses of children and the elderly-have become a source of grief and post-traumatic stress disorder for these women. Their exclusion from employment, leading to loss of professional qualification and male unemployment, has exacerbated the economic plight of their families and psychological problems of every family member. Such emotional overloads magnified the negative side of intra-family gender relations; women assumed the burden of economic problems and providing for their families.

Democratic principles that underwrite the policies of the independent Azerbaijan Republic have been evident in the formation of civil society. When the first NGOs were established in 1991, the public did not understand them well: years under the ruling Soviet ideology accustomed people to the command style of management, a lack of alternatives and uniformity of social thought and behaviour. Initially, women's NGOs were viewed as organisations germinated from the Women's Council of the Republic. Almost all newly-created women's NGOs became actively involved in providing support to refugees and IDPs through mobilizing food and non-food aid as well as supporting their dedication to the earliest resolution of the conflict.

In 1995 the country showed signs of an improved economic situation: it was the first year after the fall of the Soviet Union that registered economic growth. Petroleum exploration contracts with major international oil companies signed in 1994 (the 'Contract of the Century') and in subsequent years made the growth sustainable. GDP grew, inflation was brought under control, changes in social policy affected a steady increase in wages and pensions and the government obtained loans from international financial institutions towards reforming the education system, restructuring enterprises, developing investment policies, etc. Undoubtedly, one of the crucial underpinnings of these positive changes was the establishment of the cease-fire on the front-line in mid-1994, which has been in force for 12 years.

By decreeing the establishment of the Preparation Committee for the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing), the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan initiated preparations for one of the most significant international forums of the late 20th Century. Preparatory activities commenced in 1994 with holding topical conferences and seminars on contemporary problems of gender relations. In 1995 the Republic of Azerbaijan acceded to and ratified CEDAW and in 2001 the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. The active participation of Azerbaijani women at the World Conference (more than 90 women from Azerbaijan attended the event) and the intimate familiarity with challenges faced by the international women's movement propelled Azerbaijani women to become more involved in the Parliamentary elections held in 1995. After a sharp drop in women's representation in the transformed Supreme Soviet in 1992, parliamentary elections held in 1995 yielded a 12% representation of women in the nation's highest legislative body, which has been sustained since then. As a result of the Parliamentary elections held in November 2005, women constitute 11,2 % of the deputies in the National Parliament.

Proposed by Azerbaijan, in 1995 the UN Commission on the Status of Women adopted a resolution entitled "Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts" which is of immense universal humanitarian importance. In line with the resolution, the UN Secretary General was requested to prepare

a report on its implementation at the Fourth World Conference on Women. Regretfully, the resolution has not been implemented to the present day.

Along with many important events, the year of 1998 was one of great importance for the advancement of the concept of gender in Azerbaijan. State Committee for Women's Issues was established in 1998 by the Presidential Decree. The President appointed the late Zahra Guliyeva, the famous scholar, former rector of the State Medical University, and one of the leaders of the women's movement in Azerbaijan, as the Chair of this new committee. The President also issued the Decree on Actions to Enhance the Role of Women in Azerbaijan.

The same year, the UN Commission on the Status of Women heard the first report on CEDAW implementation in Azerbaijan. The first women's Congress of independent Azerbaijan elected the National Council of Women. In consideration of instability in almost all post-Soviet states and the relevance of gender issues to conflict situations, the government of Azerbaijan proposed holding in Baku and hosted an international conference entitled "Women's Rights are Human Rights: Women and Armed Conflicts", co-sponsored by the Azerbaijani government, UNDP, UNIFEM, and UNHCR, which was attended by representatives from 13 countries (including Armenia). The Declaration adopted at this conference (*the Baku Declaration*), became a milestone for the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

The implementation of a UNDP gender project in Azerbaijan (1997 - 2000), as a part of the regional project on Gender and Development, was effective for advancing gender equality. The project rendered operational, methodological and financial support to the State Committee for Women's Issues, non-governmental organisations and for women's participation in presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections. For the first time in Azerbaijan, the project oversaw studies on gender violence, the gender aspects of economic development and employment, the condition of IDP women and children and gender expertise in legislation. The project supported the development of the National Action Plan, the methodology of gender statistics and principles of gender education.

In 2000 the President issued a Decree on the State Women's Policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan. At the same time, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the National Action Plan on Women's Issues (2000-2005) and ordered the selection of gender focal points in all government institutions to bear the responsibility for promoting gender equality.

This period is characterized by significant legislative endeavours to improve a legislative framework of human rights in the country. The Parliament of Azerbaijan ratified major international agreements on human rights, reformed the former Soviet legislation, and enacted laws regulating issues arising in connection with the military conflict.

Until the present, Azerbaijan submitted the second and third CEDAW implementation reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Parliament approved the draft Law on Gender Equality in the second hearing. The State Committee on Women's Issues was transformed into the State Committee on Family, Women and Children's Issues in February 2006. The rate of establishing new women NGOs has decreased. Most political parties have gone from "gender blindness" to forming separate entities to address gender problems (in 1997, only three parties focused on gender issues and then only in the context of the "woman question"; by 2000, 25 of 40 parties established structures to address women's problems, in the gender context). Still, gender problems have not been adequately reflected in the parties' political platforms as demonstrated by the parliamentary elections in 2005.

Prospects for the resolution of the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan would greatly benefit from women's active participation in achieving a durable peace—a final settlement—between the warring parties. The more active involvement of the populace, especially women, in the peace process pre-supposes defeating stereotyped perceptions that, like everything related to war, is also something for men to decide. At the

present moment, both politics and diplomacy tend to display marked male asymmetry and preserve a pyramidal structure, whereas fewer women are represented in the career hierarchy from the bottom up. Preventive diplomacy is still predominantly an area of male domination: women make up 14.3% of diplomatic personnel.⁸

Gender imbalance is also currently observed through male dominance at the decision-making level. According to assessments of Azerbaijan Human Development Report,⁹ men have an absolute majority (over 90%) at the highest levels of management (ministers, chairs of the state committees and commissions; heads of large enterprises; heads of executive committees [local authorities] in the districts and their deputies) as well as in the judicial system (about 85%). With reference to official gender disaggregated statistics on the state institutions that has become available since 2006,¹⁰ women have a majority at the level of supporting positions (63.6%), whereas men continue dominating at the highest managerial positions (about 80%).

Thus, the last ten years of gender development in Azerbaijan exhibit the beginnings of transition from feminized perceptions on the equality of the sexes to the understanding of gender equality as part and parcel of human rights. There is a political will, improvement in legislation, a certain progress in education and healthcare, economic development and (at least, partial) readiness of civil society for achieving equality. Keeping this in mind, the active involvement of the First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva in state governance seems no longer incidental or related to personality. Her active participation is not limited to philanthropy as a traditional form of social involvement for spouses of heads of state, but covers a wide range of responsibilities: she is the President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, UNESCO Good Will Ambassador, and a Member of Parliament. In her capacity as the President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Ms Mehriban Aliyeva makes decisions on constructing new and renovating old schools, hospitals and child care institutions, especially for orphaned and disabled children, as well as supports the cultural and spiritual values of the people. She is a paragon of a public figure, a role model for women from various social groups of Azerbaijan's society.

Overall, Azerbaijani society, which is undergoing the transition from Soviet totalitarianism to democracy, is in the midst of overcoming stereotypes of gendered behaviour and balancing gender relations and building gender relations on the basis of the democratic principles is unfolding in the context of unproved normative requirements. This is an obvious explanation for the simultaneous presence of sometimes diametrically opposed value systems in social behaviour. This process, complicated at the psycho-social level by its breakneck speed dramatically affected the realm of personal development (men and women react to this pace differently), is also pregnant with the potential to effect positive changes in set perceptions, re-work or abandon old patriarchal, or any forms of domination and introduce democratic norms of social interaction into behavioural patterns. A crucial condition for the well-being of society, this path starts from balanced gender relations and the harmonious partnership of women and men in their personal and public lives.



CHAPTER 1



Employment and Living Conditions

1.1 BACKGROUND

The first steps towards the market economy have immediately proven to have had varying impacts on men and women. In 1991-1992 women were the first to be sent on obligatory “vacations” and then pushed out of paid jobs into unemployment, irregular or unskilled occupations, shuttle-trading and peddling. Women with high level of education also suffered as they found it difficult to adjust to new economic conditions. However, in the Soviet era, the Azerbaijan economy had high levels of female labour force participation (49% of the total workforce as of 1989). The situation was aggravated by the influx of refugees and IDPs as a result of the military conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Beginning in 1993-1994 mass redundancies affected men as well. After men started to be laid off *en masse*, the gender imbalance somewhat decreased, although women constituted nearly half (48%) of the entire employed population, they were in a majority among the officially registered unemployed.

The development of the natural resource base (oilfield development and construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan export pipeline), accumulation and use of petroleum revenues (establishment of the State Oil Fund and preparation of the first report for the Extracting

Industries Transparency Initiative), reconstruction of vital infrastructure (road construction, etc.) are considered to be major achievements of the Government of Azerbaijan in recent years. Since launching the State Programme for Poverty Reduction and Economic Development for 2003-2005, the poverty level was reduced from 49% in 2003 to 29% at the end of 2005.

1.2 GENDER SITUATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

As is well known, one of the most important indicators of economic development is the gender situation in the labour market, characterized by the gender gap in economic activity and the unemployment rate and a corresponding disparity in employment mode and wages for men and women. In 1990, economic activity (the economically active population (EAP) includes the employed and the unemployed, that is, those who have no work and seek it) was higher among females than males (51.4% female and 48.6% male).¹¹ In 2005 official statistics showed that 52.3% of men and 47.7% of women were economically active,¹² thus the gender balance became more asymmetrical. Currently, the total able-bodied prime-age population (the total labour resource) of Azerbaijan is 4,896,200 of which about 48% or 2,350,200 are women.

The gender analysis of the transition in post-Soviet countries reveals that although men are able to adapt to the market model and the consequential social situation, women show more adaptability to the labour situation, with a readiness to switch jobs and accept even those with a lower social status. Women feel the negative impact of having many children on their economic activity, whilst for men this factor is statistically insignificant. When the average of number of children is compared with respect to women's employment status, it can be observed that the average number of children for employed women is 2.45, whereas the mean is 3.25 for unemployed women. This can be easily explained by the disproportionate burden of nurturing children for employed women. The larger number of children substantially increases amount of time off work and decreases the chances of the female's employment.

The respondents were asked about their current employment. 48.5% of survey respondents were employed. (including those, who work off and on 3.4%) 40.7% of male respondents and 22.9% of female respondents had full time jobs. 15.1% of male, and 11.5% of female respondents had part-time jobs. 51.5% of the respondents were not currently employed, including those, who were disabled (0.7%), or had health problems (1.1%). 13.3% of all respondents claimed that they didn't work, because they could not find suitable jobs. It should be emphasized that, more of them were men. 26% of female respondents were housewives. 2.5% of women claimed that they did not work, because they were not allowed to by family members. 12.5% of respondents were pensioners, of which women constituted the majority.

The level of economic activity is also influenced by respondents' age and place of residence: urban male youth are more active than female, whereas in the rural settings the difference is practically unnoticeable. Labour force participation peaks between the ages of 20 and 40 for both females and males.

There are a number of factors that influence labour force participation including regional variations, job market, and informal employment. The smaller the town, the lower the labour force participation is. This conclusion is confirmed by a comparative analysis of focus groups in Baku, Lenkaran, Khachmaz, Gakh, Devechi, Sumgayit and Sheki.

The economic and geographic situation can affect women's labour mobility. Female employment in Baku is higher than in rural areas, which can be explained by the higher number of children, deficiency of pre-school day care facilities, lack of jobs and social stereotypes about priority of male labour over female in rural areas. Rural-urban migration, particularly to Baku, brings women out into the labour market, but increases their presence in the informal sector, unskilled occupations and street peddling.

We also know that the kind of work is highly dependent on the opportunities available. In one location there might be investment and the availability of jobs whereas this might not be the case in other locations. The survey conducted in selected districts reveals that a regional pattern of female economic activity is more pronounced than for men. For example, female and male participation to the labour force is higher in the districts of Imishli, Zagatala, Barda, Gusar and Gakh than in Lenkaran, Fuzuli, and Yardimli, which are highly dependent on industrial investments. Participants in the Imishli focus group noted, "A sugar mill opened in Imishli in 2005. It mostly employs men. A broiler factory has a lot of women workers. These new jobs give us hope for the future. A few years ago people were dissatisfied; now unemployment has been reduced, both among men and women". Focus group members in Astara District noted that there would be more jobs offered for men as two canning factories and a terminal were under construction.

1.3 EMPLOYMENT

Public-private distinction in terms of male and female economic activity is highly observable. The predominance and the value of a man's paid economic activities are highly regarded; a man's 'breadwinner' role is highly internalized; and accepted both by man and woman from all age groups. In society men are predominantly expected to be employed. One female respondent in a focus group remarked, "A man has to work. He has to bring bread money home. A man has to take care of his family. Women don't have to work".¹³ Similarly a male respondent argued, "A man has to bring what is necessary for the house. Money brought by a woman is nothing. This results in disputes within family".¹⁴ However, the transition economy has led to major economic problems and poverty and requires women's engagement in economic activity.



The majority of respondents clearly identified 'female' and 'male' jobs. "Light" professions such as teachers and doctors were predominantly assigned to women both by male and female respondents, whereas "heavy" jobs were identified as male. These include working at construction sites, in factories, in engineering and on the police force. One male respondent stated, "There is a difference between men and women in terms of occupation. There are male jobs which are difficult. Women cannot work there. There are some jobs assigned to women such as the educational and health sector".¹⁵

It should be emphasized that such classification of the "light" and "heavy" jobs particularly derives from the conception of woman's roles and duties in private/family life as wives and mothers and the acknowledgement of her dual obligations in both public and private life. One female respondent argued, "Women belong to the educational and medical field. The main problem is that the workload for a woman should be less than that of a man.a woman has to worry about her family. If she works, she will be unable to devote herself fully to her family".¹⁶ A similar idea was expressed by a male respondent from the same age group. In many cultures house-related obligations are normally disregarded as work. They are treated as non-paid work and are not reflected in the work history. In the present survey, surprisingly, women's house-keeping in addition to her responsibilities outside the home were considered as an intensive workload. One male respondent said, "... a woman works more than a man. She works both at home and outside".¹⁷

Expert opinion obtained in the scope of this study confirmed a developing tendency of acknowledging the economic importance of unpaid housework by Azerbaijani society, a trend that can alter societal attitudes to female labour, enhance its public recognition and social status. Women often combine several responsibilities at a time: keeping house, caring for children, looking after the elderly; therefore, to be able to attain any job efficiency, women depend on being served well by schools, day care centres, social services, and special programmes for working women and their family members available in their localities.

Slumping industrial production and a drop in living standards in the first years of independence resulted in the demonetization of economic transactions within families and the corresponding development of in-kind forms of subsistence economy. With decreasing incomes, many families had to cease using outside services, substituting them for domestic labour of family members, primarily women. Records on the labour market of Azerbaijan indicate hidden unemployment and informal employment outside state control and official statistical registration. But as focus group participants repeatedly stressed, the shadow economy is a chance for getting *any* job for most job-seekers.

The focus group data revealed a residual pattern of orientation towards state paternalism, rooted in the Soviet period, "The government shall raise wages, pensions, and social benefits". All in all, the focus groups made clear that many people look up to a strong state as a key party in solving social and economic problems. For instance, the focus group of 18-25 year-old males in the city of Nakhchivan (Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (AR)) stated that they mostly relied on the state to generate new jobs for them. The same idea was prevalent in the focus group of 25-34 year old females in the village of Shikhmahmud, Babek District (Nakhchivan AR). Along with that, personal responsibility of respondents for their own situation was also clearly stated, exhibiting a growing adjustment to market rules and conditions that define success and effectiveness of one's own efforts.

One of the main features of employment, especially in the regions, is the expansion of informal employment. Based on the data from the focus groups, wage labour began to

develop, which was paid without commissioning an official contract, during high seasonal demands, ranging from 4 AZN to 6 AZN per day. A female focus group member claimed, "Farmers, who have money, can hire people. My husband works for another man and gets 20,000 Manats (4 AZN) daily"¹⁸.

The analysis of focus group discussions identifies unemployment as the main concern of the respondents. In 2005 there were 27,900 officially registered unemployed women and 23,100 men; that is, female unemployment was 51.6% of the total unemployment.¹⁹ Both male and female unemployment has displayed a clear tendency to stabilize during the past three years.²⁰

Unemployment is higher for women in all age cohorts, except for urban and rural females aged 41-57: This can be explained by the fact that women in this age group are usually freed from child care responsibilities and ready to accept any job to rejoin the workforce.

Attitudes of respondents on whether men or women suffer more from unemployment affirm the broad acceptance of traditional gender roles: men suffer more for not being able to fulfil the role of a breadwinner, women, from the psychological hardship of coping with poverty at home. Research shows that although there are significant regional variations in land reform and privatization issues, serious concern about unemployment is common for all. One female respondent explained, "There are more needy women than men. During economic transition women are first to become unemployed. Unemployment breeds poverty. Women's choice is more limited than men's. Under the present conditions, it is not women that select jobs-jobs select women."²¹

The opinions about unemployment and its consequences for both male and female respondents of the focus groups mainly centred on the topic "men are breadwinners". On one hand, attitudes towards unemployment are based on a gender biased definition of female and male roles within the family. The majority of focus group participants identified men as the main victim of unemployment, arguing that men could not fulfil their role as the "breadwinner". On the other hand, both men and women reinforced the stereotype that men were the "breadwinners" and internalized traditional gender roles within the family through their perception of

unemployment. One woman said, "It does not matter where he is working. The main problem is that he should take care of his family and bring income to the house."²² Similarly men consider that "woman can not work. A man has to work. If he does not work, there will be disputes in the family. It may even result in a divorce and divided families."²³

The survey respondents noted that men's unemployment challenged their status as 'household heads' and threatened traditional authority patterns within the family. "Men become silent"; "they cannot raise their voice"; "are ashamed"; and "their words are not taken seriously". The statement of a young female respondent expressed this very clearly, "an unemployed man cannot take care of his family and is ashamed of his situation in front his wife and children."²⁴ An older woman similarly stated that the man was the main provider in the family. Most men agreed on the fact that unemployment challenged traditional male roles in the society and harmed Azerbaijani traditions since unemployment resulted in the man's decreasing authority in the household, disputes, domestic violence within the family and even divorce.

Women are identified as the 'indirect victims' of unemployment, arguing that women suffered from unemployment due to the fact that their husbands were unemployed. However, it is not only women's reliance on the income provided by men as the "head of the household," but also the recognition of women's housework as real work by both men and women. One respondent from Agsu District (village of Gadali) noted, "Women stay at home and deal with housework, take care of the children. Therefore unemployment does not directly affect her."²⁵ Another man supported this argument in the similar line saying, "The woman is at home all day. She deals with household work, takes care of the children. Therefore unemployment does not affect woman seriously."²⁶ Similar quotations prove that unemployment is perceived as a temporary lack of job rather than a missing opportunity to earn money required for survival. This perception is likely to be rooted in the recent socialist past when there was compulsory employment; unemployment was not regarded as a continuous social phenomenon and was perceived as short period between old and new positions.

It should also be noted that not all men and women agreed on the impact of

Women and men in a focus group in the Gusar District, "Both men and women are poor; however, unemployment and poverty have a graver effect on women. Jobless men, at the very least, can spend their time at the chaikhana [tea house], but women are always at home: children need feeding or they show their moms holes in their clothes, or whatever. All problems at home lie on women".

unemployment. Particularly some female participants of the focus groups argued that the impact of unemployment was worse on women since they were the ones who dealt with the demands of the children. One woman from Guba said, "There are disputes between the man and woman as a result of unemployment. The man goes out. The woman has to stay at home to take care of the children. The child gets hungry and asks her mom for food. She needs soap to wash the laundry. She needs food to feed them. She cannot find these".²⁷

As is well known, in many societies where there is a strong patriarchal culture and the male breadwinner role is strongly internalized by the families alongside the existence of unemployment, there is a tendency to pull women out of the labour force. The argument is simple: There are so many male heads of household, who are unemployed that it is better for women to stay out of the labour force. This will make their work available for men. In the end, this will be beneficial for all, because every family will have a stable income and harmony in the family. This rather conservative attitude, which has non-egalitarian consequences on gender groups, has very little appeal in Azerbaijan. This statement is proved by the fact that 66.7% of men and 70.9% of women disagree with the proposition that "If there is a shortage of jobs for men, then women should not work". The ratio increases directly with the level of education of the respondents.

As noted earlier, in Azerbaijan during Soviet period, particularly the last five decades, women's labour force participation has been very high. Both men and women were used to

the idea of women having jobs. Amongst the educated groups this practice has been more habitual. This attitude should be considered as an important step towards gender equality.

1.4 EDUCATION AND THE LABOUR MARKET

The study finds that the transition labour market favours women with tertiary educations - they make up 47 % of all working women. 33.1% of women with specialized secondary educations can also find jobs. Women with regular secondary and primary education are not favoured by the transition labour market (See Figure 1.1).

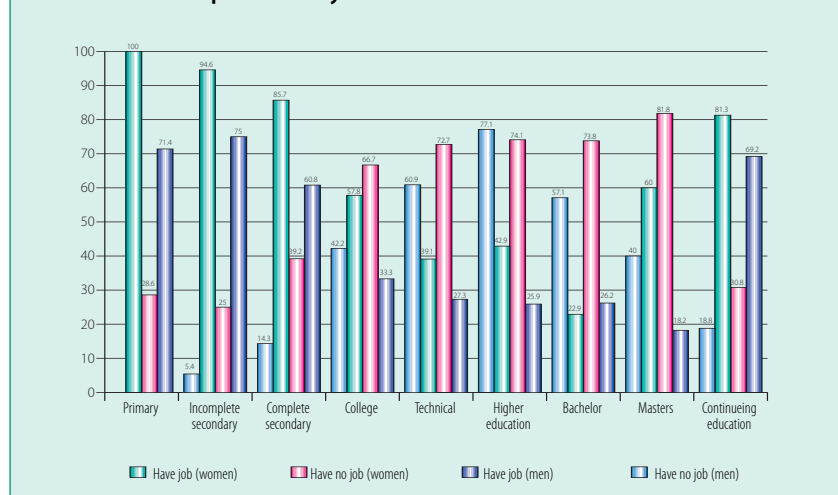
With men, the situation is different: As can be seen in Figure 1.1, employment with tertiary and specialized secondary education is nearly identical and in both cases exceeds 60%, and with regular secondary and primary education it stands at 30.5%. Thus, having an education is a bigger boost to male employment opportunities than that of women, which is in line with a global trend: educated men obtain jobs easier than either uneducated men or educated women.²⁸

1.5 LABOUR MIGRATION

Unemployment and poverty are the main reasons of labour migration abroad and, internally, from rural areas to the capital. The vast majority of the focus group participants felt migration to be undesirable and they argued that it took place due to economic hardship. Expert opinions and focus group results confirmed that migration was commonly perceived as an "involuntary act". Even though sometimes women also migrate, migration is usually more typical for men. However, survey data displayed an emerging tendency of female labour migration, although according to official data it was still lower than male migration. Family circumstances and receiving education abroad were also mentioned as the other reasons for migration. Survey data revealed an obvious gender asymmetry among economic migrants: looking for a job was the reason for 30.2% of men and 47.3% of women. 57.1% of men and 45.7% of women left their homes because of family circumstances. Only 1% of men and 1.6% of women left to study abroad.

Furthermore, the reasons behind migration is also analysed taking into account education level of the respondents. People who had

Figure 1.1: The frequency distribution of the employment status of female and male respondents by education level



primary and secondary school education said that the main factors underlying migration were looking for work (46.2%) and family circumstances (53.8%). Only 3.7% of these people said getting an education was another factor for migration in their household. Migration for education abroad was pointed out as significant stimulus for the people who had higher education (11.5%) and master's degree (33.3%).

It should be noted that since finding a job is relatively easier elsewhere, approximately 65% of college and technical school graduates thought that people migrate because of family circumstances. A male respondent noted, "Our village has very few jobs, for men or women. That's why many leave for Baku or Russia. The village is large: more than 7,000 residents. Because I can't find a job, I want to go to Russia, too."²⁹ One female respondent stated, "Unemployment mostly affects a man, because he has his family responsibilities. When he can not find work here, he goes to Russia. There are some men who work outside Azerbaijan and send money to their families and take their families afterwards with them."³⁰ Focus group data also supported the survey results indicating unemployment and related family problems as the main reasons for migration.

66.4% of women and 74% of men indicated that the consequences of male migration are noticeable in the area of their residence. (See Figure 1.4) The migration of men often leads to the emergence of family problems, which was repeatedly emphasized in the focus group discussions. It was argued that first, labour migration, particularly male migration, resulted in divided families. One male respondent from Imishli remarked, "When men leave, the families suffer. Many men stay in Russia, marry or have new relationships there; they forget their family back home except as perhaps sending some money, if any at all. Many families break up because of this. Many men never come back."³¹

Moreover, respondents noted that women and children become more vulnerable when men migrate. One male respondent from Agstafa District stated, "I think that the fact that the man, the head of household, has left has a very negative impact on the woman. The burden of the household remains on the woman and the absence of the man harms the children's education. What would the future of the children be if they did not see their father for

years? What if they did not feel their father's authority?"³² Similarly, one young woman from Guba District said, "If everything else fails, men would leave to earn a buck elsewhere. But women stay, and the [family] burden is still on them."³³

The survey respondents believed that the negative impact of migration was the increasing number of single young girls, which threatened the Azerbaijani family structure. One female participant of a focus group from Gedabey District said, "Men have to leave their homeland, their houses and are forced to live apart from their families. Because of this, many girls cannot marry."³⁴

Male migration was approved if not desired by most of the focus group participants. However, the social approval was less common in case of female migration. A decision to migrate "revives" many gender stereotypes and conflicts related to woman's role in family and in society. Without explaining the reasons, a focus group statement to that effect is: "Men can leave in search of work. For women, it would be hard to work abroad."³⁵

One man from Astara District noted, "Male migration is acceptable. Since there is a high rate of unemployment, a man has to migrate. Female migration is no good because they either become victims of criminals or other ugly aims."³⁶ However, female migration for education was not evaluated as having a negative effect on her future marriage.

Disaggregated data on household incomes indicate that male economic migration is apparent in all income brackets and is highest among households with monthly income ranging between 50 AZN and 110 AZN

Figure 1.4: The frequency distribution on whether the consequences of migration of males are noticeable in the region

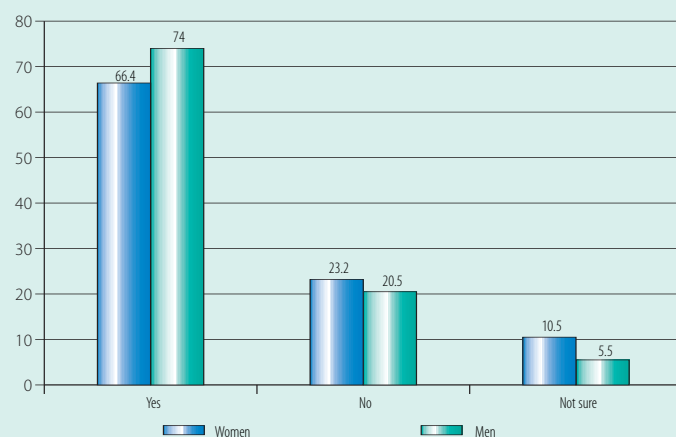
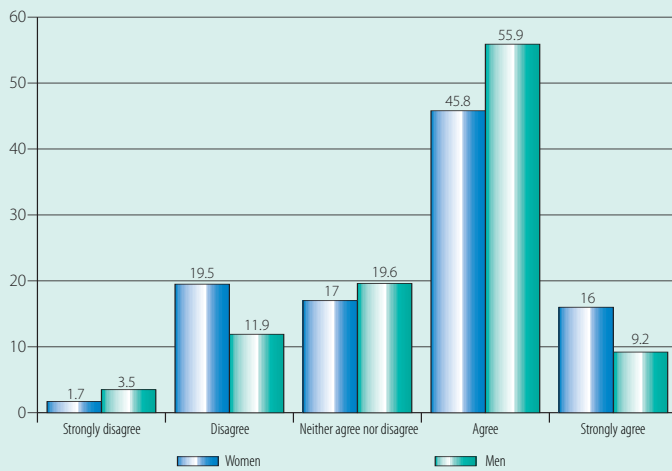


Figure 1.5: The frequency distribution on whether men and women should receive the same salary for the same job



meaning that migrant men are able to support most often an average life standard for their families. Female labour migration only starts at incomes above 90 AZN and in a smaller measure proceeds only at a level of the income 200 AZN. Hence, the level of the income does not influence female migration.

1.6 GENDER AND INCOME

'Equal pay for equal work' is an essential indicator of gender equality in the labour market. This indicator reflects, on one hand, gender attitudes in labour, and, on the other hand, gender sensitivity of the state's economic policy. The Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan stipulates equality for men and women in paying for labour. A special section of this Code outlines legal regulations of women's problems in the area of labour.

The survey data revealed that 61.8% of women were convinced that there should be equal

pay for equal work. However, 21.2% of women considered that men should be paid more, because they were responsible for supporting their families (again reproducing the stereotype of male's breadwinner role). It should be noted that fewer men than women were in favour of unequal payment with the percentage of 15.4, whereas 65.1% of men "agreed" and "strongly agreed" with the 'equal pay for equal work' principle. (See Figure 1.5)

The stereotype of the male as breadwinner and his ability to support his family is the main component of an image of a "true man" in Azerbaijan. 36.1% of the women and 42.9% of the men stated that there was no need for women's employment if her husband's income was sufficient. This stereotype was reaffirmed by focus group participants as well. One woman noted, "However, much a woman earns, her husband's bread is sweeter for her".³⁷ On the other hand, 46% of women opposed this statement as did 33.6% of men (See Figure 1.6). It can be argued that, women's education level is negatively correlated with the statement. Half of the women who have not completed secondary education agree with the statement (51.8%), whereas this percentage is only 7.1 for women having bachelor's education. A similar trend can be observed for male respondents' attitudes towards women's work when their husbands provided adequate money for family subsistence. 75% of men who did not complete secondary education agreed with the statement, but this agreement decreased to 34.2% for the men who had diplomas from institutions of higher education.

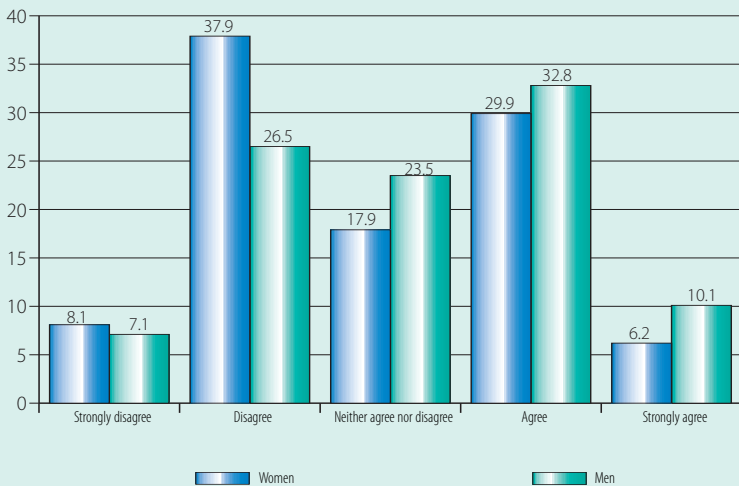
Focus group data also gives ground to believe that traditional gender differences concerning employment and supporting family are becoming increasingly less rigid and open to change. One man noted that women had become physically strong: "They accept any hard work to support their families, because men can't find work".³⁸

The survey data shows that, generally in respondents' families the husband's income is much higher than that of the wife and in women-headed households there is often lack of sufficient income.

1.7 GENDER GAP IN INCOME

The gender gap in income is a global phenomenon.³⁹ This difference mirrors gender inequality in the area of housekeeping and the

Figure 1.6: The frequency distribution on whether the wife should not work if a husband's income is sufficient



division of family responsibilities. The World Bank estimated that female incomes in Azerbaijan were just above 50% of equivalent male incomes in 1995.⁴⁰ Figure 1.7, drawn from the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan data, shows that ten years later this gap has not closed but has considerably decreased to 75%.

The gender gap in salaries is not significantly related to the professional level of women. It is more closely related to inter-sectoral salary differences as can be seen from Figure 1.7. There is a peculiar status pyramid at work here, resulting in lower positions for women.

Still, almost all “female” employment sectors have a lower average wage. This is an alarming tendency, since the “impoverishment” of female occupations leads to a drain of younger, more promising and mobile women employees into the private sector or informal employment (e.g. into private tutoring). Empirical data gives credence to the popular stereotype about the inferiority of female labour. Disproportionate concentration of women in the so-called female sectors, such as education and healthcare, breeds a vicious cycle of low pay and unattractiveness for men, resulting in still higher feminization. This impedes professional development, lowers quality and reduces the prestige of these occupations.

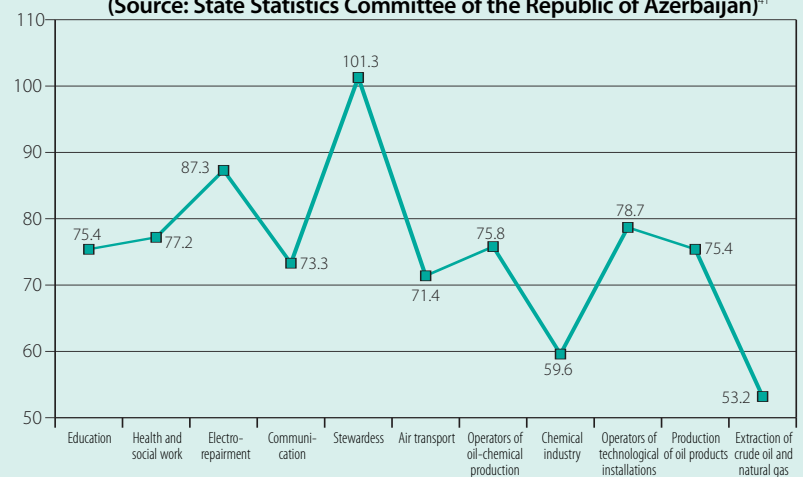
According to survey results, a clear distinction of the source of income amongst the female headed and male headed households exists.

According to 'Main Results of the Household Budget Survey in 2005', male headed households tend to have income from more reliable sources (such as regular employment and agriculture) and in general these sources generate more income.⁴² Women tend to concentrate more in resources that are either reliable but minimal in income, such as pensions or “other income” resources that are neither reliable nor sufficient. This instability of income is usually an important source of poverty. (See Figure 1.8)

1.8 IDEAL JOBS FOR WOMEN AND MEN

To understand the evaluations of respondents about the “ideal” job for women and men, some qualifications for jobs are listed for them, and they are asked to match the “ideal job” for women and men. Figure 1.9 outlines the results.

Figure 1.7: The female remuneration as percentage of male remuneration by sector (Source: State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan)⁴¹



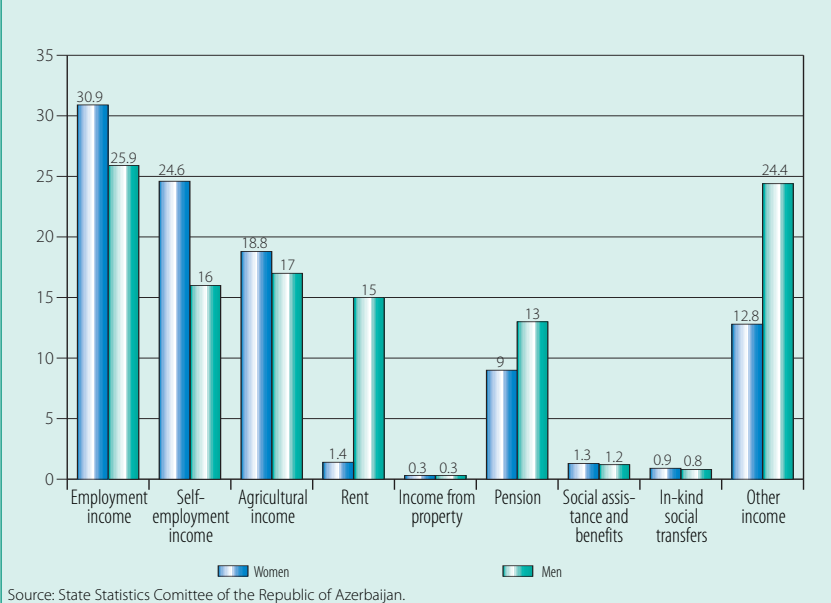
Source: State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

First, gender stereotypes are reflected in the activities of suitable jobs for women. 23.5% of men and only 6.8% of women chose housework as the ideal job for women, and 45.1% of men and 38.4% of women thought that a woman's job should be compatible with her housework. On the contrary these other activities were considered to be significant for men's jobs. Second, one important characteristic of jobs for women is related to the salary. More men than women emphasize that high income jobs are important for women's work. Probably men have a more realistic account of the market situation and would consider income by the wife as an important relief on their burden as breadwinner. On the other hand, woman preferred high-income jobs for men (82.8%) since they possibly thought that the more money he brought home, the more stable their families would be.

In order to identify the gender segregation of jobs, the respondents were asked about their opinion of the statement “Women can do men's work”. 24.4% of the male respondents and 56.9% of the female respondents agreed with this statement, whereas 41.9% of men disagreed. Here, it is important to note that more than half of the female respondents agreed about the capacity to handle “male jobs” which can be considered as a significant attitudinal change towards stereotypes associated with types of employment. From the survey data we can conclude that there is a concentration of women in certain occupations and activities and their relative exclusion from other employment areas. According to official statistics, 70% of secondary school teachers, 68% of teachers in specialized secondary schools, 43% of



Figure 1.8: Comparison of male and female headed households by income types



university professors and 61% of all doctors are women.⁴³

“Main Results of the Household Budget Survey in 2005”⁴⁴ presented by the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan demonstrate that men tend to dominate the private sector of the economy. Men (heads of households) earned from employment in private sector 5.9% in cities and 1.6% in villages; for women the corresponding figures are 2.4% and 0.3%. Business and commerce incomes made up 5.1% for urban males and 1.1% for urban females, 3.5% for rural males and 0.5% for rural females. Individual labour was a primary household income in rural areas: 18.3% for men and 30.6% for women. In our survey a statement from a female focus group member in the Sheki was indicative: “Women can do work at home: embroider or bake something. For instance, my mom is 80 years

old, but still grows grapes, sells them and lives off it”. Despite the large urban-rural gap, gender proportions remained the same throughout the sample.

Under conditions of an emerging private labour market, which makes up 75% of employment in Azerbaijan and has grown by 5.4% in the last 5 years according to official statistics,⁴⁵ gender discrimination may decline since private sector development presumes the equalization of male and female incomes. As private sector development promotes the emergence of new employment opportunities, the dominant role of men or women in their respective employment sectors is being reinforced. According to a male expert from a government agency, limitations for female employment do not exist: “If a woman wants to work, she will find a job. We have no special quotas-people find jobs according to their ability”. He is convinced that the driving force of female entrepreneurship is male out-migration. He adds, “Now women feel they are very independent. It wasn't like that before. Nobody hinders women any more-they have their economic liberty”. In the view of a female activist, the key problem is the lack of law enforcement mechanisms: “Experience bears out that in the most difficult issues the mechanism of equal rights does not work. Laws on books are one thing, and reality is an altogether different thing. There are very few women entrepreneurs. Our women can be proprietors of any enterprise, but it remains to be seen whether it's for real”.⁴⁶

1.9 PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AND INHERITANCE

Since 1996, under conditions of macroeconomic stability, the State Programme on Privatization of Public Property prioritized privatization with regard to optimal combination of commercial, preferential and gratuitous privatization options. Legislation in force is quite egalitarian in respect of guarantees of property rights and protection of rights to land and other property acquired before and after marriage. However, gender asymmetry can be seen in unequal property ownership. From the point of market formation, privatization has facilitated emergence of the market where all key and major players are men. Women lost out at the start of economic reforms as men gained chief access to the process under the selected mode of privatization, owing to their being in



managerial positions in state-owned enterprises and organisations to be privatized. According to an ILO study, in Azerbaijan men outstrip women by almost 90% in property ownership.⁴⁷

Free transfer of public property to the people was stipulated as a priority in the state privatization programme. To implement this transfer, all citizens were issued a share in privatized public property, called a privatization voucher that consisted of four coupons without a set face value. Overall, 72.5% of women and 67.5% of men in the survey sample simply sold their privatization "shares"; 2.7% of women and 4.2% of men invested their vouchers as actual shares in privatized property; 22.2% of women and 26.4% of men did not even know how to use vouchers they received. First of all, this can be explained by the lack of entrepreneurship traditions, which were suppressed under Soviet rule. The nationwide pattern was basically identical everywhere: women did not know what to do with the voucher. This tells of deficiency in public education and campaigns targeted specifically at women on the possibilities of participation in various privatization initiatives and in the securities market; in all likelihood, most women simply handed their vouchers and the right to dispose of it as they see fit to men in their families. Data on male preferences, however, shows a very considerable difference between urban and rural men: only 34.6% of the former and almost twice as many, 65.94%, of the latter sold the vouchers. This goes to prove that privatization highlighted not only gender differences, but also the fact that urban males are better informed and more entrepreneurial.

The survey showed that around 52% of women after divorce and women entering into marriage left their privatization coupons to their former husbands and their parents respectively. In other words, they were deprived of economic rights to own a share in the national property. Moreover, women are in a vulnerable position as a result of unofficial marriages (including early-age marriages) since these results in a decrease in their share of property.

In the respondents' view, women's rights were encroached upon with land privatization as well: although each family member was allotted a plot of land, upon marriage many women left their allotment in the parental family and did not gain a lot in the new family.

Available data permits us to conclude that women were divested of the chance to benefit fully from privatization and economic liberalization.

Focus group data suggests that privatization has contributed to the creation of favourable attitudes (among both men and women) including respect for private property which was banned by the ideology throughout the Soviet period. One male respondent said, "Privatization has become a source of gain. It bred our faith in entrepreneurship and encouraged entrepreneurial skills"⁴⁸ Another man supported this view saying, "The [economic] reform has taught us to work hard; it expanded opportunities and created favourable conditions for both men and women. On your plot of land, you are free to plant what you like. If you work, you won't starve."⁴⁹ On the other hand in the areas where the privatization did not mean land distribution the reactions of the public were mixed.

The study also revealed gender stereotypes in views on property. Figure 1.11 shows that merely 0.1% of men and 1.1% of women intended to will their property to their daughters, whilst 36.9% of men and 41.9% of women thought that property should be inherited by younger / youngest sibling who stayed with the parental family. As traditionally the younger / youngest son stays with the parents, girls have a much slimmer chance to obtain property through inheritance. This indicates that the inequalities in property

Figure 1.9: The frequency distribution of what jobs are suitable/interesting for women and men

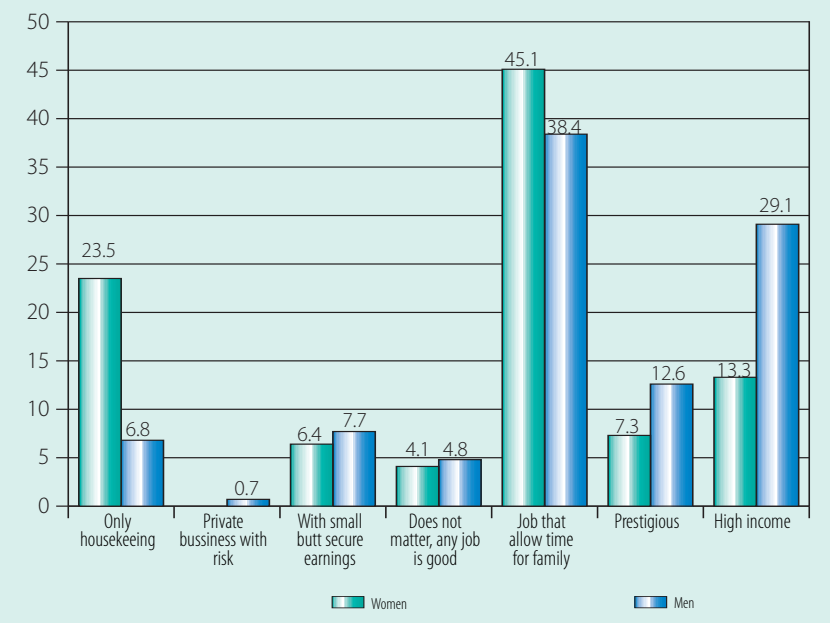
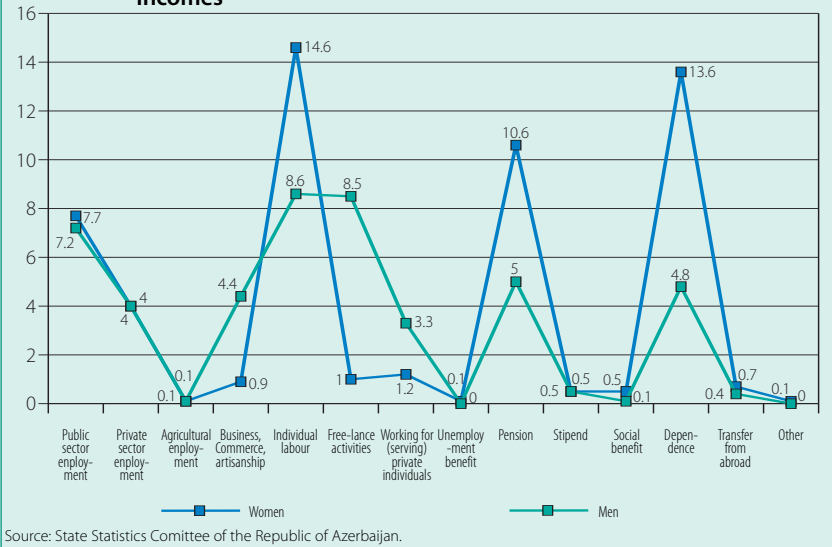


Figure 1.10: The frequency distribution of the main sources of male and female incomes



ownership have a tendency to continue into the next generation.

1. 10 LAND PRIVATIZATION

According to experts, the land reform programme in Azerbaijan is considered one of the most progressive among the former republics of the Soviet Union. According to the Law on Land Reform of 1996, land was transferred into private title for free. A title holder could freely sell, exchange, will, let or mortgage the land. As of 2006, over 22,000 private farms existed in Azerbaijan.⁵⁰

In general, survey respondents viewed land reform as a positive socioeconomic act benefiting both men and women. One male respondent said, "After the land reform everyone is working their own land. We are farming, too. In area of Gishlag we are growing cotton and vegetables. Women work along with men. The lack of equipment causes many

problems: there are only 6 tractors in the village. Farmers need credit to develop."⁵¹ The land reform has had some striking regional differences defined by climatic zones and soil productivity. In particular, in Gakh, Lenkaran, Zagatala, i.e. in districts with fertile soils, the respondents showed approval for land reform. A focus group in Lenkaran explained, "Our morale rose, we became more confident, because we have land now. The reform made our dream come true; partially, it gave us a material guarantee"⁵² A focus group in Zagatala, noted, "Land reform is good. At least people found something to do"⁵³ However, some respondents saw that land reform has had a negative impact on children since they have to work in the fields. One man says "Land reform was beneficial for both men and women and improved the situation of the families. Those who tilled the land well profited. But the reform was bad for boys and girls. Some children don't go to school and work the land instead."⁵⁴

The land reform being carried out also had an impact on the structure of employment. Focus group participants in the rural areas argued that land reform did not necessarily contribute to the economic reforms due to 'unfair distribution of land', 'lack of technical equipment', 'distance from the land' and 'shortage of water'. One female respondent noted "Land reform is good, but there are different opportunities and different consequences. Most of the land distributed is small, far from our village and there is no system of irrigation. That is why the product that you get does not pay back your expenses. On the one hand, land reform provides you with the opportunity of benefiting from it; on the other hand, it prevents you from getting a high income since you do not have necessary knowledge and capability in the field of agriculture."⁵⁵

Most farmers sold their land. A male respondent in the village of Novkhani: "Everyone, from a child to an adult, received a share. People had no money for equipment or irrigation, so over 70% sold their land, and 30% are getting ready to do the same. From the proceeds, someone bought a cow, someone a car. This solved their little problems. That's all."⁵⁶ It should be added here that the mentioned plots of land are located in a prestigious resort area and purchased for construction of dachas (summer cottages). The situation is incomparably worse in districts settled by refugees and IDPs or districts devastated by



the conflict in and around the Nagorny-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan. A review of focus group data from the Fuzuli District shows that both males and females were dissatisfied with the way land was divided. Sub-optimal distribution of land further aggravated an already complicated irrigation problem. The reform was implemented against the backdrop of reconstruction efforts following the conflict in and around the Nagorny-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan: "Whenever we get money, we quickly buy a sack of cement and slowly work on repairing our houses that were burned by Armenians."⁵⁷

Focus group respondents emphasized that under these difficult circumstances "the government's help may not have been much, but was regular."⁵⁸ A focus group in the Barda District noted, "The local executive office regularly helps families of martyrs."⁵⁹⁻⁶⁰ A focus group in Imishli District explained: "Every holiday, the government and the broiler factory management provide assistance and give presents to poor families, elderly people in need and families of martyrs. Rich entrepreneurs engage in charity."⁶¹

1. 11 GENDER AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Capitalist entrepreneurship is a new phenomenon in the entire CIS region, including Azerbaijan. Lack of financial and social capital, relevant knowledge and skills have led to slow development in this area. The legislative framework of business development in Azerbaijan (including female businesses) grants no special preferences to women.

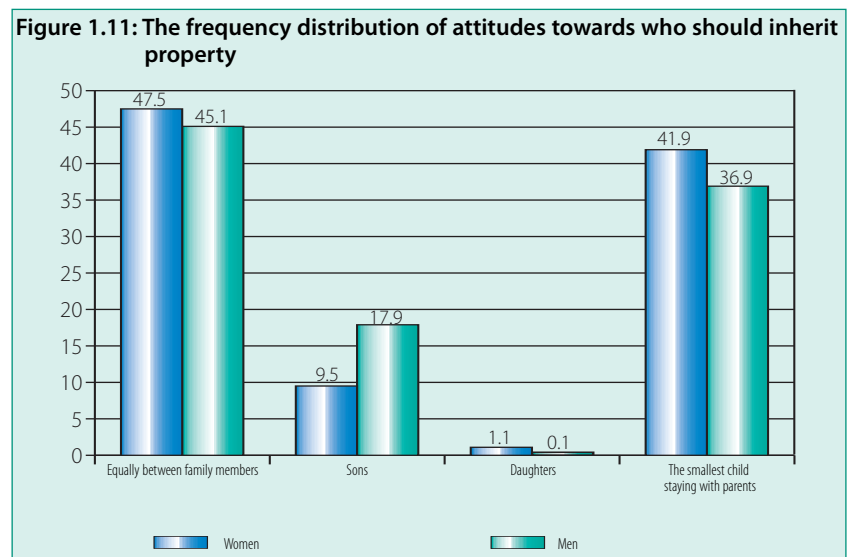
Disparity in ownership would have an increasingly negative impact on gender equality of rights, opportunities and development of female entrepreneurship. Women's lack of property ownership leads to inferior chances of obtaining credits. An expert said, "We have very few women entrepreneurs, and those are mostly in Small and Medium Enterprises (SME). In Baku, they are primarily in domestic services, and in rural areas, in agribusiness and farming. Sometimes women get preferential loans, or are helped by municipalities. Entrepreneurial women are either well informed or have sufficient material and financial resources."⁶²

Official statistics on this area are quite scarce. According to the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues, out of 69% of

women engaged in entrepreneurship, only 3% have their own businesses.⁶³ Expert evaluations show that 7-8% of entrepreneurs are women.⁶⁴ However, assessing the gender structure of entrepreneurship considerably depends upon the definition used; the term "entrepreneur" is not clearly defined in these studies. "Entrepreneurs" may denote employers using hired labour and possessing substantial financial resources, as well as self-employed individuals, whose income level, unlike those of the employers, are comparable with employee wages.

Micro-financing has a special role to play in developing entrepreneurship in the provinces, poverty reduction and providing for social needs of the population. Focus group data also revealed the existence of specific gender stereotypes in obtaining credit. One female respondent said, "It's easier for men to start a business, because men are trusted with loans and women are not."⁶⁵ According to another woman, "Women have no opportunities. It is men who can start a business. If people can get credit, it would be good. With this money, we can buy and keep livestock, and then women would have jobs, too, because if men are rearing cattle, we'd have lots of milk, and women could churn butter, make cheese, curd or yoghurt."⁶⁶

Based on the focus group data we can identify three main areas of female entrepreneurship in regions ready-to- eat food, (baking pita, bread, pies, local pastries, cookies, tandoori, etc.), farming and dairy products (cheese, processed agricultural products) and handicrafts (carpets, kerchiefs etc.) These are all important manifestations of entrepreneurship and increase the income of women. Some focus





group participants indicated that they welcomed such opportunities. A female participant in the city of Sheki said, "I am all into cookery. It is very interesting that many women have adjusted to the new environment. I used to work at the Sheki Silk Factory; now I take orders for home-baked cakes."⁶⁷ A female focus group in the village of Alekseyevka, Guba District, said, "Guba used to be famous for its hand-made handicrafts, women wove beautiful carpets. If such shops opened now, you would see how many jobs would be available for women."⁶⁸

Women in the provinces do not see themselves solely as carpet-weavers. However, changing life realities and new technologies may suggest an opportunity to realize one's professional potential, taste and knowledge. However, entrepreneurship needs not only knowledge and capital but may also require a cultural change. In the opinion of one expert, "rural women are completely devoid of business acumen; they are afraid of everything new. For instance, if their great-grandmothers, grandmothers and mothers used to grow wheat on a given plot of land, it will be quite difficult to convince them that sugar-beet is a more profitable crop now. They don't explore new markets, keep within a set assortment of products and are averse to exceeding the bounds of a narrow region."⁶⁹

Free market ideology and the associated model of free entrepreneur have a hidden gender implication. They are associated with the role of a family breadwinner and suggest

implicit reinforcement of traditional gender roles. That is why a woman entrepreneur inevitably must overcome double resistance. She has to realize her initiatives under risky conditions: poorly developed gender-legal base and incomplete mechanisms of implementation of rules. At the same time, she has to resist patriarchal stereotypes, the practice of discrimination within the male-dominated business environment. An expert noted, "Things are much more complicated in villages. Although everything rests on women's shoulders, men often manage the process. I see that many women get on with private enterprise: establish their own farms, start small rural businesses. Their example might encourage the rest. But stereotypes hold them back. The gender problem will remain so for a long time, I think, and not only in Azerbaijani villages, but throughout the world. This is simply some incomprehensible male belief that a woman cannot manage."⁷⁰

1. 12 LIVING STANDARDS

This survey shows that 34% of women and 45.3% of men are content, to a greater or lesser extent, with their housing conditions. As can be noted gender asymmetry in perceiving their own accommodation was significant: for example, 36.4% of women and only 25.1% of men were dissatisfied with their living conditions.

Probably since women spend more time in the household, they are much more demanding in terms of the quality of accommodation and

utilities. For instance, water supply was deemed satisfactory by 66.5% of women and 75.5% of men, gas supply by 42.6% of women and 47.53% of men, sewerage by 28.6% of women and 32.5% of men. Overall, gas is connected to 51.4% of households; sewerage and central heating are available to only 39.2% and 7.3% of households, respectively. This difference of attitudes also reflects the fact that women spend more time at home and household facilities are more important for them. As housework is seen as the main function of a woman, this may also mean that better facilities may lead to greater efficiency in housework. This may be a means of self satisfaction, as well as a matter of competition between friends and neighbours in domestic skills.

According to the survey, only 10.2% of houses have air conditioning even though many regions have a monthly average temperature in summer of more than 30°C. More than half of all respondents (52.7%) have a fixed phone line and 44.1% own a cell phone. 79.6% have a colour TV set. These facilities facilitates the exchange of information and do make life easier for both men and women. However, domestic appliances that help housekeepers (mainly women) are in shorter supply: 41.9% of all households have a vacuum cleaner, 29.8% have a washing machine, and only 3.2% have a dishwasher. People possess very little entertainment hardware: 4.1% of all households own a video camera, 29.4% have a musical centre or a music player, and 42.5% own a videocassette recorder (VCR). Households headed by women own 9.1% fewer TV sets, 10% fewer satellite dishes, 22.9% fewer cell phones, more than 3 times fewer cars and 2.5 times fewer garages than male-headed households.⁷¹

Such home necessities as furniture are not available to every household. Only half of households have sitting-room and bedroom furniture, merely every third household has kitchen furniture and one-seventh of all families could afford special furniture for children. 92% of households own a carpet, traditionally a basic item for any Azerbaijani family. Of course, every family has at least one furniture piece such as table, chair, or bed, but that hardly amounts to comfortable and functional home interior. It is no coincidence that 79.39% of refugee and IDP women and 69.17% of men see their homes as "poor", whilst only 4.06% of women and 6.25% of men in that category stated that their home interior

was "good". As a rule, refugee and IDP households own a more or less random assortment, if any, of furniture items; some families have to make use of makeshift furnishings.

Survey outcomes show a worrying tendency of an economic gap between the capital and the rest of the country. This digital divide informs of a serious lag in information and communication technologies (ICT) in the regions. Only 4.5% of all respondents had a personal computer (all of them reside in Baku) and 4.1% had a modem for a dial-up Internet connection. Among refugees and IDPs, only one household (headed by a woman) reported having a computer and a modem. In Azerbaijan, ICT penetrates faster than people are able to acquire computer hardware. ICT penetration into the economy and society is becoming a condition for Azerbaijan's accession to the World Trade Organisation and integration into Europe.⁷²



CHAPTER 2



Education

2.1 THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan belongs to the category of countries that legislatively secured equality between men and women in ensuring the right to education. The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan (section two, chapter III, article 42) guarantees the right to free compulsory primary and secondary education for all citizens. This right is also reflected in the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Education" adopted on December 16, 1992.

The educational system in Azerbaijan includes both state and private educational institutions. According to data from the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in 2004-2005 in the country there were 4,533 secondary schools with 150,353 school-age students.⁷³ The source also states that the same year, 42 institutions of higher education, 27 state-owned and 15 private, provided tertiary education to 127,248 students out of which 47% were women.⁷⁴

The education system is one of the few fields of occupation in Azerbaijan where women are in the majority. Women make up 71% of all educators employed in this field, men only 29%. At the same time, a vertical gender concentration exists despite the small number of men working in the educational system. Men

form the overwhelming majority (83%) among secondary school principals across the country.

Corruption, the ineffectiveness of existing methods of managing and administering the educational system, the low quality of textbooks, the low salaries paid to teachers and the lack of funds for the training and re-training of teachers are listed by experts among the main factors generating the education system's low efficiency.⁷⁷ Elements of school infrastructure inherited from the Soviet period need urgent reconstruction, whereas the issues of secondary schools' financial independence are being addressed slowly.

In looking at Azerbaijan's educational system, it is worthwhile to mention the serious consequences of the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The military operations on the territory of Azerbaijan resulted in the destruction of more than a thousand educational institutions;⁷⁸ a great number of secondary and pre-school educational institutions are situated in the occupied territories. About 131,000 students as well as 20,000 employees of the educational system became IDPs. Most of the refugees from Armenia and IDPs forced to leave the occupied territories were temporarily housed in the buildings of kindergartens and schools.⁷⁹

Another important issue of the educational system mentioned by researchers is the inconsistency between methods, content of education, knowledge and skills acquired by students during the educational process and demands of the national labour market.⁸⁰ However, at the same time the annual statistics provided by the State Commission for the Admission of Students exhibit an increase in the number of applications for admission to institutions of higher education. Presumably one of the reasons for such an increase could be the duality in defining the value of education: diploma and knowledge in Azerbaijani society are often perceived as two independent parts of social capital. Azerbaijanis have a hope that a diploma's effectiveness in bringing professional success will compensate for the poor quality of knowledge received in the educational institutions.

At the same time our research has indicated that educational achievement and its correlation with the level of income is highly problematic since the achievement does not guarantee employment. Many of the focus group participants complained that even those with higher educations were unemployed. One female respondent explained, "Those who have a higher education are unemployed. If our children were able to find jobs in the future, they would be more willing to study."⁸¹

In 2006 the generation between the ages 35-54 is making decisions about the education of their own children. We think that the strategies of educating children can be considered

important indicators of gender attitudes. These strategies are often influenced by the education levels of parents Figure 2.1 shows the educational background of respondents participating in the survey. 10.3% of women and 3.0% of men had a primary education, which provided basic reading and writing skills. 45.3% of women and 41.2% of men had secondary education. 20.6% of women and 24.1% of men surveyed were graduates of colleges or technical schools. 17.4% of women and 21.1% of men had higher education. Only 4.4% of women and 7.1% of men received a bachelor's degree or higher.⁸²

Studying in private institutions of higher education requires an investment of significant material resources. The cost of tuition in private divisions of state institutions of higher education is also rather high. Financial risks for women are especially high and as a result, parents often prefer to finance boys' educations. Such a situation, as well as the significant difference between professions chosen by males and females strengthens the existing gender segregation in the labour market. In the situation of limited material opportunities, parents often encounter the dilemma of which children should continue their education. In cases when the children are of different sexes, gender tracking,⁸³ as well as gender stereotypes can strongly influence parental choice. Focus group discussions revealed that most men and women considered boys primary bread-winners for a family and support for parents in their old age. Correspondingly, getting an education was regarded as expanding boys' opportunities for

The UNICEF research conducted in 2001 on gender processes in Azerbaijan's education revealed that the main challenge was not access to education but its quality, the correlation of opportunities provided by the educational system with the changing conditions of economic and social lives of women (lost jobs, the labour migration of a significant number of the male population, the decline of the post-Soviet preschooling system and the enforcement of women's cultural function as the guardians of tradition during periods of change).

The growth in the education sector's proportion of the state budget in 2005 as compared to 2003-2004 is an encouraging tendency; budget outlays on education increased by 25.2%. The State "Programme to Reform Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan" was launched in 1999 and will last 10 years with the aim of improving the level of education through reforms in training courses, the development of national education standards, the publication of new textbooks and the computerization of schools.

Figure 2.1: The frequency distribution of the education level of the respondents

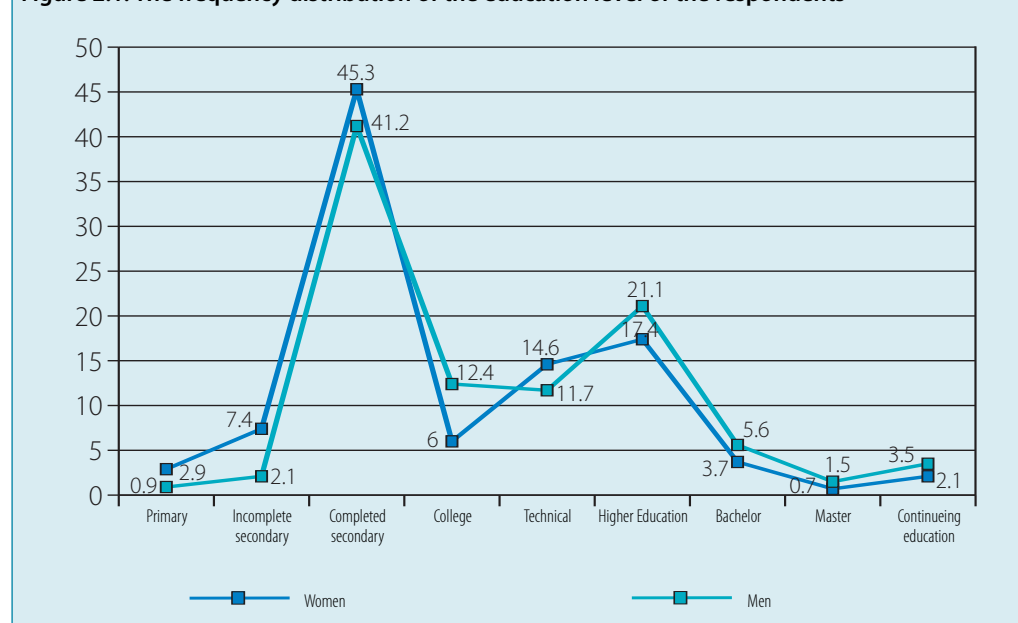
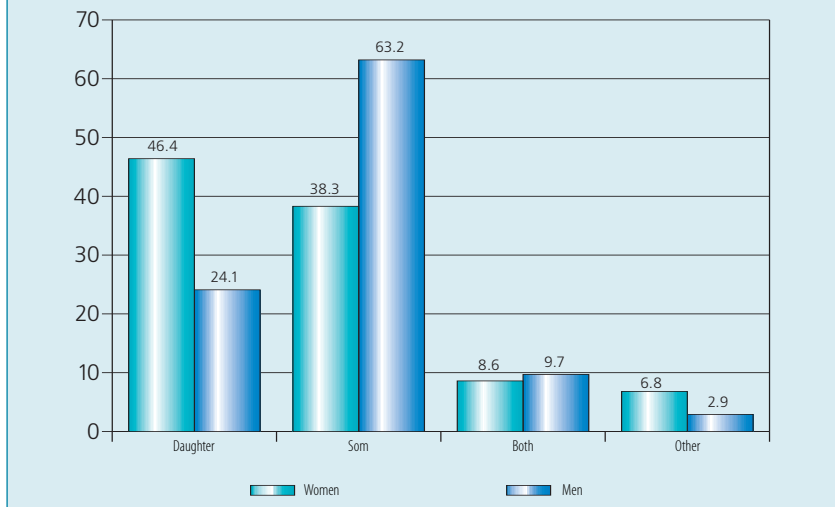


Figure 2.2: The frequency distribution of who should be given preference if a family faces financial difficulties and is unable to provide education for both children



social advancement. The official data on admissions to institutions of higher education allows us to see that in reality boys more often than girls are given the opportunity to access paid education: out of those accepted to private institutions of higher education in 2004, 56.6% were boys and 43.4% girls.⁸⁴

Taking this into account, survey respondents were asked: "If there are economic problems in the family and you can not provide education for both children, who will be given preference?" Overall picture of gender preference for education is male biased and more than half of the respondents stated that if the family had serious financial problems, male children's education was more important than that of girls' (51.0%), 35% of respondents gave preference to the girls while the rest found it difficult to answer the question.

The age, the level of education, the place of residence and the attitude of participants to religion did not generate significant differences in attitudes or preferences for boys or girls in receiving an education.

However, striking differences existed between male and female attitudes. Given the above situation (See Figure 2.2) 46.4% of women preferred to provide their daughters with education and only 38.3% of them favoured boys, whereas men preferred their sons to pursue their education over their daughters with 63.2% to 24.1% respectively. These figures demonstrate that despite the financial difficulties in providing for children's education, women considered education to be a more important precondition for a girl's

social growth than for a boy's. The reason could be either the widespread attitude to a diploma as a significant part of the dowry (increasing the status of the bride), or the importance of education for girls as a way of avoiding professions involving hard physical labour. The latter was underlined by some participants of the focus groups.⁸⁵

Women's preferences for girls' education can be also explained by the fact that women themselves want their daughters to overcome the dependency on men. One young woman remarked "...if we had an education we would not be afraid of anybody, I mean of men. We could go and work".⁸⁶ This statement was supported by a male participant of focus group who noted: "I have one son and three daughters. I like my daughters more than my son. I want them to study, to have an education, so that if something happens to their husbands in the future they can take care of themselves and their families".⁸⁷ Another supports this argument saying, "Today, finding the ideal husband is like winning the Jackpot in the lottery. Parents cannot be fully sure that their daughters will be happy in the future. That is why they make their girls study so that they can work in sanitary and proper jobs in the future".⁸⁸

2.2 GENDER ROUTES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Stereotypical gender attitudes in education reveal that boys should not only be given more opportunity in education, but also they should receive higher and better education.

It is important to emphasize that the majority of respondents' show a preference for providing boys better education, while still stressing the necessity of higher education. According to survey results, the majority of respondents considered higher education sufficient both for girls and boys. Such an assessment coincides with official statistics. During the period between 2002 and 2005 the number of students in institutions of higher education increased. At the same time, in the total number of students the share of women also increased from 40.1% in the 1999-2000 academic year to 47.0% in 2004-2005.⁸⁹

One should note that almost none of the respondents considered primary education sufficient for either girls or boys. However, on the level of secondary education it is possible to see a difference between attitudes to girls'

and boys' education. Only 0.9% of respondents considered secondary education sufficient for boys, whereas 8.4% for girls. Respondents considered secondary special education, as well as vocational education more acceptable for girls than for boys.

The majority of respondents chose higher education as the sufficient level for both girls (72.1%) and boys (92%). These responses demonstrate a considerable clear gender asymmetry. If we look at the attitude to the different stages within higher education then we could pinpoint where in the educational route a gender gap comes into being. If the attitude to bachelor's education is almost the same, even with a small advantage given to girls (22.4% and 21.6% respectively), then on the level of the next stage - master's education - the gender gap is almost 20% in favour of boys. Master's degrees were considered to be a sufficient level for girls only by 49.7% of respondents, compared to 70.4% for boys. (See Table 2.1)

Such an attitude can be partially explained by comparing the age when Azerbaijani students usually graduate with a bachelor's degree (20-22) and the age that, according to respondents, is the more preferable for forming a family. 61.7% of respondents considered that the best age for girls to marry is between 20 and 23. So, graduation with a bachelor's degree for girls almost coincides with the beginning of marriage age in accordance with the expectations of the society. Part of the respondents may be taking into consideration the difficulty of combining studies and family responsibilities. For boys the majority of respondents mentioned the age of 25 and older as suitable for starting a family (i.e. the age right after graduation from a master's programme).

Despite the evidence provided in the Table 2.1 a comparison of the male/female ratio of those studying in institutions of higher education demonstrates that the gender gap (20.3%) is in fact smaller than would be expected. In 2005 47% of female and 53% of male students studied in institutions of higher education. Among those enrolled in master's programmes, gender gap constituted 14%. According to SCAS, females constituted 43% (1,739) and males - 57% (2,302).⁹⁰

The preferences given by survey respondents with regard to the sufficient level of education for boys and girls were disaggregated by sex.

Table 2.1: The frequency distribution of what level of education should be sufficient for boys and girls

	Primary	Secondary	Secondary Special	Vocational	Bachelor's	Master's
What level of education is sufficient for girls	0.3%	8.4%	12.9%	5.8%	22.4%	49.7%
What level of education is sufficient for boys	-	0.9%	4.2%	2.5%	21.6%	70.4%

The general tendency is clearly visible here: women had higher expectations relating to girls and have higher requirements for the sufficient level of education. Women considered girls to have higher education 9.3% more than men and 12.7% more women rather than men thought that girls should have Masters degree. Thus the opinion of men have a special significance taking into consideration that they dominate in decision making, and control over financial resources that are assigned for education in the family. To the question of who makes decisions in a family: regarding the education of the children in a family of the respondents, the decision was often made by the husband (60.5%) or father/father-in-law (11.3%), and also relating to the education expenses (payment of trainings, tutors etc.), the decision was often made by men - a husband (44.8%), a father/father-in-law (14.2%) or son (14.5%).

It should be noted that in both cases (both for women and men) the percentage preferring master's education for girls is higher than the percentage of those preferring bachelor's education, which speaks of a sufficiently high level of respondents' expectations regarding the educational achievements of girls-those who were admitted and graduated with bachelor's degrees are still expected to continue their education. The survey also shows that the percentage of people who consider secondary and secondary special education sufficient is low. The reason for such an evaluation could be the prestige of higher education as a symbol of social status, as well as the respondents' belief in the value of specialized knowledge and skills. The latter could explain why "secondary special education" receives more support (i.e. it provides for more specialized training than ordinary secondary education).

The difference in opinions of women and men regarding the necessity of higher education for boys is considerably less than for girls, only 2.9% in favour of men. At the same time, 71.3% men and 69.4% women among the respondents preferred the youth to receive the highest level of education, master's degree.



The percentage of men considering completion of secondary education as sufficient for boys was very low (0.4%). In most of the focus group discussions, respondents identified men “the main source of material well-being in the family”. This can be considered as the significance attributed to higher education as an important precondition of material success.

To understand varying attitudes to girls' and boys' education, the answers of respondents are also examined taking into account such variables as educational level, age, monthly income, place of residence and level of religiosity.

The first analysis is based on the relationship between gender and the respondents' level of education and their opinion about the sufficient educational level for both genders. The relationship of choice for sufficient education levels for girls and boys to respondent's own educational background allows us to see whether the respondents are inclined to consider their own educational level as the ceiling for girls' development, which is especially important taking into consideration the existence of the above mentioned gender gap. The largest group of respondents (43%) are people with secondary educations, the majority of which (66.1%) considers higher education to be a sufficient level of education for girls. The share of those preferring master's education increases with the respondent's level of education. Thus, 85% of respondents who claimed master's education as the sufficient level for girls are those with bachelor's degrees. The tendency to support higher educational achievements compared to one's own prevails even among

men with the lowest educational level: 42.9% of male respondents who claimed that the optimal educational level for girls was vocational education were those who had a primary school degree.

The division of answers among age groups shows that - the generation of 18-24 year olds strongly supported higher education for girls: 21.5% chose bachelor's education and 57.1% consider master's education a sufficient level. In total 78.6% of respondents in this age group supported higher education (women 65.1%, men 49%). This indicator (49%) is higher than in any other age groups. Nevertheless, as can be observed from the above mentioned data, in this category more women than men consider girls should receive higher education. The number of women of the 18-24 age cohorts considering tertiary education sufficient for girls is very significant rather than men, which in its turn shows the gap.

As a comparison, in the 55 to 64 years of age group the difference between men (40.9%) and women (44%) supporting tertiary education sufficient for girls is only 3.1%. So, the generation born after the onset of “perestroika” and formed at the end of the 1990's definitely chose a high level of education as necessary for girls, a fact that is possibly related to the growth in significance of specialization and professionalism in market economic conditions and the gender awareness.

The attitude expressed by the younger generation of respondents coincides with data on the results of students' admission to institutions of higher education for the 2004-

05 academic year. In the 2004-05 academic year the number of applicants for admission to institutions of higher education increased by 29% as compared with the previous year (51% of applicants were girls).⁹¹

In contrast to the younger generation, the 65 years of and older cohort demonstrated the lowest percentage of support for girls' higher education (Bachelor's education 19.0% and 44.8% for Master's education). Men in the 55-64 years of age group demonstrated the least support for girls' higher education among men and women of all age groups. The position held by parents of today's students (45-54 age group) can have a strong impact on the educational routes of boys and girls currently pursuing higher education. The survey demonstrated that the opinions of this group did not differ considerably from the position of the youth (21.7% for bachelor's education and 52.5% for master's education for girls, 21% for bachelor's education and 71.9% for master's education for boys). Our data permits us to say that in this age group a greater number of women (63.4%) than men (42.5%) gave preference to master's education as sufficient for girls. Thus we assume that currently girls receive support more often from their mothers (generation of 45-54) in obtaining higher education due to the fact that this generation of mothers (among all female respondents) has the highest level of expectations for girls' academic achievements.

The survey examined the impact of the respondent's monthly average family income on the choice of sufficient educational level for girls and boys. The results demonstrated that the number of respondents choosing tertiary education as a sufficient level for girls was greater for each group with average monthly income over 90 AZN. In this group the weight of those who gave their preference to master's education increased as well, since access to education was also related to meeting the financial cost of it. The higher the monthly average family income the more a family could afford such expenses.

At the same time the results of the survey showed that among the respondents whose families have a low monthly income (from 30 AZN to 50 AZN) 69.5% supported higher education for girls which was not very different from the result in the group with incomes three times higher (from 130 AZN to 150 AZN)- (73.2%). The difference can be considered as negligible and we can argue that education is

important for Azerbaijani families of all income levels. Comparing the changes of gender preferences in relation to respondent family incomes allows us to see the same gender gap in access to higher education independent of family income (15-20% more respondents considered higher education sufficient for boys compared to girls).

The results of the survey did not show a significant difference between urban and rural inhabitants in defining educational routes for boys and girls. More urban inhabitants exhibited a preference for girls' tertiary education (9% more than rural inhabitants). Perhaps this difference exists because most of urban inhabitants gave preference particularly to master's degree. It should be taken into consideration that getting an education for rural inhabitants is always connected to moving to urban areas and living away from parents. At the same time rural participants of the focus group repeatedly indicated that taking care of a girl was much harder, because it was more dangerous for her to leave home by herself. At the same time 67.1 % of respondents from rural areas supported higher education for girls. It can be concluded that the prestige of higher education and the corresponding social and material benefits were more important for rural inhabitants than the family's fear of losing direct control over an unmarried daughter.

The examination of how the responses varied depending on degree of religiosity revealed that 73.4% of "religious" respondents (77.3% of "religious" women and 68.9% of "religious" men) considered higher education a sufficient educational level for girls, with 52.2% supporting master's degree education for girls. This indicator is higher than the percentage of those supporting girls' enrolment in higher education among survey participants in general (72.3%), which means that the "religious" respondent was more likely to support higher education for girls than the average respondent.

The large proportion of respondents identifying themselves as "strongly religious" (dindar) also favoured the various stages of higher education as a sufficient educational level for girls (69.7%) just slightly lower than those demonstrated by less religious categories. However, in this category the number of men (72.4%) supporting higher education for girls exceeded the number of women (67.5%). A significant difference was evident in choices made by

respondents with regard to the transition between the two levels of higher education for girls: "strongly religious" respondents gave preference to bachelor's degrees (38.1%) as sufficient for girls, while the less religious groups preferred to see girls progressing to the master's degree level (52.2%).

Examining the data-disaggregated by gender, age, income level and educational level-throws new light on the difference between the gender gap in actual practice and attitudes of survey respondents to the sufficient level of education for boys and girls and to the real gender situation. The actual gap between the percentage of male and female students enrolled in higher education is smaller than what is to be expected based on attitudes of survey respondents. 71.3% of survey participants indicated that in their family man (husband, father/father-in-law) was responsible for making decisions regarding the education of children. However, if the actual number of male and female applicants to higher education reflected solely the position of the father or husband, we would witness a wider gap between the number of female and male students. Only 67.3% of male respondents supported higher education for girls compared to 93.4% supporting higher education for boys

Apparently the decision-making process taking place in the family with regard to girl's education is more complex and more gender balanced than our respondents chose to describe. Groups that demonstrated a smaller gender gap in their attitudes toward the opportunity of higher education for females and males (women, youth, and respondents with higher educational level) in practice seem to be able to influence the decisions made by families with regard to girls' education and thus manage to reduce the gender inequality.

2.3 EDUCATION AND GENDER STEREOTYPES

Another reflection of the gender stereotypes can be seen in the choice of occupation and related professional education. Some 'jobs' may be seen as a better fit for girls and/or boys both in their public lives, and their roles in the private sphere. According to the results of the survey, 33% of respondents did not see any prospects for girls in acquiring traditionally male "technical" professions, arguing that there would not be employment opportunities for them. If we include those who partially agreed with this position, the figure increased to 57.7%. Correspondingly the remaining 42.3%

of respondents did not agree or strongly disagree with this viewpoint. Thus, the position of a significant portion of the respondents consisted of a full or partial support of the gender stereotype contained in the statement. A significantly larger group of women (37.9%) than men (28.1%) agreed that girls should not acquire any "male" professions. According to the survey data exactly half of the respondents were not in favour of women working in positions normally held by men. Discussions in the focus group provided extensive materials demonstrating a widespread belief in "female" professions: "The ideal positions for women are doctors and teachers, because women are mothers; they should allocate time for their children, whereas men can work in a wide range of jobs". Thus the survey data as well as the focus group discussions presented a vicious cycle generating gender segregation of professional training on the level of the educational system, as well as professional gender segregation in the labour market.

Official data about which category of professions were the most popular among applicants in the 2004-2005 academic year permits us to see gender stereotypes associated with choosing professions. According to the data of the State Commission for the Admission of Students, a significant difference exists between professions chosen by female and male applicants.⁹³ Therefore in the 2004-2005 academic year, male matriculates preferred in the first place a subgroup consisting of technical professions (engineering, mathematics, physics, architecture and design). The second most preferred subgroup consisted of economy, management and geography. Female matriculates preferred the humanities: the most popular subgroup included sociology, pedagogy and psychology, followed by the second most popular consisting of languages, philology, history, jurisprudence, arts and music. It should be noted that in the framework of our discussions in focus groups "teacher" was also often mentioned by respondents as the most suitable for women.

This data demonstrates a clear division in the applicants' preferences among gendered professions. Moreover, if we pay attention to the characteristics of professions chosen by boys and girls, then it is not difficult to notice that the specific decisions of the applicants regarding the choice of a future profession coincides with the attitude of the respondents to the gender stereotype posed in the question.

Increasingly young people in Azerbaijan are looking for educational opportunities abroad, which tend to lead to better chances of employment, because of the higher quality of education and the advantage of a foreign language. Survey respondents were offered the following question: "If a girl travels abroad for education, she loses an opportunity to get married". The majority (58%) disagreed with this statement, 23.9% partially agreed, 18% agreed. In Azerbaijan where most unmarried girls live with their parents until marriage, such a reaction confirms our previous conclusion about the prestige of education in society. In this case high regard for education serves to further expand an unmarried girl's mobility in public, as well as widen her educational opportunities.

At the same time, a considerable number of focus group participants demonstrated a negative attitude to women's labour migration. "We understand why men are [going abroad for work]. Women's migration is a very unfortunate thing, it creates problems for the state...women migrate to Iran, Turkey, China and Russia. They are immoral women. And no one can prevent them from doing it."⁹⁴ It is notable that the accusation of immorality addressed to women traveling abroad in search of jobs was not extended to the girls going abroad for studies - respondents thought that education abroad would not impede their marriage prospects. The majority of survey respondents and Focus Group participants were more inclined to allow women the freedom to migrate for education than for employment.

Gender stereotypes are often reflected in the purposes people set in pursuing education, so respondents were asked their opinion on the following statements: "Men receive an education only in order to earn money in the future" and "women receive an education in

order to care for children when they become mothers". The results of the survey demonstrated that a "life strategy" stereotype for men (being a breadwinner) had more support than the "life strategy" stereotype for women (being a mother). More than half of the respondents (55.3% of women and 55% of men) agreed that the goal of receiving an education for men was to become providers. At the same time only 22.4% of respondents (21.9% of women and 22.9% of men) agreed with the opinion that women received an education to teach their own children in the future. Only 24.2% (25.5% of male and 23% of female) respondents disagreed with "earning money" as the goal of education for men, whereas more than half of the male (52.3%) and female (60.3%) respondents disagreed with the view that educated women were merely housewives educating their own children (see Table 2.2).

The strong difference in support and rejection of the "male" and "female" stereotype showed a more intensive process of changing borders of normative behavior for women as compared to men. It also confirmed the conclusion that survey respondents were more inclined to reject traditional norms including stereotypes of women's behavior and "life strategy" when it came to the field of educational development.

Such a reaction has deep roots in the cultural-political history of Azerbaijan. Since the period of the Azerbaijani Enlightenment (end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries) and further in the course of the Soviet period, Azerbaijani society passed a more thorny and steep path of changing the traditional stereotypes of a women's image and behavior than men's. Soviet modernization shattered the foundations of traditional society and brought about dramatic changes in the field directly relating to the image and way of life of Azerbaijani women: removing the chadra (veil),



Table 2.2: The frequency distribution of gender differences in the assessment of gender stereotypes

	Disagree		Partially agree		Agree	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
There is no point in sending girls to universities of engineering, because they'll not be able to find a job suitable to this profession	46.8%	37.9%	25.1%	24.2%	28.1%	37.9%
If a girl goes abroad for getting education she loses her opportunity to get married	57.0%	59.2%	24.7%	23%	18.3%	17.8%
Men only get education in order to earn money in future	25.5%	23%	19.5%	21.5%	55%	55.5%
Women get education in order to become mothers and take care of their children	52.3%	60.3%	24.8%	17.8%	22.9%	21.9%

entering the public sphere and taking an active involvement in education and production. Since then, female education became a synonym for modernization and development. Correspondingly, the preparedness to accept changing women's gender stereotypes in the field of education turns out to be higher than when it concerns men.

For further examination of the survey data it is worthwhile to examine closely attitudes the respondents expressed about proposed gender stereotypes disaggregated by sex, age, level of education, level of income, place of residence (urban/rural inhabitants) and level of religiousness. It is notable that almost no gender difference existed in attitudes toward the statement about men's "life strategy" connected to education (goal to receive education for men - to earn money). In both groups the number of respondents supporting this stereotype exceeds almost twice the number of those who disagreed. The attitudes of urban and rural inhabitants did not differ. However, when it came to statements about women's "life strategy", female respondents were more inclined to disagree with limiting women's educational opportunities. With regard to the two statements out of three ("education abroad will impede girls' marriage prospects" and "girls' goal to obtain an education is to take care of their own children") more women than men expressed their disagreement. In both cases, a large percentage of women selected the strongest degree of disagreement.

Respondents belonging to different age groups demonstrated no significant differences. However, youth, more than people older than 65, disagreed with the statement that studying abroad would hinder girls' marriage. The number of respondents that disagreed with the stereotypes limiting educational opportunities for women increased with the respondents' education. A significantly large difference was apparent between the answers of respondents with secondary and tertiary educations. Urban inhabitants turned out to be more inclined to disagree with the proposed stereotypes than the rural inhabitants.

Respondents who described themselves as "strongly religious", in almost all cases, demonstrated the strongest degree of disagreement with the proposed statements. Thus the strongest degree of disagreement concerned not only the statements relating to

women, but also those containing the stereotype of men's "life strategy" (this statement was supported by all other categories of respondents). The most religious portion of the respondents was against the stereotype limiting the educational opportunities of both women and men, whereas the respondents with the least degree of religious self-identification demonstrated reactions close to average survey results. This may be due to the fact that a high degree of religiousness is often accompanied by challenging and sometimes a complete reassessment of behavioural norms that prevail in society. Moreover, there may be a strong ideological inclination towards education amongst the strongly religious. In this case, the content of the education may be the real question. However, this is beyond the content of this report.

Regarding the connection between the level of respondents' incomes and their attitudes to the proposed statements it should be noted that in all cases except one, respondents with higher incomes tended to disagree with the proposed gender stereotypes. Only in discussing the purpose of men's education ("earning money") did the situation change slightly. Out of relatively small groups with the lowest and the highest level of income (only 12.5% out of total number of respondents), the number of those who disagreed with the stereotype of obtaining education for "earning" was considerably higher than those in the majority with an average level of income. However, the majority of respondents considered education a source of material prosperity that should be obtained by men in a family. Taking into account, the wide distribution of this stereotype, we may assume that in selecting educational strategies for boys, parents and future students will demonstrate a strong preference for professions that promise high material dividends in the future.

2.4 INTERNET AND GENDER STEREOTYPES

Approved in August 2004, the three-year State Programme on Providing General Secondary Schools in the Republic of Azerbaijan Access to ICT became an important step in reforming the educational system in Azerbaijan. This initiative allocates 20 million USD to provide public secondary schools with information-computer technologies and envisions providing schools with equipment, training for teachers and publishing educational-methodological manuals. The programme is intended to increase the number of computers in public

Table 2.3: The frequency distribution of gender differences in the assessment of gender stereotypes from the perspective of using the Internet

	Fully disagree	Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Fully agree
Girls should not be allowed to use internet, because we'll not be able to control their correspondence	6.0%	38.8%	26.5%	24.5%	4.2%
Girls and boys should have same opportunities to use internet	4.5%	25.8%	25.8%	37.4%	6.5%

secondary schools, so the schools will have one computer per 33 students (at the outset of the programme this ratio was 1:1063).

Currently, according to the results of the survey, only 4.5% of respondents had personal computers at home, and only 4.1% of respondents own a modem. Therefore, the school computer and Internet centres for the majority of Azerbaijani children was the only way to learn how to use ICT. Taking into consideration the existence of relevant legislation on both education and ICT there is no doubt that these centres are designed to provide equal access to obtaining knowledge and skills in the field of ICT for all school age children regardless of sex. However, the presence of this opportunity may not be an indicator of the gender symmetry in the usage of Internet resources. The problem of gender equality in learning Internet resources in a broad perspective is bound up with providing girls the same degree of freedom of access to information. The differences in restrictions on the freedom to access information, in turn, have a direct relation to the system of gender control and domination: girls are subjected to a more rigid system of power relations. It is concerning that several times participants of

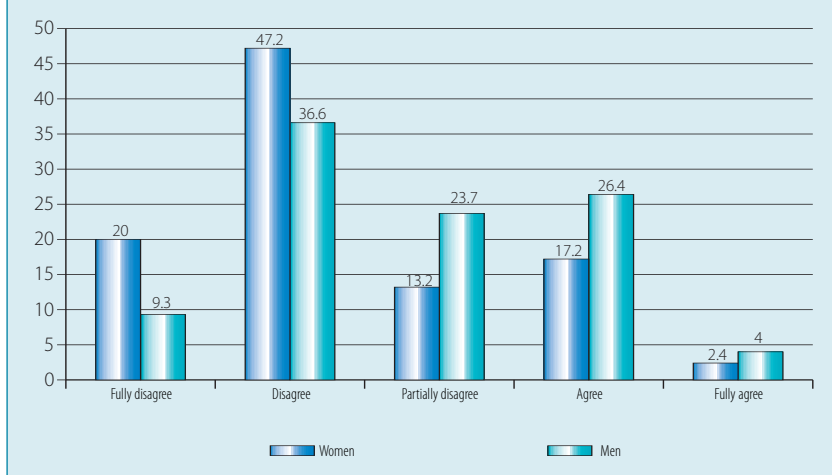
the focus groups mentioned the necessity of such control: "We may leave boys alone but not the girls. Girls always have to be under supervision. A girl is her fathers' and brothers' honor. She always needs protection."⁹⁵

When it comes to the question of using the Internet, it seems almost half of the respondents were consistent in expressing their positive opinions about providing equal opportunities to accessing the Internet (43.9%) regardless of sex. Table 2.3 shows that almost the same number of respondents (44.8%) rejected the necessity to limit the Internet access as means enforcing control over girls' private lives. Those with the opposite opinion remain in the minority-28.7% and 30.3% respectively. However, almost a quarter of the respondents (25.8% and 26.5% respectively) didn't give a definite answer. Possibly these respondents had a poor understanding of the Internet or did not develop a clear position. In any case, they belong to a part of society that is ready to change its views regarding access to the Internet.

Examining differences in the answers of male and female respondents reveals a sharp divergence in their positions. A considerably



Figure 2.8: Full or partial support of limitations for the use of the Internet for girls



larger percentage of women (51.5%) than men (38.1%) expressed their disagreement with limiting girls' opportunities in using the Internet, whereas 33.7% of men and 23.5% of women supported this limitation. (See Figure 2.8) This data allows us to identify male respondents as the main source of prohibitions and restrictions in this area. Women constituted a majority of the respondents who disagreed with gender-based limitations and supported equal opportunities for using the Internet.

Analysis of differences in the various age groups' stances on freedom of access to the Internet permits us to see how the current generation of parents and grandparents regard gender equality in this issue. The number supporting gender limitations on Internet usage and disagreeing with providing boys and girls equal rights to Internet information steadily increased with age. Furthermore, among the youth (18-24 years old) 52.3% were against gender-based restrictions; 24.6% supported them and 23.2% supported them partially. Despite the fact that the percentage of 18-24 year-olds who supported limitations was lower than in the 55-64 cohort (32.9%), it was still a quarter of the entire age group. The same situation was observed in the matter of equal rights to Internet usage.

That 23.8% and 35.1% of today's generation of parents with school-age children (25-39 years old) partially or fully agreed with prohibiting girls Internet usage is a real concern. The attitude is a source of concern not only from the perspective of observing gender equality in acquiring computer skills at schools, but also from the position of limiting development opportunities for girls. The answers of the participants of these age groups to the second statement (Girls and boys should have same opportunities to use Internet) demonstrated the strengthening of the same tendency.

The number of those who disagreed with gender restrictions for girls and support equal opportunities directly correlated to education level. Respondents with tertiary education exhibited a particularly significant increase in the number disagreeing with the practice.

The survey results revealed that religious respondents were more often inclined to approve restrictions on girls' access to Internet. 32.9% of the "strongly religious" category agreed with the girls' restrictions on access to Internet compared to the less religious category (20.6%). Among the "strongly religious" category the percentage of those, who disagreed with equal access to Internet for girls and boys, was also high (47.7%). Among the other categories the percentage of respondents who disagreed with this statement did not exceed 28.5%.

It should be noted that among the most religious respondents a significantly larger number of women (44.4%) than men (27.4%) agreed not to allow girls to work on the Internet. Thus within the "strongly religious" category women were more likely than men to support limitations on girls' access to the Internet. For comparison, among less religious categories male respondents more often than women favoured such restrictions.

Among rural inhabitants the number of those ready to agree with gender restrictions (36.8%), as well as the number of those prepared to

Table 2.4: The frequency distribution of whether religion influences education

	Fully disagree	Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Fully agree
In our religion, women's getting high education is welcomed	2.8%	11.4%	15.0%	59.4%	11.4%
Co-education of girls and boys is not prohibited by religion	3.2%	17.2%	19.7%	51.4%	8.5%
Religious symbols (veil, religious cloths, beard) are inappropriate in schools	7.2%	28.2%	24.1%	33.3%	7.2%

disagree with gender restrictions (34.2%), was higher than among the urban inhabitants (22.1% and 27% respectively). In this case the rural inhabitants' low level of ICT awareness should be taken into consideration.

results from the particular attention of this category of respondents to the contents of information, offered in the educational process alongside the general support that they render for the education of women.

2.5 RELIGIOUSNESS AND GENDER: RESTRICTION OR SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

After the collapse of the Soviet system, a marked liberalization in religious practices has occurred in Azerbaijan. Even though Azerbaijan is a secular state with the separation of religion and the state education system established by the country's Constitution, religious attitudes have a significant impact on a wide variety of social practices. The survey included several questions exploring the relationship between religious interpretations and gender attitudes in education. (See: Table 2.4)

As shown in Table 2.4 the majority of survey participants consider both women's high level of education and the co-education of girls and boys compatible with religion. In this respect the level of religiosity seems not to constitute a hindrance for girls' education. At the same time 40.5% of respondents considered wearing religious attributes inappropriate at school—a result rather unexpected given the high proportion of respondents choosing one or the other form of religious self-identification. These responses reflect a particular mode of religiosity prevalent among the survey participants which combines religious self-identification with the adherence to the secular nature of educational institutions. The attitude demonstrated by the respondents fits into the particular type of discourse about the Azerbaijani nation which describes Islam as an intrinsic part of national heritage while affirming the view that strong secular statehood is the highest level of the nation's development.

The survey data illustrated a significant divergence of opinions among respondents that identified themselves as “strongly religious” and other categories. Moreover, despite the widespread opinion in some cases, the “strongly religious” respondents unlike the least religious expressed their support for the expansion of educational opportunities for women. However, it was in the issue of using Internet that the “strongly religious” group was more inclined to support restrictions and inequality of opportunities, which possibly



CHAPTER 3



Health

Attitudes to health and especially to reproductive health in many countries have become an important dimension of gender relations. Increasingly in many international discussions, reproductive rights are considered indicators of equality between the sexes. In this section the attitudes of men and women in Azerbaijan on their health, as well as their perceptions of health problems are discussed-attitudes on reproductive health and reproductive rights, as it may have very significant impact on gender relations.

3.1 HEALTHCARE UNDER NEW ECONOMIC SYSTEM

As in many facets of life in Azerbaijan, the health system is going through radical changes. Transition to a market economy and the system of private health services and health insurance requires radical changes in organizing healthcare and attitudes to health issues. The fully subsidized Soviet healthcare system had to be transformed without denying citizens access to health services, while at the same time facilitating the overall development of health services is proving to be a challenge. However, Azerbaijani society continues to view health issues through the lenses of the formerly free healthcare. Enduring perceptions of free healthcare as a norm, on top of people's limited economic means and traditional lack of personal

healthcare, favoured the general non-acceptance of paid health services. The collapse of the Soviet healthcare system undermined preventive health practices, and contributed to healthcare problems of the unemployed population, particularly children, retired and disabled persons, and the hundreds of thousands of refugees and IDPs. Women in certain circumstances became another vulnerable group for access to healthcare. Timely access to high quality health services is a matter of life and death.

The Constitution of independent Azerbaijan guarantees the right to life and healthcare to all citizens regardless of sex. The 'Law on the Protection of Public Health' endorses the provision of municipal and private health services and grants that any medical establishment is entitled to provide any and all paid health services to any patient. The Law specifically designates birth-related reproductive health services as free.

Having said that, there are problems in healthcare services in the country. According to official statistics, the average life expectancy in Azerbaijan is 72 years (75.2 years for women and 68.8 years for men), the highest figure registered in the past 17 years. Unlike many CIS countries the difference of life expectancy between the sexes is close to international norms.

3.2 ATTITUDES TO HEALTH AND TREATMENT

Azerbaijanis do not pay careful attention to their health (See Table 3.1). People tend to see a doctor when they can “endure no more”. Probably, not only this attitude, but also other reasons such as limited household incomes and lack of a developed health insurance system can explain the fact that 75.5% of respondents did not go for regular health checks (74.7% women, 76.4% men) although vast majority, 93.7%, knew that these examinations were necessary. 73.6% of the female respondents who thought that periodic examinations were necessary did not undergo them.

Gender disaggregation of responses to this question shows no marked gender asymmetry. In the survey the respondents were asked about why they had so few regular health checks. (See Table 3.1) The main factor that leads to low motivation behind seeing a doctor regularly was the lack of sufficient money for treatment and for purchasing drugs (45.9%). The second reason was that they said if they were sick they would go to the doctor for medical check-ups (28.8%). Another significant observation is that 14.6% of the respondents used traditional healing methods. It may be expected that women will have less access to financial sources than men and that is reflected in having no medical treatment. In fact 5.8% more women than men indicated economic reasons for their negligence. In Azerbaijan women are believed to be more knowledgeable in traditional medical practices. Since women provide medical care for their families, traditional medicines are more often used. In case of Azerbaijan, surprisingly more men than women tend to apply to the practitioners of traditional medicine.

The majority of respondents used public health facilities (74.5%) when they needed medical assistance. Only 8.5% went to private practitioners and 4.5% to specialized private medical centres. (Figure 3.1) Neither the sex of the respondent, nor any of the socio-economic independent variables indicated a meaningful correlation between the two variables. Certainly, middle and high income individuals referred to private professionals more often, but it was not infrequent for them to attend public facilities as well.

Life expectancy and quality of life depend directly on preventive health interventions, particularly on focused interventions aimed at

infection control and protection against communicable diseases at any age. This includes a well-developed immunization programme including a proper immunization schedule and high quality vaccines for children of certain age groups. As of 2006, the Azerbaijani government provides vaccination for such diseases-tuberculosis, hepatitis, poliomyelitis, tetanus, diphtheria, etc.

The survey questionnaire included a question on whether the respondents and their family members were immunized. 29.4% of the respondents gave a negative answer. The respondents often related immunization to children only. This can well be supported by respondents' statements, such as: “There are no children in the family, so no one got vaccinated”, or “All children have already got their shots”. With closer scrutiny, the negative responses were grouped into several categories: 1) subjective refusal, 7.3% of all negative responses (including answers like “I have no faith in vaccines”, “they are not necessary”, “I will get a shot when I get ill”, etc.); 2) objective reasons, 38.9% (including “already vaccinated”, contra-indications for medical reasons); 3) lack of information, 33.9% (“nobody came” and such); 4) no money to pay, 16.1% (although these are required and supposedly free vaccines). The simple question opens up an entire horizon of problems with contemporary healthcare and the approach to questions of health.

Official and intra-agency disease statistics establishes gender prevalence for diseases. Diseases like tuberculosis (active forms), mental disorders, alcoholism, drug abuse (and resultant mental changes) are particularly seen in male patients, whereas women are more susceptible to anaemia, and gynaecological problems. This data also relates to the discussions in the focus groups where men were considered as “the main victims of economic hardship and unemployment” and were argued to suffer often from emotional



Table 3.1: The frequency distribution of the reasons why the respondents choose not to seek medical treatment

	Average (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)
I do not get sick	28,8	27,1	30,5
The medical institution is far from our house	3,3	3,4	3,2
I do not trust the competence of doctors	4,3	4,7	3,9
One of the members of the family is a physician	3,1	3,5	2,7
I use traditional treatments	14,6	12,6	16,6
Lack of sufficient money for treatment and purchasing	45,9	48,7	43,1
Drugs	-	-	-
Total responses:	100,0	100,0	100,0



breakdowns, stress and cardiovascular diseases.

Gender disaggregation of 98.5% of responses to the question “in which diseases are the problem in the area where they live” shows the subsequent results. The most acute health problem is related with cardiovascular diseases according to both male (48.9%) and female respondents (43.8%) in their region. Additionally, drug abuse is seen to be more problematic according to woman (10.4%) than men.

In short we can argue that the majority of health problems as perceived by men and women have similarities. The health problems are more related to poverty, and health interventions will be successful if adequate health services are provided and people know of and have access to them.

3.3 ENVIRONMENT AND LIVING STANDARDS

Environmental problems also have a deleterious impact on individuals' health. Focus group participants stressed that general contamination results in incidences of malaria. They also emphasized lack of sanitary-hygienic interventions and shortage of potable water. Specifically, shortage of pure potable water and/or difficulty in accessing it (i.e. carrying from long distances, buying, etc.) were indicated as a major problem in focus groups conducted in Barda, Imishli, Sabirabad and Guba districts. In the focus groups conducted in Baku, where there is a centralized public water supply system available, it was claimed that access to water was limited by a scheduled supply pattern. Therefore, infectious diseases were considered to be related to a certain extent to the deteriorating environmental situation. Although industrial production has sharply declined, environmental degradation, air and water pollution were considered as local problems by 22.1%, 13.6% and 18.3% of the respondents respectively (See Figure 3.3).

The most common environmental problems were environmental pollution (22.1%), drinking water pollution (18.3%), wood chopping (24.5%), air pollution (22.1%), and hazardous industries (13.6%). In the perceived environmental problems we have not noted any significant differences between gender groups except for the destruction of the forest which is more important for men than women (31.2% of men as opposed 17.9% of women).

3.4 REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Reproductive health services and, primarily, child delivery services are legally free, however, 79.3% of the respondents thought that the “state does not adequately cover costs of reproductive health services”. This shows that the majority of the population may be paying formal or informal fees towards obstetric costs and cover health expenses, including childbirth, from the common household budget. This represents a gap between national legislation and practice. One representative of a local NGO said, “This gap firstly derives from the fact that people do not know about their rights. Azerbaijani families start saving money for the birth from the first day of pregnancy.”⁹⁶

Figure 3.1: The frequency distribution of the respondents' preference to seek medical assistance

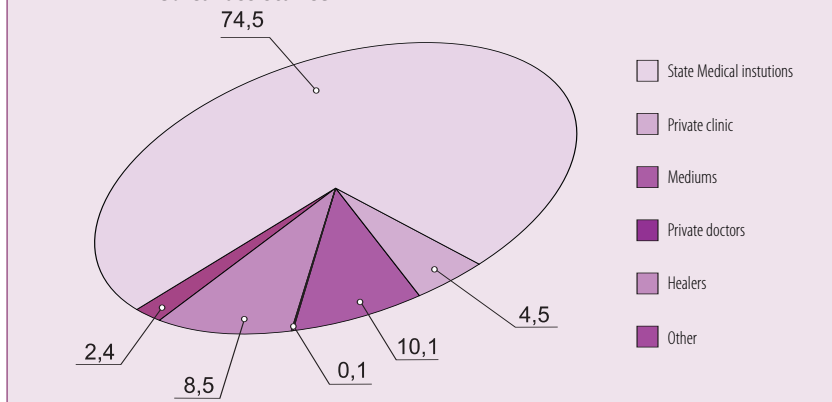
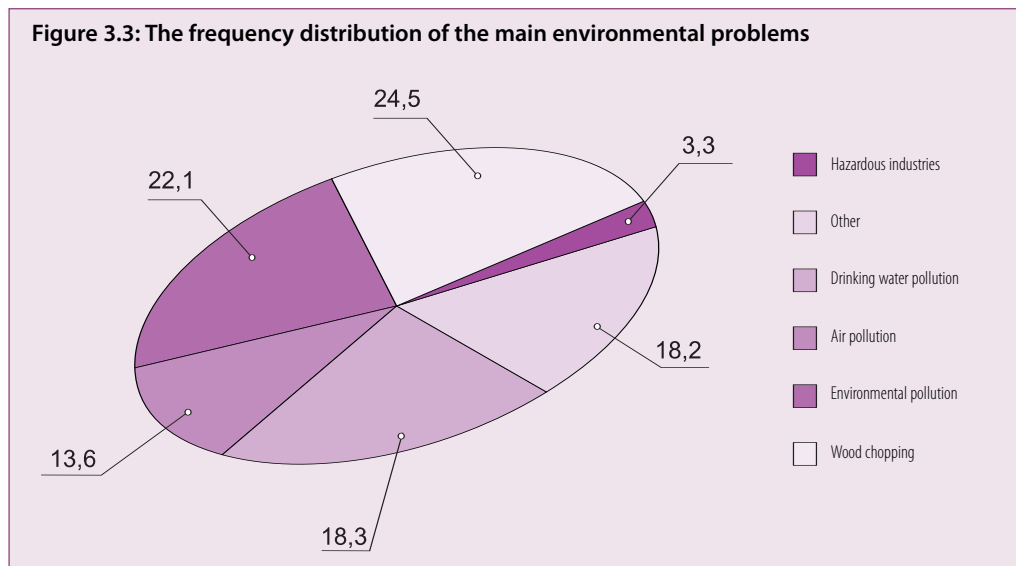


Figure 3.3: The frequency distribution of the main environmental problems



As is well known, In recent years Azerbaijan has seen a decline in female fertility, from 2.3 children per woman in 1995 to 1.8 in 2002. Since 2003 it has somewhat recovered: 1.9 in 2003 to 2.1 in 2004 to 2.3 in 2005.⁹⁷ One NGO representative said, "In the past, families would have 4-5 children. Now this figure is down to 2-3 children at best. This is due to an increased consumer demand and financial difficulty in meeting this demand. People are now more educated about family planning".⁹⁸

The desired number of children is a very important indicator of the perceptions on family. It not only shows the ideal family size, but also reveals the gender roles and intra-family divisions of labour. Participants of the focus groups related the decreasing number of children within the family with the economic difficulties. One young male respondent from Barda said, "30-40 years ago families had at least 6 children. My father has 9 brothers and one sister. Today young married couple wants one boy and one girl".⁹⁹ A woman from Fuzuli District said, "Are there more than two children in any family? It is now economic hardship. Having two children means having too many children".¹⁰⁰

The survey looked at the gender aspects of birth control. International experience indicates that there are significant political and cultural differences in resolving this question. In many countries the decision about having a second baby is for the man to make-a lucid example of patriarchal control. Analysing questionnaire responses yields a kin pattern in Azerbaijan: in making the second-baby decision, men outweighed women. Yet, breaking down the impressive-looking share of "other" responses to this question (34.5%)

shows that more than 2/3 of them (68.8%) were decisions taken by husband and wife jointly. Yet, the same patriarchal tradition is evident here: father (0.7%) was almost twice as likely as mother (0.3%) to take the decision (see Figure 3.4).

When the level of educational attainment increases, decisions related to the number of children were taken collectively. 80% of men with primary educations said that the husband decided on the number of children, decreased to 43.6% among respondents having undergraduate degrees. There was also a corresponding distribution for women.

An overwhelming number of the respondents (over 93%) thought that the government and civil society should do more to educate the public about family planning and contraceptives. However, there is a very strong deficiency of services; only 2 respondents reported having a family planning centre in their region (2 respondents reported having a female crisis centre, 7 - a health facility for children, 27 - a female advisory centre).

Figure 3.4: The frequency distribution on who makes the decision on birth control

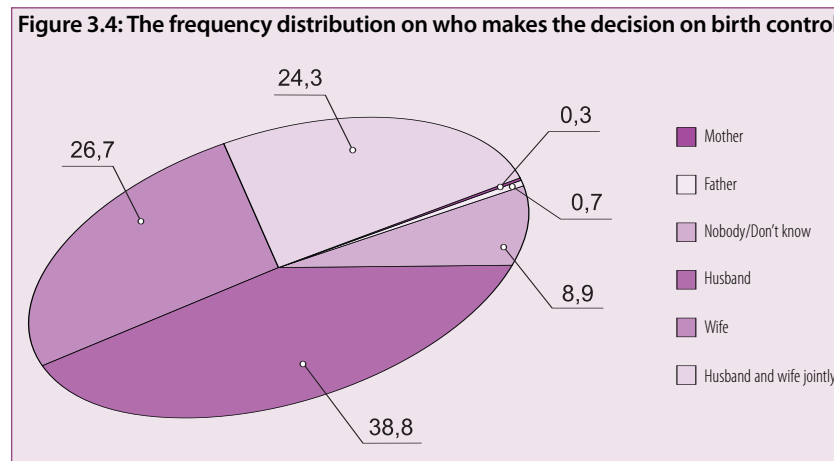
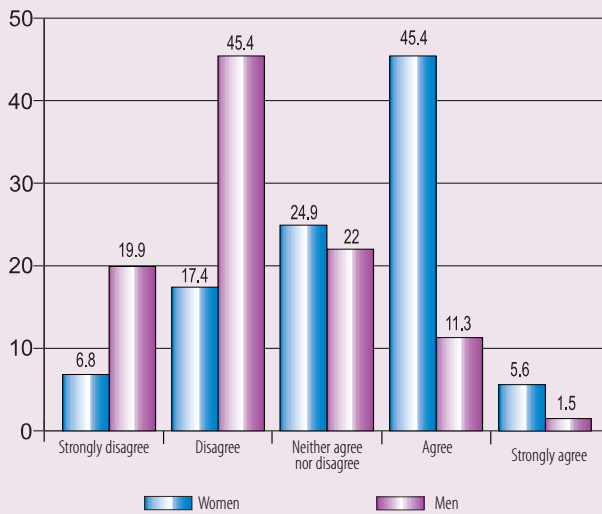


Figure 3.5: The frequency distribution on providing each woman access to abortion services



Attitudes towards abortion showed male-female discrepancy. Overall 44.6% of respondents opposed free abortion for every woman, whereas 31.9% of them agreed. 47% of female respondents saw no problem with the free abortion. This rate is only 12.8% for the male respondents (See Figure 3.5).

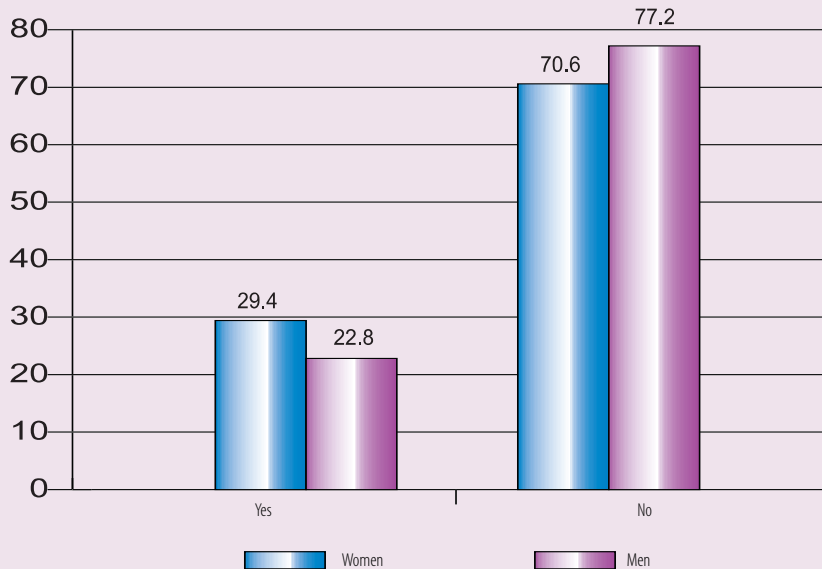
As families want few children, the preferences for the sex of that child becomes more visible. Moreover, contemporary medical techniques make it possible to detect the sex of the unborn child. The preference for boys over girls in many societies, including Azerbaijan, encourages sex selective abortion. While 45.2% of the sample admitted to knowledge of the phenomenon, 54.8% of respondents indicated that they had no knowledge of it. The gender proportion of positive responses

was dramatically different. Among men only 27.6% said they were aware of such practices, whereas amongst women this ratio more than doubled making 62.6% of the respondents. This can be considered as an important indicator of women's sensitivity and/or inclinations towards selective abortions. Further analysis indicates that there is no strong direct correlation between the level of education and having knowledge on selective abortion.

As of 2006 it was unofficially reported that newly-born boys outnumber girls by a 3 to 1 ratio, probably as a result of sex-selective abortions. Privately, some obstetricians express their concern that 4 out of 10 women that refer to them and want to discontinue pregnancy are doing so, because they are bearing a girl. Evidently, this is a demographically damaging consequence of foetal diagnostics. However, the responses to the survey contradict with this data. 73.9% of those polled thought that resorting to sex-selective abortion was not the right thing to do even if there were already many daughters in a family. Men rather than women predominated among these respondents (52.1% and 47.9%, respectively). As it can be seen from Figure 3.6, nearly every third woman (29.4%) and under one-fourth of men (22.8%) considered sex-selective abortion acceptable.

This is an interesting tendency, which may show that women more than men, value male children. This may be due to a very common factor that bearing a male child raises the status of the mother in the family and

Figure 3.6: The frequency distribution on whether a woman should consider a selective abortion if she has many daughters



community. This may also be related to the conception about the girl who can lead to further uncertainties and problems in the future whereas a boy can be seen as a source of support and security. This phenomenon also reflects the issue that women, as well as men are bearers and transmitters of patriarchal values. One very important relation that we observe with education is that there is an irregular relationship on approval of sex selective abortion. Whereas in the low levels of education both men and women disapproved strongly, in the middle levels of education amongst both men and women, there was slightly more tendency to be on the positive side. Similarly in the middle income bracket there was a slight (but statistically significant) rise of the acceptance of the selective abortion, both amongst male and female respondents. Such a relation was also seen amongst women in very high income brackets. These all confirm that middle education, middle income families tend to have a more traditional outlook to the male child.

Most of the focus group participants both male and female were against the selective abortion considering it “a sin”, “strictly prohibited by religion”, “a crime”, “murder” and “a violation of the right to life of an unborn child”. They considered the sex of child as “God-given”. A young man from Barda said, “Abortion is wrong. It means to take the right to life of a child. A baby girl is also given by God. Abortion is a crime.”¹⁰¹ A female from the same age group said, “I am single but I know that I would never have an abortion. This is a sin. Today there are many means to avoid pregnancy. Women have to be trained about these issues, particularly in rural areas.”¹⁰² However, the female participants also expressed the fact that sometimes woman were forced to abort by their husbands: “Today they give the priority to boys. Men force their wives to undergo ultrasound and if it is a girl, they will have an abortion.”¹⁰³ Abortion seems to be the only choice particularly when there are economic problems. One female respondent said, “We are afraid of having the abortion. We know that it is a sin but it is out of necessity. If we could afford it, why should we not have more children?”¹⁰⁴

Social problems, such as adolescent and pre-pubescent marriages, kindred marriages, violence to girls, sexual coercion and exploitation constitute the dark side of reproductive health. The most vulnerable and

discriminated against groups in this regard are girls from poor families; girls from strict, conservative backgrounds; refugee and IDP girls; and disabled girls. The health of these vulnerable groups is seriously threatened whilst opportunities for supporting their health are limited. “... In recent years girls experience growing problems. Girls marry at younger age; sometimes they are forced to. I think this is a big problem. Marrying off at the age of 14 or 15 early negatively affects female health. These things are harmful on the whole. Many such women live short, unhappy lives”, said an NGO activist.¹⁰⁵

The respondents noted that various facets of the conflict in and around the Nagorny-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan left scars of war. 90.8% of the respondents (both men and women) considered the psychological impact of the conflict “very strong” (75.3%) and “strong” (15.5%), especially in the view of the fact that the conflict has yet to be resolved. The physical impact of the conflict, meaning mainly death and maiming of combatant men, (considering that the ceasefire has lasted for more than 10 years now, although people continue to be shot in sporadic gunfire and blown up by mines) are considered “strong” and “very strong” by 36.1% of men and 18.2% of women (including those who suffered physical and sexual violence).

Healthcare personnel (medical and paramedical) constituted 2.3% of the sample: 82.9% of them were women and 17.1% men. This disproportion is typical for the national healthcare system as a whole, which is extremely gender-asymmetrical, even compared to the education sector. In conformity with official data, women constitute nearly 80% of the personnel engaged in the healthcare system. Out of about 29,700 medical doctors in the country, 63.5% are women. A greater asymmetry is observed among paramedical personnel, where women outnumber men by 9 to 1 (i.e. 90% of all paramedics are females). Official statistics states that 35% of healthcare managers (i.e. chief physicians, managers of hospitals, clinics, polyclinics and medical centres) are women.



CHAPTER 4



Marriage and Family

Family structure, marriage and intra-family power relationships, are perhaps the most telling indicators of gender attitudes in a state and society. Countries experiencing political and economic transition also undergo radical changes in social norms, traditions and cultural values, as well as in marriage and family relationships. Modern and traditional values coexist and create a conflict in terms of new life-strategies and behaviours, including gender relations.

In the post-Soviet period, countries of the CIS have witnessed significant socio-cultural transformations, the re-emergence of national and religious values and traditions, and the articulation of new concepts such as democracy, human rights and gender equality. In this respect family and gender relations have turned into a battlefield where old and new patterns are in conflict.

Family is a very important agent in shaping the individual and the society. The family holds one of the central places in the Azerbaijani mindset; at the same time it socializes a person, provides an inter-personal relationship model, defines one's personal space, sets limits and perspectives for an individual's social development and implements social control over his/her sexuality. The attitude toward one's family is considered an individual's touchstone of social value and a criterion of personal self-assertion.

4.1 THE AZERBAIJANI FAMILY

Extended families, consisting of several generations living together, were predominant in Azerbaijan until the mid-20th century. Survey and focus group discussions, conducted within the scope of this study and results of other studies and official statistics, indicate that the model of Azerbaijani family has changed - in recent years an increasing number of Azerbaijanis live in nuclear families consisting of spouses and their unmarried children. Extended families are dissolving especially in urban areas, even though intra-family connections run deep and are sustained. Most focus group participants gave particular significance to relations with their relatives and considered family networks as "emotional" and "material" support in times of need.

Family size has also decreased. According to the 1999 census data 20.1% of rural and 13.5% of urban families had four or more children. The female fertility indicator (number of children born by a woman during her lifetime) has dropped from around 5 in the 1960s to about 2 in 2006. Families with three or more children numbered at 41% in the early 1990s and 36.1% in 1999. The highest birth rate falls within the 20-24 age cohort. While overall fertility dropped, teenage fertility (in the 15-19 age cohort) has increased compared to 1980. The number of children born out of wedlock is

also on the rise: almost 8.2% in 2003, 4.7% more than in 1990. Most of the focus group participants argued that the number of children in families was decreasing due to the economic crisis and unemployment, which made families unable to meet the needs of their children.

In Azerbaijani families, more senior family members (parents, grandparents, elder brothers/sisters) are afforded a certain amount of respect. Both elderly and youth emphasize the necessity of caring for each other. However, there is an emphasis on children as the primary caregivers for aging parents, a role which is considered as a "responsibility" and a "debt". Although most respondents in the focus groups did not differentiate between their children, it should be mentioned that this "responsibility" was attributed to sons rather than daughters. The following statements of focus group participants can serve as an example. One young female respondent noted, "Children should look after their parents when they get older. They should pay back their debts....they say girls are migrants. However, their heart always beats for their parents. She wants to take care of them. But sons should take more care."¹⁰⁶ Another woman said, "Boys are for support....they should be honest and hardworking and should know how worthy their parents are."¹⁰⁷

These statements also support the roles assigned to boys and girls within the family. Boys are considered as "family guardians" and "sources of the family's lineage". They have the responsibility of caring for their parents. Attitudes to daughters' association with their own families seem to change after they get married. Girls, being symbols of their "fathers and brothers' honour", are seen as "another family's property" after marriage. They are characterized as "belonging to others", "migrants" and "caring for and serving another family", since they are considered members of their husbands' family. A young woman explained that she could only look after her parents with her husband's permission: "Today I can help them. But if my husband is against this, I would have to obey him for the sake of my own family. But I would do my best anyway."¹⁰⁸

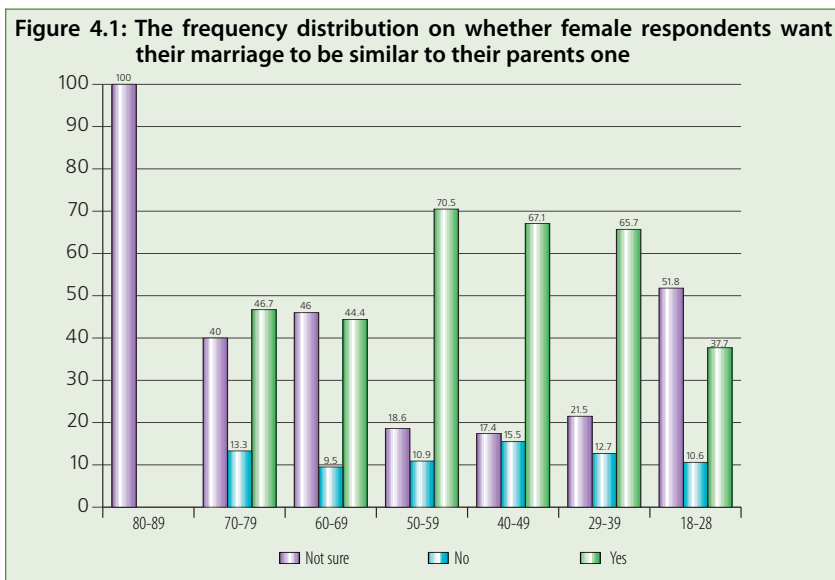
In the survey, to the question of whether they wanted their marriage to be similar to their parents', representatives of all age cohorts responded "yes" in 62.3% and "no" in 11.2% of instances.

Figure 4.1 shows that at the age between 18-28, 37.7% of women want to have a similar married life to their parents and this rate increases to 70.5 % among the women whose ages are between 50-59. This tendency is stronger amongst men. The same indicator is 75.8% for men at the age between 20-29 and 89.8% among men whose age is between 60-69. Obviously , men preferred keeping traditional family relationships. On the other hand, the young generation is conflicted about this issue and they reflect this on their answer to the question. 51.8 % of young women and 58.7 % of young men said that they are not sure whether their families should be similar with their parents. Uncertainty in replying to this question may be interpreted as a manifestation of patterns of change.

4.2 INTRA-FAMILY DIVISIONS OF LABOUR AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Attitudes to the division of labour within the family confirm the differentiation of public-private realms in Azerbaijan. Men and women have a clear understanding of the distinction between male and female roles within the family. Traditional gender roles dominate the Azerbaijani family structure. Survey and focus group data revealed that both men and women considered these roles as a "given", "taken for granted" and "unchangeable norms" based on historical and cultural roots and traditions. Male and female roles are learned and reproduced from older generations.

The consideration of men as a "breadwinners" also provides them with authority in family. They were presented as the "head", "president", "protector" and "guardian" by both male and





women invariably confirmed not only the existence of traditional gender roles, but also acted in accordance with them.

Men as “household heads” should “work and earn money”, whereas women have to perform their duties as mothers and wives. One female respondent noted, “A Muslim man never cooks or does the laundry”. (Note- Azerbaijani man is meant.). Another supports this view saying, “This is best. The beauty of an Azerbaijani woman is that she never gives female jobs to man. Men have their own jobs, so do women. Men have to be like men. One cannot assign a female responsibility to a man.”¹¹² Male attitudes to the division of labour within the family do not differ significantly. One male respondent pointed out, “A man has power within family. The ideal husband is one who earns money. He has to deal with physical labour, whereas women should cook and clean.”¹¹³ Although some female respondents complained about the unequal division of labour within family, they do not see any prospects for change. One young woman remarked, “A woman carries the bulk of the housework. A man can do it as well. But they consider it a weakness. But we do not attempt to change it, because it is hard to change. However, this division of labour changes independently of our will. In most families a man does not work, stays at home and helps the woman with the housework. A woman works and brings money home.”¹¹⁴

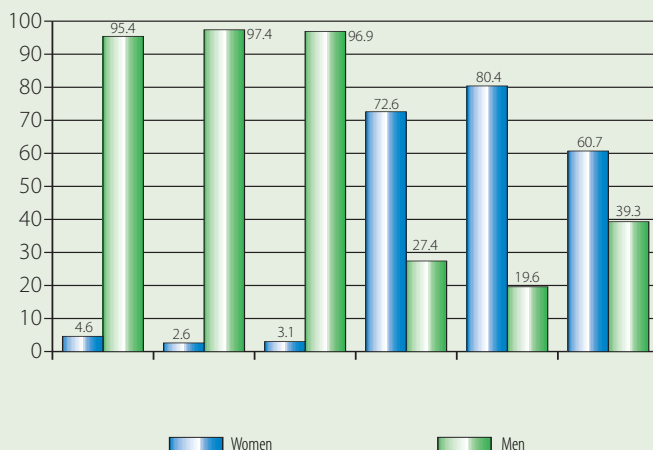
female focus group respondents of all ages. Women on the other hand were considered the main people to do housework, such as cleaning, cooking, ironing, child care and “implementing decisions” taken by their husbands and obligations of mother and wife. One male respondent explained, “In our families, power belongs to men. It has always been like this. Our traditions propagate this idea.”¹⁰⁹ One woman from the same age group said, “We heard from our mothers and grandmothers that men have their own place. Once a man enters the house, the wife, daughters-in-law and daughters are ready at his service.”¹¹⁰ Another woman confirms these statements, saying, “A man has more power within the family in the Azerbaijani mentality. He is the head of the family and its protector. We voluntarily agree with this.”¹¹¹ Both men and

According to the survey even if a woman is employed, her household chores remain. She handles most of the housework without the man's help. Figure 4.2 below illustrates the division of labour between men and women within the household.

According to survey results, the female respondents who were employed stated that they were responsible for cooking (74.6%), doing laundry (71.5%), preparing the dinner table (67.7 %), cleaning the house (67.3%), ironing (66.5%), monitoring the children's education (66.2%), washing dishes (60.8%), taking children to and from school (55.7%), cleaning the yard (41.9%), shopping for food (39.2%), managing the budget (36.9%), and paying for utilities (31.5%).

Unemployed females were also responsible for cooking (69.7%), preparing the dinner table (61.2%), cleaning the house (58.8%), cleaning the yard (40.2%), washing dishes (57.2%), doing laundry (62.8%), ironing (59.5%), shopping for food (68.5%), paying for utilities (67.9%),

Figure 4.2: The gender division of the housework



managing the budget (70.9%), taking children to and from school (67.1%) and monitoring children's education (69.2%). It is not difficult to notice that compared to unemployed women, employed women have more limited control over the material resources of the family although they contribute to the family income.

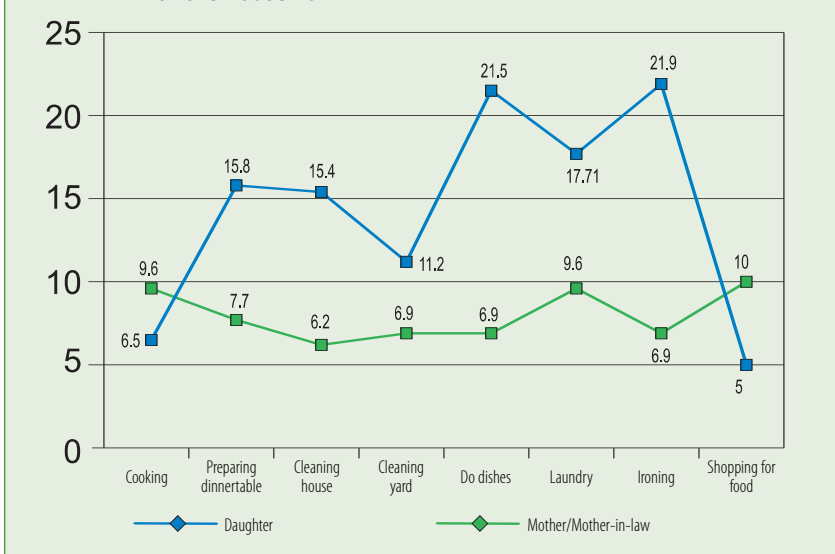
Mothers/mothers-in-law and daughters support working women by sharing the load of housework. Figure 4.4 shows that daughters were the main support and assistants in handling chores, such as cleaning the house and washing dishes and ironing, whereas older women, mainly mothers and mothers-in-law, provided help by cooking and doing laundry.

The household chores constitute yet another burden for women pursuing careers. Gender equality (or lack thereof) clearly manifests itself in time allocated to family members for sleep, meals, work duties, housework and leisure (See Table 4.1).

The identification of a woman's ideal "workplace" as home overlaps with the amount of time spent within and without the household. The survey showed that the average time spent by women and men on household chores per week was 84 and 38.6 hours, respectively. Most male (58.9%) and more than half of female respondents (48%) agreed that a woman should spend more time in the house, which illustrates the strongly internalized gender roles. A gender-based division of labour constitutes a double burden for woman particularly when they are employed. One female focus group participant pointed out, "A woman both works and does household jobs after work. She cooks, cleans, washes dishes, irons and takes care of the child. This is a double workload. But we, the women, we consider men one step further than ourselves, show ourselves as weak regardless of the jobs we perform."¹¹⁵

Housework was considered by men as "light labour". Men themselves recognized that it is

Figure 4.4: The frequency distribution on who should help a working woman with the housework



their role to do work which requires physical strength. One man from Baku explained, "Ideally a man has to perform physical labour, whereas woman should deal with "light labour" such as cooking and cleaning."¹¹⁶ Some women did not necessarily agree with this labour division at home, saying woman could also do jobs which required physical strength, whereas men were not taught to do female jobs: "They teach girls boys' jobs. They neither teach boys nor ask them to do girl's jobs. For example, girls can chop wood, feed the animals, but boys cannot clean the house, wash the dishes or cook. I don't know why this is the case."¹¹⁷

According to focus group discussions, men defined the division of labour within the family. Table 4.2 shows that men decided the family budget, land usage and house repair, whereas cooking was stated as the only issue women were allowed to decide. Even decisions on child care, children's education and recreation were predominantly taken by the husband. However, husbands are not the only decision makers in the family. The father/father-in-law was considered as the second male authority figure in 22.7% of the families. Although

Table 4.1: Actual time spent (hours per day) on various activities

	Men	Women
Employment	6.9	3.9
Household economy	2.3	2
Shopping for food	1.4	1
Cooking	0.2	1.9
House cleaning	0.1	1.7
Laundry and ironing	0.01	2
Child care	1.5	3.4

women worked and brought money to the family, the father/father-in-law could intercede in managing the family budget, so this could restrict the woman's control over family income. Defining the role of men as a "breadwinner", the majority of respondents (87.1%) still thought that the husband should not conceal his income from his wife. This can be considered as a first step towards reaching a consensus on issues related to household income and its allocation within family.

Education and employment status are determining factors on decision-making patterns in the family. Unemployed respondents with a primary education stated that the wife was responsible for managing the family budget (40%), whereas this rate was only 2% among employed respondents. In families with no economic difficulties, the husband's role in deciding the family budget was underlined strongly, in contrast to the unemployed families. College graduates stated that the family budget was under the control of the husband (81.3%).

Although Azerbaijani families have a patriarchal domination, Figure 4.5 shows that 59.1% of men and more than 2/3 of women (78.2%) thought that women's opinions should be taken into consideration by men. It seems that respondents preferred respecting women's opinions in the home since there was a very strong limitation on women expressing their views in public. According to survey data, 68.2% of women and 72.8% of men thought that women could express their

opinions in the family but never in public. Both men and women, tended to disagree with such a statement as their education level increased. This was probably due to the increase of more egalitarian gender attitudes, as well as respondents are less likely to challenge the gender equality in publicly expressing one's opinion that is institutionalized by the education system

4.3 FAMILY AND CAREER

Women pursuing careers have become increasingly common in the newly independent post-Soviet states. The phenomenon varies, depending on socio-cultural values and degree of patriarchy accorded to each society. Men stepping into domestic affairs and women moving into the public arena (or, at least, propagation of this idea) represent essentially an indicator of change in traditional gender roles. This change, however, is challenged by the improving financial situation of some families combined with the existence of stereotypes of patriarchal social milieu. This double-sided process is no doubt asymmetrical in terms of emotional and personal effects on men and women. In cases where the woman is the bread-winner, the man reacts hyper-sensitively to any encroachment upon his status as the head of the family, which affords him control over decision-making and resource distribution, strongholds of undiluted male strength. Women face a (sometimes compulsory) choice of employment strategy between low salaries in the public sector (especially in sectors where women predominate) and weak or non-existent social protection (vacation times, reproductive privileges, etc.) in the private sector.

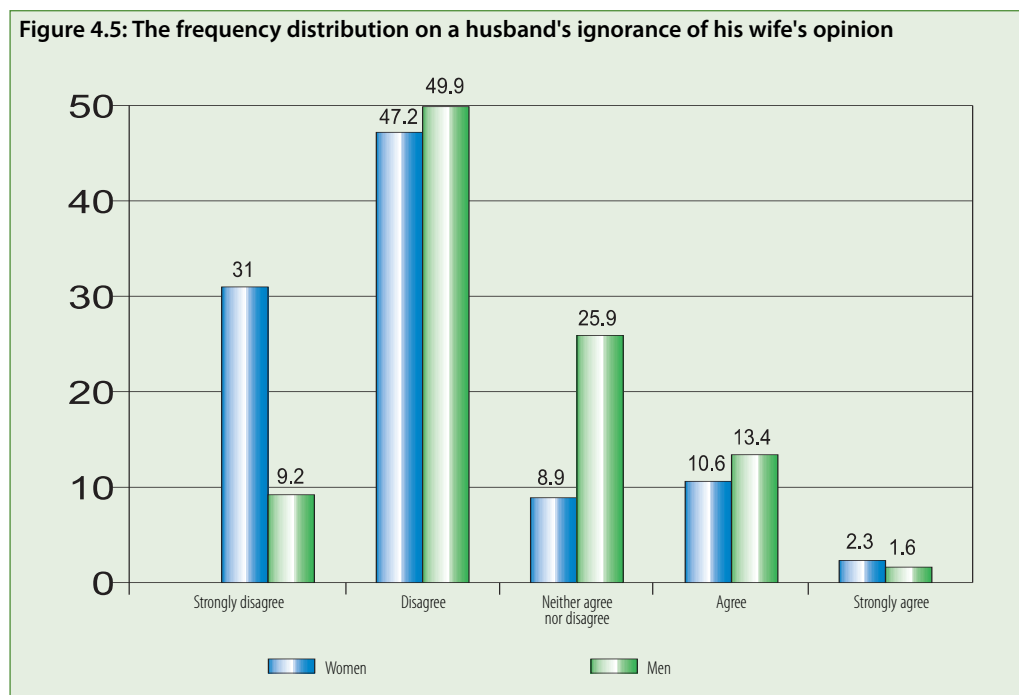
The emerging structure of new economic relations and low standards of social protection in post-Soviet countries push women out of the economic sphere or present insurmountable challenges to them, which in turn, causes them to alter their gender role. They are faced with the dilemma of balancing family obligations with the need to earn money and the desire for societal acceptance.

Gender stereotypes play a role in job preferences for both men and women. From the women's perspective, the most preferred job was one that was highly profitable and allowed her maximum free time for fulfilling household responsibilities; the second preference was purely a domestic pre-

Table 4.2: The frequency distribution on who makes the decisions on the family issues

Decision on	Taken by	
	Wife (%)	Husband (%)
One's education	6.4	38.5
Child's education	9.2	71.3
Recreation / tourism	9.0	66.7
House repair	7.7	67.0
Child care	23.7	56.2
Children's marriage	20.3	52.9
Shopping	16.6	55.2
Going to bazaar	7.3	68.5
Using land plot	11.4	63.2
Forming family budget	10.9	64.0
Employment (work)	10.5	66.4
Number of children	17.7	63.6
Family problems	11.3	65.0
Cooking	64.9	10.1
Resolving family conflicts	10.4	66.6

Figure 4.5: The frequency distribution on a husband's ignorance of his wife's opinion



occupation, and then a prestigious job. Table 4.3 shows that only 6.8% of female respondents thought that solely being a housewife was preferable for women. The rest preferred other types of employment: 12.6% wanted a prestigious job, 29.1% a well-paid job, and 23% a job that was compatible with housework. However, men's opinions exhibited a different tendency: nearly half of men believed the ideal job for women would allow her to cope with household responsibilities. On the other hand male respondents had a dramatically different image of their own ideal jobs. For men income was seen as more important than prestige. 72.4% of the male respondents considered a highly paid job as most preferable.

Women thought of a high-income job as fitting men in even stronger terms than men

themselves did, underlying the gender stereotype of a man as the breadwinner. It is not surprising that 97.6% of respondents (men and women alike) considered men as the head of family. None of the male respondents and only one female respondent in the survey considered housework preferable for men.

The survey, focus groups discussions and expert opinions asserted the assumption that in Azerbaijan, the secondary status of women was an outcome of male pressure, as well as women's own readiness to conform to norms traditionally accepted in their families, among their friends and in their social milieu. One female respondent explained, "If a man is not home, a woman can do male jobs. But when he is home a woman has to do her own jobs. She has to clean the house, do the laundry and cook. A man has to do his own job. Under

Table 4.3: The frequency distribution of gender-specific employment preferences

Job Features	For women		For men	
	as viewed by women	as viewed by men	as viewed by women	as viewed by men
High income	29.1	13.3	82.8	72.4
Prestige	12.6	7.3	4.9	13.9
Jobs which provide spare time for women so that they can spend it for their families	23.0	45.1	2.3	1.5
I do not have any opinion, any job is fine	4.8	4.1	4.2	9.5
Small, but stable income	7.7	6.4	2.9	2.3
Own business with high-risk	0.7	0	2.8	0.5
Only housework	6.8	23.5	0.1	0
Other	0	0.3	0	0

exceptional circumstances a man can do a woman's jobs".¹¹⁸ Another woman supports this view stating, "This is an issue of mentality. A woman does female jobs and a man does male jobs. I cannot accept a man doing housework after he comes home. A man is the head of the household. He has to have authority".¹¹⁹ However, 91% of all respondents either partially or fully agreed with the statement that "a woman who is successful in developing her career deserves respect".

The only exception which might challenge the male's dominant role in the family is unemployment. Earning money provides a sense of authority to a woman particularly when her husband is unemployed. Focus group participants mentioned the unemployed "man's declining authority", "his being ashamed", "keeping quiet" and "being disrespected". However, this fact does not really challenge traditional gender roles since it is argued that this does not suit the Azerbaijani mentality. One male respondent from Agstafa said, "Today who earns money has power within family. In most families men do not work and women earn money which means that they have the power. This is not suitable for Azerbaijani mentality. Authority belongs to men. He has to work, earn money and rule the family".¹²⁰ Women shared the same view noting, "You know this is what we were taught. The man is the master of family. Even if he earns less than the woman, even if he is unemployed, we never say a word. We behave as if they are better and superior. This is what we teach our children as well".¹²¹ Another woman said, "There are men who do not earn anything. Women work and bring money but men treat them as if it is women's obligation and not a favour to men".¹²² Even in cases where a woman acquires a degree of power due to her economic independence, her ability to challenge traditional power relations remains limited.

One striking feature of men and women's attitudes to unpaid household work is that it was considered "work". One male respondent said, "I can say that a woman has more work than that of man. They work both at home and outside".¹²³ Another young man from Sumgayit explained, "Men and women have to help each other in household work. If we compare, women's workload is much more than that of men".¹²⁴ These two responses point to women's double burden of the dual responsibilities at home and in the workplace, which is not common in many societies. Despite the

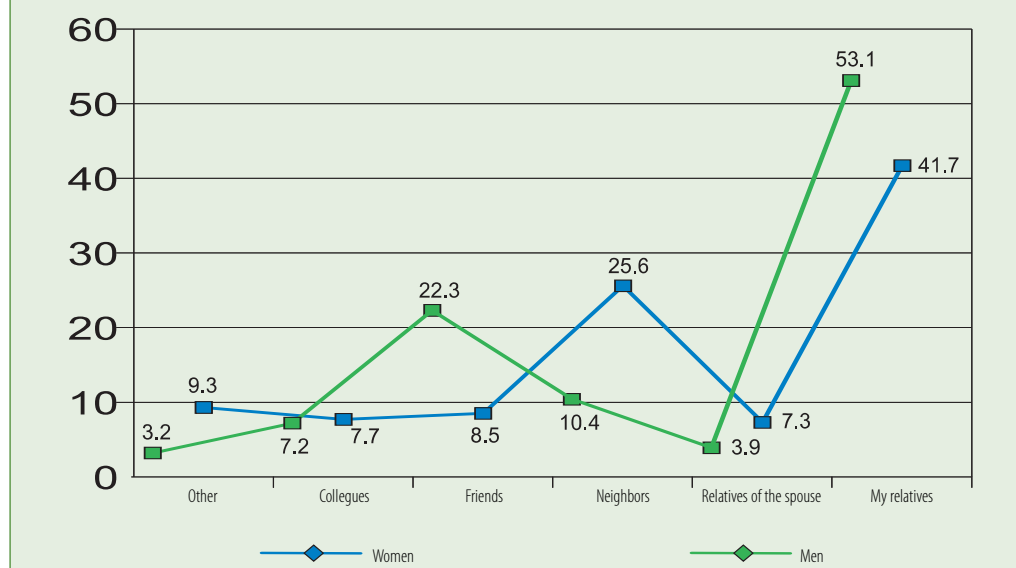
double burden, the trend in the world, as well as in Azerbaijan, is towards having more career women. This is an interesting trend for Azerbaijani thought which takes pride in family-centredness. Thus, in the future, the protection of the Azerbaijani family relies heavily on men performing household chores.

In the current situation, however, when women do the lion's share of housework, the main problem is a just compensation for actual work effort. As is well known, housework, being unpaid, is rewarded only emotionally. This reward is seen as precious and is considered not to have a monetary equivalent. Nevertheless, many European countries have instituted social transfers to housewives. Such a decision is difficult to take not only because of financial concerns, but chiefly because of social stereotypes about family relations and the perception of simplicity and ease of housework. Opinions given by Members of Parliament illustrate the difference in the approach as indicated in Box 4.1.

Another dimension of the gender division of labour has been added by migration. At least a third of the respondents reported that one or more of their family members had migrated, searching for work within or outside the country. Considering that migration was not common in Azerbaijan during the Soviet period, it has affected the stagnant life of the periphery by changing gender strategies of men and especially women. Women not only take part in migratory mobility but, also deal with the "re-arrangement" of life back home. One male respondent said, "When you go to villages one sees that all the men are in Russia. They go, work and earn money. They come back, marry and take their wives with them. There are also some men who have a second family in Russia. Their families here stay with no head".¹²⁵ Similar opinions were expressed by most participants of the survey. Thus, male migration results in divided families, increases women's burdens and decreases their chances to find jobs since there would not have been any assistance from men to care for their children.

4.4 FAMILY RELATIONS

The survey examined perceptions that regulate intra-family and extra-family relations, including male-female relations, nature of their social relations in connection with marriage; frames that influence women's lives and the significance of the relationship between

Figure 4.7: The frequency distribution on whom the respondents have better social relations with

women's social networks and community and the women's husbands.

Social networks are important sources of information. They are also known to regulate the behavior of society members. Many of the networks an individual belongs to are part of the private life and these networks usually have a strong solidarity and social control dimension, such as family. The more social networks an individual has, the more is the potential for social capital. Many researchers also argue that the boundary of maintenance in families was provided by women.¹²⁶ This makes women also focus on the family. Whereas for men, a variation of networks is possible through which they can escape from strict social control and have access to various sources of information.

The survey data revealed that ties within the traditional parental family remain strong, and this preference is applicable to both men and women. They value social interaction with their relatives, more than their friends and neighbours. Figure 4.7 shows that the second group most often socialized with are friends for men (22.3%), and neighbours for women (25.6%). In the focus groups, women favoured seeing their relatives because of the "need to preserve family ties"; their neighbours in order to enforce "solidarity and support" for household chores, as well as to get information and their friends in order to "share secrets". Men predominantly preferred their relatives for "emotional and material support". Women in comparison to men indicated their strongest relations were with their spouses' family with 7.3% and 3.9% respectively.

Limitations placed on married women in their social and extra-family connections are well known. Marriage puts significant limitations and extra responsibilities on men as well, but it leaves them a certain freedom of action within, and even more so, outside the family. First of all, in Azerbaijan the opinion that the circle of communication of a married woman should be limited to her relatives, husband's relatives and neighbours is widely accepted. But when it comes to contacts with former classmates of the opposite sex, the picture is radically different (see Figure 4.8). The two peaks on this chart reflect diametrically opposed views on the issue. 62.2% of men did not approve of women socializing with their male friends, whereas 38.7% of women valued their old male friends.

It should be supposed that for the majority of women, this was the 'only' network that was socially accepted, whereas men's social capital seems to be more diversified than that of women.

4.5 FAMILY STABILITY

Most respondents of focus groups, regardless of sex, argued that spouses should "be tolerant to each other", "make a compromise if needed", "be understanding and caring" and "respect each other's views". Although this rather contradicts the statements about "male's superiority in the household", "the man's dominance in decision making" and "distinction of 'male-female' jobs in the family", the promotion of the equality principle among spouses can be considered as a positive step for gender equality and an important condition ensuring family stability.

Box 4.1 Opinions of Members of Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan on unpaid female labour at home

A female M.P.:

There is already a special monetary benefit for multi-children mothers. But paying salaries to women that do housework to provide comfort to their families is beyond the financial means of the state. It is absurd to think otherwise.

A male M.P.:

I don't think it is realistic right now. Other things can be done. We enacted a law on targeted social assistance; there is a provision for the social protection of families. Not the childbirth benefit [as previously] but the family benefit. Depending on the number of family members and the price index, the government will compensate the difference between the income per family member and the minimum consumption. The government can also take steps to decrease working hours for women.

A female M.P.:

I see no need for that. We live in a market economy; how can you earn money by sitting at home? Why should we further burden the state? If they are able-bodied, they must strive to provide for their families. If disabled, they have certain privileges; they are entitled to disability benefits. I can't agree to healthy individuals getting compensation while sitting at home. I think any self-respecting woman wouldn't accept that.

A male M.P.:

A good proposal, a really productive idea for helping sustain families. It is applied in some countries. You see, raising children, educating children, simply being with children and tending to the home all the waking hours is a lot of real work. I am all for this idea.

The respondents preferred the recognition of each spouse's views and argued that decisions related to family life should be taken collectively and on the basis of consensus. One female said, "Even if men have the authority in the family, they always listen to their wives. But they do not admit this."¹²⁷ Statements, confirming the fact that traditional gender roles are internalized by both men and women do not necessarily overlap with the need for equality within family. One young man said, "Both men and women have equal rights. However, the main person is a man. We have a tradition: If somebody comes to the house, he has to ask for the man."¹²⁸

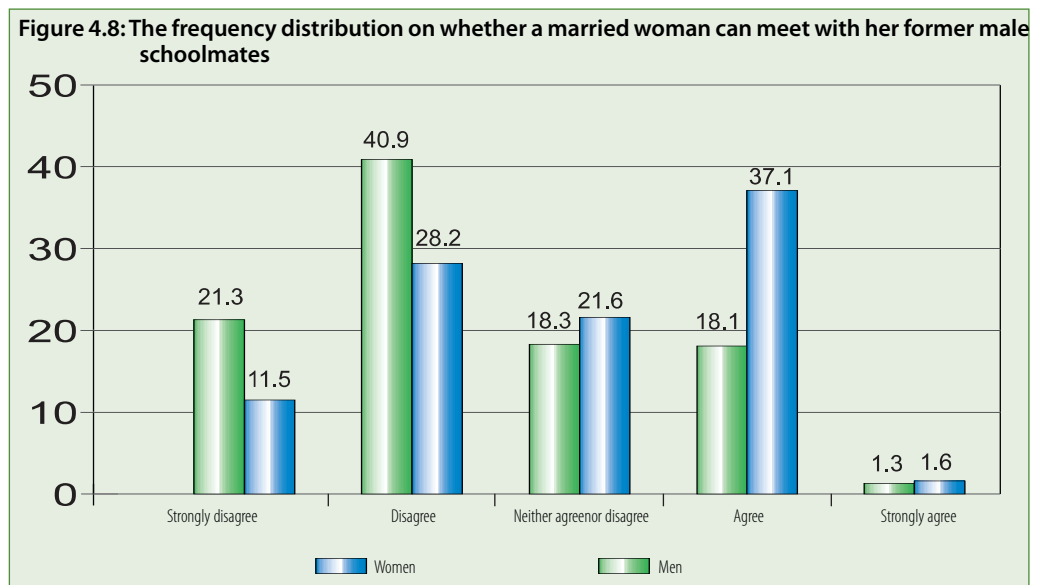
On the question of whether women can state their views independently (or without the approval of their husbands), only 12.6% of men and 29.5% of women were in favour of women's independence. Particularly men preferred preserving their dominance in influencing or controlling women's views with 66.4% in favour.

The respondents' level of education had considerable impact on attitudes towards a woman's independence from her husband. There were significant variations between the levels of educational groups in terms of their approach to the statement: "Women's positions should be stated independently from their husbands". Only 10.3% of primary school graduates approved of women's independent position; 17.6% of the people who completed secondary education agreed with the statement; the rate increased to 31.5% among graduates of higher education. Young people (18-28) were more enthusiastic about woman's independent status (23.8%), unlike people between 80 and 89 (14.3%).

Although men were predominantly in favour of sustaining their authority within the family, women seemed to argue the need for compromise and negotiation to achieve stability. One young woman from Guba stated that men have the power within the family. "His wife has to listen to him. Otherwise there will be disputes and the family will be divided. If one is fire, the other one has to be the water so they can live together."¹²⁹

Contradicting the dominant view of "men as the authority", some woman-although very few-argued that the woman was the decision-maker without openly challenging traditional gender relations. One woman from Baku said, "It seems to me that women have the last word. It is not matriarchy. It is true that the man's word is superior. But whatever he does, in the end he will do what his wife tells him to do."¹³⁰ Another woman supported this view explaining, "There is a proverb. 'If a man is the head, then a woman is the neck' meaning the man has to look at the place where woman turns. That is why women have more power. They can make their husbands agree with them."¹³¹ Another woman said, "There are visible rulers and the invisible ones. Women run the family. Men only seem to have power."¹³² Although this is not the dominant attitude to gender relations within the family, it can be argued that women were well aware of their "hidden/covert authority" and find channels to increase their authority within the family-at least feel the power to do so and the society is to certain extent ready to accept it.

An outsider's view on the relationships within the Azerbaijani family can also be illustrative: A gender expert from an international





organisation accredited in Azerbaijan noted, "In our conception, ethnic mentality is not a certain behaviour, a code stemming from the pattern of cohabitation and interaction within certain territorial bounds. For us, it has more to do with cultural identity, psychology, ethnic specificity, tradition, etc. In this sense I can say that in Azerbaijan a woman is the custodian of her family and the helper of her husband. Women are expected to support their families throughout. A husband's interests are more important to them, and they are ready for sacrifice, if needed. At least that's what I've seen so far".¹³³ The survey results confirm this opinion: 46.6% of the respondents thought that despite a number of new challenges, women's conduct in the family had not been changed substantially, whereas 38.9% thought the opposite.

Divorce is one of the main indicators of family stability. Marriage and divorce statistics are kept by the Public Registrar's Offices. Only state registration of marital status has judicial force. The Family Code provides for the possibility of executing a marriage contract on a voluntary basis. In recent years Azerbaijan has seen an increase in both marriages and divorces. The divorce rates are very low in Azerbaijan (0.8 per 1000 people annually).

Among the far-reaching consequences of changing in social norms, there has been an open discussion of other forms of marital status, as well as the proliferation of alternative marital forms, such as two types of Islamic marriage, (permanent and temporary). The ceremonial registration of a permanent Islamic

marriage, often referred to in Azerbaijan as *kebin*, is increasingly becoming a common practice. In many cases it is undertaken by couples as complimentary to civil registration. Temporary marriage (*sighe*) is a part of the Shi'a religious tradition and designates a union between a man and a woman, which lasts for a limited period of time indicated in the marital contract and can exist parallel to a man's permanent marriage.

According to different schools of Islamic law, permanent, as well temporary Islamic marriage, involves specific sets of economic, social and ethical obligations. However, neither type of Islamic marriage is recognized in Azerbaijan as legally binding marital contracts. In the families, where civil registration was neglected, women's rights are not protected by the existing Family Code. In this situation the practice of *kebin* is sometimes used by a man in order to enter into union with a woman without divorcing his current wife or to force a woman into a polygamous marriage. By a recent decision of the Shaikh-ul-Islam (officially, the highest Muslim cleric) a *kebin* certificate can be issued by Islamic authorities only upon official state registration of a marriage in the Public Registrar's Office.

The survey demonstrated that a considerable majority of respondents were aware that religious marriage in Azerbaijan was legally ineffectual. 62.9% of participants (71.7% of all respondents) believed that religious marriage could not substitute civil registration. The fact that more women than men were against such a substitution, can be explained by a stronger

Box 4.2 The characteristics of "Ideal Wife and "Ideal Husband", according to focus group participants

Female Focus Groups
Ideal husband

1. For me, an ideal husband means a wealthy husband.
2. An ideal husband means a lot of things: intelligent, educated, and wealthy. The problem is such husbands are a rarity nowadays.
3. I think any tender, gracious man can be an ideal husband for his family.

Ideal wife

1. Speaking of ideal wives, a wife faithful to her husband is an ideal wife.
2. An ideal wife is sincere, patient, upright, honest, genial and understanding.
3. I think an ideal wife is a woman who is married to an ideal husband.

Male Focus Groups

Ideal husband

1. An ideal husband must solve all family problems, that is, he must care for his wife and his children. He must share in bringing up the children, in their education, in raising a healthy and decent individual for society.

Ideal wife

1. An ideal wife, as I understand it, is one that can substitute for the man when he's out of the home. Children must feel the parent is at home. If children are unruly, parents should spank them: children must be afraid to defy parents.
2. An ideal wife is loyal to her husband, she wouldn't betray her husband.
3. A wife that keeps family problems inside the home is an ideal wife.

concern of female respondents for the vulnerable position of women in these types of marriage. It should be noted that religious marriages are socially acceptable—at least for some segments of the population. Figure 4.10 shows that 32% of men and 19.1% of women considered religious marriages as a substitute for official marriage.

Most of the respondents of this survey were officially married (71.5%). The above-mentioned forms of marital ties also existed with very low percentages. The survey also confirmed that official marriages were preferred to any alternative and that male and female respondents had a high rate of objection (83.5%) to polygamy.

The legal marriage age for women is 17 and 18 for men. Under certain justifiable circumstances, the legal marriage age can be lowered by one year for both men and women. In official statistics the average age of the first marriage was 23.3 for women and 27.5 for men in 2004. According to the survey sample, the ideal marital age was 21 for females, and 25 for males. At the same time, as yet not very noticeably, early marriages (meaning all forms of marital relations involving parties under the full legal age) are on the rise in Azerbaijan. It should be noted that the ban on early marriages during the Soviet period was strict. Data from Eurostat (Statistical Office of the European Communities) and the UN Statistics Division affirm that the same trend is observed throughout the CIS.

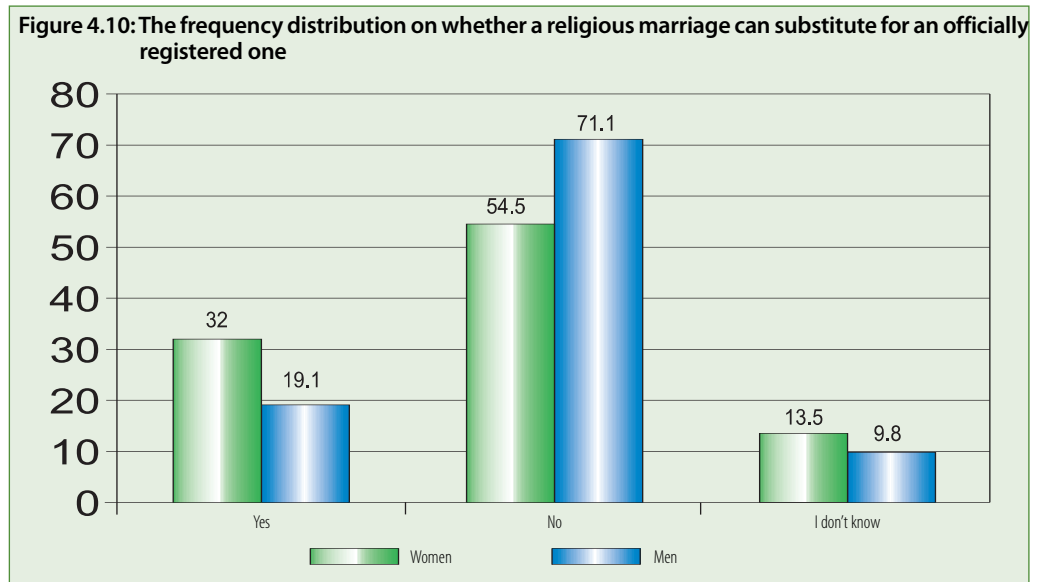
Experts also argued, "In recent years, girls encounter more problems. Girls marry at a younger age; sometimes they are forced to. I

think this is a big problem. Marrying off too early negatively affects female health. These things are harmful on the whole. Many such women live short, unhappy lives. Naturally, the education of these young women has become a problem. Recently, more girls have been dropping out of school..."¹³⁴ These cases only become known when an under-age mother gives birth to a child. Uncovering cases of under-age marriage is complicated by the fact that they are illegal and constitute a criminal offence for all concerned. With exception of under-aged parties, most under-age marriages are carried out with the hope of improving the economic situation of either one or sometimes both parties.

4.6 MEN AND WOMEN TODAY

Azerbaijani culture includes instituting closely regulated patterns of societal interactions and distinct gender roles. In the last century women obtained equal rights in the public sphere and became actively involved in economic and social life, but retained their traditional roles in the home and within the larger family. Legislation establishes equal responsibility of men and women for bringing up their children, though in practice the main burden is on the women's shoulders. For instance, in almost 100% of divorce cases, children stay with the mother, whereas the father is mandated to pay alimony. (Allocation of part of his income for children's care)

Children are socialized in traditionally defined cultural roles, such as "woman is first and foremost a mother", "a woman is a nurturer and a protector", "a wife fills in for her husband when he's not at home", relegating women to





paid jobs and take care of their families along with being loving and intelligent, whereas men associate an ideal wife with being faithful, caring, well-educated and well-mannered.

Statements of focus group members also overlap with survey results. Female respondents considered their husbands as “ideal” if they “made money” and “were educated and intelligent”. They considered themselves as “ideal wives” if “they took care of the family” were “faithful” and “caring”. Male respondents similarly expect their wives to be “faithful”, “dealing with household work”, “well-mannered” and “able to solve family problems”. The expectations from a “model” husband and wife still confirm the gender aspect of public/private distinction within society. At the same time, the opinions expressed by respondents from the focus groups indicate a noticeable trend towards gender equality.

the status of the “second sex”. Young men and women enter adulthood with rigid gender stereotypes, which are upheld because of a genuine belief in their invariability. Usual gender stereotypes (e.g. “women must keep house and care for children”, “the final decision is for the man to make”, and “men are stronger and better adapted to public life”) are sincerely thought of as “real” gender roles for both sexes. These stereotypes are gradually transformed into a system of gender expectations that continues to emphasize the “natural” difference between men and women and prescribes clearly outlined gender-specific roles in employment and leisure.

By the introduction of patterns of change, “a husband's authority at home” and his role as “the head of the family” has been challenged. Moreover, a woman's domestic and public duties are often conflicting. On the one hand, a woman's unemployment or refusal of gainful employment in favour of being at home significantly reduces the aggregate family income. On the other hand, a women's over-employment has become one of the key factors in decreased female fertility.

Commonly acknowledged and internalized traditional gender roles also affect male and female perceptions of the “ideal husband” and “ideal wife”. The survey results show that women expect their husbands to have well-



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.

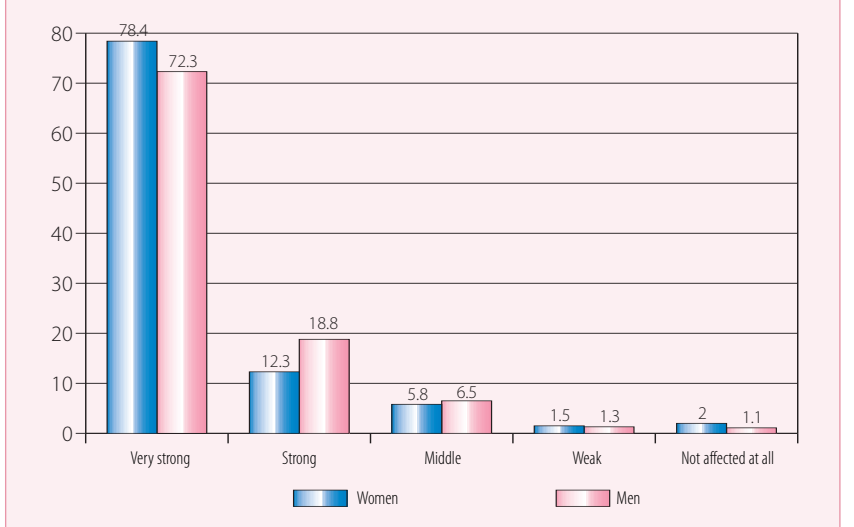
The war had strong psychological, physical, economic and social consequences for a high proportion of survey respondents including those not directly involved in it. 91.1% of the male respondents and 90.7% of the female respondents considered the psychological impact of the conflict "very strong" and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

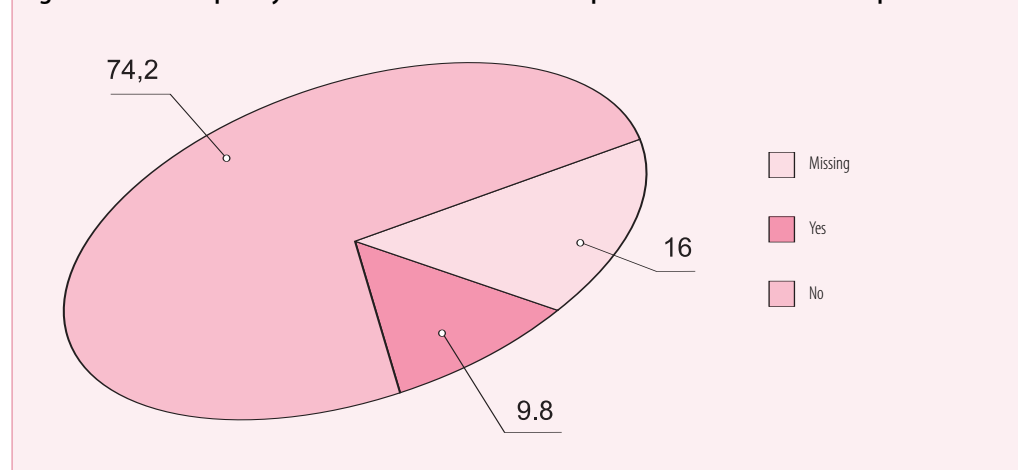
children suffer from it. Causes of violence are varied. For example: birth of female children in the family, male substance abuse, husband's adultery, financial and social problems and misunderstandings."¹⁴⁷

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

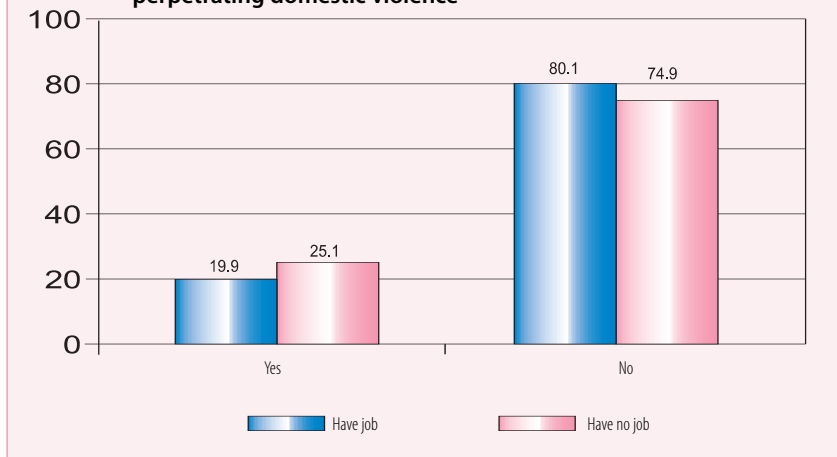
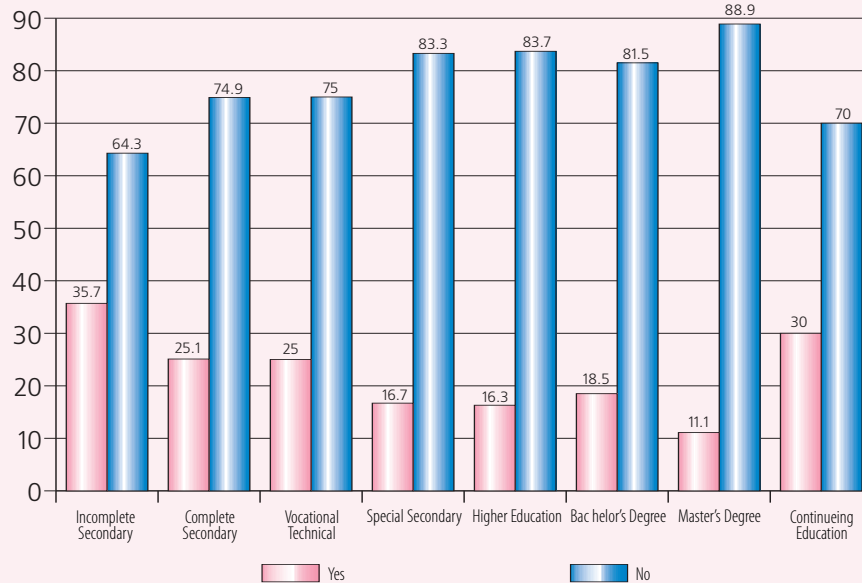


Figure 5.7: The frequency distribution of the education level of men committing domestic violence

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.

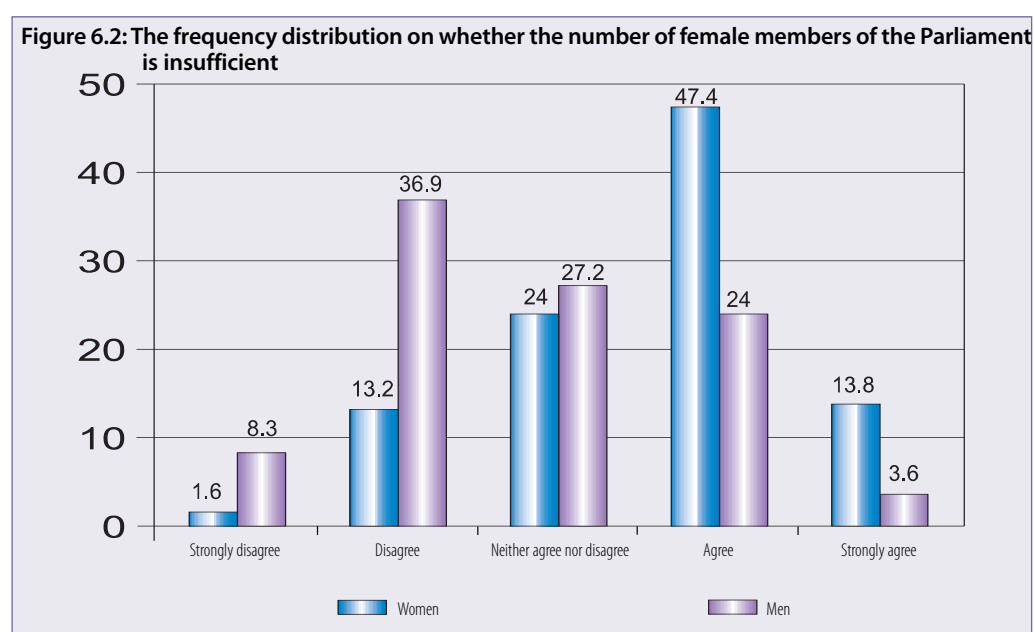
In order to identify the attitude of respondents to using quotas as a means for reaching gender equality the following question was asked in the survey: "Should quotas be set in order to have more women represented in parliament"? The answers were as follows: 51.3% of women and 21.7% of men agreed on 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

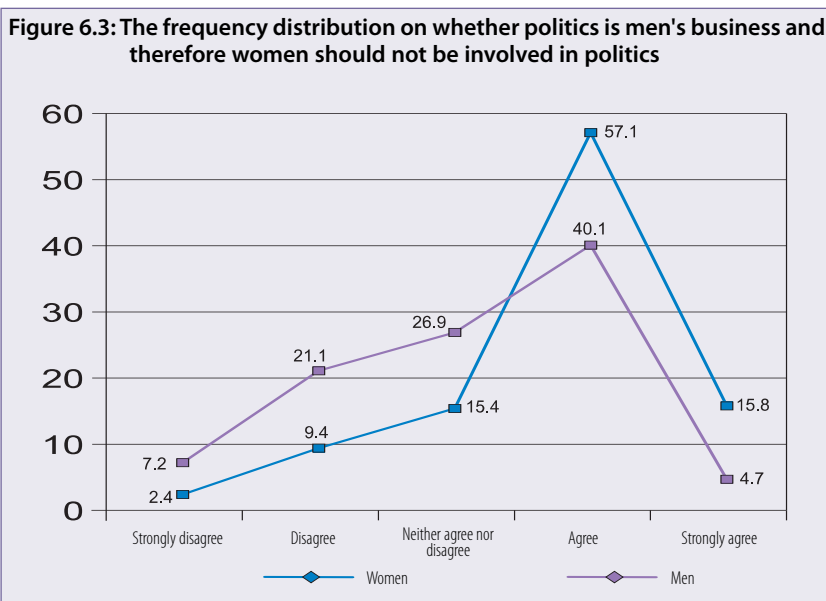
It should be noted that not all men and women share these views. One man from Tovuz said, "Today there are a number of female presidents in the world. I really like this. Women become ministers, such as Tansu Çiller,

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)

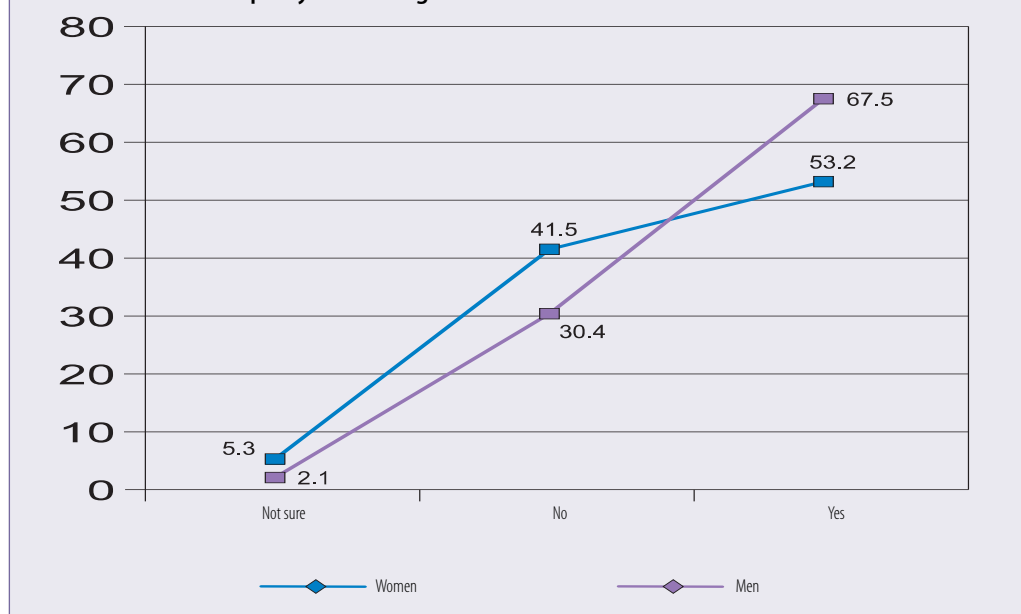
In July 1999 the National Parliament passed laws on municipal elections and on the status of municipalities, based on these laws. According to this law, municipalities are local self-government bodies formed as a new type of body in Azerbaijan. The second municipal elections were held in 2004. At present 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

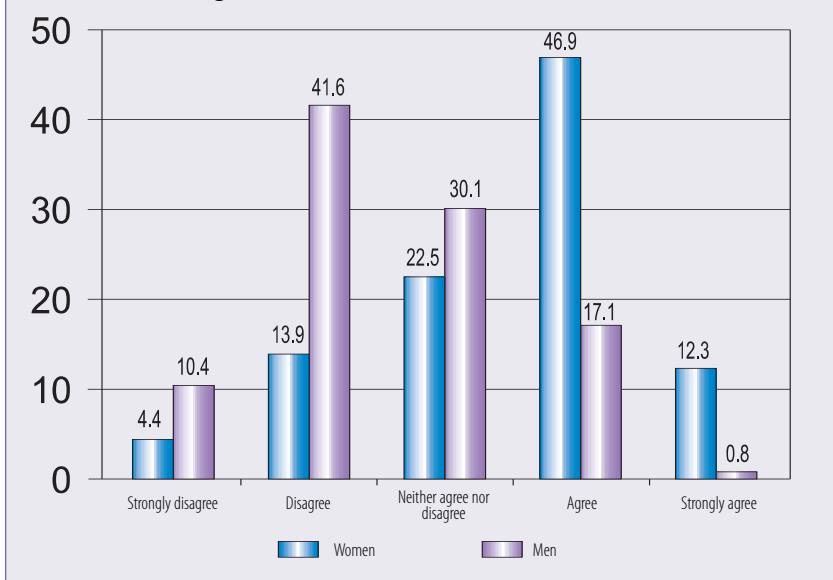
women and 73.2% of men pointed out that they mainly received (albeit scarce) information on gender related issues from television. 47.1% of female respondents and 43.9% of male respondents agreed with the statement that "Media affects the formation of gender-consciousness and creation of gender awareness" (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

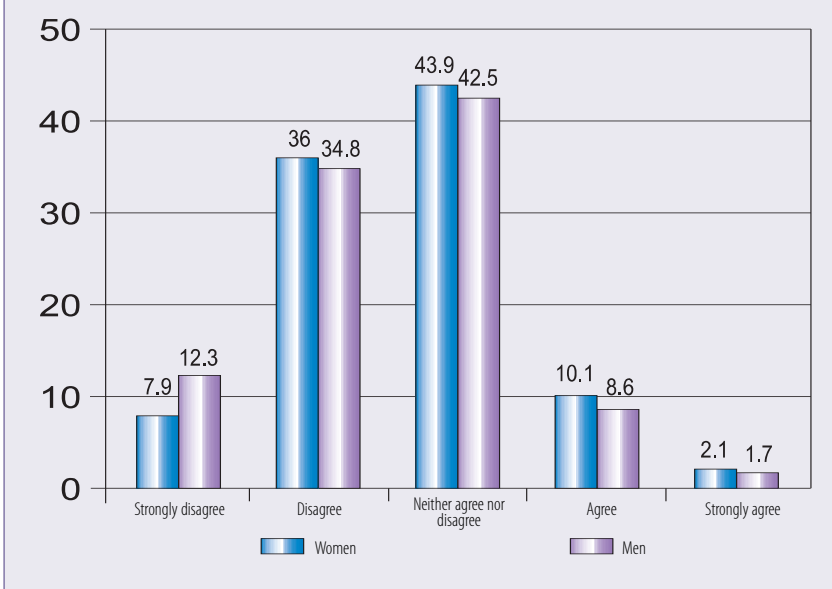
Azerbaijan is a country with a multi-confessional population where the religious differences rarely provided a basis for armed conflicts.

Under Soviet rule practicing religion remained limited due to a severe ideological restrictions and intense anti-religious propoganda. 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



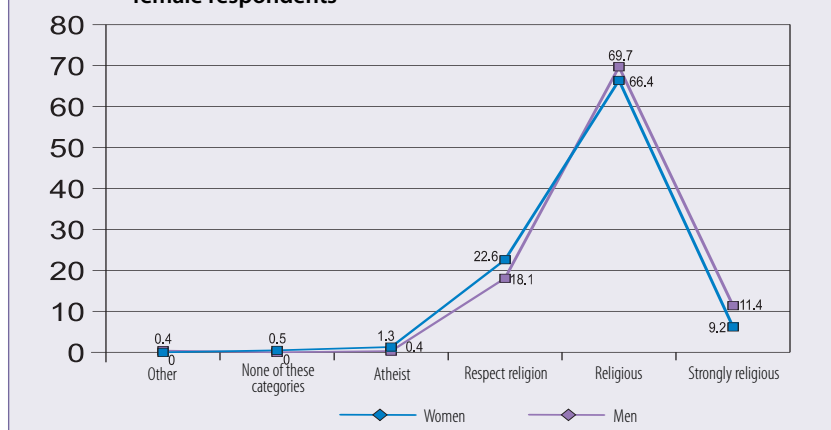
More than half of the survey sample (56.4%) agreed that strongly religious women could bring a positive impact into public life. This opinion, however, was more popular among male respondents (62.3%) than female respondents (50.6%). Women also constituted a majority among the group of respondents that 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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