



Research Article

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Received: 13 July 2021 / Accepted: 26 August 2021 / Published: 5 September 2021

Gender Equality, a Priority for the Social, Economic, Political and Educational Development of a Country: The Case of Albania

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2021-0122>

Abstract

In this paper we have focused on measuring the gender inequality index in relation to some important indicators that reflect gender inequality in social, economic, political, and educational terms. Our study aims to reflect the differences in gender inequality through the gender inequality index for 2013-2020 in relation to these important indicators such as reproductive health, which includes maternal mortality per 1000 live births and fertility rate of teenagers. Another indicator is the empowerment, which includes the percentage of seats in parliament on a comparative basis by gender and completion of secondary or higher education by gender. Another indicator is the labor market, which includes the degree of participation in the labor market. Precisely, in relation to these indicators and according to the annual periods taken into consideration in the study, we have analyzed the index of gender inequality between women and men. Measuring gender inequality is very important for the fact that it highlights many problems related to the social, economic, political, educational development of a country. The data is provided by INSTAT (Institute of Statistics, Albania), based on social surveys and administrative resources by gender. The paper is based on the descriptive method, from which comparative statistical analysis related to the gender inequality index are derived through data processing, by years and by important indicators obtained in the study. This study is also focused on recommending some important policies to be undertaken by the government to improve the gender inequality index in relation to the indicators we have taken into consideration in our study.

Keywords: Gender Inequality Index, Comparative Analysis, Gender Equality

1. Introduction

This paper aims to highlight how important gender equality is and how it affects the social, economic, political, and educational level of a country. We use the gender inequality index (GII) through the measurement of gender inequality, which serves to measure gender inequality by showing the results and differences of gender inequalities between women and men in relation to the following indicators: public health, educational policy empowerment and market work.

We are based on comparative statistical analysis to measure the gender inequality index, expressed in percentage (%), from which we highlighted the differences in gender inequality between men and women based on the indicators we have taken into consideration in the study and how this index has changed according to the years we have considered in the study. Analyzing gender equality, we highlight the problems that come as a result of gender inequality and what will be some of the government policies that we will recommend for improving the gender inequality index in the future, arguing how gender equality affects the growth of economic and social welfare, political and educational.

2. Literature Review

Gender inequality remains a major barrier to human development. According to the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals the “*gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world*” (United Nations, n.d.) A large number of authors have focused on topics in gender equality in the world. We can mention here *Charles Kurzman, Willa Dong, Brandon Gorman, Karam Hwang, Renee Ryberg, and Batool Zaidi*, (Kurzman, et al., 2019). In their work titled, “*Women’s Assessments of Gender Equality*”, they have mainly focused on global indices on gender inequality between women and men, based on gender inequality surveys covering 150 different countries of the world.

Based on the gender inequality surveys, women are rated as unequal according to global gender inequality indices in relation to education, health, labor force participation and political representation. According to them, the gender inequality index also varies according to the surveyed countries, where in developed countries this gender inequality index is less pronounced and in less developed countries, it is more pronounced.

According to the human development report program, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) ranked each country based on the Gender Inequality Index from 1995-2010. According to the Gallup International Association Surveys, in countries where societies had equal results in the index, between women and men were considered places of gender equality. Whereas in countries where societies had unequal results in indices with high values of indices on gender inequality were considered countries as gender unequal.

Another study who has addressed similar topics related to our paper is the work of *Gaëlle Ferrant* (Ferrant, 2010). In her paper with topic, “*The Gender Inequalities Index (GII) as a New Way to Understand Gender Inequality Issues in Developing Countries*”, initially is focused on appropriate indicators to make comparisons regarding gender inequality in developing countries paying special attention to the relationship between gender inequality and economic growth.

This paper emphasizes on measuring gender inequality to know whether high inequality promotes or hinders economic growth, reflecting through statistical analysis the correlation and relationship that exists between economic growth and gender equality according to the countries that have studied in their research. For the measurement of gender inequality, based on a new statistical methodology called Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), which is a data analysis technique for nominal categorical data that endogenously determines the weight of each variable. In terms of average gender inequality index, Asia presents the worst score with a high average of gender inequality index, and precisely the worst score in terms of gender inequality index, compared to other countries taken in study.

Of particular importance in their work is the measurement of gender inequality, through the gender inequality index. In developed countries they point out that there has been an improvement in the inequality of gender inequality in relation to the indicators taken into consideration in the study. However, some important policies are proposed that need to be undertaken in terms of further improving the indicators related to gender inequality for women, both in terms of financial, social welfare, and in terms of health.

In another study, the author Sekar Anggun Gading Pinilih (Pinilih, 2020), in his paper with topic "*Gender Specificity in Democratic Elections: International Implementability as an Exemplary for Indonesian Political Landscape*", aims to examine how the legal construction in the electoral field is responsive to the right of women to participate in their empowerment. Founding that there are some factors that influence the political representation of women in politics and elections, ranging from socio-cultural factors, religious reasons, and economic factor. In their paper they've used descriptive and qualitative analysis to more highlight the socio-legal conditions regarding women's status and right in national election and political bodies. Another author who has addressed similar topics related to our paper is: Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling (Schilling, 2004). In her paper with topic, "*The Role of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and its Monitoring Procedures for Achieving Gender Equality in Political Representation*" aims the importance of the application of quota systems to achieve and maintain gender balance in public and political life must be positioned in a human rights framework.

Regarding the Albanian case, according to Evelina Qirjako (Qirjako, 2016), in her paper with topic "*Women Rights and Gender Equality as Per Albanian law*". In her paper, she stipulates that gender mainstreaming shall be the approach to ensure gender equality in society, by reflecting the perspectives of all genders into the law-making, policymaking, planning, implementing and monitoring processes. The progress of Albania in gender equality and human rights is subject of monitoring from EU structures, who deliver annual progress reports for Albania.

3. Research Methods

Regarding the methodology used in our paper, we used the descriptive method, which is based on data processing provided by INSTAT (Institute of Statistics, Albania), social surveys and administrative resources to reflect the problems in gender inequality, based on the measurement of gender inequality through the gender inequality index (GII), to highlight problems related to gender inequality. We are based on comparative statistical analysis expressed in percentage (%), analyzing how the gender inequality index has changed according to the years taken into consideration in the study from 2013-2020, and according to the indicators we have taken into consideration in the study which are: Reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor market.

3.1 The purpose of the paper

The purpose of our paper is to highlight how the gender inequality index has changed according to the years that we have taken into consideration in the study 2013-2020, and according to the indicators that we have taken into consideration which are reproductive health, empowerment and market work.

3.2 The research questions

Our paper focuses on two research questions:

1. How the gender inequality index has changed according to the years taken into consideration in the study 2013-2020, and according to the indicators taken into consideration in the study, which are reproductive health, empowerment and labor market?
2. What are some of the government policies that should be undertaken to improve the gender

inequality index in order to develop social, economic, political, educational life in the country?

3.3 Data collection

The data is provided by INSTAT (Institute of Statistics, Albania), social surveys and administrative sources. Data is collected based on social, cultural, economic, political factors and treated, processed through descriptive methods, based on relevant tables and graphs leading to unequal results and treatments based on gender. In addition, based on the gender inequality index, it is clearly defined how gender inequality has changed according to the years and indicators studied in the economic, social, political and educational aspects.

We have obtained results related to the gender inequality index through comparative analysis.

4. Analysis and Results

Based on the descriptive method from the processing of data provided by INSTAT, we obtained tables and graphs where we analyzed and measured the gender inequality index (GII) based on comparative statistical analysis expressed in percentage (%).

Table 1. Composition of the parliament by sex according to the years from 2013 to 2020

Year	Number		%	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
2013	115	25	82.1	17.9
2014	111	29	79.3	20.7
2015	108	32	77.1	22.9
2016	107	33	76.4	23.6
2017	99	41	70.7	29.3
2018	99	41	70.7	29.3
2019	86	36	70.5	29.5
2020	86	36	70.5	29.5

Source: INSTAT, 2021

The table shows the composition of the parliament by sex, from 2013 to 2020.

As we can note, for all the years taken into consideration in the study, the participation of men in parliament has been higher than the participation of women. We see from the table that the participation of women in the parliament from year to year has been increasing, although the participation of men has been much higher.

2019, 2020 are the years when the participation of women in parliament was higher, occupying 29.5% of seats in parliament, and in 2017, 2018 occupying 29.3% of seats in parliament.

Women in 2019, 2020, occupy 41 % fewer seats in parliament compared to men, and in 2017, 2018, occupy 41.4% less seats.

In addition, the participation of men in parliament has been higher every year compared to the participation of women. However, from 2013-2020, the participation of men in parliament has been declining.

Men provided the highest turnout in 2013 and 2014, occupying respectively 82.1% and 79.3% of the seats in parliament or 64.2% and 58.6% more seats in parliament than women do.

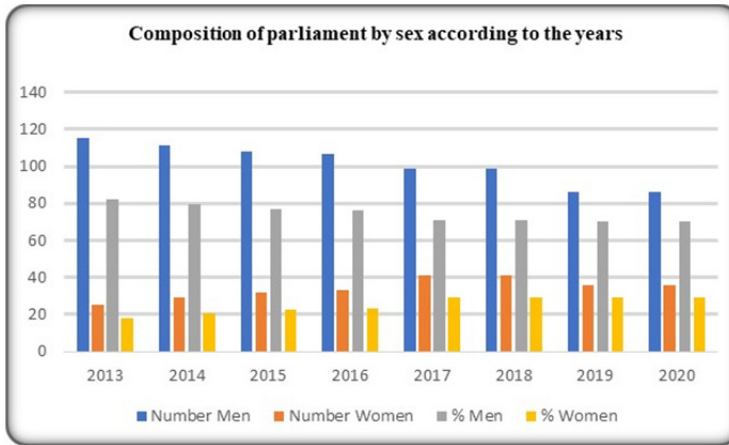


Chart 1. Composition of parliament by sex according to the years from 2013 to 2020
Source: Authors

Chart 1, shows the composition of parliament by sex according to the years taken into consideration in the study.

In terms of the composition of parliament by sex, men occupy more seats in parliament than women do, in all the years studied. Men occupied exactly the highest percentage of seats in parliament in 2013 and 2014, respectively 82.1% and 79.3%. From 2013 to 2020, the percentage (%) of seats in parliament occupied by men has been declining. While the percentage (%) of seats in parliament occupied by women has been increasing with a low percentage from 2013 to 2020.

Women in 2019, 2020, occupied the highest percentage of seats in parliament, respectively 29.5% and in 2017, 2018, women occupy respectively 29.3% of seats in parliament.

In 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 women occupy 41% fewer seats in parliament compared to men.

Table 2. Gender inequality index in relation to the important indicators taken into study, health, empowerment, and labor market for the period 2013-2020.

Gender Inequality Index	Health		Empowerment		Labour market	
	Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births)	Adolescent birth rate per 1.000 females	Parliamentary representation	Attainment at secondary and higher education	Labour market participation rate	
2013	Men		82.14	0.89	0.62	
	Women	11.20	20.44	17.86	0.85	0.44
	Gender Inequality Index	0.20				
2014	Men		79.29	0.90	0.64	
	Women	3.00	21.91	20.71	0.85	0.44
	Gender Inequality Index	0.11				
2015	Men		77.14	0.91	0.64	
	Women	6.80	20.21	22.86	0.86	0.47
	Gender Inequality Index	0.14				

Gender Inequality Index	Health		Empowerment		Labour market
	Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births)	Adolescent birth rate per 1,000 females	Parliamentary representation	Attainment at secondary and higher education	Labour market participation rate
2016	Men		76.43	0.91	0.65
	Women	3.15	18.98	23.57	0.50
	Gender Inequality Index	0.09			
2017	Men		70.71	0.92	0.67
	Women	9.70	16.12	29.29	0.50
	Gender Inequality Index	0.14			
2018	Men		70.70	0.92	0.68
	Women	3.40	14.50	29.29	0.51
	Gender Inequality Index	0.07			
2019	Men		70.49	0.93	0.68
	Women	7.00	14.20	29.51	0.53
	Gender Inequality Index	0.10			
2020	Men		70.49	0.90	0.67
	Women	3.60	13.30	29.51	0.52
	Gender Inequality Index	0.06			

Source: INSTAT, 2021

Table 2. Shows the gender inequality index in relation to health, empowerment, and the labor market. In terms of health, we have referred to these indicators in relation to the gender inequality index for the period from 2013-2020:

Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births) from where the gender inequality index for 2013 is 11.20.

We also referred to the index of gender inequality and the birth rate of adolescence per 1,000 women which in 2013 is 20.44

Referring to parliamentary representation, we can argue that:

The index of gender inequality in 2013 on parliamentary representation is 82.14 for men and 17.86 for women.

Males dominate the Gender Inequality Index on Parliamentary Representation in 2013 with 64.28% higher compared to women.

The gender inequality index in 2013 in terms of achievements in secondary and higher education is 0.89 for men and 0.85 for women. The gender inequality index is 0.04% higher in favor of men compared to women, thus a very low% makes the difference between the two genders which means that women are approximately equal in terms of gender with men in terms of secondary and higher education.

Referring to the other indicator, which is related to the degree of participation in the labor market, the index of gender inequality on the labor market participation rate in 2013 is 0.62 for men and 0.44 for women.

We can say that the index of gender inequality in 2013 for men is 0.18% higher compared to

women. For both genders together, the index of gender inequality in 2013 on the indicators taken into study, health, employment and labor market is 0.20.

The gender inequality index from 2013-2020 has been declining, but at very low values, which means that for all indicators taken into account, men have advantages compared to women. With the exception of the indicator which is related to the achievements in the level of secondary and higher education, the difference between the gender inequality indexes in all the years taken into consideration in the study is very low, which means women were approximately equal to men in this aspect.

In addition, the gender inequality index has been relatively high in 2015 and 2017.

The index of gender inequality related to health in 2015, according to the relevant indicators we have taken into consideration in the study, including the maternal mortality ratio (Deaths per 100,000 live births) for women is 6.80.

While the index of gender inequality for 2015, in relation to the rate of adolescent fertility per 1000 women, is 20.21.

Regarding the participation of women in parliament in 2015, the gender inequality index is 22.86, whereas the index of gender inequality in terms of percentage of seats in parliament occupied by men in 2015 is 77.14. The index of gender inequality is 54.28% higher for men compared to women, in terms of the share of seats in parliament that occupy.

Regarding the gender inequality index for 2015, in terms of completing the level of secondary education or higher is 0.91 for men and 0.86 for women. The index of gender inequality regarding the completion of the level of secondary education or higher for males is 0.05% higher compared to females.

Referring to the labor market participation rate, the gender inequality index in 2015 is 0.64 for men and it is 0.47 for women. The index of gender inequality in relation to the degree of labor market participation in 2015 is 0.17% higher for men compared to women.

The gender inequality index has been relatively high in 2017 as well. In terms of the gender inequality index in relation to mortality, it is 9.70 per 100,000 births for women.

While the index of gender inequality regarding the birth rate of adolescents is 16.12, for women. In addition, the index of gender inequality regarding the participation of seats in parliament for men is 70.71, and for women is 29.29.

Regarding the index of gender inequality in relation to achievements in secondary and higher education for 2017, the index of gender inequality is 0.88 for women and 0.92 for men. Moreover, regarding the gender inequality index in terms of labor market participation rate, the gender inequality index is 0.50 for women and 0.67 for men.

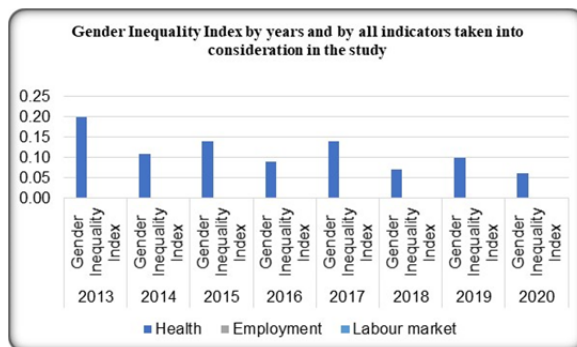


Chart 2. Gender Inequality Index by years and by all indicators taken into consideration in the study such as health, empowerment, and labor market

Source: Authors

Chart 2, indicates how the gender inequality index has changed according to all the indicators we have taken into consideration in the study and according to the years from 2013 to 2020.

As we can see from the chart, the gender inequality index in relation to all indicators taken into consideration in the study such as health, empowerment and labor market as well as over the years has been declining at a low rate. In some periods after the decline, there was an increase once again in this index showing fluctuations in favor of the male gender. In addition, the lowest value of the gender inequality index in relation to all indicators taken into consideration in the study has reached in 2020 with an index value of 0.06. Whereas, the highest value of the gender inequality index is in 2013 with an index value of 0.20.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Referring to the results of the analysis regarding the composition of the parliament by sex for the period from 2013-2020, we conclude that men in all years have had a higher share of seats in the parliament compared to women. However, the participation of women in parliament from 2013 to 2020 has been increasing.

It is women who have secured the highest turnout in parliament in 2019 and 2020. The turnout of women in parliament is much lower comparing to men, with men dominating with a high turnout of seats in parliament in all years studied.

Regarding gender inequality in relation to the indicators taken into the consideration in the study which are: health, empowerment and labor market, gender inequality from 2013 to 2020 has been declining.

Gender inequality was most notable in 2015 and 2017 in relation to all indicators taken into the consideration in the study. Women are the most discriminated according to the results regarding the gender inequality index in all indicators taken into consideration in the study. As for gender inequalities related to health, referring to the index of gender inequality and adolescent birth rate per 1,000 women, it was high. The Gender Inequality Index in relation to the maternal mortality rate (Deaths per 100,000 live births) was also high. In addition, in terms of gender inequality index regarding participation in parliament, men have an advantage over women for all periods of time taken into consideration in the study, providing more seats in parliament than women, and the gender inequality index in this aspect is high.

Referring to the achievements at the level of secondary and higher education, the difference of the gender inequality index has a low value, which means that women are approximately equal to men in this aspect. In terms of labor market participation, men are more privileged than women, and the highest index of gender inequality is reached in 2015 and 2017. In terms of labor market, men are more favored in all periods taken into consideration in the study compared to women as well. As we can see from the results of the analysis, Albania faces many problems related to gender inequality, where women are more discriminated compared to men while men are more privileged in terms of all indicators we have taken into consideration in the study, both in terms of health, empowerment, participation in parliament, and in the labor market.

Women were less discriminated and almost equal to men only in relation to achievements in secondary education and higher education, making the difference a very low percentage (%) of the gender inequality index (GII), in favor of men. It is very important for the government to take measures to mitigate the gender inequality index and increase the role of women in society, to have a country with a more developed economy and a society with perspective, well-informed and emancipated, and more developed in terms of health, social, politics, economics, and education. Precisely, some of the government policies that we would propose to lower gender inequality are:

First, the government should cooperate with all sectors and provide more documented information on gender inequality in each sector, such as health, economy, employment, education, etc., to intervene through reforms that reduce gender inequality. It is the documentation of information for each sector that is important to see where more problems with the gender inequality

are.

Second, governments have the legislative power to ensure equal rights between the sexes and to correct gender discrimination (Morse, 2020). It is therefore important that in legislative terms women have equal rights with men in every sector. Including the right of women to secure seats in parliament just like men, as well as their right to do business just like men, the right to inherit property just like men, and the right to be educated just like men.

Third, another important policy is for the government to take strict measures regarding the phenomenon of domestic violence and violence against women. Because in the case of Albania, from the results of the analysis, we saw that women were more discriminated in almost all sectors we have studied, which means the higher the gender inequality index, the more pronounced the nature of inequality and discrimination will be. Therefore, the government should tighten the laws related to domestic violence and violence against women in general (Morse, 2020).

Fourth, another important policy is the empowerment of women, as it is very important for women to participate in parliament and ascendancy just like men, for the fact that women in positions of authority tend to solve national problems in the best possible way without resulting to violence and would reduce the index of gender inequality in various sectors of the country, ensuring an economic, social, cultural development in the country (Morse, 2020).

Fifth, another important policy is for the government to promote more financially supportive policies towards women in general through reforms and legislation, including social assistance or assistance for uneducated women so that they are not financially dependent only on the opposite sex. The government should also plan more supportive policies for divorced women or mothers who have no economic financial support, providing them with housing, social assistance and support.

Sixth, regarding health an important policy would be: Increasing and strengthening the participation of civil society, with emphasis on women's groups and other gender equality advocates, in the identification of priorities, and formulation and monitoring of health policies and programs at regional, national, and local levels (Paho, 2005).

Seventh, an important policy would be the aspect of employment; we saw from the results of the analysis that women were more discriminated in terms of employment. Therefore, the government should take measures by cooperating and providing reliable and documented information regarding the employment statistics of women and men in all public sectors and should also cooperate with the private sector to make functional employment offices that offer equal employment vacancies for both sexes. These were some of the government policies that we would suggest the government should undertake to mitigate gender inequality in the country; there are also plenty of other policies that need to be undertaken. In the case of Albania, the fact that the gender inequality index has been declining from 2013 to 2020, is positive, but much work still needs to be done as the difference of the gender inequality index, according to the indicators we have taken into consideration in the study between the two genders is high for each period, which shows that women are more discriminated than men. Therefore, work needs to be done by the government to have a country with gender equality in the future, which would bring more economic, cultural, social and educational development.

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