

Covid-19 Pandemic as a Factor in Increasing Gender Inequality In Kyrgyzstan

A THESIS

Presented to the MA Programme

of the OSCE Academy

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Politics and Security (Central Asia) Programme

by

Aziza Abdugarimova

January 2024

Declaration

Herewith I declare that I clearly understand §11 of the Academic Regulations and that the submitted paper is accepted by the OSCE Academy in Bishkek on the understanding that it is my own effort without falsification of any kind. I declare that I am aware of the consequences of plagiarism or/ and cheating.

Name: Aziza Abdugarimova

Date: January 08, 2024

Signature: Aziza Abdugarimova

ABSTRACT

The research is dedicated to the urgent issue of gender inequality in Kyrgyzstan. It evaluates the trend towards increasing gender disparity in the context of the regional gender balance situation in Central Asia. The study examines contemporary directions in the implementation of gender policies in developed countries, taking into account their experience as applicable to Kyrgyzstan.

The research aims at identifying the dynamic changes of gender inequality, focusing on the women-housewives' area of concern in Kyrgyzstan during the COVID-19 pandemic quarantine. The hypothesis suggests that there has been a surge in gender inequality towards women-housewives during the quarantine period in Kyrgyzstan. Manifested cases of gender inequality attribute to such factors as reduced household income, increased burden on mothers due to school-aged children's shifts to remote learning, and growth of male aggression amid unemployment-related stress. These factors, coupled with the lack of impactful women's legal protection, significantly worsened the overall status of women, particularly women-housewives.

A systemic mixed-method approach is applied as a research methodology. This approach includes interconnected scientific methods: legal analysis, sociological surveys, applied for intensified women-housewives gender inequality cases identification during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Neural Designer analytics program is used to process statistical data.

The obtained results include:

1. The rise of gender inequality throughout the pandemic quarantine is confirmed by the majority of respondents. Women-housewives reported reduced household incomes, increased expenses for food and medication, heightened workload due to children's transition to remote learning, worsened access to medical services, deterioration of their own psychological well-being, and an increase in domestic violence.

2. Survey data from women-housewives in Bishkek and Osh cities, as well as two major rural settlements, Gulcha (Osh province) and Belovodskoe in (Chui

province), revealed significant disparities between household conditions and the situation of women-housewives in urban and rural areas.

Based on the results, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. State measures are necessary to make improvements in the environment within families and women's living conditions in rural areas. Attention should be directed towards providing the equal access to education for women and girls in order to achieve gender balance in perspective future. The establishment of the equal access to healthcare services is also a prerequisite condition.

2. Considering launching the legal protection of women's national awareness campaign is a requirement for achieving gender equality in the near future. Women should not only be aware of their rights but also empowered to defend themselves. Centralized efforts are needed to educate the public and change gender stereotypes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	8
CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECT OF THE STUDY OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE MODERN WORLD: SPECIFICITY OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN REGION.....	8
1.1. General characteristics of gender inequality in the modern world	13
1.2. The specifics of gender inequality in the Central Asian region.....	23
CHAPTER 2. GENDER AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	38
2.1. General characteristics of gender policy in the Kyrgyz Republic	38
2.2. Key problems and shortcomings of gender policy in the Kyrgyz Republic as a sample for Central Asia region	46
CHAPTER 3. PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE PROSPECTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC IN THE CONTEXT OF PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN CRISIS SOCIAL CONDITIONS	56
3.1. Assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on households and women-housewives in the Kyrgyz Republic	56
3.2. Gender inequality among women in household responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic: an empirical study	65
3.3. Prospective directions for ensuring gender equality and protection of women's rights in the Kyrgyz Republic on the empirical basis	73
CONCLUSION.....	77
BIBLIOGRAPHY	79

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – Gender Equality Index for Kyrgyzstan

Figure 2 – Poverty Level in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia (% according to the Beijing Platform for Action Review-2020)

Figure 3 – Birth Rate among Women of Pre-marital Age in Kyrgyzstan and on Average in Central Asia (based on the Beijing Platform for Action Review-2020 data)

Figure 4 – Domestic Violence Levels in Kyrgyzstan and on Average in Central Asia (based on International Alert Report-2020 data)

Figure 5 – Indicators of Urban and Rural Households Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Kyrgyz Republic

Figure 6 – Changes in Household Incomes in the Kyrgyz Republic during the COVID-19 Pandemic (based on the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic study)

Figure 7 – Reasons for Household Income Reduction as Indicated by Respondents in the National Statistical Committee's

Figure 8 – Percentage of Households in Regions of the Kyrgyz Republic Affected by Income Reduction during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Figure 9 – Assessing the degree of fathers' involvement in raising children

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BPA – The Beijing Platform for Action

EPIC – Equal Pay International Coalition

EU – European Union

ILO – International Labour Organization

IOM – International Organization for Migration

IPV – intimate partner violence

NAP – National Action Plan

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund for Population Activities

UN WOMEN – United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

VET – vocational education and training

WGEA – Workplace Gender Equality Agency

INTRODUCTION

The widespread problem of gender inequality is a crucial and relevant topic in Kyrgyzstan and throughout Central Asia¹. Particularly women in Kyrgyzstan go through labor inequality, human trafficking, various forms of physical or sexual inequality. Moreover, reemerging socio-cultural practice forms that might be wrongly interpreted as a religious custom, increasingly constrain women's rights to control their own lives. Recently, there is a lack of a comprehensive data on gender-based inequality in Kyrgyzstan. Obtaining reliable information from available resources on inequality against women is a necessary means for effective gender-responsive policies².

The problem of gender-based inequality in Kyrgyzstan has become acute. It attracted the attention of international organizations. The UN-Women country office in Kyrgyzstan took the initiative to collect this data. In accordance with this organization, Kyrgyzstan has the leading position in the number of gender-based inequality's cases in the Central Asian region. Along with UNFPA and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN-Women agency is the lead institute that analyzes the perception of gender in societies with the use of the KIZ methodology (knowledge, attitudes and practice). The UN-Women promotes gender mainstreaming in judicial reforms in Kyrgyzstan, providing gender expertise in formulating laws in accordance with the country's international and national the gender equality and empowerment of women's commitments. The agency took steps to guarantee that women and girls have access to justice in cases of gender-based inequality³.

¹ "Review of the situation on the inclusion of the needs of women and girls from religious communities in the national strategy and national action plan for achieving gender equality in the Kyrgyz Republic". (Kyrgyz Republic: International Alert, 2021), 4-7.

² "Research report Impact of COVID-19 on the situation of women and men in the Kyrgyz Republic. Rapid Gender Analysis as of 15 May 2020". The UN, 2020. Accessed December 7, 2023, <https://eca.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ECA/Attachments/Publications/2020/07/Factsheet-Kyrgyzstan-FIN-rev-min.pdf>

³ Ibid.

However, the records of the increase in gender inequality during the quarantine period due to the COVID-19 pandemic collected by the UN-Women present only statistical data. The factors that led to this growth were not analyzed. The proposed project aims at supplementing the data of the international institution "UN-Women". It also focuses on revealing the correlation between the quarantine factor and the gender-based inequality's growth in Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, the relevance of the thesis's issue is proven by the sharp surge in inequality against women during the pandemic and quarantine in the Kyrgyz Republic. In comparison with 2019, the level of inequality increased by almost 65% during the period of strict quarantine restrictions, in accordance with the country's Ministry of Internal Affairs' official statistics⁴.

It is also worth mentioning that the main strategic documents of the Kyrgyz Republic on the supporting gender equality's policy expired in 2020. This research can make a contribution in the form of effective work and recommendations, as well as positive experience in the development of the National Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality's projects in the Kyrgyz Republic until 2030 and the National Action Plan for 2021-2023. The present study on gender-based inequality in Kyrgyzstan develops a methodology for identification of the correlation between the rise in the number of the gender-based inequality's cases and the COVID-19 pandemic quarantine.

In the practical part of this study, an empirical investigation was conducted with the aim of identifying the situation of women-housewives in urban and rural settlements of the Kyrgyz Republic and the reasons for the exacerbation of gender inequality during the COVID-19 pandemic. The category of women-housewives was deliberately chosen as the subject of the study; unemployed women, particularly those with multiple children, represent the most vulnerable social group among the female population of the Kyrgyz Republic. The status of women during the COVID-19 pandemic deteriorated due to reduced household incomes resulting from the decrease in family breadwinners' wages or job loss. Simultaneously, the burden on women increased, especially concerning the transition to remote learning for school-aged children. Some women were forced to terminate pregnancies or postpone family planning to more

⁴ "Report COVID-19 Impacts on Livelihoods of Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic Gender Rapid Assessment as of 15 May 2020". Accessed December 10, 2023, https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/ENG_Gender%20Rapid%20Assessment%20of%20COVID-19%20impact_June%202020_final.pdf

stable times. The complex interplay of these and other issues was examined through the empirical data obtained.

This research aims at filling the deficiency in the gender inequality's analysis by identifying disparities between households and women-housewives residing in urban and rural areas during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main research question is as follows:

- Is the state's quarantine policy throughout the COVID-19 pandemic a factor in exacerbating gender inequality among women managing households in Kyrgyzstan?

The sub-questions for the study are:

1. Has the situation of women managing households changed during the pandemic, leaning towards an increase in gender inequality?

2. Is there a difference in the situation of women managing households in rural areas compared to those in major cities in Kyrgyzstan?

3. How adequate were the state measures in supporting women and protecting their rights?

The review of relevant literature covers a broad range of research materials by authors of a variety of specializations: lawyers and human rights' researchers, sociologists, scholars of conflicts. The legal aspects of gender-based inequality in Central Asia countries in general theory are presented in the works of such authors as F. Abdulkhamidova⁵, V. Caven, E. Navarro, V. Urbanaviciene⁶, C. Grawn⁷, G.

⁵ Fazilat Abdulkhamidova, "Women's Rights and Status & Islam". *American University in the Emirates (AUE, 2021)*. Accessed December 13, 2023, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351284996_Women%27s_Rights_and_Status_Islam

⁶ Valerie Caven, Elena Navarro Astor, Vita Urbanavičienė, "Gender inequality in an 'Equal' environment". (*Gender Work and Organization, 2021*). DOI:10.1111/gwao.12715

⁷ Caren Grown, "Gender Inequality in Europe and Central Asia – Challenges and Opportunities". The World Bank, March, 2020. Accessed December 13, 2023, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2020/03/05/gender-inequality-in-europe-and-central-asia>

Kuldysheva, Ch. Paraidinuulu, A. Atantaev, A. Mirzaeva⁸, D.A. Osmonova⁹. These studies reveal the main legal doctrines in Central Asia countries in comparison with Kyrgyzstan.

Sociological perspectives on the gender-based inequality's problem in the Central Asian region are presented in the works by T. Alon, M. Doepke, J. Olmstead-Rumsey, M. Tertilt¹⁰, S. S. Dzhenbekova¹¹, Yu. Yu. Kovalev and P. S. Yakovleva¹², L. L. Lindsey¹³, R. Palriwala¹⁴, O. A. Safak¹⁵. These works represent methodological interest for our research, as authors discuss the social gender structure. It can be applied in the case of Kyrgyzstan as a basis for several analysis points: the construction and role of the traditional family as the basis of society in Kyrgyzstan and most countries in Central Asia and its implications for gender-based inequality, methods for analyzing the women's status during the COVID-19 pandemic. The latter is very important for the methodological basis of our study, since, on the basis of this literature, it is possible

⁸ Gulsara Kuldysheva, Shailoobek Paraidinuulu, Aktilek Atantaev, Aigul Mirzaev, "Providing Women Equality in Kyrgyzstan: Legal and Historical Analysis". *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 9 (1), (2021): 328-333.

⁹ Dinara Osmonova, "Gender relations and gender policy in the Kyrgyz Republic". *International Journal of Applied and Basic Research*, Vol. 2. (2018): 335-339.

¹⁰ Titan Alon, Matthias Doepke, Jane Olmstead-Rumsey and Michèle Tertilt, "The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality". *NBER Working Paper 26947*. Accessed December 14, 2023, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w26947/w26947.pdf

¹¹ Svetlana S. Dzhenbekova, "The position of women in Kyrgyz society". *Bulletin of Tajik National University*, Vol. 7, (2020): 60-65.

¹² Yuri Kovalev, Polina Yakovleva. "Gender and Sustainability: Evolution of Discourse and Feminist Critique of the Concept of Sustainable Development". *History and modern worldview*, Vol. 23, (2021): 32-43.

¹³ Linda L. Lindsey, "Gender: Sociological Perspectives". *Social Science*, Vol. 6, (2020): 44-57.

¹⁴ Rajni Palriwala, "Gendering Sociology, a Sociology of Gender or Studying Women? Some Reflections". *Critical Themes in Sociology*, (2019): 240-256.

¹⁵ Safak Oz Aktepe, "Gender Inequality in Work Organizations: What HRM Practices Mean for Gender Inequality". *Research Anthology on Challenges for Women in Leadership Roles*. (2021): 75-99.

to identify clear criteria for analyzing the correlation between gender-based inequality and the quarantine situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

The conflict-based approach to the problem of gender-based inequality in the countries in the Central Asia region, including Kyrgyzstan, is presented by the works of such authors as A.A. Tynystanova¹⁶ and N. Usacheva¹⁷. These studies are necessary for the implementation of our research because they contain an already identified general tendency of the relationship between the traditional family lifestyle, national mentality and conflict potential with the growth of gender-based inequality during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study is based on the hypothesis that during the quarantine period due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Kyrgyzstan, there was an upsurge in gender inequality towards women-housewives, manifested by an increase in cases of gender disparity. This occurred due to several reasons, including a decrease in household income, a rise in male aggression amid stress from salary reductions or unemployment, and the absence of effective legal protection for women. The situation of women differs between rural and urban areas, with identified factors exacerbating the position and status of women-housewives in rural settlements.

The hypothesis is planned to be confirmed or refuted through empirical research on the reasons for gender inequality among women-housewives in rural and urban areas of Kyrgyzstan during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The methodology of the Kyrgyz case-study is based on a systematic mixed methods approach that draws on interrelated scientific approaches:

1. method of legal analysis (content analysis of the norms of Kyrgyz legislation);
2. method of sociological survey (questionnaire survey) aimed at identifying the causes of the increase in gender inequality among women-housewives in rural and urban areas during the COVID-19 pandemic in Kyrgyzstan.

The primary goal of the questionnaire survey is to gather the opinions of focus group participants (women-housewives) regarding the challenges faced by women

¹⁶ A. A. Tynystanova, “The role of Kyrgyz women in society during the period of democracy”. *Science, new technologies and innovations of Kyrgyzstan*, Vol. 7 (2019): 158-161.

¹⁷ Natalia Usacheva, “Theory and methodology of modern gender studies”. Accessed December 14, 2023, <http://gender.cawater-info.net/publications/pdf/usacheva.pdf>

managing household affairs in rural and urban settlements during the COVID-19 pandemic. It aims to explore how the level and quality of life in households have changed, the difficulties encountered by women-housewives in raising children during the pandemic, whether the quarantine has influenced the escalation of aggression and domestic violence from men, and other related aspects.

The information collected in this way was systematized, which supplemented the scientific analytical base for further research in the field of gender-based inequality in Kyrgyzstan. The proposed empirical research methodology is transparent, understandable for respondents and can be used in the future to conduct a broader comparative analysis of the problem of gender-based inequality based on the material of other countries in Central Asian region.

CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECT OF THE STUDY OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE MODERN WORLD: SPECIFICITY OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN REGION

1.1. General characteristics of gender inequality in the modern world

The chapter examines modern theoretical issues of studying the problem of gender inequality. The chapter discusses the sociological approach, which is the main methodological research. The chapter presents the main theoretical developments in the scientific discourse on the topic of gender inequality. Sociological features of the problem of gender-based inequality in the Central Asian region for our research, is of methodological interest, since they contain: methods of identifying the social gender structure, which can be used in the case of Kyrgyzstan as a basis for analysis; methods of identifying cases of gender-based inequality in the context of the specifics of the traditional family as the basis of society in Kyrgyzstan and most countries of Central Asia; methods for identifying the status of women during the COVID-19 pandemic. The latter is very important for the methodological basis of our study, since, on the basis of this literature, it is possible to identify clear criteria for analyzing the correlation between gender-based inequality and the quarantine situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. The conflictological approach to the problem of gender-based inequality in the countries of the Central Asia region, including Kyrgyzstan, is presented by the

works of such authors as A. A. Tynystanova¹⁸ and N. Usacheva¹⁹. These studies are necessary for the implementation of our project because they contain an already identified general tendency of the relationship between the traditional family lifestyle, national mentality and conflict potential with the growth of gender-based inequality during the COVID-19 pandemic. To obtain reliable and fresh statistical data in our study, it is also purposeful to use materials from such structures like UN Women, Commission on the Status of Women, reviews of international human rights organizations and think tanks. The report “Report on the results of the study Impact of COVID-19 on the situation of women and men in the Kyrgyz Republic. Operational Gender Analysis”²⁰; “Impact of COVID-19 on the standard of living of women and men in the Kyrgyz Republic”. Also useful for this work were research by the McKinsey Global Institute “COVID-19 and Gender Equality: Countering Regressive Effects”²¹; the publication of the National Bureau of Economic Research “Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality”²²; Analytical Publication and Review of UN Government Support Agencies in the Europe and Central Asia Region “Progress under Threat: Gender Equality in Response to COVID-19 in Europe and Central Asia”; the publication of the Asian Development Bank “The Kyrgyz Republic: Gender Assessment in the

¹⁸ Safak Oz Aktepe, “Gender Inequality in Work Organizations: What HRM Practices Mean for Gender Inequality”. *Research Anthology on Challenges for Women in Leadership Roles*, (2021): 75-99. DOI:10.4018/978-1-7998-8592-4.ch005

¹⁹ A. A. Tynystanova, “The role of Kyrgyz women in society during the period of democracy”. *Science, new technologies and innovations of Kyrgyzstan*, Vol. 7 (2019): 158-161.

²⁰ “Research report Impact of COVID-19 on the situation of women and men in the Kyrgyz Republic. Rapid Gender Analysis as of 15 May 2020”. The UN, 2020. Accessed December 7, 2023, <https://eca.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ECA/Attachments/Publications/2020/07/Factsheet-Kyrgyzstan-FIN-rev-min.pdf>

²¹ “Progress at risk. Gender equality in COVID-19 response in Europe and Central Asia. United Nations Development Program”. The UN. February 2021. Accessed December 14, 2023. <https://www.undp.org/kyrgyzstan/publications/progress-risk-gender-equality-covid-19-response-europe-and-central-asia>

²² “Report COVID-19 Impacts on Livelihoods of Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic Gender Rapid Assessment as of 15 May 2020”. Accessed December 10, 2023, https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/ENG_Gender%20Rapid%20Assessment%20of%20COVID-19%20impact_June%202020_final.pdf

Country”²³; publication with the support of the British Embassy in Bishkek "Overview of the situation on the inclusion of the needs of women and girls from religious communities in the national strategy and national action plan for achieving gender equality in the Kyrgyz Republic"²⁴, etc.

The gender revolution is an important step along the same path. Its essence is that people «are not born as men or women»²⁵. They choose their own sex and are equal in all spheres of social life, competing in a wide range of social relations. Thus, the very concept of «gender» separates social and biological sex.

The main consequence is that the relationship between sex and its inherent set of social functions is denied, and, consequently, the sexual characteristics of behavior, as well as the different rights and responsibilities characteristic of the sexes, are denied too²⁶.

Gender inequality is a characteristic of the social structure, according to which different social groups (in this case, men and women) have stable differences and the resulting unequal opportunities in society. Gender inequality was recognized by researchers in the social and human sciences due to the emergence of the gender concept in 1980 as the basis of the feminist movement. The conceptualization of gender has shed light on the process of social construction for masculinity and femininity as oppositional categories with different social values²⁷.

²³ “Report on gender equality in the EU”. (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2021). Accessed December 14, 2023, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/11d9cab1-fa52-11eb-b520-01aa75ed71a1>

²⁴ “Kyrgyz Republic. Country gender assessment”. (Philippines: Asian development bank Report, 2019). Accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/546966/kyrgyz-republic-country-gender-assessment-2019.pdf>

²⁵ William A. Donohue, “Origins of the Sexual Revolution”. *The New Freedom*, (2021): 94.

²⁶ Max Levin, “The Physician and the Sexual Revolution”. *The Linacre quarterly*, Vol. 85 (3), (2018): 220-224.

²⁷ V. Geetha, “Masculinity and Femininity”. *Gender and Education in India A Reader*, (2021): 29-35.

Gender inequality is a consequence of deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes and misogyny. Moreover, gender inequality is the root cause of gender-based violence in the family: a woman without education, without the opportunity to work, is completely dependent on a man, which in countries with a traditional family structure leads to complete «domestic» women's slavery.

Since the active suppression of similarities and the differences' construction requires social power, the problem of dominance is central to gender theory. Gender, together with race and class, is a hierarchical structure for the provision of both opportunity and oppression, and an effective structure of personal identity and group solidarity²⁸. The «male – female» differences characterize the views of researchers who construct social qualities in a person through biological characteristics²⁹. Traditional psychoanalysis recognizes that the male and female models are diametrically opposed in their qualities (typical male behavior is characterized by activity, aggressiveness, determination, the desire for competition and achievement, the ability to creative activity, rationality; for the female - passivity, indecision, dependent behavior, conformity, lack of logical thinking and striving for achievement, as well as great emotionality and social balance)³⁰. Keeping the basic psychoanalytic paradigms unchanged, K. Horney draws attention to the fact that the girl grows up, realizing that a man has a «great value» for society both in human and spiritual terms, and, thus, the cause of the complex of masculinity in women should be sought in supra-individual, cultural factors³¹.

Based on the social identity theory, some researchers consider men and women as social groups with different social status. High-status groups are most often assessed in terms of competence and economic success, and low-status groups - in terms of kindness, humanity, etc.³². So, all positive features of the female stereotype (warmth,

²⁸ Colette Chiland, "Masculinity and femininity". *Exploring Transsexualism*, (2018): 48-64.

²⁹ Barnaby J Dixson, "Masculine or feminine". *Encyclopedia of Evolutionary Psychological Science*. 2016. P.1-6.

³⁰ Kelvin Randall, "Masculine or feminine?" *Evangelicals Etcetera*, (2016): 133-153.

³¹ Kendra Cherry, "Horney's Theory of Neurotic Needs". Accessed December 18, 2023, <https://www.verywellmind.com/horneys-list-of-neurotic-needs-2795949>

³² Kelvin Randall, "Masculine or feminine?" *Evangelicals Etcetera*, (2016), 137.

emotional support, compliance) are typical compensation for lack of the «power position» achievement. As members of a low-status group, women have less developed a sense of identification with their group than men, they tend to overestimate male achievements and dignity and underestimate their own, adopting the point of a higher-status men group³³. Confirmation of these positions can be seen in the data of many studies, for example, K. Randall discovered a certain share of women’s prejudice against themselves in the field of scientific activity; female college students rate articles signed by men more highly than by women³⁴.

Analyzing over 600 studies on psychological gender differences, it is concluded that there are essentially no inherent differences in psychological characteristics between men and women. The differences observed in early childhood are at least insufficient to justify traditional gender role inequalities. Nowadays, the concept of gender inequality is especially actively used in sociology (problems of division of labor, asymmetry of employment, etc.)³⁵. Despite the narrowing of the gap in recent years, on a global scale, the progress towards male and female parity is slowing: the authors of the report believed that it will take 202 years before full economic equality is achieved.

The report notes that today 45% of women at working age do not have access to the world labor market, and only 22% of men in this category. The salary of working women is 60% less than that of men in similar positions. Until now, in 72 countries of the world, women are prohibited from opening bank accounts or receiving loans³⁶.

Access to the professions of the future («Industry 4.0») is also challenging for women. Thus, in the market of specialties related to society and culture, women make up 65% of the total number of employees. In the sector of «cloud technologies» women

³³ Colette Chiland, “Masculinity and femininity”. *Exploring Transsexualism*, (2018), 49.

³⁴ Kelvin Randall, “Masculine or feminine?” *Evangelicals Etcetera*, (2016), 141.

³⁵ “Global Gender Gap Report 2021”, The World Economic Forum. Accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/ab6795a1-960c-42b2-b3d5-587eccda6023>

³⁶ Ibid.

- only 12% of the number of employees, in the sector of engineering professions - 15%³⁷.

Such an alignment of forces, according to experts, may lead to a further increase in the income gap between men and women³⁸.

From a methodological point of view, the problem of gender inequality in the world scientific discourse is considered in several areas.

1. Political representation

The largest gender gap is in politics. At the current level of progress, the experts believe that we will see an equal number of male and female politicians only in 95 years³⁹. Of the 153 countries, 85 have never had a female head of government⁴⁰.

At the same time, experts note the convergence of opportunities for both sexes in terms of political empowerment; progress in this area, they argue, is the most obvious since 2006. Since last year, the gap has narrowed by almost 2%⁴¹.

2. Regional differences

³⁷ CNBC. “Equity and Opportunity. Covid widened the gender gap — it will now take 135 years to close that divide”. Accessed December 17, 2023. <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/04/01/wef-covid-worsened-the-gender-gap-it-will-take-135-years-to-close.html>

³⁸ “Global Gender Gap Report 2021”, The World Economic Forum. Accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/ab6795a1-960c-42b2-b3d5-587eccda6023>

³⁹ CNBC. “Equity and Opportunity. Covid widened the gender gap — it will now take 135 years to close that divide”. Accessed December 17, 2023. <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/04/01/wef-covid-worsened-the-gender-gap-it-will-take-135-years-to-close.html>

⁴⁰ “Global Gender Gap Report 2021”, The World Economic Forum. Accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/ab6795a1-960c-42b2-b3d5-587eccda6023>

⁴¹ “Development finance for gender equality and women’s empowerment: A 2021 snapshot”. OECD, 2021. Accessed December 14, 2023 <https://www.oecd.org/development/gender-development/Development-finance-for-gender-equality-2021.pdf>

The gender gap varies considerably across regions. If in Western Europe it will take 54 years to overcome it, in North America it will take 151 years⁴². Iceland tops the list of countries closest to gender equality, followed by Norway and Finland. At the other end of the scale is Yemen, the country with the worst gender equality record. In second place from the end is Iraq, in third place is Pakistan⁴³.

3. International Framework for Measuring Gender Inequality Indicators

Gender Inequality Index is a combined indicator of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which measures human development in countries around the world in terms of gender equality⁴⁴.

The index is regarded as one of the key indicators of social development. The research results are used to calculate the Human Development Index, issued as part of a special series of United Nations (UN) reports on human development⁴⁵. Currently, the Index covers UN member states, as well as some administrative territories with a special status, while the ranking table often has a smaller number of states, since countries that are unwilling or unable to provide statistics on this indicator are not included in the ranking. The index is updated annually⁴⁶.

However, reports with UN data are usually one to two years late, as they require international comparison after the publication of data by national statistical offices. For the Gender Inequality Index, current data are as of 2020 (published in 2021)⁴⁷. The higher the index (1-100), the worse the situation with gender inequality in the country. For example, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Finland,

⁴² “Global Gender Gap Report 2021”, The World Economic Forum. Accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/ab6795a1-960c-42b2-b3d5-587eccda6023>

⁴³ “Development finance for gender equality and women’s empowerment: A 2021 snapshot”. OECD, 2021. Accessed December 14, 2023 <https://www.oecd.org/development/gender-development/Development-finance-for-gender-equality-2021.pdf>

⁴⁴ “Gender Inequality Index (GII)”, Human Development Reports. Accessed December 20, 2023, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

France, Iceland, Slovenia are among the top ten successful countries in combating inequality. Russia ranks 50th in the ranking, while the Central Asian countries show a heterogeneous performance. Kazakhstan at 44th, Uzbekistan at 64th place, Tajikistan at 70th place, Turkmenistan at 69th place. Kyrgyzstan is 83rd in the world and the lowest in the Central Asian region.

4. Gender inequality in the labor market

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), when estimated using the average hourly wages of men and women in 73 countries (80% of all employees), the global gender payment gap was 16%. However, the data vary widely across countries, ranging from 34% in Pakistan to -10.3% in the Philippines, which have a negative gap (i.e., women earn more than men)⁴⁸.

According to the ILO, the gender gap in the United States in terms of average monthly wages is 23.5%; for the median monthly salary - 25.7%; in Brazil - 20.1% and 20.8%, respectively; China - 19.0% and 20.0%; South Africa - 28.6% and 30.8%; while for Thailand there was a zero gap in the average monthly wage and a negative -2.5% in the median⁴⁹.

In the European Union, according to the European Commission⁵⁰ and Eurostat⁵¹, the gender payment gap has been decreasing rather slowly over the past decade and averages 14.1% as of 2018 (in 2014 it was 15.7%). At the same time, the EU notes that in 2018 for the EU economy as a whole, the hourly wages of women (excluding deductions) were on average 14.8% lower than that of men in the European Union (EU-27) and by 15.9% - in the euro area⁵². In the EU is the lower employment of women: the employment gender gap was 11.7% in 2019, with 67.3% of women

⁴⁸ “Gender equality (Equality and discrimination)”, ILO. Accessed December, 22, 2023, <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/equality-and-discrimination/gender-equality/lang--en/index.htm>

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Overview - Equality (age, gender and disability), Eurostat. Accessed December, 22, 2023, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/equality/overview>

⁵² “Gender equality”. European Commission. Accessed December 22, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality_en

employed in the 27 EU member states, compared with 79% of men. Part-time employment is also typical for women: in 2020, only 8% of men worked part-time and 30.7% (almost a third) of women. Among occupations, the largest gender gap in hourly wages is noted among managers - 23%⁵³.

According to Eurostat, EU countries differ greatly in terms of gender payment gap: the largest gap is in Estonia - 21.8%, Austria - 20.4%, Germany - 20.1%; the smallest - in Luxembourg - 1.4%, Romania - 2.2%, Italy - 3.9%⁵⁴. The gender pay gap in Europe is significantly lower for young people entering the labor force and increases with age. The largest gap is observed in the financial sector and insurance activities. The gender payment gap is higher in the private sector than in the public sector. The gender pay gap should be viewed in the context of women's underrepresentation in the labor market. Thus, according to the ILO, the global gender gap in labor force participation is 27%, while in Arab countries, North Africa and South Asia it exceeds 50%.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) monitors data on the status of the gender payment gap⁵⁵. According to the OECD, the average gap in the countries of the Organization in 2018 was 12.7% (the calculation is based on the median earnings of men and women); the highest gender gap is observed in the Republic of Korea - 32.5%; in Japan - 23.5%; in Israel - 22.7%; in Canada - 17.6%; in the UK - 16.0%; in Chile - 12.5%; in New Zealand - 6.5%; in Colombia - 4.0%. Closing the gender payment gap, in turn, creates incentives for more active involvement of women in the economy. The ILO estimates that reducing the gender labor force gap by 25% by 2025 could increase global GDP by 3.9%, or 5.6 trillion dollars⁵⁶.

5. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the growth of gender inequality

⁵³ “Gender equality”. European Commission. Accessed December 22, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality_en

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ “Gender (in)equality”, OECD. Accessed December 23, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/2012-06-14/58616-genderinequality.htm>

⁵⁶ “Gender equality (Equality and discrimination)”, ILO. Accessed December, 22, 2023, <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/equality-and-discrimination/gender-equality/lang--en/index.htm>

The fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic could ruin the limited progress that has been made on gender equality and women's rights. The coronavirus outbreak is exacerbating existing inequalities for women and girls in everything from health and the economy to safety and social protection.

Women play a disproportionate role in the response to the virus, including as primary health care workers and home-based caregivers. Women's unpaid care work has grown significantly due to school closures and the growing needs of older people. Women are also more affected by the economic impact of COVID-19 as they disproportionately work in unsafe labor markets⁵⁷.

All COVID-19 response plans, as well as all recovery packages and resource budgeting, need to take into account the gender impact of this pandemic. This includes: 1) Including women and women's organizations in the planning and decision-making process for the COVID-19 response; 2) transforming unfair unpaid care work into a new, inclusive «economy of care» that benefits all; and 3) developing socio-economic plans deliberately focused on the lives and future of women and girls.

The COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity to take radical positive action to close long-standing inequalities in many areas of women's lives and to build a more just and sustainable world. Globally, about 750 million women and girls were married before the age of 18. About 200 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation. In 18 countries, a husband can officially ban his wife from working, in 39 countries boys and girls have different inheritance rights, and 49 countries lack laws prohibiting domestic violence. One in five women, including 19 percent of women aged 15 to 49, said they had experienced physical and / or sexual violence from an intimate partner within a 12-month period⁵⁸.

Despite the active participation of women in the political life of countries, women today account for 23.7 % of seats in state parliaments, which does not yet meet the principle of gender parity. Slightly more than half (52 %) of women aged 15 to 49

⁵⁷ “COVID-19 impact on women and gender equality”, McKinsey & Company. Accessed December 22, 2023, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/covid-19-and-gender-equality-countering-the-regressive-effects>

⁵⁸ Ibid.

who are married or in an extramarital union make their own decisions about consenting to sexual intercourse, contraceptive use and health care⁵⁹.

The problem of gender inequality also exists in developed countries, albeit on a smaller scale. For example, in Germany, a third (32%) of men consider it justified for a man to beat his wife or girlfriend in certain circumstances (compared to 60% of men in the Central Asia region)⁶⁰. Even women believe it: 16% of women in Switzerland and 13% of women in the United States⁶¹.

Based on the data of international organizations reports and statistical data, it can be concluded that gender inequality is a global problem, it cannot be solved by the efforts of international structures without the active participation of national governments, public and human rights organizations, as well as without a radical transformation of social stereotypes about the role women in socio-political and socio-economic life. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that gender inequality in conditions of quarantine and self-isolation leads to an increase in gender-based violence not only in outsider countries, but also in developed countries, whose societies are considered highly civilized.

1.2. The specifics of gender inequality in the Central Asian region

Domestic violence has risen sharply across the region, women have taken on more unpaid work, vital remittances to households from abroad have declined, and women's position in national labor markets has become so dire that they have nullified all the gains they have achieved from the moment of gaining independence by Central Asian countries. The pandemic has had a huge negative impact on the socio-economic life of the countries of the region and has particularly highlighted the gender gaps that women still face. The isolation regime and school closures have placed additional

⁵⁹ "COVID-19 impact on women and gender equality", McKinsey & Company. Accessed December 22, 2023, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/covid-19-and-gender-equality-counteracting-the-regressive-effects>

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ "COVID-19 impact on women and gender equality", McKinsey & Company. Accessed December 22, 2023, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/covid-19-and-gender-equality-counteracting-the-regressive-effects>

household chores on women — for example, in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, women’s household responsibilities have reportedly increased by 80%⁶².

In Central Asia, the issue of gender inequality is associated with three factors: competition in the labor market based on gender, national perceptions (stereotypes) of the role of women in society, and national stereotypes regarding the role of men in society.

The burden of household chores was heavy by global standards even before the pandemic: in 2019, women in the region spent an average of five hours a day on unpaid household chores, while men spent an average of two hours a day on such unpaid work⁶³. Data following the first quarantine in spring 2020 show that women faced stronger reductions in paid working hours and higher unemployment rates, mainly due to employment in hard-hit sectors of the economy, as well as high levels of household responsibilities. For example, working hours for women decreased by 42.6% in Kyrgyzstan and by 31% in Kazakhstan⁶⁴.

Women in Central Asia are also more likely to be in vulnerable positions, mainly in the informal economy, which effectively deprives them of access to social security programs.

During the pandemic, access to essential sexual and reproductive health services was limited. A UN Women Organization study in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan found that women faced particular difficulties in accessing sexual and reproductive health services during periods of isolation⁶⁵. In Kazakhstan, more than 80% of women interviewed did not use maternal health services during isolation. In Kyrgyzstan 43% of women were unable to access health centers, compared with 36% for men⁶⁶. Studies

⁶² “UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020”. (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ “Gender equality and women’s empowerment in pinistration: Kyrgyzstan Case Study”. (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2012). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/KyrgyzstanFinal%20-%20HiRes.pdf>

modeling the development of the pandemic indicate that maternal mortality in low- and middle-income countries could rise by 8–38% over 2019 as a result of limited access to basic services⁶⁷. These data show how important it is to make efforts to avoid the potentially life-threatening reallocation of resources that is nevertheless already taking place in Central Asia.

What’s more, COVID-19 has seriously disrupted prevention and treatment services for noncommunicable diseases, which can affect men and women differently depending on disease and location. In some Central Asian countries, especially in fragile and conflict-affected regions, where institutional capacity and the range of services are rather limited, access to health services for women was particularly difficult. The OECD confirms that «in a situation of increased instability, the ability of the state to provide health services is sharply reduced, while the demand for them grows»⁶⁸.

Women in the region, particularly in Kyrgyzstan, also face limited access to services due to the inaccessibility and remoteness of health facilities and testing centers, as well as social and cultural norms that restrict women outside the home. Only 15% of nurses and 2% of doctors in Kyrgyzstan are women, which has led to a massive shortage of medical personnel in the field of women’s health⁶⁹. Thus, public health policies need to take into account such critical factors as service delivery in fragile settings, gender diversity in needs and access to health care.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread psychological stress due to economic turmoil, social exclusion, rising levels of domestic violence and infection fear. The extreme workload, infection risk and death of patients undermine the mental stability of medical and social workers at the forefront of the response to the

⁶⁷ “Gender equality and women’s empowerment in pinistration: Kyrgyzstan Case Study”. (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2012). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/KyrgyzstanFinal%20-%20HiRes.pdf>

⁶⁸ “Gender Equality”, OECD. Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.oecd.org/gender/gender-flyer.pdf>

⁶⁹ “UNICEF Annual Report 2020”. UNICEF, 2021. Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unicef.org/reports/unicef-annual-report-2020>

pandemic⁷⁰. However, women constitute the majority of workers in these areas in many countries⁷¹. In addition, young mothers and pregnant women are particularly prone to anxiety and depression caused by difficulties in accessing health services, lack of social support and COVID-19 anxiety⁷². Many countries reported rising suicide rates during the pandemic, and Central Asia was no an exception⁷³. Despite the fact that both men and women suffer from exacerbation of mental disorders during the pandemic, women are on average more likely to experience the negative effects of the pandemic on their mental health. For example, the media have reported numerous suicide attempts among Asian women due to the surge in domestic violence⁷⁴.

In particular, 78% of women and 77% of men in Uzbekistan reported that their mental and emotional health has deteriorated since the crisis onset, which is of utmost concern given the fact that the country's annual government spending on mental health services does not reach 1 dollar per capita⁷⁵. In Tajikistan polls also indicate an increased diagnosis of mental disorders among both men and women⁷⁶. Common symptoms include impaired adaptive response (40.7% women, 31% men), depression (30.3% women, 25.27% men) and anxiety (23.9% women, 21% men)⁷⁷.

The pandemic, forcing governments to re-prioritize budget spending and expand health service delivery, highlighted existing health inequalities in Central Asia. Due to

⁷⁰ “UNICEF Annual Report 2020”. UNICEF, 2021. Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unicef.org/reports/unicef-annual-report-2020>

⁷¹ “UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020”. (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ “Global Suicide Trends during the COVID-19 Pandemic”. Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC), 2021. Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://sprc.org/news/global-suicide-trends-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ IRC – International Rescue Committee (Author), UN Women. Accessed December 26, 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/covid-19surveyreport121020.pdf>

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

the high costs of health care in some countries, citizens have to pay for most of their health-related costs on their own. Women, who tend to have a more modest financial cushion to begin with, may not always be able to afford expensive treatment, potentially leading to a decline in life-saving preventive visits to doctors. Health insurance in the region is at a low level of development: up to 80% of the population in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were not insured during the isolation period⁷⁸. Given the fact that the pandemic has limited household incomes, private health care has become even less affordable. About 56% of health care costs in Central Asia are covered by patients' own funds⁷⁹. In some countries, the share of households in covering health care costs is high even in non-crisis times, which poses serious barriers to access to health care. This is especially true for poor and vulnerable households and contributes to the further growth of social and economic gaps in the region⁸⁰.

Moreover, COVID-19 vaccination programs in Central Asian countries can be challenged by gender norms because in recent decades it has become clear that gender barriers to vaccine access and vaccine research development are a major challenge. Social and cultural norms that dictate the role of women in society often create barriers to women's access to health services.

In some regions, women have limited control over resources and decision-making in the household and therefore often cannot seek medical and preventive care, including vaccinations⁸¹. In addition, while women predominate among health workers in remote and conflict-ridden regions, it is generally men who provide vaccinations, which has limited access to vaccinations for some women. No gender analysis was

⁷⁸ “UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020”. (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

⁷⁹ IRC – International Rescue Committee (Author), UN Women. Accessed December 26, 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/covid-19surveyreport121020.pdf>

⁸⁰ “UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020”. (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

⁸¹ “Development co-operation during the COVID-19 pandemic”. OECD, 2021. Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/e4b3142a-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/e4b3142a-en>

carried out in the development of various vaccination strategies in Central Asia. All countries in the region, with the exception of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, receive the vaccine under the COVAX program, but ensuring adequate doses remains a major challenge for the region, making vaccine distribution critical. Vaccinations began in February 2021 in Kazakhstan. It is important to consider public health and equity aspects as vaccination campaigns unfold. Several countries in the region and beyond have faced scandals over allegations of vaccine smuggling and spontaneous vaccination of privileged groups. While this is not only a gender issue - it is more about territorial and income inequality and accessibility issues for people at risk - a disproportionate number of women in many vulnerable groups (e.g. care workers) gives it an important gender dimension. International cooperation and assistance from international organizations continue to be critical to ensure that the entire population in the region can be vaccinated so that men and women can return to normal life.

Among the medical and social workers in the region, as in the rest of the world, women predominate (70%). In Kyrgyzstan women make up 82 % of health workers, respectively⁸². In Kazakhstan, this situation reaches 73%⁸³. As primary care workers, women are often at greater risk of infection. The risk to health-care workers has not only not decreased, but increased - the changing percentage reflects only a much faster increase in the total number of infections.

Likewise, Kazakhstan had 12,983 infections among healthcare workers out of 90 000 people⁸⁴. Lack of emergency protective equipment such as masks and protective suits puts these workers at increased risk of infection. In Kyrgyzstan, 73% of women reported problems with the availability of protective equipment, compared with 64% of men - this corresponds to the situation faced by women in Kazakhstan (75%)⁸⁵. One of

⁸² “UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020”. (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ “Development co-operation during the COVID-19 pandemic”. OECD, 2021. Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/e4b3142a-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/e4b3142a-en>

⁸⁵ “UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020”. (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

the studies conducted in Uzbekistan in 2020 showed that only 14% of female health workers were fully provided with personal protective equipment⁸⁶. Women are also at great risk because they care for older people and members of vulnerable groups. In Soviet times, care for the elderly was primarily carried out by the state. However, since 1991, the responsibilities of long-term or home-based care in Central Asia region have largely fallen to women, and these responsibilities are often both unpaid and do not provide social security⁸⁷. An estimated 76.8% of health workers in Europe and Central Asia are women, with rates ranging from 71.7% in Kazakhstan to 82% in Kyrgyzstan. In 2020, these rates were below the OECD average of 90%⁸⁸.

Perhaps the most serious problem that exacerbated in Central Asian countries during the COVID-19 pandemic became the rise of domestic violence.

In Central Asia, as elsewhere in the world, isolation and quarantine measures have been associated with an increased physical risk for women due to rising levels of domestic violence. The pandemic underscored how unprepared many communities are to protect victims of intimate partner violence. With COVID-19 linked to travel restrictions and stress due to the threat of poverty, as well as declining seasonal migration, which tends to reduce domestic violence, domestic violence has skyrocketed in Central Asia. This phenomenon has been called a «shadow pandemic», and it affects women and children the most. It should be noted that Central Asian countries experienced the highest levels of domestic violence in the world even before the pandemic.

In 2019, almost 40% of all women in Central Asia reported having experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) at least once in their lives, which is comparable to 10% registered in the OECD countries⁸⁹. Despite the fact that the indicators in Central Asia

⁸⁶ Uzbekistan - Country Fact Sheet. UN Women Data. Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://data.unwomen.org/country/uzbekistan>

⁸⁷ “Gender Equality”, OECD. Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.oecd.org/gender/gender-flyer.pdf>

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ “Violence against women”, OECD. December 25, 2023, [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/008fcef3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/008fcef3-en#:~:text=SIGI%202019%20shows%20that%20within,in%20Germany%20\(Figure%208.8\)](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/008fcef3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/008fcef3-en#:~:text=SIGI%202019%20shows%20that%20within,in%20Germany%20(Figure%208.8))

are below the world average (51%), there are serious intraregional differences: the level of IPV ranges from 6% in Kazakhstan and 10% in Uzbekistan to 46% in Kyrgyzstan and 38% in Tajikistan⁹⁰. An IPV is also more common in Central Asia: women whose partners consume alcohol on a daily or weekly basis are more likely to experience some form of IPV, which may explain especially high IPV rates in Kyrgyzstan.

During the quarantine, the situation worsened even in countries with lower rates of violence (Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan). Women faced increased levels of domestic violence: in Kyrgyzstan, the number of attacks increased by 65% compared to 2019⁹¹. In December 2020, the United Nations determined that 49% of Central Asian women had experienced sexual harassment, and the number of calls to national hotlines during the isolation period doubled⁹². Human rights groups in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have stated that the number of women seeking legal assistance has doubled since the declaration of nationwide isolation⁹³. The data for Kyrgyzstan based on the number of calls to hotlines that the police register and regularly report to the media. However, the traditional underreporting in the region suggests a significant underestimation of the rise in IPV, not least because many women were more closely monitored by rapists during isolation periods. Access to shelters was also limited. Resources were redirected to tackle the COVID-19 crisis, while the ability of shelters to accept new victims during isolation was further constrained by social distancing requirements, leaving women in

⁹⁰ “Violence against women”, OECD. December 25, 2023, [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/008fcef3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/008fcef3-en#:~:text=SIGI%202019%20shows%20that%20within,in%20Germany%20\(Figure%208.8\)](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/008fcef3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/008fcef3-en#:~:text=SIGI%202019%20shows%20that%20within,in%20Germany%20(Figure%208.8))

⁹¹ “UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020”. (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

⁹² United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). December 25, 2023, <https://www.unfpa.org/>

⁹³ “Violence against women”, OECD. December 25, 2023, [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/008fcef3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/008fcef3-en#:~:text=SIGI%202019%20shows%20that%20within,in%20Germany%20\(Figure%208.8\)](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/008fcef3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/008fcef3-en#:~:text=SIGI%202019%20shows%20that%20within,in%20Germany%20(Figure%208.8))

the region without such critical assistance⁹⁴. For example, in Kazakhstan, most crisis centers and shelters do not accept victims of domestic violence due to a lack of space as a result of mandatory quarantine and social distancing measures. During the isolation, only one state crisis center in the country remained open⁹⁵. Other countries in the region have faced similar constraints, although many non-governmental and international organizations are seeking to fill the gap in public shelter across the region⁹⁶.

In Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan deeply rooted patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes persist in political discourse, in the media and in society, normalizing gender-based violence against women⁹⁷. Thus, public acceptance of violence and the stigmatization of its victims can force women to remain silent. Legal and institutional protection for women in the region was limited even before COVID-19. Today there are legislative gaps in the criminalization of sexual harassment, domestic violence and marital rape⁹⁸.

The International Commission of Jurists raised concerns about the operation of courts and the ability of lawyers to offer legal aid to their clients in Central Asia, saying that COVID-19 has severely limited access to legal aid for victims of domestic violence⁹⁹.

⁹⁴ “UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020”. (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

⁹⁵ “Violence against women”, OECD. December 25, 2023, [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/008fcef3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/008fcef3-en#:~:text=SIGI%202019%20shows%20that%20within,in%20Germany%20\(Figure%208.8\)](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/008fcef3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/008fcef3-en#:~:text=SIGI%202019%20shows%20that%20within,in%20Germany%20(Figure%208.8))

⁹⁶ “UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020”. (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ “International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)”, Justice. Accessed December 26, 2023, <https://justice.org.uk/international-commission-jurists-icj/>

Women in Central Asia spent an average of five hours a day on unpaid household chores in 2019, compared with two hours for men. This is in line with a trend around the world: women everywhere do three times as much unpaid domestic work as men. The significant gender differences in such unpaid work are also related to the fact that the majority of single parents are women. In Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, 80% of women reported an increase in household chores since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, while only 58% of men faced such a problem¹⁰⁰. The increase in unpaid domestic work places a particular strain on women, including young girls from vulnerable families. For them, fewer hours children spend at school can directly translate into more unpaid hours of housework¹⁰¹.

It must be emphasized that high absenteeism has a long-term impact on women's prospects in the regional labor market. Across Central Asia, gender gaps in education have been a problem long before COVID-19 and made adjustments to educational systems. Nearly two-thirds of young people who did not participate in education, training and work, were young women. In Tajikistan 60% of out-of-school children were girls, and the largest gap was observed in higher education: only 4.9% of women can obtain it, while among men reached 14.2%¹⁰².

Higher school absenteeism among girls in Central Asia is a consequence of higher rates of child marriage among girls than boys, early pregnancy, discriminatory attitudes and practices in girls' higher education, and responsibilities for caring for home and relatives¹⁰³.

Such discriminatory practices are especially evident in Central Asia: in Tajikistan 30% of men and 52% of women do not participate in education, training and labor processes. In fact, girls in the region are four times more likely than boys to get

¹⁰⁰ "UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020". (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ "Violence against women", OECD. December 25, 2023, [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/008fcef3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/008fcef3-en#:~:text=SIGI%202019%20shows%20that%20within,in%20Germany%20\(Figure%208.8\)](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/008fcef3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/008fcef3-en#:~:text=SIGI%202019%20shows%20that%20within,in%20Germany%20(Figure%208.8))

married before the age of 18. In Kyrgyzstan 20% of girls do not go to school due to the widespread practice of early marriage. Thirty-seven percent of the Central Asian population believes that a university education is more important for a boy than for a girl, while household responsibilities are unevenly distributed: 20% of women do not receive education, work or vocational training due to unpaid domestic work, while among men this the figure reaches only 2%¹⁰⁴. Thus, COVID-19 risks undermining hard-won gains in narrowing the gender gap in education. UNESCO reports that the crisis is exacerbating pre-existing inequalities in education by reducing opportunities for many of the most vulnerable, including girls, to continue their education, threatening to destroy decades of progress¹⁰⁵. Globally, about 90% of students were unable to attend school for some part of the year due to isolation, and a third of them did not have access to distance learning¹⁰⁶. In Central Asia, school closures affected 16 million students. In Tajikistan only 20% of students were able to continue their education digitally, while in Kazakhstan, 10.6% of teachers did not have access to ICT technologies to teach their students¹⁰⁷.

Distance learning also poses certain challenges in terms of reconciling household chores and school work - 40% of girls in the region reported problems finding the time they need, compared to 29% for boys¹⁰⁸. The quality of education has fallen, emotional anxiety has increased, and the disadvantage of students from rural, poor and vulnerable populations has become more evident than ever. Mothers are also more affected by the need to spend more time teaching their children at home: in Kazakhstan almost half of internally displaced persons reported this. In Kyrgyzstan

¹⁰⁴ “UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020”. (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

¹⁰⁵ UNESCO. “COVID-19 interruptions to learning”. UNESCO, 2021. Accessed December 27, 2023, http://gaml.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/UIS_COVID-19-interruptions-to-learning_EN.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ “UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020”. (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

79% of women were engaged in home schooling of children alone, without the support of their partner¹⁰⁹.

COVID-19 is likely to exacerbate existing pay and labor gaps. This time around, women-dominated sectors of the economy have been hit, and childcare services have declined, affecting the lives of women in both developing and developed countries. Initial data show that in Central Asian countries, the employment rate of women has declined: one in ten working women in the region had to take unpaid leave, compared with 8% for men¹¹⁰. More than 40% of women in the region performed less paid work during the period of isolation. In Kazakhstan 26% of women and 22% of men lost their jobs. The pandemic hit self-employed women just as hard: 81% of them in Kazakhstan and 77% in Kyrgyzstan (compared with 57% of men) reported reduced working hours or lost their jobs¹¹¹. The gender payment gap is threatened to widen further due to rising unemployment rates, reduced working hours and wages - it currently ranges from 8-9,7% in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to over 50% in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan¹¹². The decline in female labor force participation reflects a range of factors, from difficulties in accessing childcare and low availability of part-time employment options to mass emigration and cultural perceptions of motherhood. With the spread of COVID-19, the region risks further declining female labor force participation rates, which requires government intervention. Thus, it can be concluded that during the pandemic, the problems of gender inequality in Central Asian countries became critical, which deepened the already existing crisis of social protection of women. Alarming trends are observed in almost all spheres of women's lives in Central Asian countries. At the same

¹⁰⁹ UNESCO. "COVID-19 interruptions to learning". UNESCO, 2021. Accessed December 27, 2023, http://gaml.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/UIS_COVID-19-interruptions-to-learning_EN.pdf

¹¹⁰ "UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020". (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

¹¹¹ UNESCO. "COVID-19 interruptions to learning". UNESCO, 2021. Accessed December 27, 2023, http://gaml.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/UIS_COVID-19-interruptions-to-learning_EN.pdf

¹¹² "UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020". (New York: UN Women, 2020). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>

time, government measures of support and protection are clearly insufficient while maintaining patriarchal stereotypes in societies.

CHAPTER 2. GENDER AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

2.1. General characteristics of gender policy in the Kyrgyz Republic

According to official statistics, the Kyrgyz Republic shows an annual small increase in rankings according to the annual assessments of the state of gender equality. However, estimates such as the United Nations Development Program Gender Inequality Index¹¹³, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index¹¹⁴ and Social Watch's Gender Equality Index¹¹⁵ show that the country's performance is below the average for the Central Asian region as a whole (Figure 1).

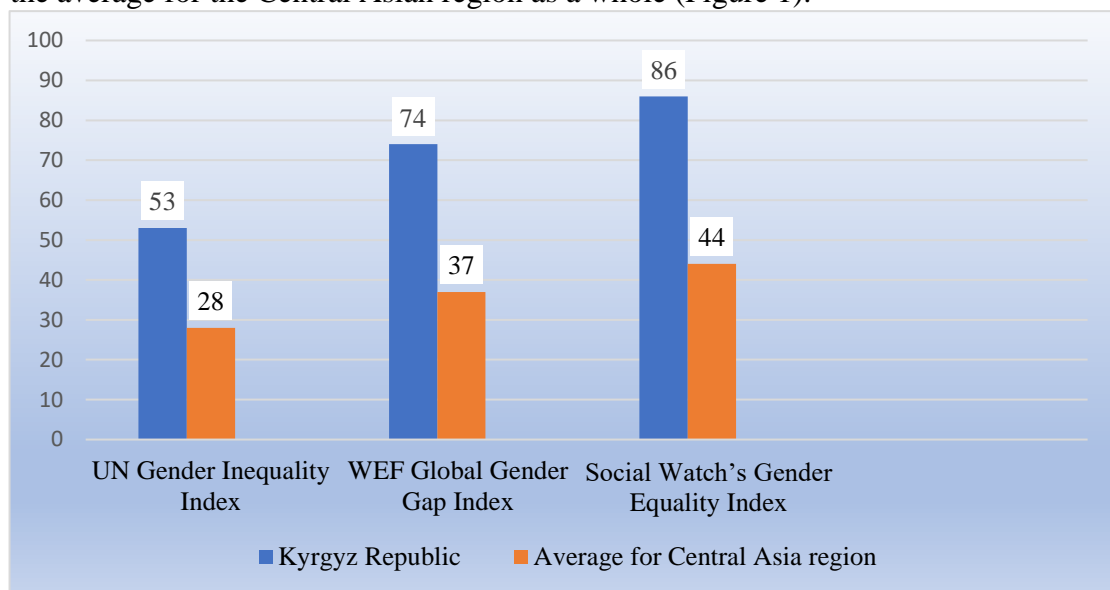


Figure 1. Gender Equality Indices for Kyrgyzstan

The current sub-index scores indicate that the Kyrgyz Republic has achieved high educational outcomes due to nearly complete gender parity in enrollment and literacy rates, but persistently low scores on economic and political opportunities for women reduce the aggregate scores.

Since independence in 1991, declining employment opportunities for women

¹¹³ “Gender Inequality Index (GII)”, Human Development Reports. Accessed December 20, 2023, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>

¹¹⁴ “Global Gender Gap Report 2021”, The World Economic Forum. Accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/ab6795a1-960c-42b2-b3d5-587eccda6023>

¹¹⁵ “Gender Equity Index (GEI)”, Social Watch. Accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.socialwatch.org/taxonomy/term/527>

have made it difficult for them to gain a livelihood or participate fully in decision-making. Traditional practices such as bride kidnapping and early marriage for girls persist, although these are increasingly challenged by women's rights. A law, signed by the President of the country in January 2013, amended the Criminal Code to introduce appropriate punishment for the abduction of women for marriage against their will¹¹⁶. There are differences in estimates, especially between urban and rural areas and the North and South of the country, with more conservative perceptions of the roles of men and women persisting in the South.

Over the past decades, the country has created a legal framework to ensure gender equality.

The Law "On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women" (2008) establishes the principle of gender equality. The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, amended in 2010, guarantees equal rights and opportunities for men and women and prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender. The National Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality until 2020 and the National Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012-2014 were adopted in June 2012¹¹⁷.

Fundamental is the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic «On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women» (August 4, 2008, No. 184)¹¹⁸, 1 containing constitutional norms for protecting the rights and opportunities of citizens. The National Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic on Achieving Gender Equality until 2020, adopted by the Government Decree No. 4432 dated June 27, 2012, defines the priorities of the state gender policy. Specific measures for its implementation for the coming period are determined in the next, fifth in a row, National Plan for Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for the period from 2018 to 2020 (NAP 2018-

¹¹⁶ "Gender equality and women's empowerment in pinistration: Kyrgyzstan Case Study". (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2012). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/KyrgyzstanFinal%20-%20HiRes.pdf>

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women". CIS Legislation, 2008. Accessed December 27, 2023, <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=23962>

2020)¹¹⁹.

It is important to note that between 2014 and 2019, a number of important laws and regulations were adopted to promote gender equality in various fields. In the field of peacebuilding. On September 21, 2018, by order of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the third National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325¹²⁰ on the role of women in ensuring peace and security was approved.

In the field of eliminating harmful practices (early marriages) the implementation of measures provided in the NAP 2018-2020, the Kyrgyzstan' administration offered great efforts for informing the population about negative consequences of early marriages. Explanatory work was conducting among representatives of religious organizations and the public about the illegality and inadmissibility of early marriages taking into account ethnocultural and religious traditional views¹²¹.

According to researchers of the Center for Statistics of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the main reasons leading to early marriage are the lack of economic and social opportunities for realizing rights, the growth of poverty and the family's desire to marry the girl as early as possible¹²², the prevalence of the traditional hierarchical family model in family relations, in which girls have a minimum status, early sexual

¹¹⁹ "Gender equality and women's empowerment in pinistration: Kyrgyzstan Case Study". (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2012). Accessed December 25, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/KyrgyzstanFinal%20-%20HiRes.pdf>

¹²⁰ Kyrgyzstan - 1325 National Action Plans – Peace Women. Accessed December 27, 2023, <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/kyrgyzstan/>

¹²¹ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. Accessed December 27, 2023, <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/sbornik-zhenshiny-i-muzhchiny-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki/>

¹²² "Gender in the perception of society". (Bishkek: UNFPA, 2016). Accessed December 27, 2023, <http://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/04b5b8ac-3016-46ed-a7ec-750398c1aeb4.pdf>

activity, as well as increased religious influence¹²³: the bulk of the respondents (over 60 %) condemn parents who married off their daughters under the age of 18¹²⁴. At the same time, 27% of respondents said that giving or not giving their daughters in marriage as a minor is a purely private matter of parents¹²⁵. To improve the situation in the field of marriage relations, on November 17, 2016, the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic «On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic (Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic) » was adopted¹²⁶.

A provision stipulating that person's guilty of violating the requirements of the Family Code are liable in accordance with the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic was included in Paragraph 3 of Article 14 of the Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic¹²⁷.

An Action Plan for the Implementation of the Law was developed to actively involve government and civil society at the national and local levels¹²⁸, so that they can participate in the prevention of violence against women and girls and to reduce the practice of early marriage in general. In March 2019, monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan was carried out, which revealed the following results.

¹²³ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. Accessed December 27, 2023, <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/sbornik-zhenshiny-i-muzhchiny-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki/>

¹²⁴ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. Accessed December 27, 2023, <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/sbornik-zhenshiny-i-muzhchiny-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki/>

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic (Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic)”. (Bshkek: Central Election Committee, 2020). Accessed December 27, 2023, [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF\(2020\)016-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF(2020)016-e)

¹²⁷ Ministry of justice of the Kyrgyz Republic. Centralized data bank legal information Kyrgyz Republic. Family Code of The Kyrgyz Republic. Accessed December 27, 2023, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/1327>

¹²⁸ Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic (Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic)”. (Bshkek: Central Election Committee, 2020). Accessed December 27, 2023, [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF\(2020\)016-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF(2020)016-e)

1. The working group has developed five by-laws concerning the order of interaction of state bodies to prevent marriages with minors and early marriages of minors. It was also important for development guidelines. A mechanism for receiving and transmitting operational messages to law enforcement agencies on the detection of early marriages cases was finally applied. This mechanism is reflected in the automated information system «Unified Register of Crimes and Misdemeanors»¹²⁹.

2. Training materials were prepared to strengthen the capacity of all parties involved in the prevention of early marriage¹³⁰. In the field of preventing violence against women and girls: On April 27, 2017, the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic «On the Protection from Domestic Violence»¹³¹ of April 27, 2017 No. 63 was adopted, which defines the fundamental principles that should guide the subjects of its implementation (11 authorized bodies). For each of them, this law sets specific tasks, as well as a mechanism for interdepartmental coordination and interaction in the process of their implementation. In particular, it is envisaged to redirect persons who have suffered from domestic violence to provide the necessary legal, medical and psychological assistance, provide social support and counseling services.

The law contains innovative norms: the internal affairs are obliged to strictly respond to incoming complaints on the domestic violence from any person - not only from the injured person; instead of 2 types (temporary protection order and court order), one protection order was introduced; for the first time, the introduction of correctional programs for perpetrators of violence to change violent behavior is envisaged¹³². The

¹²⁹ “Presentations on the unified register of crimes and misdemeanors (further – ERPP) and AIS SUDA systems were held for representatives of the delegation of the European Union to the Kyrgyz Republic”. Accessed December 27, 2023, <http://www.rolpro2kg.eu/en/news/full/61.html>

¹³⁰ Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic (Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic)”. (Bshkek: Central Election Committee, 2020). Accessed December 27, 2023, [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF\(2020\)016-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF(2020)016-e)

¹³¹ “Kyrgyzstan: New Domestic Violence Law”, Human Rights Watch. Accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/10/kyrgyzstan-new-domestic-violence-law>

¹³² Ibid.

mechanism for the implementation of the updated legislation in law enforcement activity was expressed in a number of by-laws and departmental acts: in the Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic «On approval of the form of a protection order»¹³³ dated October 3, 2017 No. 642 and the «Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic (On approval of the Instruction on the organization of the activities of bodies Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic for the Protection from Domestic Violence)»¹³⁴.

Also, draft resolutions of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic «On a correctional program to change violent behavior for persons who have committed domestic violence»¹³⁵ and «On the procedure for protecting and protecting from domestic violence»¹³⁶ detail the mechanisms of interaction and coordination by the responsible state bodies. In 2017, for the first time, an analysis of state and administrative (departmental) statistics was carried out and the forms of accounting and reporting were improved in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, the General Prosecutor's Office of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Judicial Department under the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic¹³⁷. In the area of promoting women's participation in politics

¹³³ “Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic “On approval of the form of a protection order”. Accessed December 27, 2023, https://cis-legislation.com/docs_list.fwx?countryid=006&page=18

¹³⁴ “Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic (On approval of the Instruction on the organization of the activities of bodies)”, Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic for the Protection from Domestic Violence. Accessed December 27, 2023, <https://clck.ru/ZLDka>

¹³⁵ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic “On a correctional program to change violent behavior for persons who have committed domestic violence”. Accessed December 27, 2023, https://www1.undp.org/content/dam/kyrgyzstan/Publications/gender/UNDP-KG-Beijing20_en.pdf

¹³⁶ “On the procedure for protecting and protecting from domestic violence”, OECD. Accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/kg/eng-gs-2018-2022.pdf>

¹³⁷ “NGO REPORT on implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by the Kyrgyz Republic”. December 27, 2023, <https://www.omct.org/site-resources/legacy/CAT-Alternative-Report-Kyr-EN.pdf>

the following measures were taken. In terms of the implementation of the NAP 2018-2020 «Application of special measures to ensure gender representation in political special state and municipal positions»¹³⁸ (no more than 70% of persons of the same sex) and «Monitoring and assessing the representation of women and men in political, special positions in the state and municipal service»¹³⁹ in 2017, amendments were made to the electoral legislation.

According to these amendments in case of early termination of the deputy powers, the mandate is transferred to the following registered candidate: 1) from among female candidates, in case of termination the powers of a female deputy; 2) from among the male candidates, in case of termination of the powers of the male deputy. In the absence of the indicated persons of the corresponding sex in the candidate list, the mandate of the deputy is transferred to the next candidate in turn from the same list. To solve the problem of low representation of women at the local level, deputies of the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic (a one-house parliament of the country) initiated and adopted in the first reading the draft Law of the Kyrgyz Republic «On Amendments to the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Elections of Deputies of Local Keneshes», where it is proposed to apply a reservation for women as such a temporary special measure 30% of mandates in village keneshes (local community parliaments) of the Kyrgyz Republic (Articles 46, 47, 52, 59, b2)¹⁴⁰. This task is included in the Strategy for Improving the Legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic on Elections for 2018-2020.

In the field of promoting the representation of women in the public service the following normative documents were adopted. The Regulation on the procedure for conducting competition and career promotion in the civil service and municipal service of the Kyrgyz Republic was approved by the Decree of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated December 29, 2016 No. 706.8 So, if candidates receive an equal points number, the competition commission recommends a candidate whose ethnicity and

¹³⁸ “Kyrgyz Republic. Country gender assessment”. (Philippines: Asian development bank Report, 2019). Accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/546966/kyrgyz-republic-country-gender-assessment-2019.pdf>

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

gender are less represented in the central or local government. In the event that the candidates who received an equal points number are representatives of the same ethnicity and the same sex, the decision is taken by a simple majority of the commission presents at the meeting. The Kyrgyz leadership takes a comprehensive approach to gender equality issues in its operations to support the goals and development government strategy. Literacy and enrollment rates in primary and secondary education are broadly the same for girls and boys, although boys drop out of school slightly more often than girls. Gender segregation by subject and occupation remains a problem in vocational education and training (VET) and higher education. Female students and trainees are concentrated in areas such as education, health care, services, sewing and handicrafts.

One of the tasks of the Kyrgyz government is to reduce the gender imbalance in the labor market through the diversification of female and male employment. This will be achieved through quotas, training opportunities, media campaigns, although these programs are not yet fully funded. Access to pre-school childcare also needs to be improved to enable women to work outside the home, and to ensure that children in poor and remote areas are not left behind. Older women can experience multiple discrimination, often associated with a difficult economic situation and the need for young family members to leave for labor migration. According to the MLSD, of the 192,000 families visited, 72,000 children were left unattended - one of the consequences of migration is the problem of abandoned children.

The older generation, especially older women, play an important role in the upbringing of children (grandchildren). The burden of caring for grandchildren is significant. In addition to the health and physical stress associated with childcare and household chores, older parents of labor migrants may face financial difficulties. According to surveys conducted among older people in a number of villages in Chui, Naryn and Batken oblasts, slightly more than a third received support (mainly food, but also money, clothes and medicines) from their migrant children (of whom 48% received support from sons and 30% from daughters). For the majority of respondents (83%), pensions are the main source of income, followed by remittances (24%)¹⁴¹.

¹⁴¹ “Kyrgyz Republic. Country gender assessment”. (Philippines: Asian development bank Report, 2019). Accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/546966/kyrgyz-republic-country-gender-assessment-2019.pdf>

Nevertheless, despite all the efforts of the state, gender inequality and domestic violence continue to flourish in the country, the latter being a consequence of the former. Unresolved problems in the labor market, in education, in the protection of human rights against women are still accumulating in the country. Stereotypes and patriarchal views on the role of women in society limit their opportunities as entrepreneurs. Expectations for women to combine their domestic responsibilities with their jobs are pushing women towards informal and underemployment. The decline, since the country's independence, in government social support, such as free or affordable childcare, increases pressure on women to work where there is a flexible schedule, without being distracted from household chores. Women have limited access to the assets, skills and information, as well as a lack the professional contacts they need to grow their businesses.

2.2 Key problems and shortcomings of gender policy in the Kyrgyz Republic as a sample for Central Asia region

Authors of most studies noted that over the past five years the only obvious result is progress in the adoption of laws and the development of policies and programs¹⁴². In terms of promoting de facto equality and opportunities for the practical realization of the rights of women and girls, there are still many challenges and problems¹⁴³. In 2020 the review of the situation of women and girls was seen as closely interlinking¹⁴⁴ national commitments to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA)¹⁴⁵. The

¹⁴² See: Dinara Osmonova, “Gender relations and gender policy in the Kyrgyz Republic”. *International Journal of Applied and Basic Research*, Vol. 2, (2018): P. 335-339;

¹⁴³Rajni Palriwala, “Gendering Sociology, a Sociology of Gender or Studying Women? Some Reflections”. *Critical Themes in Sociology*, (2019): 240-256;

¹⁴⁴ Gulsara Kuldysheva, Shailoobek Paraidinuulu, Aktilek Atantaev, Aigul Mirzaeva, “Providing Women Equality in Kyrgyzstan: Legal and Historical Analysis”. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 9 (1), (2021): 328-333.

¹⁴⁵ “25 Years in Review of The Beijing Platform for Action”. The UN Human Rights Commission, 2020. Accessed December 28, 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/EDVAW_Booklets.pdf

comprehensiveness of the SDGs and the GAP provides a fundamental basis for achieving de facto equality of rights and opportunities, and this applies to all spheres and stages of the life cycle of girls and women. In particular, SDG 1.2 aims to reduce poverty in all its dimensions. If a girl was born into a poor family, this automatically puts her in an unequal position in relation to other peers. In Kyrgyzstan, the poverty rate fell very slowly from 30.6% in 2014 to 25.3% in 2020. The poverty rate in Kyrgyzstan is currently above the average for the Central Asia region (Figure 2).

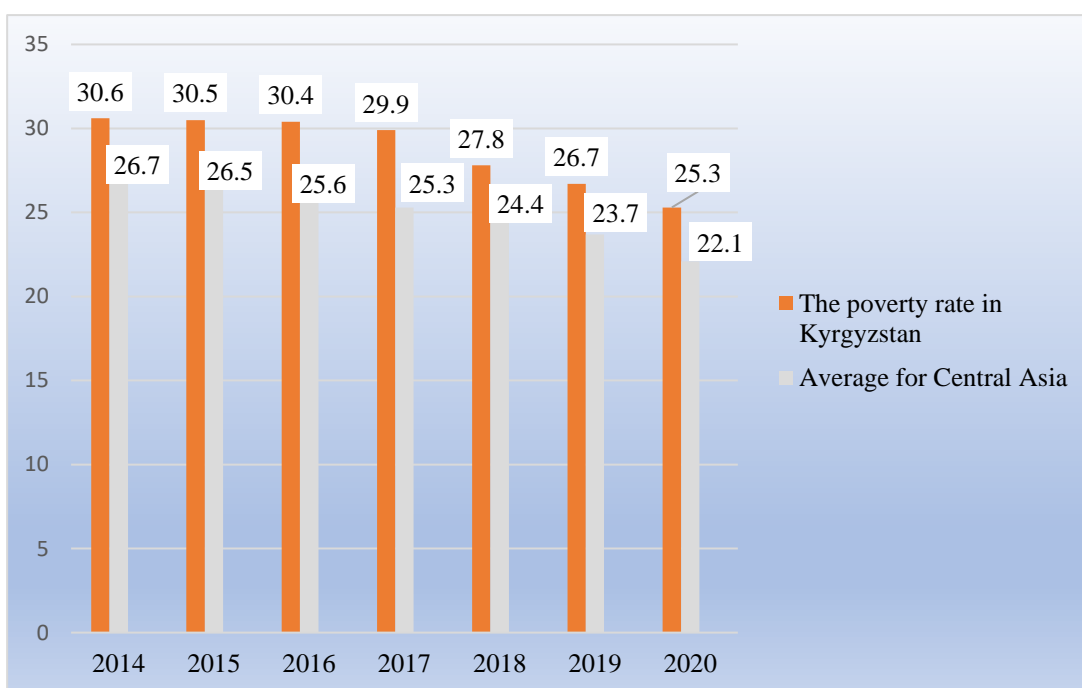


Figure 2. The poverty rate in Kyrgyzstan and in Central Asia (% , according to Review of The Beijing Platform for Action-2020)

So, still 1,892,000 people lived below the poverty line in 2020, of which 72% were residents of rural areas. A girl from a poor family is more at risk of being forced into early marriage, calling for an implacable fight against all types of harmful practices. In Kyrgyzstan, in 2019, the number of girls who got married between the ages of 15 and 18 was 1048¹⁴⁶. In 2020, there is a downward trend in this number to 410 girls (probably, the dynamics of forced marriage was affected by quarantine and self-isolation). A girl forced into an early marriage, as a rule, is deprived of the opportunity to continue her studies at school. In Kyrgyzstan, the number of girls who did not start attending general education tends to decrease from 1,168 girls in 2019 to

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

1,201 girls in 2020¹⁴⁷. Here, an important role is played by the effectiveness of measures provided by the state to ensure complete, free and high-quality education.

Without an adequate level of education among girls, the country still has the highest rate of early pregnancy among the countries of the Central Asia region. In the country, the birth rate among women of premarital age was 7.4 newborns per 1000 girls aged 15-17 years in 2014 and 4.4 newborns per 1000 girls in 2020 (Figure 3).

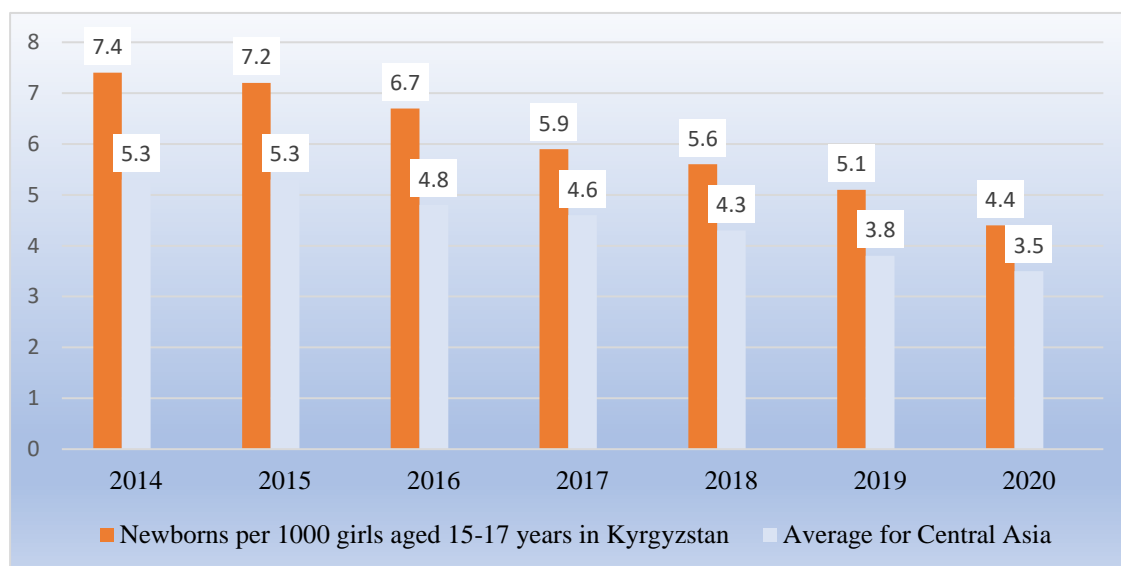


Figure 3. The birth rate among women of premarital age in Kyrgyzstan and average for Central Asia (according to Review of The Beijing Platform for Action-2020)

As can be noted from the above expert data, in Kyrgyzstan, the level of early pregnancy and childbirth is still the highest in the region¹⁴⁸. Nevertheless, over the past five years, there has been a steady downward trend in the early fertility rate. This downward trend is provided by measures on reproductive health. And since only 66% of all women of reproductive age in the Kyrgyz Republic can meet their family planning needs, there is a high likelihood of maternal mortality risks. In a woman's life cycle, pregnancy and childbirth can be accompanied by risks associated with factors of poverty and limited access to adequate nutrition, social and medical services, which

¹⁴⁷ "25 Years in Review of The Beijing Platform for Action". The UN Human Rights Commission, 2020. Accessed December 28, 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/EDVAW_Booklets.pdf

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

increases the risks of maternal mortality¹⁴⁹. The maternal mortality rate in Kyrgyzstan is one of the highest in Central Asia and amounted to 52 women per 100 thousand children born alive in 2014; it tended to decline to 29.8 women in 2020¹⁵⁰. The state continues to take a set of measures to reduce maternal mortality. It should be noted that there can be many hardships later in women’s lives, including violence. But if a country has an effective justice system, then a woman has a greater chance that, with the help of laws and effective law enforcement agencies, she can stop abuse and return to a dignified life without violence.

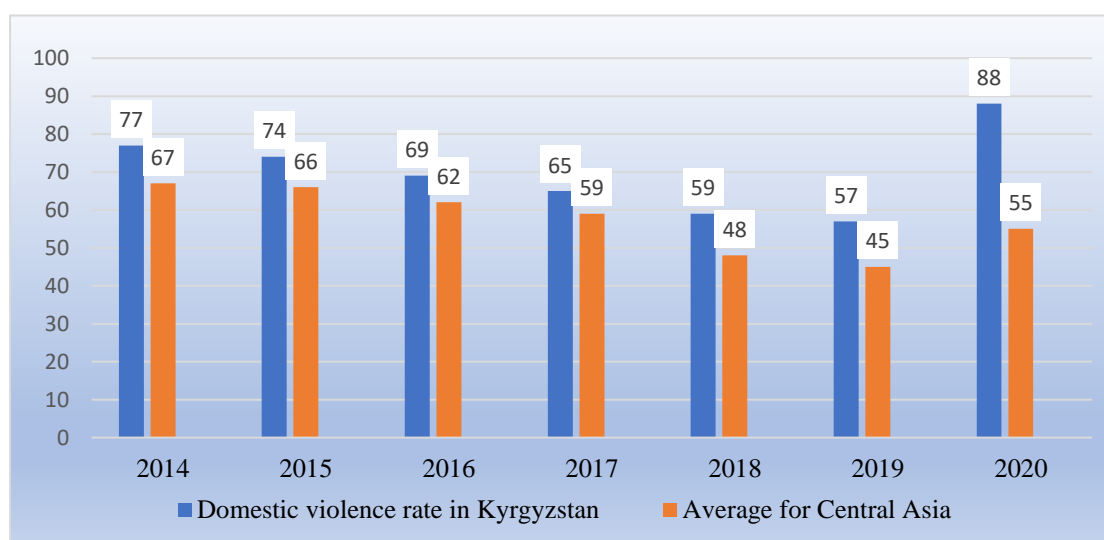


Figure 4. Domestic violence rate in Kyrgyzstan and average for Central Asia (according to International Alert Report-2020)

In Kyrgyzstan, due to a set of measures to prevent violence, the number of registered cases of domestic violence has increased since 2015 from 3,578 to 9,244

¹⁴⁹ “Research Note on Maternal Mortality in the Kyrgyz Republic”. (Bishkek: The World Bank Health Policy Analysis Center, 2012). Accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.exemplars.health/-/media/files/egh/resources/stunting/kyrgyz-republic/research-note-on-maternal-mortality-in-the-kyrgyz-republic.pdf>

¹⁵⁰ “25 Years in Review of The Beijing Platform for Action”. The UN Human Rights Commission, 2020. Accessed December 28, 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/EDVAW_Booklets.pdf

cases in 2020¹⁵¹. The number of temporary protection orders increased from 3,376 in 2015 to 8,023 in 2020¹⁵². The number of persons brought to administrative responsibility under the article «family violence» increased from 1,102 in 2014 to 4,980 in 2020¹⁵³.

Obviously, a sharp increase in the rate of domestic violence manifested itself during the quarantine period due to the COVID-19 pandemic - a sharp «jump» in the rate is observed only in Kyrgyzstan, but also throughout Central Asia. However, the indicator in Kyrgyzstan is again higher than the regional average.

Likewise, the situation is not the best with the political representation of women's political participation in Kyrgyzstan is as follows:

- The general population perceives women politicians as responsible, accountable and dedicated professionals, with over 60% of the population wanting to see greater women in Kyrgyz politics. But people vote for men because women must fulfill their «other» important roles as housewives and mothers before participating in public life¹⁵⁴.

- Women politicians were generally perceived as helpers or executors of the political ambitions of their male colleagues, and not as leaders.

- The main barriers that women have yet to overcome in order to be equal to male civil servants are: lack of family / community support (50/42%), political experience (46%) and financial support (42%)¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵¹ Kuldysheva G., Paraidinuulu Sh., Atantaev A., Mirzaeva A. Providing Women Equality in Kyrgyzstan: Legal and Historical Analysis. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 9 (1), (2021), 330.

¹⁵² “How we challenged the 65% rise in domestic violence in Kyrgyzstan”. (Kyrgyzstan: International alert, 2021). Accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.international-alert.org/stories/how-we-challenged-65-rise-domestic-violence-kyrgyzstan>

¹⁵³ “Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women Review of Kyrgyzstan”. Accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/29/submission-committee-elimination-discrimination-against-women-review-kyrgyzstan>

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ “25 Years in Review of The Beijing Platform for Action”. The UN Human Rights Commission, 2020. Accessed December 28, 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/EDVAW_Booklets.pdf

- Peacebuilding, like the implementation of community development projects, was widely reported as one of the distinctive skills of women politicians. Although this was combined with the fact that women were only negotiators and mediators, while men were the actual builders of the world.

The gender rating of political parties in Kyrgyzstan, conducted in 2019¹⁵⁶, demonstrated a blind gender agenda, a patriarchal perception by the leaders of many political parties of women's participation in political life. Although the promotion of women's participation is a key priority of many women's organizations, it has not been effective in combating violations of women's political rights in the past 5 years. During the consultations, women deputies of local keneshes (local parliament) and deputies of Jogorku Kenesh (national parliament) raised the issue of violence against women during elections and political activities. This is a widespread phenomenon in Kyrgyzstan, which is not recognized and is not yet considered by responsible state bodies such as the Jogorku Kenesh and law enforcement agencies¹⁵⁷. Women candidates received threats and intimidation from male opponents and family members who insisted that women withdraw from the race¹⁵⁸.

There is a regular practice of political parties winning parliamentary elections to force women MPs to hand over their mandates under pressure from party leaders and male party members¹⁵⁹. Women members of national and local parliament receive threats and intimidation from male colleagues for raising issues of corruption and

¹⁵⁶ “Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women Review of Kyrgyzstan”. Accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/29/submission-committee-elimination-discrimination-against-women-review-kyrgyzstan>

¹⁵⁷ Gulsara Kuldysheva, Shailoobek Paraidinuulu, Aktilek Atantaev, Aigul Mirzaeva, “Providing Women Equality in Kyrgyzstan: Legal and Historical Analysis”. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 9 (1), 2021, 332.

¹⁵⁸ “Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women Review of Kyrgyzstan”. Accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/29/submission-committee-elimination-discrimination-against-women-review-kyrgyzstan>

¹⁵⁹ “Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women Review of Kyrgyzstan”. Accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/29/submission-committee-elimination-discrimination-against-women-review-kyrgyzstan>

violations of the law. Double standards, blackmail and smear campaigns in the media are actively used against women politicians, which leads to their short-term political influence. As a result of violence against women during elections and political activities, despite a mandatory 30 % gender quota, two political parties in the National Parliament, Bir Bol and Kyrgyzstan, do not have women deputies¹⁶⁰. Another unfortunate result of violence against women politicians is the decrease in the number of young women willing to run in local elections. In 63 out of 450 municipalities, there are no women in local councils. There are no women among the chairmen of city councils, heads of districts and city administrations. Women have not been represented among the heads and deputy heads of the Osh city and Osh state administrations over the past decade. Women belonging to religious and ethnic minority groups face great barriers to decision-making even at the family and community levels, do not participate in political life, remain voiceless and suffer from social and economic marginalization and vulnerability to violence, poverty and radicalization. In October 2018, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women recognized violence against women in politics as a human rights violation for the first time before the General Assembly and called on participating States to take action¹⁶¹. As a result of discrimination based on gender, age and ethnicity, hate speech and violence against women, the number of women and other vulnerable groups in decision-making is decreasing, and state and local institutions are becoming homogeneous and prone to corruption and social conflict. According to participants in the national consultations, these factors increase the fragility of democratic institutions and threaten peace in Kyrgyzstan.

Based on the above, we can state some gender gaps and concerns in Kyrgyzstan during COVID-19 pandemic:

1. Participation of women in management and decision-making: the country has made progress in increasing the number of women in the national parliament. Now women make up 24% of deputies. This is due in large part to the 2020 amendments to

¹⁶⁰ “25 Years in Review of The Beijing Platform for Action”. The UN Human Rights Commission, 2020. Accessed December 28, 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/EDVAW_Booklets.pdf

¹⁶¹ “United Nations Work on Violence Against Women”, Division for the Advancement of Women. Accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/news/unwvaw.html>

the electoral law requiring at least 30 percent of the same sex to be represented. At the level of local keneshes, women make up only 16% of deputies of representative bodies, with especially low rates observed in rural areas¹⁶². Women make up 40% of all civil servants, but they mostly hold positions in certain ministries and departments, not at the managerial level. They hold only 25% of political posts. Women predominate in public institutions related to social policy, in the Ministry of Social Protection 71.6% and in the Ministry of Health 68.3%, but only 20.3% in the Ministry of Transport and Communications and 29% in the Ministry of Agriculture¹⁶³.

2. Gender aspects of economic development: the level of economic activity (the number of economically active population in the total population of the corresponding age group) in 2019 was 52.3% among women and 76.6% among men. This level is lower than the average for low-income countries, but higher than the regional average. However, high levels of male and female labor migration distort the true picture of workers' number. The official unemployment rate in 2020 was 9.9% for women and 7.7% for men¹⁶⁴.

3. A study of working time frame shows that men spend a little more time per day on paid work, but it is important to note that women spend three as much time on housework and twice as much time on raising and caring for children per day than men. Deterioration in public services is an important factor contributing to lower labor force participation rates among women. In cities, a little less than 30% of children attend preschool institutions, while in rural areas this figure is only 6%. Women, like men, are active in the informal sector. In 2019, the informal sector employed 43 % of all workers¹⁶⁵. The informal sector does not provide such additional benefits as maternity

¹⁶² “25 Years in Review of The Beijing Platform for Action”. The UN Human Rights Commission, 2020. Accessed December 28, 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/EDVAW_Booklets.pdf

¹⁶³ “Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women Review of Kyrgyzstan”. Accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/29/submission-committee-elimination-discrimination-against-women-review-kyrgyzstan>

¹⁶⁴ “25 Years in Review of The Beijing Platform for Action”. The UN Human Rights Commission, 2020. Accessed December 28, 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/EDVAW_Booklets.pdf

¹⁶⁵ “Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women Review of Kyrgyzstan”. Accessed December 28, 2023,

leave and pensions, and the government is interested in the transition of people from informal to formal employment that requires payment of taxes, but also provides social protection and labor protection.

4. The labor market shows both horizontal and vertical segregation, which means that men and women work in different sectors and also occupy different positions in the hierarchy of jobs. Women are predominantly represented in the public sector, where work is paid from the state budget, and generally characterized by low salaries, for example, in the education sector (76.6% of women among workers) and health (80.3% of women among workers)¹⁶⁶. Men make up 67.7% of all heads and managers of public, private enterprises and other institutions. In 2020, the average earnings of women amounted to 63.6% of the average earnings of men, that is, compared to 2019, the gap has widened¹⁶⁷. At the same time, there are a number of issues that determine the risks associated with labor migration for women migrants, including the problems associated with the predominance of women in informal employment. In the absence of access to social protection services: 2/3 of employed women receive cash payments without being reflected in the accounting records; only 2/5 of the women surveyed have employment contracts. There are also well-known factors that are negative consequences of labor migration: the problem of abandoned children and non-fulfillment of direct parental responsibilities for raising children; the phenomenon of the «second family», which creates social problems and hopelessness in the sphere of a woman's private life; stigmatization of women migrants by society, «demonization» of the image of a migrant who is engaged in «unworthy work» away from home and family; high levels of stress, despair and uncertainty about the future among returnee women migrants and their families; problems of social adaptation and

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/29/submission-committee-elimination-discrimination-against-women-review-kyrgyzstan>

¹⁶⁶ “Women and men of the Kyrgyz Republic Collection of gender-disaggregated statistics "Women and men of the Kyrgyz Republic" for the period 2005-2019”. Accessed December 29, 2023, <https://mlsp.gov.kg/gendernaya-politika2/>

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

integration into society both in relation to women migrants and their children in the host country, and in relation to returned women migrants¹⁶⁸.

5. International and national obligations of the country imply mandatory gender expertise of laws. The requirements for taking into account gender equality issues in the development of programs and plans are included in the Methodology for Strategic Planning for Sustainable Development, which is mandatory for all state and municipal structures. However, in the programs of ministries, gender issues are observed only in sections of the social sector (education, health, social protection) and the gender component is completely «blurred» in the sectors that, in essence, determine the availability of opportunities for economic development (industry, entrepreneurship, trade, rural economy).

6. There is a gap in ministries and departments in the staff availability with the expertise to assess and analyze the impact of sectoral policies and programs on various groups of women and men. In ministries, departments and at the local government, understanding the concept of gender equality is reduced to a simple calculation of the number of men and women participating in various events. In fact, there has been no institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in the civil service. As before, gender equality issues are considered the prerogative of the Gender Department. The main function of the department is coordination and intersectoral interaction on gender equality. And this despite the fact that the main implementers of gender policy in the country should be all state and municipal structures, which are obliged to include a gender component in their sectoral plans and provide for the allocation of budgetary funds for the implementation of all planned activities and actions. Currently, there is a lack of understanding of the role and responsibility of state structures in matters of gender equality. Mainstreaming gender issues in ministries and departments is fragmentary and depends on the availability and implementation of projects supported by international organizations.

With regard to Kyrgyzstan, the following main challenges can be identified that hinder the advancement of gender equality:

- gender-responsive budgeting - lack of institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in sectoral strategies, policies and program budgets;

¹⁶⁸ “Women and men of the Kyrgyz Republic Collection of gender-disaggregated statistics "Women and men of the Kyrgyz Republic" for the period 2005-2019”. Accessed December 29, 2023, <https://mlsp.gov.kg/gendernaya-politika2/>

- changes in negative social norms and gender stereotypes - there is a polarization of public opinion regarding issues of women's rights and gender equality;
- political participation and representation - there is a significant decrease in the representation of women at the decision-making level.

Nevertheless, for the current state of gender inequality, the country ranks the lowest in the Central Asia region. There remains a huge problem of domestic violence, the surge of which in 2020 showed the unreliability of legislative measures against this phenomenon in Kyrgyz society. The evidence of the absence of significant results of public policy in the field of combating gender inequality lies in the statistics of international organizations presented above. To confirm the hypothesis that during the quarantine period of 2020 regarding COVID-19, the situation with gender inequality has worsened in Kyrgyzstan against the background of other countries in the region, an empirical study was conducted, the results of which are presented in the next chapter.

**CHAPTER 3. PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
PERSPECTIVES OF GENDER EQUALITY SUPPORT IN THE KYRGYZ
REPUBLIC UNDER THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN-HOUSEWIVES'
RIGHTS IN CRITICAL SOCIAL CONDITIONS**

**3.1. Assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on households and
women-housewives in the Kyrgyz Republic**

In this section, the results of sociological research conducted in the Kyrgyz Republic are presented, reflecting the conditions of households and women-housewives during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the 2020 study by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, the situation of women in the country deteriorated. This study was cluster-based, focusing on the status of two categories of Kyrgyz Republic citizens: women and children.

The surveyed households amounted to 3,869, including households from various villages and cities of the Kyrgyz Republic. Data collection was carried out through telephone interviews. Among the surveyed households, families with children constituted 58% in rural areas and 42% in urban areas. According to the survey data, the number of members in the households was distributed as follows:

- 5 to 7 people and above: 53%;
- 3 to 4 people: 31%;
- 1-2 people: 17%.

Thus, the majority of households participating in the study conducted by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic are large, meaning they consist of 5 people or more¹⁶⁹. From the surveyed households, over 86% have at least one child under 17 years old. Approximately 49% of households surveyed have at least one child under 5 years old.

The results of the 2020 study by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic lead to several conclusions. Firstly, statistically, households in the cities of the Kyrgyz Republic were most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In

¹⁶⁹ “MICS Follow-up Survey on Impact of COVID-19 on the Situation of Children and Women in Kyrgyzstan”. Snapshots of Key Findings. (Kyrgyz Republic: UNICEF, 2021). Accessed December 15, 2023, <https://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/53ec04ae-17ca-4480-a448-de389fe035f1.pdf>

percentage terms, affected urban households were 79.0%, while rural households were 73.1%¹⁷⁰.

Researchers identified households as affected when experiencing the following phenomena:

- one or more family members suffered severely from the disease or died;
- forced displacement occurred (family members were relocated, or relatives arrived);
- limited or no access to healthcare services;
- income reductions were observed;
- deterioration of the mood (emotional state) of family members;
- families with school-age children expressed dissatisfaction with the online learning process.

A diagram was constructed based on five criteria, illustrating the level of the situation for urban and rural households (Figure 5). The analysis of the diagram data revealed that income reduction negatively affected the situation of households in rural areas. Moreover, a significant percentage of families in rural areas did not have access to healthcare services. However, the worsening of emotional well-being and relationships between family members was higher in urban households compared to residents of rural areas in the Kyrgyz Republic.

¹⁷⁰ “MICS Follow-up Survey on Impact of COVID-19 on the Situation of Children and Women in Kyrgyzstan”. Snapshots of Key Findings. (Kyrgyz Republic: UNICEF, 2021). Accessed December 15, 2023, <https://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/53ec04ae-17ca-4480-a448-de389fe035f1.pdf>

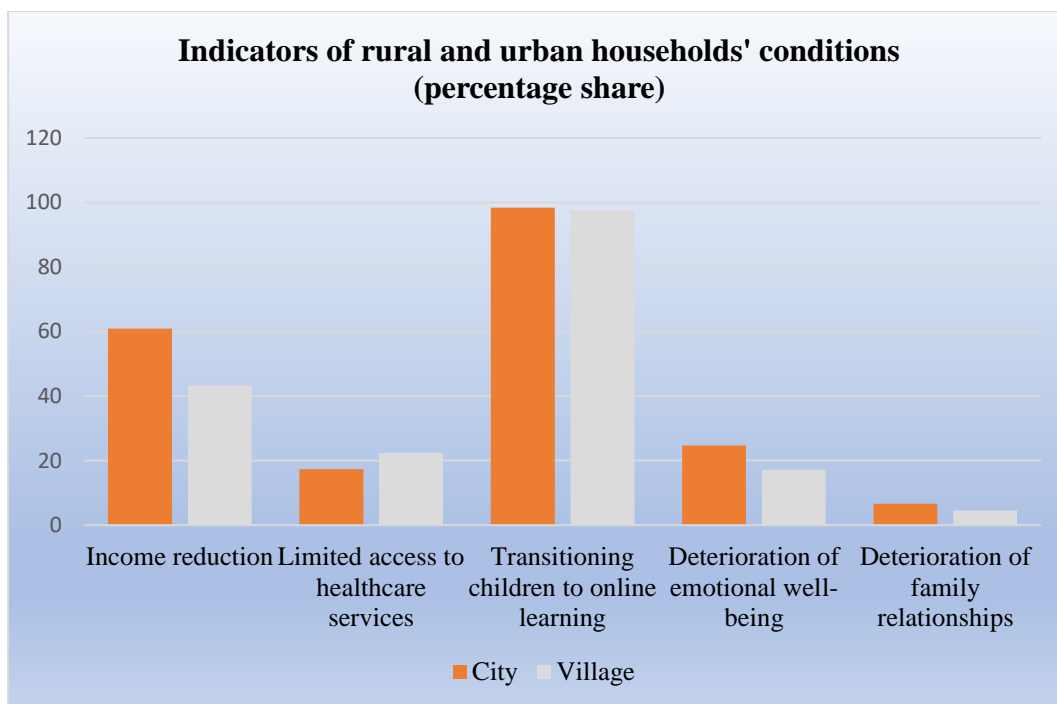


Figure 5. Indicators of the condition of urban and rural households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Kyrgyz Republic

As revealed by the 2020 research conducted by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, the most significant issue was the reduction in household incomes. As depicted in the diagram (Figure 6), more than half of the households (50.7%) were affected by income reduction¹⁷¹.

The incomes of 48.6% of households remained unchanged, and only 0.3% of respondents reported an increase in income during the COVID-19 pandemic. This statistics leads to the conclusion that income reduction was a substantial issue, negatively impacting the situation of households in the Kyrgyz Republic.

¹⁷¹ “MICS Follow-up Survey on Impact of COVID-19 on the Situation of Children and Women in Kyrgyzstan”. Snapshots of Key Findings. (Kyrgyz Republic: UNICEF, 2021). Accessed December 15, 2023, <https://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/53ec04ae-17ca-4480-a448-de389fe035f1.pdf>

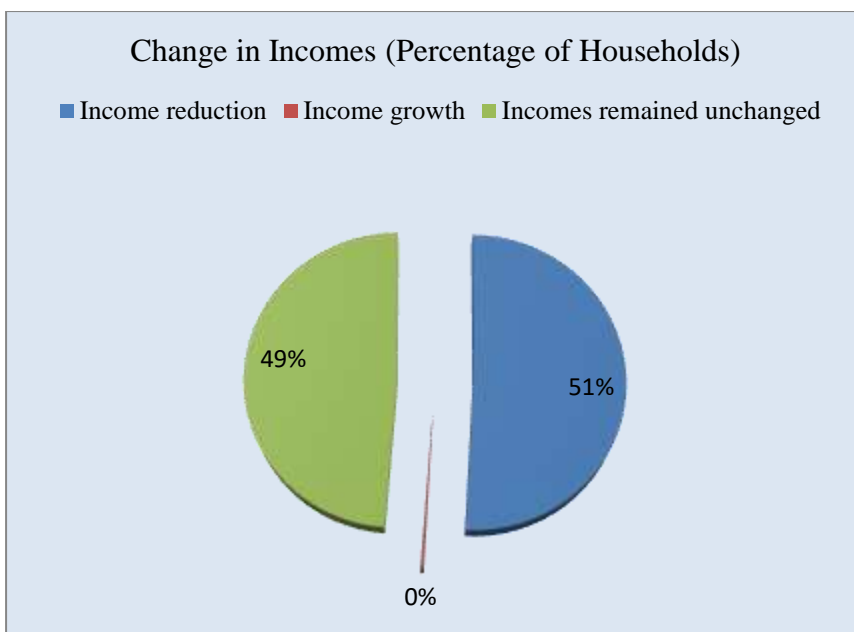


Figure 6. Changes in the Incomes of Households in the Kyrgyz Republic during the COVID-19 Pandemic (based on the data from the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic¹⁷²)

Respondents identified the main factors contributing to the decline in household income, including the following reasons (Figure 7):

- job loss;
- inability to work due to health conditions;
- reduction in salary or working hours;
- death or serious illness of close family members;
- inability to maintain livestock, etc.

Based on the diagram (Figure 7), it can be concluded that the primary reason for the decrease in household income during the COVID-19 pandemic, as indicated by respondents in the survey conducted by the National Statistical Committee in 2020, is job loss, reduced wages, and the inability to work due to various reasons. Consequently, it can be inferred that the situation for unemployed women in households worsened because household heads received lower wages or remained unemployed.

¹⁷² “MICS Follow-up Survey on Impact of COVID-19 on the Situation of Children and Women in Kyrgyzstan”. Snapshots of Key Findings. (Kyrgyz Republic: UNICEF, 2021). Accessed December 15, 2023, <https://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/53ec04ae-17ca-4480-a448-de389fe035f1.pdf>

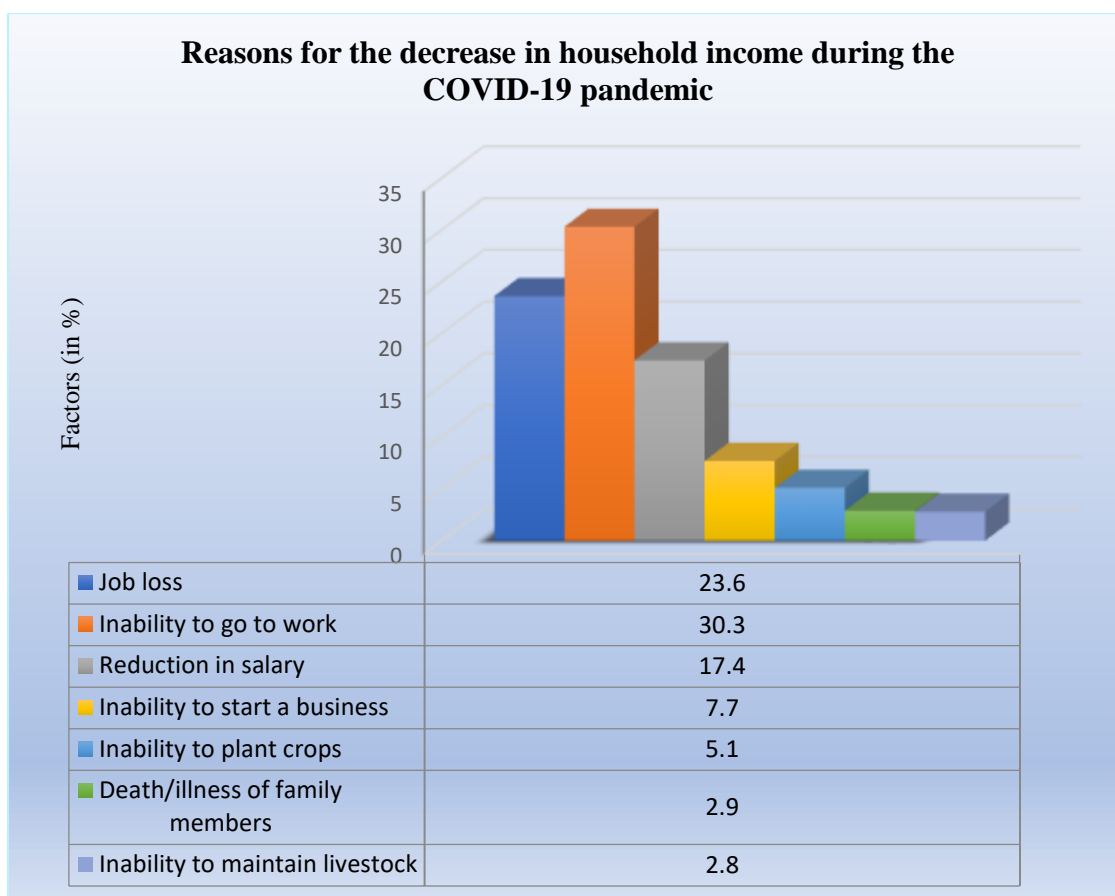


Figure 7. Reasons for the decrease in household income during the COVID-19 pandemic (based on the data from the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic¹⁷³)

It might have been expected that increased anxiety combined with reduced income would significantly decrease the emotional well-being and mood of people. However, according to the research conducted by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, only 20.4% of respondents reported a worsening of mood, while 79.6% did not feel any changes.

Many households in Kyrgyzstan needed social support, and the government provided assistance to those in need. The forms of social aid included:

- provision of food packages;
- financial assistance;
- provision of protective and hygiene items.

¹⁷³ “MICS Follow-up Survey on Impact of COVID-19 on the Situation of Children and Women in Kyrgyzstan”. Snapshots of Key Findings. (Kyrgyz Republic: UNICEF, 2021). Accessed December 15, 2023, <https://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/53ec04ae-17ca-4480-a448-de389fe035f1.pdf>

It is worth noting that only 5% of surveyed households sought help from authorities. Social assistance was provided to every third household in urban areas and every fourth household in rural areas. The primary form of government support was food packages.

Statistics across the regions of the Kyrgyz Republic revealed uneven distribution in the proportion of households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The diagram illustrates that the highest number of affected families was found in the cities of Osh and Bishkek (88.6% and 84.0%, respectively). The most prosperous in this regard was the Batken region (60.9%). On average, the indicator among the nine regional subjects of the Kyrgyz Republic was approximately 75%.

It should be noted that the most significant reduction in income occurred in the cities of Bishkek and Osh (68.9% and 68.0%, respectively). The diagram (Figure 8) presents comparative data on the reduction of household incomes across the nine regional subjects of the Kyrgyz Republic.

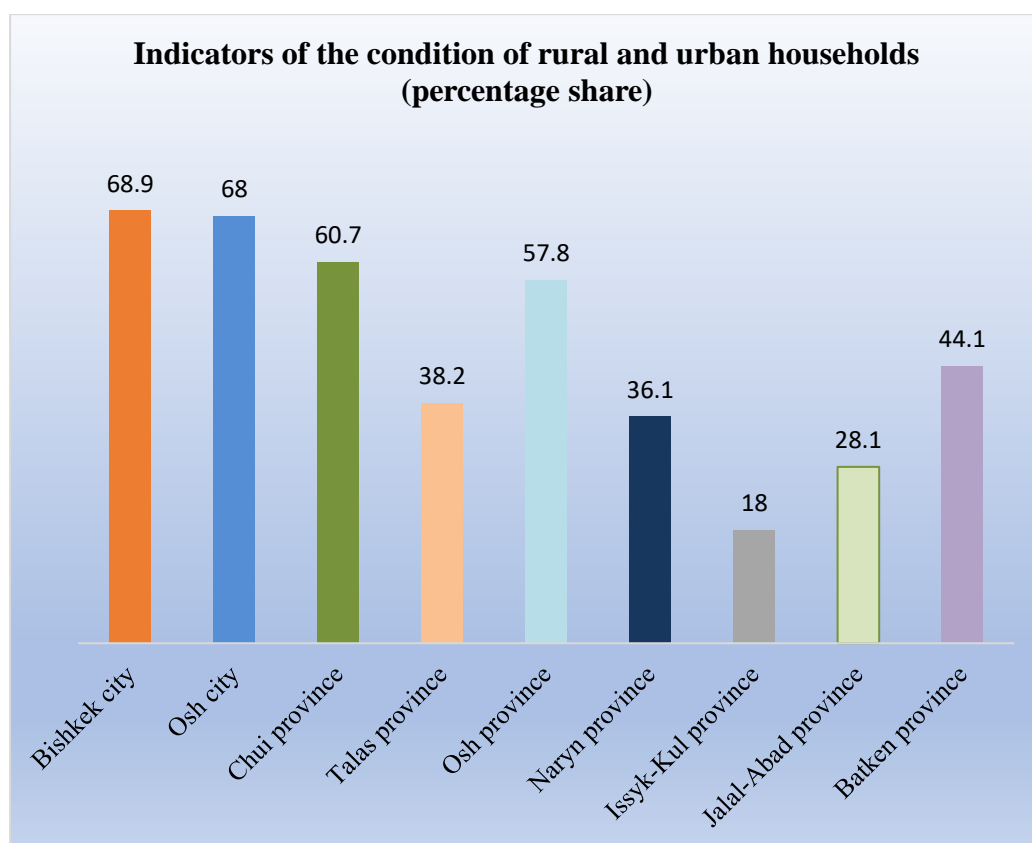


Figure 8. Percentage of Households in Regions of the Kyrgyz Republic Affected by Income Reduction during the COVID-19 Pandemic (based on the data from the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic¹⁷⁴)

According to the data from the diagram (Figure 8), the lowest indicators of income reduction for households are noted in the Issyk-Kul and Jalal-Abad regions (18% and 28.1%). The analysis of the results of the study on the condition of households in two cities of republican significance and seven provinces of the Kyrgyz Republic identified the most disadvantaged is Osh city. This city had the highest number of displaced persons (24.4%). For comparison, in the Issyk-Kul region, the proportion of such households was only 11.9%.

Additionally, in Osh city, 16.4% of respondents reported a lack of access to healthcare services during the COVID-19 pandemic. In comparison, in the Batken region, this figure was 1.9%. This allows to draw the conclusion, that the combination of all negative factors affecting the situation of households during the COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on the emotional state of people. In Osh city, the number of respondents who reported experiencing a deterioration in mood and emotional state was the highest among all nine regions of the Kyrgyz Republic: 38%. For comparison, in the Naryn region, it was 1.9%.

The worsening of the emotional state and increased anxiety of people during the COVID-19 pandemic is a significant social problem. Many people experienced deteriorating relationships with family members. Marital conflicts between husband and wife, and disputes between parents and children created a negative emotional background. According to the research conducted by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic¹⁷⁵, 17.1% of households reported a sense of oppression and feelings of hopelessness. Sleep difficulties were experienced by 4.4% of respondents. Disagreements and disputes with family members were reported by 5.5%. Due to the above-mentioned reasons, the proportion of households experiencing a deterioration in emotional state was 20.8%.

¹⁷⁴ “MICS Follow-up Survey on Impact of COVID-19 on the Situation of Children and Women in Kyrgyzstan”. Snapshots of Key Findings. (Kyrgyz Republic: UNICEF, 2021). Accessed December 15, 2023,

<https://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/53ec04ae-17ca-4480-a448-de389fe035f1.pdf>

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

According to the degree of emotional distress, four respondent categories were identified:

- extremely depressed psychological state 15.8%;
- very depressed psychological state 63.4%;
- slightly depressed state 19.5%;
- not depressed emotional state at all 1.3%.

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the overwhelming majority of households participating in the survey noted a deterioration in their emotional state/mood to some extent. This indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on people's psychological well-being. It affected family relationships, but to a minor extent. According to the 2020 survey, only 5.5% of households reported an increase in disputes and disagreements within the family, for 84.2% of respondents no changes were observed, and for 10.4%, the conflict tension among family members even decreased. These figures indicate that despite the decrease in emotional well-being, the majority of households managed to maintain their emotional stability.

A separate consideration in connection with the research topic is the state of maternal and child protection during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the majority of housewives are mothers. Pregnant women and mothers with newborns were most at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. Antenatal care was provided for 100% of women during the pandemic. Only 9% of women living in households surveyed by the National Statistical Committee in 2020 were first examined by a doctor at 4 months of pregnancy or later. All mothers and children born during the pandemic received the necessary assistance, and the required measurements were taken. However, only 80.3% of mothers were informed by healthcare workers about signs of a threat to the baby's health.

There is no data on the emotional state of pregnant women and mothers with newborns during the pandemic. The research conducted as part of this master's thesis addressed this gap by dedicating a specific section of the questionnaire to assessing the psychological well-being of women who were pregnant or became mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

More responsibility for child rearing, care, food preparation, and assistance with homework was placed on mothers in households. Special attention and care, as is known, are required for young children.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, as the survey by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic showed, fathers spent about five times less time with their children aged 2-4 than mothers and other household members. The following activities were considered under engagement:

- reading books, telling stories to children;
- walks, playing with children;
- conducting activities preparing for school, etc.

According to the survey, the percentage of households in which fathers engaged with young children during the COVID-19 pandemic was 12.6%. For comparison, 69.6% of mothers engage with children aged 2-4, and 94.7% are engaged by other household members.

Thus, it is concluded that the main responsibility for the care and upbringing of young children in most households during the COVID-19 pandemic rested on mothers, along with other household members. Fathers participated minimally in joint activities with children of preschool age.

The limited involvement of fathers in childcare during the COVID-19 pandemic suggests that even in a crisis period, when women experienced increased anxiety and emotional distress, fathers did not provide adequate support in caregiving for children. This fact confirms the research hypothesis about the worsening situation of women in Kyrgyzstan during the COVID-19 pandemic. In households with school-aged children, mothers took on additional responsibilities for educating and assisting in the organization of online learning and homework. According to the National Statistical Committee of Kyrgyzstan's survey in 2020, 98% of surveyed households assisted their children with homework. The greatest assistance was provided to children aged 7-14 (98.7%). However, parents and other family members also helped high school students with their homework (94.5%).

The lack of data on the involvement of fathers, mothers, and other household members in organizing education and assisting with homework for school-aged children doesn't allow these findings to be considered a factor worsening gender inequality during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is because traditionally, men are not involved in the upbringing of young children.

There is no data on the emotional state of pregnant women and mothers with newborns during the pandemic. This research conducted as part of this master's thesis addressed this gap by dedicating a specific section of the questionnaire to assessing the

psychological well-being of women who were pregnant or became mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the study conducted by the National Statistical Committee revealed that the percentage of parents dissatisfied with the online learning process was 78%. The main reasons for dissatisfaction included the child's difficulty in understanding learning materials, lack of quality internet connection, lack of time to watch TV lessons, and insufficient equipment for distance learning.

Based on this, the conclusion was drawn that the transition of children to distance learning has become an additional burden on parents, primarily on housewives and other non-working members of the household.

3.2. Gender inequality among women in household responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic: an empirical study

During the COVID-19 quarantine in Kyrgyzstan, gender inequality surged, evident in increased cases tied to job loss, heightened male aggression amid unemployment stress, and insufficient legal protection for women. This hypothesis is validated through an empirical study correlating rising gender-based inequality with the COVID-19 quarantine. The Kyrgyz case-study employs a sociological survey methodology, revealing the link between increased gender-based inequality and the pandemic's quarantine. The two-stage empirical research involves determining the target group and developing a questionnaire in the first stage, followed by conducting a survey among the identified respondents in the second stage.

Population survey in the Kyrgyz Republic was conducted in 2 urban and 2 rural settlements:

- Bishkek city;
- Osh city;
- Gulcha (Osh province);
- Belovodskoe (Chui province).

Bishkek city and Belovodskoe village in Chui province are located in the most densely populated part of the Kyrgyz Republic – in the Chui Valley. In terms of area, the valley occupies 10.2% of the country's total territory. It is in this part of the Kyrgyz Republic that large industrial enterprises are located, and agriculture is well developed.

Bishkek city and Chui region together are home to 31.8% of the country's population¹⁷⁶. According to the 2022 census, Bishkek city has a population of 1,120,827 people¹⁷⁷. The population of Belovodskoe village is 21,275 people¹⁷⁸.

Osh city is the second-largest city in the Kyrgyz Republic. 25.8% of the country's population lives in the Osh region and the city of Osh. The population in the city of Osh, according to the 2022 census, is 353,080 people¹⁷⁹. The population in the village of Gulcha in the Osh region is 11,691 people¹⁸⁰.

A representative regional sample involved 100 respondents (25 women from each settlement).

The survey included only unemployed women (housewives) aged 25 to 60, married during the COVID-19 pandemic, residing in Bishkek, Chui region, Osh city, and Osh region.

The survey was conducted in an online format. Participants were anonymously asked to answer 30 questions covering 5 thematic blocks:

1. Personal information;
2. Children;
3. Financial situation;
4. Health;
5. Psychological state.

The average age of the participants was 40.5 years, indicating the working age. Typically, women in this age group have already obtained education, established families, and given birth to one or several children. The childhood of the surveyed women falls into the mid-80s to early 90s. During this period of Soviet and post-Soviet history, women generally had equal access to education as men.

Block 1: Personal information.

According to the survey data, there are more women with secondary or vocational education living in rural areas. The number of women with higher education

¹⁷⁶ “Population and Housing Census of the Kyrgyz Republic. Book I: Basic Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Population”. (Bishkek: The National Statistics Committee, 2023). Accessed December 15, 2023, <https://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/5cf96b00-ef31-4c8c-845c-ec7f38bbc670.pdf>

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

in the villages of Gulcha and Belovodskoe is very small: only 4 women among those surveyed have higher education.

For comparison, in Bishkek, the number of women with higher education among those surveyed was 8, and in Osh, it was 10. Also, in cities, there are more women with incomplete higher or vocational education. This indicator indicates an existing social gap between women living in rural and urban areas of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The reason for this gap is explained by the fact that citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic residing in rural settlements do not always have equal access to continuing education after completing basic general education. It should be noted that currently, according to the latest data from the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, the level of education among women is increasing. In 2019, the proportion of women with higher professional education in the total employed population was 27%, while the proportion of men was 18%¹⁸¹. Male employment predominates in activities and occupations where sufficient secondary or incomplete secondary education is required, but professional training is necessary.

At the same time, there is a traditional predominance of girls in education in such specialties as education, consumer goods technology, healthcare, culture, art, and services. Meanwhile, men choose professions related to engineering and metalworking, processing of forest resources, development of minerals, construction and architecture, electronic technology, and energy. It should be taken into account that the number of women with higher education or girls currently receiving higher education is higher in cities. In rural areas, there are still few women with higher education.

According to the survey, only 32% of women have work experience. Average work experience is from 1 to 3 years. A comparison of survey data showed that there is a large gap in this indicator between women living in cities and women living in rural areas. Of the women interviewed, all women interviewed in Bishkek and Osh have little work experience. Thus, in Bishkek, 40% of women have work experience from 1 to 3 years. In Osh city the number of such women is 60%. Only 2 women from among the interviewed residents of Bishkek, and 1 woman from Osh, have work experience of 10

¹⁸¹ “Education Level of Women in the Kyrgyz Republic is Higher Than That of Men”. National Statistical Committee, 2021. Accessed December 29, 2023, <https://ru.sputnik.kg/20210123/nacstatkom-obrazovanie-muzhchiny-zhenshchiny-1051196989.html>

years or more. Among the interviewed women living in the village. Gulcha, only 28% of women have work experience. Number of women with work experience in the village. Belovodskoe is 24%. Thus, there are more than 2 times more women in villages who do not have work experience. According to the conditions of the sociological study during the COVID-19 pandemic, all women had the status of unemployed (housewives).

Also, the results of the answers allow us to draw conclusions about the number of household members of the surveyed female housewives. Thus, when asked about the number of family members living together during the COVID-19 pandemic, in rural settlements there are more households in which the number of family members is more than 5 people. For comparison, in the village of Gulcha the number of households with 5 or more members is 56%. In the village of Belovodskoye the number of such households reaches 72%. There are many families in villages with 7 or more members. Of the total number of respondents in the city of Bishkek, the share of households in which there were more than 5 people during the COVID-19 pandemic was 32%. In Osh city there are 28% of such households.

Block 2: Children.

The surveyed female housewives, on average have the following number of children:

- Bishkek 2-3 children;
- Osh city: 2-4 children;
- Gulcha village: 3-8 children;
- Belovodskoe village: 3-7 children.

The number of children varies significantly between urban and rural women, as well as by region and nationality. The survey results also indicate the existing gap between urban and rural settlements of the Kyrgyz Republic: more families with children of 5 or more live in villages.

According to the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, in 2021 the overall poverty level in households with three or more children is higher than the national average. If “a third of the country’s population lived below the national poverty line in 2021,” as indicated in the Report of the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2022, then in large families with five or more children, the poverty

level in 2021 reached 62.5%, that is, more half of the total number of all large families¹⁸².

Based on these data, we can conclude that the financial situation of large families is very low. Since, as a rule, women in such families do not work for hire, but are engaged in raising children and running the household, the level of material well-being depends entirely on the husband and other working members of the household.

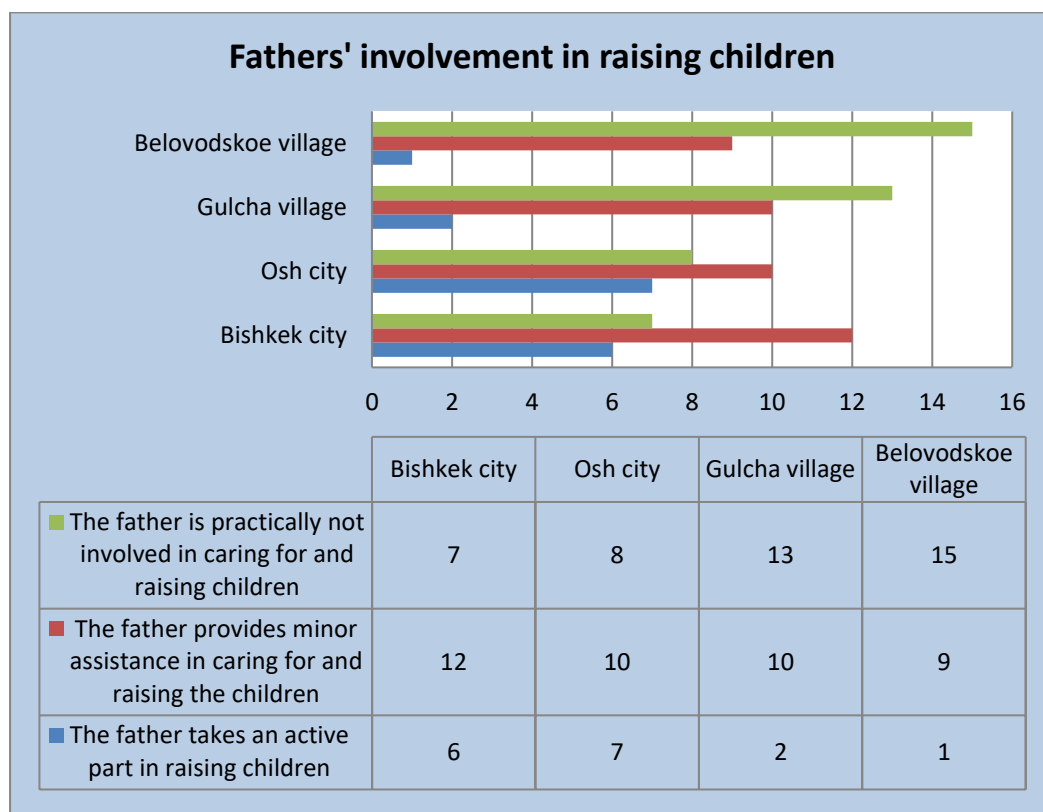


Figure 9. Assessing the degree of fathers' involvement in raising children

Women were asked to answer how they rate the help of their spouse, the children's father, in raising children. The survey results revealed low involvement of fathers in the process of raising children. Approximately 28% of fathers are practically not involved in raising children, 41% are involved irregularly, that is, they provide little assistance to women in raising children. The greatest involvement of fathers in the care and upbringing of children is observed in families living in the cities of Bishkek (24%) and Osh (28%). In families living in the villages of Gulcha and Belovodskoye, the percentage of fathers involved in raising children is three times lower: Gulcha 8% and

¹⁸² “Multidimensional Poverty Index for Children in the Kyrgyz Republic 2017-2021”. (Bishkek: The National Statistical Committee, 2022). Accessed December 29, 2023, <https://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/fd48ceaa-e1a1-4742-b56a-2d2dac3cb5ba.pdf>

Belovodskoye 4%. So, raising children in rural families is predominantly entrusted to women. This significantly complicates housekeeping, especially in large families. However, one should take into account the fact that in villages, grandmothers and other elderly relatives who live together (in the same house) often help with childcare.

According to the survey, 46% of the total families had children under 3 years of age. Since the care of newborns and young children is predominantly the responsibility of mothers, it can be concluded that during the COVID-19 pandemic, mothers with young children are at increased risk. Mothers were most involved in caring for and raising children from 0 to 3 years old in the family during the COVID-19 pandemic - 93% of respondents. 5% indicated that grandmothers provided assistance, and only 2% responded that the father was involved in caring for young children. There were no significant differences in this indicator between urban and rural households. It can be concluded that care and concern for newborns and children under 3 years of age is assigned mainly to women. The participation rate of fathers and relatives is very low.

The involvement of fathers in raising school-age children is also low. The number of school-age children, as the results of the responses showed, in families living in villages and cities is also no different. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 64% of the families of respondents had school-age children. Help in organizing distance learning and doing homework was provided mainly by mothers (68% in cities; 55% in villages). Older brothers and sisters (12% in cities, 20% in villages), and grandparents (10% in cities, 20% in villages) also helped. Fathers took very little part in organizing distance learning and doing homework: 10% in cities, 5% in villages. 70% of women surveyed admitted that the workload on them during the transfer of school-age children to distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has increased:

- 72% of respondents answered that the workload has increased significantly;
- 18% of respondents responded that the workload increased slightly;
- 10% of respondents chose the answer “no changes”.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the main burden of organizing distance learning and helping school-aged children with homework fell primarily on female housewives. Fathers have virtually no involvement in this process.

Block 3: Financial situation.

The analysis of the obtained response results allows us to conclude that the main source of income in the surveyed households is the head of the family. Approximately 31% of respondents also identified a relative or household member as an additional

earner. The number of non-working women not engaged in home-based work during the COVID-19 pandemic in the cities of Bishkek and Osh was 15%. In rural areas, as indicated by the survey, women homemakers were not involved in home-based work, with only one woman from the village of Gulcha stating that she engaged in home-based work during the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of surveyed women during the COVID-19 pandemic were not employed and did not engage in home-based work. The primary sources of income were the head of the family and other economically active household members.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, 77% of all respondents reported a decrease in family income, while 20% maintained the same level of income, and only 3% reported an increase in income.

The majority of respondents (63%) cited a reduction in family income due to decreased wages resulting from reduced working hours, temporary extended leaves, and other reasons. Additionally, 20% of respondents stated that job loss was the cause of reduced income. Furthermore, the survey results revealed that in the majority of households (62% of all respondents), expenditures on food and medicines increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. It should be noted that many families had to reduce the purchase of expensive food items due to the decrease in income levels.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the financial situation of households in the studied regions of the Kyrgyz Republic significantly declined. This was attributed to the reduction in the incomes of working household members due to wage cuts, layoffs, or other reasons. There were only isolated cases where women homemakers had the opportunity to work from home or take temporary jobs. The decline in income affected the quality of life in the population of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Block 4: Health.

75% of respondents reported cases of COVID-19 in their families. Only 7% of all respondents gave a negative response, and 18% reported deceased family members. The incidence of illness in villages and cities did not significantly differ based on the recorded indicators. However, issues related to the quality and timeliness of medical assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic were identified.

According to the survey results, it was found that in the cities of Bishkek and Osh, the majority of patients, who were family members of the respondents, received timely medical assistance. Residents of Gulcha and Belovodskoe villages reported that timely assistance was provided only in 32% and 24% of cases, respectively. Twelve

percent remained without medical assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. These indicators indicate that the national healthcare system in villages was not effective during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Out of 200 surveyed women, 12 reported being pregnant. Seven women stated that their pregnancies ended successfully with the birth of a healthy child. One pregnancy ended unsuccessfully in a miscarriage, and five women opted for an abortion. This trend is characteristic of many countries, where pregnant women chose to have an abortion, fearing that contracting COVID-19 could harm the fetus, resulting in health problems for the child at birth. 49% of respondents reported making adjustments to their family planning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In such families, the decision was made to postpone childbirth to a more favorable period. Five percent of women among the respondents were forced to undergo an abortion due to concerns about complications.

Block 5: Psychological state.

Most surveyed women (82%) reported personally experiencing a deterioration in their emotional state (mood) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of this group:

- 32% reported feeling "slightly depressed";
- 35% reported feeling significantly depressed;
- 22% reported experiencing extremely depressed psychological states.

Only 11% of women stated that their emotional state remained unchanged. The results also showed that in only 12% of families, the emotional state remained unchanged. 45% percent noted a slightly depressed overall family atmosphere, 25% reported a significantly depressed psychological state, and 18% reported an extremely depressed psychological state.

Describing their psychological state during the COVID-19 pandemic, surveyed women used words such as anxiety (50%), depression (26%), fatigue (80%), concern (77%), mild agitation (20%), and calmness (8%). These indicators suggest that the psychological state of the majority of surveyed women was suppressed and anxious. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that the overall emotional atmosphere within the family was also depressed.

According to respondents' assessments, family conflicts increased. Out of 100 surveyed women homemakers, 44% reported an increase in conflicts, 33% noted a significant increase in conflict levels, 18% stated that conflict levels remained unchanged, and 5% reported a decrease in conflicts. 73% of women reported that before

the COVID-19 pandemic, their husbands exhibited domestic violence towards them, and 44% reported aggression from fathers towards children. Regarding the pandemic period, the number of cases of aggression and domestic violence towards wives and children from spouses/fathers increased. Only 20% of surveyed women reported no such incidents, and only 8% noted a decrease in their husband's aggression. Seventy-two percent reported an increase in their husband's aggression. And this leads to the conclusion that family conflicts increased, affecting the relationships between husbands and wives. The rise in incidents of domestic violence and aggression towards women indicates a vulnerable and unprotected position of women homemakers. Often, women are forced to endure aggression from their husbands because they are not employed and unable to support themselves and their children.

Thus, the results of the conducted empirical research revealed a deterioration in the situation of women homemakers and an increase in gender inequality. The conclusion is drawn that in challenging periods, stability in families is disrupted, leading to material and psychological problems that exacerbate existing gender inequality among women homemakers.

3.3. Prospective directions for ensuring gender equality and protection of women's rights in the Kyrgyz Republic on the empirical basis

Based on the conducted empirical research, the following assumptions can be made regarding the directions of ensuring gender equality and protection of women's rights in the Kyrgyz Republic. For greater clarity, these areas were distributed according to ten criteria, which were noted in the empirical study.

1. Educational opportunity for women.

As presented in the empirical study, it is the level of education that becomes a critical factor for women to achieve independence and obtain a profession. If a girl does not go to school due to early marriage or early pregnancy, she has little chance of filling the educational gap in the future. Therefore, for victims of early marriages, it is necessary to build a program of evening and distance learning courses (for young mothers) so that women in this category can at least receive a complete secondary education. For housewives over the age of 25, public evening schools can also be organized so that women can receive not only secondary, but also secondary specialized education. For women wishing to pursue higher education, it is necessary to expand the

distance learning programs of universities in correspondence courses. The state should also expand subsidies to universities in the country to finance budget places for women - on a gender basis. Otherwise, women in Kyrgyzstan will never get equal access to education. In order for the issue of obtaining education to be settled, it is also necessary to amend the legislation of Kyrgyzstan that complete secondary education for women is compulsory, as well as for men. The compulsory nature of education will allow more careful monitoring of the situation with education for girls at the earliest stages, when it is still possible to force the family to take girls to school on a compulsory basis. As part of access to education, it is also necessary to provide sex literacy courses for girls to prevent early pregnancies.

2. Opportunity for career growth for women.

The opportunity to receive a quality education automatically increases the chances of finding a high-paying job and further career growth. At the same time, it is precisely in the field of career growth that it is necessary to introduce quotas at state enterprises to fill vacant leadership positions for women. It is impossible to leave this question to the discretion of the head of the enterprise precisely because of social inertia and stereotypes in relation to women. For private enterprises, subsidies for expanding jobs for women should be envisaged: for example, if a firm has a gender ratio close to 50/50 in leadership positions, then such companies should receive tax and credit incentives from the state. The issue of women's career advancement can only be shifted with the help of state intervention as a moderator of socio-economic processes. Given the fact that 60% of the country's population are women, and only a third of them participate in the labor market, the country's economy is deprived of serious human potential if women are deprived of career opportunities.

3. The volume of domestic work in women's life.

It is necessary to adopt a national program to facilitate the domestic work of women housewives. This requires the participation of the state, since only it is able to afford to equip houses with the necessary household appliances: washing machines, dishwashers, multicooker and other appliances, which, according to research, cut the time for household work by half. From 6 hours of domestic manual labor, you can transfer a woman's mode to 2 hours for all household chores (except for raising children). If a woman has time to study and find a job thanks to this approach to making domestic work easier, the country will get more women workers, including highly qualified ones. In order to reduce the time spent on raising children, it is necessary to

create a mandatory system of kindergartens free of charge, so that young mothers have time to study and work. In other words, it is simply necessary to civilize the society of Kyrgyzstan so that it understands the importance of women not only as a domestic servant, but also as human capital - the potential for socio-economic development.

4. Women's access to medical services and medical care.

During the quarantine, a problem was identified with access to medical care for women. In this regard, it seems promising to organize online counseling on a free basis for women among the network of state clinics. This can also be organized with the help of the state. For this, funds must also be consolidated to pay for the services of narrow medical specialists from an ophthalmologist to a gynecologist. Currently, as noted by respondents in our empirical study, it is almost impossible to get an appointment with a doctor in an electronic queue, even without quarantine conditions. As a result, 70% of women over the age of 18 already have chronic diseases for which they do not have the funds.

5. Fight against domestic violence.

The fight against domestic violence against women must be systemic and total at the state level. To date, declarative statements and adopted normative documents are clearly not enough to solve such a problem. As part of countering domestic violence, it is necessary not only to strictly monitor the implementation of legislation, but also to conduct constant educational work among the population in order to break the medieval stereotypes that the wife is the property of the husband.

6. Level of trust in the judicial system.

The level of confidence in the judiciary as a tool for the protection of women's rights can be increased by organizing free legal advice on human rights and how to protect these rights in court. 80% of women in modern Kyrgyzstan have no understanding of what rights they have and how to protect them. Therefore, it is necessary to organize courses to improve legal culture and legal literacy for women, which can be carried out, including in conditions of quarantine (self-isolation).

7. Level of trust in the state as a guarantor of human rights.

All of the above measures will lead to an increase in women's confidence in the state as a guarantor of their rights. Trust in the state is a very important factor of political loyalty. This must be taken into account when developing an information and educational campaign to improve legal literacy not only for women, but also for men. Men should also be aware of women's rights in order not to violate them.

8. The importance of women in the family.

In turn, increasing legal literacy, the possibility of obtaining a quality education and achieving career growth will significantly increase the role of women in the family from a free domestic servant to an equal marriage partner. Self-esteem and respect for a spouse will allow women to develop more freely as a person, improve in their chosen profession and feel their social security from the state.

9. The importance of women in the business environment.

Increasing the activity of women in the business environment will create conditions for their sufficient political representation both at the state and local levels of political power. This aspect is, so to speak, the “top of the pyramid” in creating gender balance: the appearance of women in politics in a ratio equal to that of men indicates that society has finally freed itself from gender prejudices. Unfortunately, for Kyrgyzstan at the present stage, this result is not achievable due to the problems listed in our study, the presence of which is confirmed not only by our empirical research, but also by the statistics of international human rights organizations.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the problem of gender inequality in Kyrgyzstan, both in the context of the regional situation of gender balance in Central Asia as a whole, and against the backdrop of the consequences caused by the epidemiological situation in the country, by combining such basic scientific methods involved in the study as legal analysis and sociological survey, it can be concluded that during the period of quarantine due to COVID-19 in Kyrgyzstan, there was a surge in gender inequality in relation to women, which was expressed in three main manifestations:

- deterioration of the economic (labor) status of women;
- increased tension in domestic and family relations;
- lack of effective legal protection of women by the state.

The following results were also achieved during the study:

1. The increase in gender inequality in Kyrgyzstan during the pandemic has been identified and proven.

2. By examining the situation of housewife women as the most vulnerable social group, the reasons for exacerbating gender inequality have been identified. Factors creating a gap in the social status of housewife women residing in rural areas compared to urban residents in Kyrgyzstan have been revealed.

3. The study in Kyrgyzstan provides a quintessence of gender inequality issues for countries in the Central Asian region.

4. The consideration of gender inequality through the prism of social conflict potential during the pandemic becomes crucial for shaping the country's internal security policy.

5. The focus of the research on the urgent issue of gender inequality during the pandemic allows for an assessment of the effectiveness of the normative-legal framework in protecting women's rights, considering them within the context of human rights.

6. The study identifies weaknesses in Kyrgyzstan's policy regarding the protection of women's rights in the implementation of international measures for human rights.

7. The provided research results enable the formulation of recommendations for improving Kyrgyzstan's state policy in the protection of women's rights, taking into account international experiences in combating gender inequality during the pandemic.

8. The methodology of qualitative and quantitative analysis within the framework of thematic research has the potential for extrapolation to countries in Central Asia, serving as a foundation for future, more extensive comparative studies.

The conclusions and results of the study can be valuable in refining and updating data on gender inequality in Kyrgyzstan, acting as a selective representation for the Central Asian region. The obtained results can be used to develop practical recommendations applicable to all countries in the Central Asian region, supporting women as a socially vulnerable category of the population. This study is also of interest in creating a methodology for analyzing the relationship between the increase in gender inequality and quarantine conditions as a crisis factor affecting the economy, labor market, social security, and other areas. Additionally, this research may attract the attention of the academic community in studying the peculiarities of gender policy in traditional societies, family structures, and the social role of women in Central Asian countries, using Kyrgyzstan as an example.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdulkhamidova, F. Women's Rights and Status & Islam. *American University in the Emirates (AUE)*, 2021, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351284996_Women%27s_Rights_and_Status_Islam
- Alon, T., Doepke, M., Olmstead-Rumsey, J., Tertilt, M. The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality. *NBER Working Paper 26947*, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w26947/w26947.pdf
- Australian Human Rights Commission, accessed September 17, 2022, <https://humanrights.gov.au/>
- Caven, V., Navarro, E., Urbanaviciene, V. “Gender inequality in an ‘Equal’ environment”. *Gender Work and Organization*, 2021. DOI:10.1111/gwao.12715
- Chiland, C. “Masculinity and femininity”. *Exploring Transsexualism* (2018): 48-64.
- Christopher, T. A. Psychology. *Savannah, Ga*, Vol. 58 (1) (2021): 3030-3037.
- CNBC. Equity and Opportunity. Covid widened the gender gap — it will now take 135 years to close that divide, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/04/01/wef-covid-worsened-the-gender-gap-it-will-take-135-years-to-close.html>
- Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2010, accessed November 27, 2022, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/202913?cl=ru-ru>
- Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2021, accessed November 27, 2022, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/112213?cl=ru-ru>
- “COVID-19 and gender equality: Countering the regressive effects”, McKinsey Global Institute, accessed October 15, 2022, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/covid-19-and-gender-equality-countering-the-regressive-effects>
- “COVID-19 impact on women and gender equality”, McKinsey & Company, accessed October 14, 2022, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/covid-19-and-gender-equality-countering-the-regressive-effects>
- “Davos Forum 2021: the Great Reset after the pandemic”, BBVA, accessed August 20, 2022, <https://www.bbva.com/en/whats-happening-davos-forum/>
- Decent Work Commission, International Labour Organization, accessed August 20, 2022, https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/safety-and-health-at-work/country-profiles/asia/australia/WCMS_156044/lang--en/index.htm

- “Development co-operation during the COVID-19 pandemic”, OECD iLibrary, accessed October 20, 2022, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/e4b3142a-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/e4b3142a-en>
- Development finance for gender equality and women’s empowerment: A 2021 snapshot, OECD, accessed October 14, 2022, <https://www.oecd.org/development/gender-development/Development-finance-for-gender-equality-2021.pdf>
- Development of rural women promotes development of the whole country, United Nations in Kyrgyz Republic, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/en/105035-development-rural-women-promotes-development-whole-country>
- “DIT gender pay gap report 2019 to 2020”, GOV.UK, accessed October 20, 2022, <https://clck.ru/ZLCmn>
- Dixon, B. J. W. “Masculine or feminine”. *Encyclopedia of Evolutionary Psychological Science*, (2016): 1-6. DOI:10.17762/pae.v58i1.1204
- Donohue, W. A. “Origins of the Sexual Revolution”. *The New Freedom*, (2021): 93-103. DOI:10.4324/9780429339189-12
- Dzhenbekova, S. S. “The position of women in Kyrgyz society”. *Bulletin of Tajik National University*, Vol. 7. (2020): 60-65.
- Elder, G. H. “Family Relations”. *Children of the Great Depression*, (2018): 83-398.
- “Equal Pay Act 1972”, Employer Guides, Employsure, accessed September 12, 2022, <https://employsure.co.nz/guides/important-legislation/equal-pay-act-1972/>
- Geetha, V. “Masculinity and Femininity”. *Gender and Education in India A Reader*, (2021): 29-35.
- “Gender (in)equality”, OECD, accessed August 09, 2022, <https://www.oecd.org/general/genderinequality.htm>
- “Gender Equality”, OECD, accessed August 09, 2022, <https://www.oecd.org/gender/gender-flyer.pdf>
- “Gender equality (Equality and discrimination)”, ILO, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/equality-and-discrimination/gender-equality/lang--en/index.htm>
- Gender Equality Achievement Award, 2019, accessed August 09, 2022, <https://igep.fi/en/the-prize>
- “Gender equality”, European Commission, accessed August 14, 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality_en

- “Gender Equity Index (GEI)”, Social Watch, accessed September 15, 2022, <https://www.socialwatch.org/taxonomy/term/527>
- “Gender in the perception of society”, UN WOMEN, accessed September 21, 2022, <http://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/04b5b8ac-3016-46ed-a7ec-750398c1aeb4.pdf>
- “Gender Inequality Index (GII)”, Human Development Reports, accessed August 14, 2022, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>
- Gender pay – Human resource services, PwC UK, accessed August 09, 2022, <https://www.pwc.co.uk/services/human-resource-services/gender-pay.html>
- Gender Pay Gap Report 2019 - Adidas Group, accessed August 09, 2022, https://www.adidas-group.com/media/filer_public/99/35/993507ea-05d4-4164-9415-76e9f5a9af1f/190326_adidas_gender_pay_gap_report_2019_v6.pdf
- Girls in Science, UNICEF, accessed September 29, 2022, <https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/girls-science>
- “Global Gender Gap Report 2021”, The World Economic Forum, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/ab6795a1-960c-42b2-b3d5-587eccda6023>
- Global Suicide Trends during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC), accessed September 12, 2022, <https://www.sprc.org/news/global-suicide-trends-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- Government of Australia, “Equal Pay Day: 28 August 2020”, WGEA, accessed September 20, 2022, <https://www.wgea.gov.au/newsroom/equal-pay-day-28-august-2020>
- Government of the Kyrgyz Republic «On a correctional program to change violent behavior for persons who have committed domestic violence», UNDP, accessed September 12, 2022, https://www1.undp.org/content/dam/kyrgyzstan/Publications/gender/UNDP-KG-Beijing20_en.pdf
- Grawn, C. Gender Inequality in Europe and Central Asia - Challenges and Opportunities. March, 2020, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2020/03/05/gender-inequality-in-europe-and-central-asia>
- Growing Women’s Businesses in Kyrgyzstan (December, 2021), OSCE, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/507383>

- “How we challenged the 65% rise in domestic violence in Kyrgyzstan”, International alert, accessed September 20, 2022, <https://www.international-alert.org/stories/how-we-challenged-65-rise-domestic-violence-kyrgyzstan>
- Iceland's Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, accessed September 12, 2022, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23408VNR_Iceland_report_140619.pdf
- “International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)”, Justice, accessed November 10, 2022, <https://justice.org.uk/international-commission-jurists-icj/>
- IRC – International Rescue Committee (Author), UN Women, accessed September 12, 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/covid-19surveyreport121020.pdf>
- “IST-85 Equal Pay Management Systems Standard”, Government of Iceland, accessed September 20, 2022, <https://clck.ru/ZLDEx>
- “Joint Working Group on Pay Equity Principles”, Public Service, accessed September 20, 2022. <https://clck.ru/ZLDDw>
- Karen Horney's Theory of Neurotic Needs, accessed September 12, 2022, <https://www.verywellmind.com/horneys-list-of-neurotic-needs-2795949>
- Kazakhstan – Novastan, accessed August 09, 2022, <https://novastan.org/en/kazakhstan/>
- Kovalev, Yu. Yu., Yakovleva, P. S. Gender and Sustainability: Evolution of Discourse and Feminist Critique of the Concept of Sustainable Development. *History and modern worldview*, Vol. 23. (2021): 32-43.
- Kozhoev, K. UNDP completed a mentoring program for entrepreneurs in the regions (September, 2022), accessed October 1, 2022, https://www.vb.kg/doc/422643_proon_zavershila_programmy_mentorstva_dlia_predprinimatelnic_v_regionah.html
- Kuldysheva, G., Paraidinuulu, Sh., Atantaev, A., Mirzaeva, A. Providing Women Equality in Kyrgyzstan: Legal and Historical Analysis. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 9 (1), (2021): 330-344.
- Kuldysheva, G., Paraidinuulu, Sh., Atantaev, A., Mirzaeva, A. Providing Women Equality in Kyrgyzstan: Legal and Historical Analysis. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 9 (1), (2021): 328-333.
- Kyrgyz Republic «On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic (Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic)», Council of Europe, accessed September 19, 2022, [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF\(2020\)016-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF(2020)016-e)

- “Kyrgyz Republic Country Gender Assessment”, 2019, Asian Development Bank Report, accessed September 20, 2022, <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/546966/kyrgyz-republic-country-gender-assessment-2019.pdf>
- Kyrgyz Republic country strategic plan (2023–2027), World Food Programme, accessed December 25, 2022, https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document_download/WFP-0000142934
- “Kyrgyzstan – 1325 National Action Plans”, Peace Women, accessed September 21, 2022, <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/kyrgyzstan/>
- “Kyrgyzstan Case Study”, United Nations Development Program., accessed September 16, 2022, <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/KyrgyzstanFinal%20-%20HiRes.pdf>
- “Kyrgyzstan: New Domestic Violence Law”, Human Rights Watch, accessed September 12, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/10/kyrgyzstan-new-domestic-violence-law>
- Law of the Kyrgyz Republic «On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic (Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic)», accessed September 21, 2022, [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF\(2020\)016-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF(2020)016-e)
- Law of the Kyrgyz Republic «On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women», accessed September 16, 2022, <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=23962>
- Levin, M. “The Physician and the Sexual Revolution”. *The Linacre quarterly*, Vol. 85(3), (2018): 220-224.
- Lindsey, L. L. “Gender: Sociological Perspectives”. *Social Science*. Vol. 6 (2020): 44-57. DOI:10.4324/9781315102023 ISBN: 9781315102023
- Looking for Harmony. Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Kyrgyzstan. *The Equal Rights Trust Country Report Series: 9* London, December 2016, https://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/Kyrgyzstan_EN_0.pdf
- Marino, K. M. “From women’s rights to human rights”. *Women and the UN*, (2021): 1-16. DOI:10.4324/9781003036708-1
- Members of the Council on the Rights of Women, Children and Gender Equality of the Jogorku Kenesh Sh. Mazhitova and V. Raimbachaeva discussed issues in the field of cooperation between the Parliament and the OSCE/ODIHR (July, 2022), accessed September 29, 2022, <http://kenesh.kg/ru/news/show/12226/chleni-soveta-po-pravam-zhenshtin-detey-i-gendernogo-ravenstva-zhogorku->

kenesha-sh-mazhitova-i-v-raimbachaeva-obsudili-voprosi-v-sfere-sotrudnichestva-mezhdu-parlamentom-i-bdipch-obse

Milovanova, M. "Socially oriented non-profit organizations through the prism of gender: sociological analysis". *Woman in Russian Society*, No. 4 (2019): 66-79. DOI:10.21064/WinRS.2019.4.6

Ministry of justice of the Kyrgyz Republic, Centralized data bank legal information Kyrgyz Republic, Family Code of The Kyrgyz Republic, accessed September 21, 2022, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/1327>

Ministry of Welfare, «Gender Equality Act No. 10/2008», accessed September 09, 2022, <https://clck.ru/ZLD8Q>

National Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality for 2022-2024, to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 513 dated September 16, 2022, accessed November, 2022, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/159488?cl=ru-ru>

National Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic to achieve gender equality until 2030, to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 513 dated September 16, 2022, accessed November, 2022, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/159472?cl=ru-ru>

National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, accessed September 21, 2022, <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/sbornik-zhenshiny-i-muzhchiny-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki/>

NGO REPORT on implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by the Kyrgyz Republic, accessed September 20, 2022, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/KGZ/INT_CAT_NGO_KGZ_15547_E.pdf

Norton, R. F. A Comparison of Women's Rights Brought About by War and by More Peaceful Means in the Mountainous Countries of the Middle East and Central Asia. N.-Y., 2021.

On the procedure for protecting and protecting from domestic violence», accessed September 20, 2022, https://www1.undp.org/content/dam/kyrgyzstan/Publications/gender/UNDP-KG-Beijing20_en.pdf

Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic (On approval of the Instruction on the organization of the activities of bodies Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic for the Protection from Domestic Violence, accessed September 12, 2022, <https://clck.ru/ZLDka>

Osmonova, D. A. "Gender relations and gender policy in the Kyrgyz Republic". *International Journal of Applied and Basic Research*, Vol. 2. (2018): 335-339.

Palriwala, R. “Gendering Sociology, a Sociology of Gender or Studying Women? Some Reflections”. *Critical Themes in Sociology*, (2019): 240-256.

“Overview - Equality (age, gender and disability)”, Eurostat, accessed September 14, 2022, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/equality/overview>

Podolskaya, D. The position of women has worsened. American Noah Bretcher about Kyrgyzstan after the pandemic (July, 2022), accessed September 30, 2022, https://24.kg/obschestvo/239730_polojenie_jenschin_uhudshilos_amerikanets_noa_bretcher_okyrgyzstane_posle_pandemii/

Presentations on the unified register of crimes and misdemeanors (further – ERPP) and AIS SUDA systems were held for representatives of the delegation of the European Union to the Kyrgyz Republic, The Rule of Law Programme in the Kyrgyz Republic, accessed September 21, 2022, <http://www.rolpro2kg.eu/en/news/full/61.html>

Progress at risk. Gender equality in COVID-19 response in Europe and Central Asia. United Nations Development Program. February 2021, accessed September 15, 2021, <https://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/UNDP-UNICEF-RBEC-Gender-Equality-COVID-19-response.pdf>

Q&A: Femicide in Kyrgyzstan (November, 2021), accessed October 2, 2022, <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/q-and-a-femicide-in-kyrgyzstan>

Randall, K. “Masculine or feminine?” *Evangelicals Etcetera*, 2016: 133-153.

Reducing our pay gap, increasing our commitment, Deloitte UK, accessed September 09, 2022, <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/about-deloitte-uk/articles/reducing-our-pay-gap.html>

Reich, W. Die Sexualität im Kulturkampf, 1986, accessed October 14, 2022, <https://www.amazon.com/Sexual-Revolution-Self-Regulating-Character-Structure/dp/0374502692>

Report COVID-19 Impacts on Livelihoods of Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic Gender Rapid Assessment as of 15 May 2020, https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/ENG_Gender%20Rapid%20Assessment%20of%20COVID-19%20impact_May%202020_final.pdf

Report on gender equality in the EU. Publications Office of the European Union, 2021, accessed October 14, 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/annual_report_ge_2021_printable_en_0.pdf

Research Note on Maternal Mortality in the Kyrgyz Republic, accessed October 09, 2022, <https://www.exemplars.health/>

/media/files/egh/resources/stunting/kyrgyz-republic/research-note-on-maternal-mortality-in-the-kyrgyz-republic.pdf

Research report Impact of COVID-19 on the situation of women and men in the Kyrgyz Republic. Rapid Gender Analysis as of 15 May 2020, UN Women, 2020. accessed October 09, 2022, https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/ENG_Gender%20Rapid%20Assessment%20of%20COVID-19%20impact_May%202020_final.pdf

Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic «On approval of the form of a protection order», accessed September 09, 2022, https://cis-legislation.com/docs_list.fwx?countryid=006&page=18

Review of the situation on the inclusion of the needs of women and girls from religious communities in the national strategy and national action plan for achieving gender equality in the Kyrgyz Republic. International Alert 2021, accessed October 06, 2022, <https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Kyrgyzstan-Rapid-Assessment-Needs-Women-Girls-Sum-RU-2020.pdf>

Safak, O. A. “Gender Inequality in Work Organizations: What HRM Practices Mean for Gender Inequality”. *Research Anthology on Challenges for Women in Leadership Roles*, (2021):75-99. DOI:10.4018/978-1-7998-8592-4.ch005

Same-sex marriages and partnerships should be recognised across the EU, European Parliament News, accessed October 12, 2022, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210910IPR11913/same-sex-marriages-and-partnerships-should-be-recognised-across-the-eu>

“Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women Review of Kyrgyzstan”, Human Rights Watch, accessed September 14, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/29/submission-committee-elimination-discrimination-against-women-review-kyrgyzstan>

Thailand: More than 100 companies pledge to strengthen women’s economic empowerment, UN News, accessed October 09, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/09/1074342>

“The Fair Work Act 2009”, Federal Register of Legislation, accessed August 20, 2022, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00323>

Tynystanova, A. A. “The role of Kyrgyz women in society during the period of democracy”. *Science, new technologies and innovations of Kyrgyzstan*, Vol. 7. (2019): 158-161.

25 Years in Review of The Beijing Platform for Action, accessed October 20, 2022, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/EDVAW_Booklets.pdf

- UN Women Annual Report 2019–2020, UN Women, accessed December 12, 2022, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/annual-report-2019-2020>
- UN Women in Kyrgyzstan, accessed September 29, 2022, <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/kyrgyzstan>
- UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls. End of mission statement by the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls visit to Kyrgyzstan (April, 2022), accessed October 1, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2022/04/end-mission-statement-working-group-discrimination-against-women>
- UNDP Kyrgyzstan gender equality strategy, 2018-2022, accessed September 28, 2022, <https://clck.ru/32EWTS>
- UNESCO. COVID-19 interruptions to learning, http://gaml.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/UIS_COVID-19-interruptions-to-learning_EN.pdf
- UNICEF Annual Report 2020, UNICEF, accessed August 09, 2022, <https://www.unicef.org/reports/unicef-annual-report-2020>
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), accessed December 12, 2022, <https://www.unfpa.org/>
- Usacheva, N. “Theory and methodology of modern gender studies”, accessed August 09, 2022, <http://gender.cawater-info.net/publications/pdf/usacheva.pdf>
- Uzbekistan - Country Fact Sheet, UN Women Data, accessed December 12, 2022, <https://data.unwomen.org/country/uzbekistan>
- “Violence against women”, OECD, accessed October 09, 2022, [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/008fcef3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/008fcef3-en#:~:text=SIGI%202019%20shows%20that%20within,in%20Germany%20\(Figure%208.8\)](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/008fcef3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/008fcef3-en#:~:text=SIGI%202019%20shows%20that%20within,in%20Germany%20(Figure%208.8))
- White, E. B., J. Thurber. *Is Sex Necessary? Or, Why You Feel the Way You Do*. Published by HarperPerennial, 1990. ISBN 10: 0060911026 ISBN 13: 9780060911027
- Women and men of the Kyrgyz Republic Collection of gender-disaggregated statistics "Women and men of the Kyrgyz Republic" for the period 2005-2019, Ministry of Labor and Social Development of Kyrgyzstan, accessed October 18, 2022, <https://mlsp.gov.kg/gendernaya-politika2/>
- Women Peace and Security Index (2021/2022), accessed October 2, 2022, <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/WPS-Index-2021.pdf>

Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), Australian Government, accessed October 09, 2022, <https://www.directory.gov.au/portfolios/prime-minister-and-cabinet/workplace-gender-equality-agency>

Yaps, M. *Gender inequality in the modern world: sociological dimension*. Routledge, 2021.