

Aspects of the feminist movement in the Albanian Monarchy (1928-1939)

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the characteristics of the Albanian feminist movement during the Monarchy and its impact on improving the social and economic status of the women. In the late 1920s, women's societies operating in different cities were suspended by the Albanian government due to the economic crises, the social and cultural backwardness and mainly because of the efforts to centralize the political power, putting under control the women's organizations, too. The monarchical government supported only the establishment of "Albanian Women" society in Tirana, under the patronage of Queen Mother and headed by Princess Sanie Zogu. It spread its activity among many Albanian cities and in diaspora and published a magazine periodically. The intention of the feminist movement in Albania was the education of girls and women, aimed at raising their cultural level, to overcome the old patriarchal mentality. The "Albanian Women" society contributed to the organization of courses against illiteracy for the emancipation of women which was closely related to the construction of a modern state. Secondly, the women's participation in the economic activity, such as old industries and handicrafts, would improve the female economic conditions and above all her position in family and society. The activity of "Albanian Women" society was helped by the governmental policies to increase the educational level of women, establishing Female Institutes, which played an important role in social progress and economic growth. Also the improvement of the legislation guaranteed women the civil rights, but unfortunately they didn't win the right to vote, as women in the developed countries. However, the Albanian feminist movement, despite the difficulties and its limitations, marked a significant effort concerning the national organization of women dedicated to their empowerment in community.

Key words: feminist movement, Albanian Monarchy, education, civil rights, "Albanian Women" society.

1. Introduction

The beginning of the Albanian feminist movement in the early XX century was relatively late compared to western developed countries. This was as a result of many factors: at first, the Ottoman rule prevented the Albanians' aspiration of freedom and nation state. Secondly, the economic backwardness of the country didn't help the separation of women from the domestic economy. Thirdly, the application of common law and norms of the religious communities encouraged bigotry and conservative principles about the role of women in family and society, and finally, the lack of a national education system favored the prevalence of illiteracy, especially in female population (Musaj, 1997a, p. 21).

Despite the difficult situation, the first society of women, called "Morning Star", was founded in the city of Koritza, in January 1909, by the intellectuals Sevasti and Parashqevi Qiriazi. This initiative continued after the proclamation of independence and the formation of the Albanian state with the establishing of many female organizations, such as: "National Hope" (1914), "Albanian Rebirth" (1919), "Signs of Improvement" (1920), "Albanian Women" (1920), "Development" (1921), "Union of Albanian ladies" (1922) etc. (Musaj, 2003, p. 8).

The above societies operated in different cities, for a limited period of time, aimed at improving the status of women through education. They intended to promote language learning and technical skill in order to enhance their capacity for economic growth and social progress. They gave an important moral and material contribution for the national question, too. The women's societies were not only actively engaged in the protection of the Albanian state borders from the attacks of Montenegrin army, but also participated in the struggle for the liberation of Valona from the Italian occupiers. Internationally, they appealed to the Great Powers to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Albania from neighboring countries' intentions (Albanian State's Archive (AQSH), F. 447, V. no year, D. 47, Fl. 1).

The Albanian women's societies were distinguished for their internal democratic organization. They provided the incomes due to the monthly payments of their members, gifts and outside assistance. The female societies operated under a

hierarchical structure and chose their representatives, by secret ballot, in the respective organs (Musaj, 2003, p. 9). They used to act separately, not in coordination with the other women societies to spread the feminist movement nationwide.

In the early 1920s, the city of Koritza was considered the center of the Albanian feminist movement, not only because of the formation of the first women society "Morning Star", but there changed positively the status of women with the creation of ladies' unions, such as: "Albanian Rebirth", "Development", which established contacts with their counterparts in Europe (Musaj, 2002, p. 119). The involvement of Albanian women societies in the international feminist movement served as the impetus for the abandoning of the conservative mentality and embracing the ideals of women's freedom and equality. The last principles needed to be enshrined in the legislation due to the importance of intellectual and moral elevation of women in the nation's progress (Musaj, 1997b, pp. 70-71).

2. An overview to the Albanian feminist movement in the 1930s

The Albanian feminist movement aimed at developing and enhancing the status of women guaranteeing equal rights and responsibilities between men and women. Its purpose was to eliminate old customs, prohibit marriages as barter agreements, protect the health of mothers and children and give them a social and economic support (Shini, 1930, pp. 171-172). Thus feminism, meaning the spread of ideas among women, was a product of culture due to increases knowledge, technical development and spiritual quality, so a symbol of a new life where peace, equality and happiness should prevail (Sherko, 1930, p. 195).

The feminist movement in Albania coincides with the struggle of women to abandon the inferior position to men, who considered them like semi-infant creatures, without an independent life. Wives were under the dominance of their husbands the same as children by their parents. Over time, they had accepted this poor social status, obeying the fate that made them half servants and some kind of slaves. From a human and moral perspective, it was a great injustice to leave woman (wife, sister or daughter) in a lower position, not to give her the permission to be equal to the "other half of humanity", taking the liberty and denying the possibility of enjoyment of rights and freedoms (Blloshmi, 1930, p. 153).

As a social issue, the situation of woman was an important problem in terms of intellectual and moral development because of child's preparation. The lack of female education and character formation affected undoubtedly the children not to achieve the adequate intellectual level. In this sense, the feminist movement was not only to the benefit of women, but the entire society. The winning of women rights required long efforts and tenacity, incessant care and dignified seriousness. They deserved these rights only through moral and intellectual advancement, ensuring gender equality (Blloshmi, 1930, p. 153).

In order to improve their status in the society, the education of Albanian girls and women was an immediate necessity to open doors to knowledge and culture. The avoidance of illiteracy would take them out of the darkness and help the women become worthy citizens to be engaged in the economic and political activities of the country (Musaj, 1999, p. 93).

Until the proclamation of the Albanian Monarchy (1928), women didn't have equal rights to men, such as the involvement in various social issues, the right to vote and to be elected to the parliament. Also women were excluded from the opportunity to take high positions in policy or decision-making. Regardless of the non-participation in legislative drafting, women carried the same responsibilities as men and were punished for the slightest infraction of the law, which they didn't know. These situations of women in captivity were as a result of their lack of education and the negative impact of religion (Plasari, 1930, pp. 175-178).

But, the difficult position of the Albanian women could change with the refusal to patriarchal mentality in opposition to women's right, considering them intellectually inferior to men (Ingersoll, 1929, p. 26). Therefore exaltation of women required changes in social life as well as legal improvements, to guarantee equal rights to men and women. They were sanctioned under the Civil Code, an important achievement of the government of King Zog. It was based on the modern and humanitarian principles that put the Albanian women on the same pedestal as men. According to the Civil Code, the rights and the responsibilities between spouses were reciprocal. Legally, men and women have equal rights. This principle marked a precious and undisputed progress compared to the previous laws that under the influence of religious concepts treated the women in a humiliating manner incompatible with the values of today's civilization. On the other side, women aimed at improving "de facto" their family and social status need to recognize their rights and responsibilities pursuant to the laws. This goal could be reached only through education and culture. Thus, developing their moral and physical powers, the Albanian women would not only know and understand their obligations, but also better protect their rights, which are taken not given (Poppa, 1930, p. 188).

Regarding the feminist activists in Albania, in the 1930s, the main task of the intellectual woman was the children education, maintenance of marital relations, housekeeping etc. This perception didn't restrict the role of woman in that of a cultured

servant, but emphasized the creation of a high-level teacher to prepare citizens and organize a normal family life. If the wife performed the mentioned task, she would help in the progress of humanity (Dako, 1931, p. 4).

The same was the purpose of the Albanian government policy. In the letter that King Zog sent to the Prime Minister, on January 16, 1929, claimed priority to the female education as a way of rising feminine culture, in order to manage successfully even the family life. If the girls were not well-educated, there could be no civilized woman, good mother or well-grown boys (Siliqi, 2003, p. 30). Considering woman as the best educator of her children intended to stop thinking backward as concerns to the children growth on the basis of sex differences. Males were superior to females, whereas the latter servants to their brothers and then to the husbands. This education was contrary to the nature, because man and woman were complementary to each other ("The role of woman...", 1931, p. 73).

Parents both influenced on the children behavior and their personality development. Especially mothers, who were responsible for family relations, where the child received the first knowledge of this world; distinguished the best from the worst; learned the language, the customs and the traditions of the country; cultivated love for the family and the motherland. Therefore it was necessary the intellectual exaltation of Albanian women that was closely related to the fate of the nation (Beratti, 1931, p. 37).

For that reason, the philanthropic society "Near East Foundation" gave a great contribution funding the new building of the girls' school of the Albanian-American Institute in Kavaja. King Zog sent a thank you note to the U.S. Ambassador in Tirana, Herman Bernstein, for their useful work to raise the cultural level of women. He added that the Albanian nation appreciated the progressive initiatives of the American people and expressed his gratitude for their peaceful and benevolent intentions. Moreover, the Prime Minister, Pandeli Evangjeli, highlighted the leading role of this school in the educational system in Albania ("The progress of women...", 1930, pp. 203-204).

Besides the increase in girl's education, the American School in Koritza used to celebrate the Mother's Day, teaching the children to reward the hard work of their mothers and the last to give importance to their highest duty, because every mother had a noble mission in family and for the advancement of humanity (P.V.P., 1931, p. 27). Referring to this fact, woman should be the collaborator of her husband in different activities, in bringing up children and cultural efforts, which help the development of social life. Thus, the status of woman would be improved due to relieve the burden of man, because the nation is comprised of two genders: males and females. Their cooperation aimed at achieving the higher purpose of becoming the woman as a key factor for the good of the homeland and the nation (P.P., 1931, p. 57).

3. The role of the "Albanian Woman" society on the feminist movement

The feminist movement during the Albanian Monarchy was under the auspices of Queen Mother and headed by Princess Sanie Zogu, who took the initiative to establish the "Albanian Woman" society. Its branches were founded in different cities throughout the country with the intention of unifying the woman's movement in accordance with her duties in social life and the nation's state. The "Albanian Woman" society was a good omen for the future that aimed to liberate girls and women. Such an ideal required overcoming major obstacles, particularly the old mentality to woman, destined to be obedient to her husband's instinct and isolated from morality. Thus, the main task was the struggle against the backward mentality due to five century rule of Ottoman Empire, which left terrible consequences after its disappearance (Sopoti, 1931, pp. 89-90).

The activity of the "Albanian Woman" focused on the modernization of women, meaning an educated, cultured and open-minded woman. Its mission was to ensure the family welfare and the upbringing and the education of their children. For this reason, should be taken into account the woman's impact on different stages of life, as a daughter, wife and mother, to the man and through them in the society. On the mother's role, she was the first teacher of her children, learning them to be familiar with the moral habits, work discipline and noble behavior. As a wife, she must recognize and enforce the household rules concerning the best use of time, money and intelligence (Çika, 1929, pp. 49-50).

It was proposed that domestic economy should be a separate subject in the design and implementation of school girls' curriculum. It charged with the task of opening training courses for housewives, not for luxury works, but for practical ones, in order to assume responsibility as the child's mother and the mistress of the house (Tule, 1931, p. 41). The domestic economy was considered the highest duty of the woman, ranking the other occupations in lower classes. Even a well-educated woman described housekeeping like a sine qua non condition to have a happy family life (Dako, 1930, pp. 170-171).

However the modernization of woman exceeded her role in the family. This process required fighting against customs, men's ambition and ignorance. While the development of mind sought the assimilation of knowledge aimed at changing the woman's position in society (J., 1930, p. 123). The education, widespread idea for human rights and the ease of physical

development helped the woman to prove again the same mental strength as man and the need to participate in public works (Dako, 1930, p. 170).

Nevertheless, the modern Albanian woman had to respect the values and the best moral qualities of her ancestors. She should not embrace the trend of some occidental countries to recognize equal rights of man and woman. First of all, she would be aware that generosity, nobility, honor and the preservation of customs were the qualities that attracted the attention of the civilized world. Also, the Albanian woman felt the material and moral obligation to the country. She was dedicated in carrying out the tasks, staying away from the political struggle, antagonism and individual interests with the purpose of playing her role in the transformation of the society (Selenica, 1930, p. 151).

The efforts of the Albanian women to improve their economic, social and political status were addressed in the "Albanian" journal, a publication of the "Albanian Woman" society, under the direction of Emine Toptani. The journal was published for two and a half years, nearly 18 numbers, because of the lack of funds, although it reflected a broad thematic coverage on the Albanian feminist movement. Most of the articles were written by famous intellectuals, such as: Sevasti Dako, Parashqevi Qiriazi, Kaliopi Plasari, Ikbale Çika, Sara Blloshmi etc. who, under the influence of progressive ideas, highlighted the situation of Albanian woman, its causes and gave their opinions on possible remedies (Musaj, 1997c, p. 79).

The "Albanian" journal devoted some articles to the important issue of marriage as a socially recognized union between spouses that shared common interests and values. The husband was the honest and the best friend of his wife and vice versa. If husband and wife had no large differences in age, class, culture, religion and educational level, they managed to build and nurture a happy family (V. F., 1929, p. 59). On the contrary, arranged marriage was criticized because partners didn't choose each other, consequently felt no sympathy or mutual attraction. Incompatible couples faced many disputes due to non-similar views and beliefs causing disharmony in a marriage (Borshi, 1931, p. 71).

Other journal articles described the significance of marital status for the benefit of domestic economy because of the reduction of overall costs compared to the single one and the generation continuity (Çika, 1930, p. 125). Authors also dealt with the legal prohibition of polygamy that made compulsory the civil marriage and guaranteed man and woman equal rights to divorce. The Albanian feminist activists appreciated the monogamous marital relationship sanctioned by the Civil Code, as a successful achievement of King Zog. He solved a severe social problem aspired to give women the right place at home, so assuring the family unit which is the foundation of every society and nation ("About the works ..., 1930, p. 169).

The "Albanian" journal authors pointed out in addition themes about the mother's duty to provide a moral and physical education to the children who became the master of themselves and did not seek the parents' support anymore. It emphasized the attempts to equip women with knowledge of first medical aid to help children and husband in the family, like women in the civilized countries (Haçi, 1930, p. 89). A special place was given to the female personal care and the man paying attention to physical beauty, aesthetic attractiveness and the strong personality of the woman (Madrus, 1929, p. 131). Furthermore, there were mentioned the rules of behavior in the ballroom, scholars quotes about women and the effects of the plastic surgery (X., 1931, p. 19).

The aim of the "Albanian Woman" society to enlighten women through educational, social and charitable activities, influenced on its expansion, besides the capital, with the formation of twenty branches in cities, like: Pogradec, Leskovik, Peshkopi, Mat, Bilisht, Delvinë, Libhově, Durazzo, Fier, Lushnja, Berat, Scodra, Përmet, Elbasan, Koritza, Kavajë, Valona, Argirocastro, Kolonja and the Albanian colony of Sofia. The society adopted the statute that was printed in Albanian and French, and began the efforts to gather members and organize women empowerment activities ("The second meeting..., 1930, pp. 138-139).

The women society gave a valuable contribution to the creation of infant literacy according to the country needs. In 1930 was opened the first systematic infant school. With the support of Ministry of Education, the society provided two scholarships to the associates pursuing a pedagogical course on the Montessori system in Rome to have trained teachers for early childhood education (Naçi, 1930, p. 102). Also the Council of Tirana branch distributed clothes for 100 girls and coal to poor families. It held even a night ballroom dance with over 400 guests in favor of the society, which used the accumulated revenues for charitable purposes ("The activity of Albanian ..., 1930, p. 82).

The branch of Durazzo, with the assistance of local authorities, ensured facilities for society offices and infant school. A room in the building was reserved for piano lessons and a salon for handicrafts courses, where it was installed a loom with all necessary tools and a machine for embroidery. As a charitable society, the Durazzo branch helped two poor girls for marriage with a gift of 300 gold francs each. Moreover, at the end of the school hall ladies could enjoy free cinema showing movies on educational and social topics. The cinema was a good opportunity for women to know each-other and develop the social life. The branch of Durazzo planned to organize conferences as well on infant growth and family health, asking

the members to invite their friends to participate in such events in order to accelerate the progress of Albanian women (Official Section, 1930, pp. 161-162).

The society branch of Fier, headed by Mahmude Vrioni, informed on its efforts to heighten the prestige of women and give the proper value to handicrafts. She announced the assistance in woolen clothes, such as: singlet, sweaters, socks etc. for the orphanage girls in Tirana ("The activity of Albanian ...", 1930, p. 81). While the president of the Leskovik branch, Afitaj Kane, reported the decision of the Council to open loom knitting classes and sewing courses intended to promote the handicrafts. The society also had issued various auction items that increased the amount of income to donate dresses for girls who attended the school (Kane, 1930, p. 162).

The branch of Argirocastro, under the direction of Hysnije Xhenneti, was going to rent a room to organize the meetings. It had decided to sell two "Singer" sewing machines for 500 gold francs and adding the same amount of money buy a machine for making woolen clothes ("The activity of Albanian ...", 1930, p. 81). On the other hand, the vice-president Violet Kennedy, describing the organization and the operation of the "Albanian Woman" branch in Koritza, emphasized the inauguration in the American School of "bazaar opening", where handicrafts in sale drew the attention of the foreign visitors ("The activity of Koritza...", 1931, p. 12). Otherwise, the women of Scodra refused to take part in the meetings of the society. Their attitude derived from maintaining old habits that impeded women's freedom and activity for the benefit of the motherland. The progressive societies like elsewhere were confronted with obstacles and controversies in the beginning, but soon the Albanian women realized the real aim of the society ("The activity of Albanian ...", 1930, p. 82).

On April 9, 1930, the women society held the second meeting, where the Secretary General, Parashqevi Qiriaz, presented the annual activity report of Tirana branch. It listed: the organization of three conferences on educational topics for capital women in the cinema hall; the purchasing of 400 meters of different colors fabric to dress primary school children in Tirana; the publication of five numbers of the "Albanian" journal; the distribution of 5000 kg coal in winter to Tirana's poor families and the successfully organized night ballroom dance for charity ("The second meeting...", 1930, p. 139).

Moreover, the Center Commission of the "Albanian Woman" society decided to give reward money to the girl or woman who made the best handicraft with national character, while the other works sent by the branches would be sold at a public auction in the Tirana club ("A competition ...", 1930, p. 162). The society announced even the start of literacy courses for ladies who had missed the chance of education. It was an individual one, held twice a week, in the afternoon, based on the needs of every woman who wanted to learn the native language ("Announcement", 1930, p. 186).

In February 1931, the society received the sad news of the earthquake in the region of Valona. Under the leadership of Princess Sanie Zogu, the "Albanian Woman" society began work to help the survivors of the natural disaster. It called the members of the branches to provide aid for the victims. The women of Koritza managed to collect 371.50 silver coins and some clothes, while the branch of Argirocastro collected 484.55 gold francs ("The branch ...", 1931, p. 10). As a result of the nationwide activity, the women society gathered the total amount of 6.685.85 gold francs deposited in the National Bank of Tirana for the relief committee. Also the society bought with its own revenues the following items: dresses, blouses, shirts and underwear. All these garments were sent by the first vehicle and distributed to the destroyed villages. In addition, the Center Commission organized actively the tickets sale to the dramatic show of the theatrical group "Orpheus" to assist victims of the earthquake disaster (The "Albanian Woman"..., 1931, p. 3).

The "Albanian Woman" society expanded its activity at an international level, with the participation of the delegate Anna Pekmezi, at the 8th Congress of the International Society of Women in Vienna. Its intention was to organize women from different countries of the world and help them improve their social, economic and political status. The International Congress of women societies aimed to ensure the appointment of a woman in the League of Nations and their representative at the International Labor Congresses, the strengthening of the international trade, the full application of Kellogg Pact, a move to thwart the military power of learning to children with the best international willingness and the celebration of the Peace Day (Beshiri, 1930, p. 159). Furthermore, the "Albanian Woman" society joined the International Association of Women centered in Geneva, which purpose was the creation of a strong connection between women all around the world to enable them the fulfillment of material desires, moral protection and unity of interests, so women enjoy the happiness and the welfare of life (Pekmezi, 1930, p. 143).

The "Albanian Woman" society was represented also in the First Balkan Conference in Athens, by deputy head of Tirana branch, Emine Toptani. The participation of a woman representative together with the men in the Albanian delegation gave an evidence of the women progress in Albania and a guarantee for the success of the delegation mission due to the role of women in peace and security. A group of women delegates made an appeal at the end of the Conference for close cooperation onwards to the women of all Balkan states. Unfortunately, they had suffered war atrocities and had seen their children, brothers and husbands die in the battle fields. Thus, it was an immediate necessity the collaboration among

women in the name of Balkan Union, in order to provide a future of peace (The "Albanian Woman" represented ..., 1930, pp. 205-206).

In the early 1930s, the activity of the "Albanian Woman" society faced internal organizational difficulties and some of its branches existed only formally. According to the analysis of Emine Toptani in the General Council, the main cause for the decrease of women society activity was the deepening of the economic crises, the slow social development, the centralization of Albanian feminist movement and its state control. All the branches of the society in the cities were formed by the order of high state authorities. Their heads were selected taking into account the social and economic position of women, not their intellectual abilities. Regarding the content of the activity, it was mostly focused on charity rather than improving female education. Additionally the lack of cooperation between the center and several branches in different cities triggered the latter non regular function. This fact embarrassed the democratic-progressive elements who called upon the state, the Albanian society and the feminist activists to refine the activity of the women society (Musaj, 2002, p. 286).

Three years after its closure, the initiative for the reorganization of the "Albanian Woman" came from central authorities, who needed the society support for the social reforms. The former executives of the General Council committed themselves to drafting a new statute, which was sent to the Prime Ministry for approval in the beginning of 1937. Based on the statute, the main purpose of the society was to propagate education to Albanian women through regular courses and fight against Albanians' daughter illiteracy; to help their education offering state scholarship at the universities abroad; protect the health of the mothers and infants, provide support to disabled women and develop creative handicrafts (Musaj, 1999, p. 95).

In February 1937, the vice-president Naxhije Hoxha informed about the reopening of the Argirocastro branch that had no possibility to spread the handicrafts education, especially the cutting and sewing courses. It intended to learn rich and poor ladies tailoring because of the city's needs, but failed to receive funds from the Prefecture (AQSH, F. 447, V. 1937, D. 45, Fl. 1). While the chairmanship of the women society in Kukës reported that 60 regular members were enrolled with the formation of the branch. Most of them had low income and couldn't afford to pay a fee of 1 gold franc as specified in the statute. The president Jaldys Spahija proposed the reduction of the membership fee not to endanger the existence of the society (AQSH, F. 447, V. no year, D. 324, Fl. 1).

The heads of the "Albanian Woman" society at the center and in the districts supported the government's social reform for the removal of face coverings. They used to hold conferences or discussions with women in different cities addressing topics like the custom of face veil and its consequences to the development of women, as well as their own struggle for the elimination of this habit inherited from the past (Musaj, 2002, p. 301). They considered it even a task of local authorities to ban veiled women in public places as a wearing that impeded their progress in social life. Also men who didn't allow women to go out without the face coverings should be punished for personal freedom restriction. The "Albanian Woman" society gave itself the first example when the Queen Mother and the Princesses threw the veil and put on the hats, trying to convince the ladies that removing the face covering didn't undermine their morale (Frashëri, 1930, p. 98). Moreover, the society took measures to hinder the participation of veiled women in the meetings and its coming elections. The feminist activists welcomed the adoption of the law banning the face coverings, in March 1937, and pledged to help its implementation (AQSH, F. 251, V. 1937, D. 75, Fl. 105).

Another important duty of the "Albanian Woman" society for the female emancipation was the nationwide organization of classes against illiteracy in October 1937. At nearly eight months, the members, the teachers and the supporters of the society got involved in teaching language and mathematics to the girls and women and opened special courses for tailoring and housekeeping. There were distinguished the branch of Tirana, Durazzo, Valona, Scodra, Koritza and Argirocastro, which collaborated with the teachers of other cities for the progress of the courses. But the "Albanian Woman" society that contributed to the empowerment of women was obliged to cease its activity due to the political conditions established in Albania under the occupation of fascist Italy (Musaj, 1999, pp. 98-99).

4. Conclusions

The Albanian feminist movement in the years 1928-1939 was influenced by the developments within the country or worldwide, such as: the preservation of old habits, the low educational and cultural level of women, the economic and social inequalities and the efforts of the only "Albanian Woman" society in the center and districts to accede to the International Association of Women.

The feminist activists in Albania during the monarchical government shared different point of views concerning the women's role in the society. The first group aimed equal integration of girls and women in society, while the second one intended to protect and develop a female perspective and to continue propagating the archaic and aristocratic image of woman. These

two positions had an inconsistency between the liberal ideals for the progress of women and the feminist attempts that combined with social issues highlighted the problems of family, labor, the political rights etc.

The "Albanian Woman" society and its branches in most of the cities, with the support of state authorities, didn't limit to the acceptance of woman case, but they took measures for the physical and intellectual development of women, the upholding of their personality values and the improvement of the economic and social status in family and society.

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The identification of basic problems on the form and functioning of the family in Albanian society

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Abstract

In this article the author has presented the form of Albanian family, the crucial problems and general mentality. Nowadays, the modern societies have built a new form of family, nuclear family or close family. This kind of family is much functional regarding the structure of the society, because we know that family relationship is very important for socialization process, and education of citizenship. On the other hand, the global culture and social development have generated importance of nuclear family in societies under transition, too. Albanian society has developed some forms of modernity but institution of family has not the clear form of the nuclear family. The tradition and psycho-social aspects have been the most difficult barriers for transformation of family. Some other issues discussed in this article are conservative mentality, the cultural heritage, the norms and values under the global inflection. In addition, the last approaches of the family institution in Albanian society have shown the influence of the issues mentioned above, but the rural regions have major problems yet.

Key words: nuclear family, structure, socialization, culture, global.

Introduction

It is already known that to have a healthy society is needed a healthy family¹. The structure of the family, the same as the social structure is permanently changing throughout the globe. Referring to the global developments of the family institution it is visible that the dynamic and diversity of the family patterns is high. But, in this article will be argued about the main forms of the institution of family in the Albanian society.

It is well known that Albania is a post-communist country, which is trying to rebuild a democratic and civil society. Due to this reason, in the focus of this study will be the social developments of the past two decades. Since the very beginnings of the democratization of Albanian society, all the social and administrative institutions underwent to the functional alienation process (the transition). In this context, the institution of family is no exception. Today, after about 22 years of the democratic society, having in focus the civic cultivation of the individual and society itself, is identified that there are exactly the forms of the family structure those that play an important role in the social well-functioning.

In addition, two postmodernist's sociologists Delphy and Leonard wrote: 'the family is patriarchal and hierarchical institution through the men dominate and exploit women. But, the modern society generated new forms of family so they highlight many ways in which the family can produce or reinforce inequalities between women and men'².

The Albanian family has been characterized by the normative traditional form, conservative and sub-cultural. This has resulted with the change of family structure, regarding its performance, according to the region, geographical position and psycho-social conditions.

The main forms of the family have been: patriarchal norms, monogamous marriage with consent from both parties accepted and adopted by the society and institutions, and the tendency of the cohabitation of more than two generations within a

1 Fromm Erich; *The Sane Society*, Tiranë 2003, p. 57

2 Harallambos Michael: *Sociology themes and Perspectives*, Collins 2007, p. 468