

**VIOLENTED WOMEN AND IT'S ASSESSMENT NEEDS -  
PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES IN ALBANIA  
(Case in Elbasan region)**

**Dorina Xhani\*, Sabina Belshaku\*\***

\* *European University of Tirana, Ruga Xhanfize Keko, 1001 Tirana, Albania*

\*\* *University of Elbasan, Rruga Ismail Zyta, 3001 Elbasan, Albania*

*Corresponding Author: [dxhani@gmail.com](mailto:dxhani@gmail.com)*

**Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to identify the quality and importance of social services provided in the city of Elbasan. To evaluate the importance of these services and to highlights, the gaps and needs for needs for other extra services. The main intension is to measure the level of information that girls and women have about the concepts of violence, howpunishable this phenomenon is and if they are aware of how they can benefit from a Protection Order.

To accomplish the purpose of this study, is used a qualitative research method and half-structured interview with the multidisciplinary group and 7 violated women that received the Protection Order. Based on the aims and objectives of the study, was oriented towards the social services offered to this target group.

One of the most important findings of the study is that despite the existence of structures, they are not very efficient. Also, the findings of this study highlighted the lack of a social fund for case management, the lack of organizations operating and providing services to girls and women victims of violence, the lack of provision with information for women's and women's UM benefits is very emphasized, especially in those women who come from rural areas and who have a low educational level. The study informed us about the importance of the presence and role of the social worker in this institution in identifying and managing cases of domestic violence.

**Keywords:** *domestic violence, social services, assessment of social services, victim, protection order.*

**INTRODUCTION**

One of the most widespread phenomena of the Albanian society but not only is domestic violence, which affects not only girls / women but also children, this phenomenon has turned into gangrene that is destroying our society day by day. Violence is treated more as an individual problem which belongs only to family members and not to society. According to sociologists, violence against women has always been part of the social structure of patriarchal societies, it has always functioned as a key instrument of control over women, to keep them subjugated. Walker (1979), a researcher in the field of violence against women, stated that: "violence against women is not only physical violence with bodily harm, but one of the most unidentified injuries is psychological violence." Despite cultural, religious, or moral differences over family behavior, abuse against women has never been accepted by the majority of society. In sociological studies, domestic violence is considered one of the darkest, most problematic aspects of family life (O'Reilly J. 1983). The family has always been considered as the institution responsible for the development of a healthy society. Unfortunately, the family itself is no longer a safe haven for women and children. Violence against women, although the most widespread human rights violation in the world, continues to be underrated, it is also a profound health problem that results in death and injury, compromises women's well-being and destroys dignity and self-esteem. Women who are victims of domestic violence usually have difficulty concentrating and working effectively with their children. They are more likely to avoid or deny the situation and neglect the impact of violence on themselves and their children (UNICEF, 2003).

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When women stay with abusive partners, the cause is generally that they have no other choice. They lack confidence in their ability to earn a living for themselves and their children. After a series of beatings, women begin to think of themselves as powerless and hopeless, these perceptions eventually "become reality, and victims become passive, submissive and hopeless." These things continue to happen because we deny the dimensions, the causes, and their political consequences. Despite recent improvements, those most responsible for continuing domestic violence - the victims themselves and law enforcement officials - continue to downplay its importance, blame victims for the frequency of abuses, and disregard their role in problem solving.

In Albania, domestic violence is a problem that negatively affects not only women, children, but also the family, it has historically attracted the attention of researchers and specialists in the field more than others. Violence against women is one of the fundamental problems nowadays and for this reason we must engage and raise awareness to minimize and prevent this phenomenon. We must also break the mentality of our society that violence is a "private matter". We live in a society where, despite the positive changes and progress achieved, prejudicial and discriminatory behaviors are not absent in our daily lives. Since 1995 in Albania a number of measures have been taken to improve the legal and institutional framework regarding the treatment of this phenomenon. Albania has ratified a number of international conventions aimed at preventing and combating gender-based violence and domestic violence. This strategy aims at cooperation between different participants and has established inter-institutional mechanisms. In terms of prevention and reduction of domestic violence, although there has been significant improvement, especially in the legal framework, Albania still needs to take a series of measures to show zero tolerance for violence. The Vienna Declaration and Action Plan (1993) defines violence against women as "an act of gender-based violence that results in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women or the threat of such acts, a coercion or removal of unreasonable freedom, which occur in private and public life "

The social services provided to women are based on the principle that the state provides social protection by improving and meeting human needs for education, health, housing and social security. Social services are needed and demanded in society, precisely when its other institutions, such as the market economy and the family, can not respond to the basic needs of individuals or social groups.

The purpose of this study is to identify the quality and importance of social services provided in the city of Elbasan. To assess the importance of these services and to highlight deficiencies and needs for additional services. The purpose is to measure the level of appropriate information that girls and women have about the concepts of violence, how reprehensible this phenomenon is on their part and whether they have information on how they can benefit from a Protection Order.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this study it was appropriate to use the qualitative method as it is a method through which the aim is to study the life experiences of people in their natural location. Through this method, researchers aim to understand people in their social environments, as they appear, with all the colors of their experiences. The main criterion for the application of this method is the provision of qualitative information (qualitative - quality; qualitative - qualitative). Qualitative method in the study necessary to know in depth the problem. In addition, through qualitative methods can be built social construct. According to Cresell, J. W. (2007) the social construct with qualitative methods is constructed by individuals who are involved with the world around them. R. Emerson (1983) has given this definition: Qualitative research is the study of people in the environments

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where they live every day. He tries to clarify how people live, how they speak and behave, what fascinates and confuses them ... most importantly, he tries to clarify what their words and actions mean to people. " While the researcher Lawrence Newman (1994) has derived some characteristics of qualitative research such as: observes the events and daily activities that take place in their natural environment with all the unusual events, possesses a human worldview, and is in direct contact with people who are studied and personally touch on their life experiences. According to Leedy & Ormrod (2005) the qualitative method is used in some cases. They explain that this method is used when there is little information about the main issues of the study. This method is seen as the most appropriate to analyze the experience of women who have experienced one of the forms of domestic violence. Qualitative techniques allow the researcher to explore meanings and perceptions of others, based on their daily experiences. The use of this method has addressed to some extent the research questions related to the services and needs of girls and women who have received protection orders, the services and assistance provided by the institution for this category and their case management, as well as what other services they need. The main advantage of qualitative research is that, they offer us the opportunity to understand more deeply the population in the study. In qualitative research, every case is worth studying. Each case is representative of the specific life experiences of a person and the interpretation of these experiences, thus representing the truth and reality for that person. The qualitative method of data collection in this study helped to explain why the services provided by staff are not sufficient for women / girls and children, highlighting the need for the presence of services provided by the social worker. Qualitative data analysis has made it possible to provide a rich and fairly extensive information about the needs for both social services and additional information.

### *The target of population included in the study and sampling*

The focus of this study was girls and women, as well as members of the Multidisciplinary Technical Group. The number of persons included in the study consisted of (11 members) of the multidisciplinary technical group and 7 girls / women who had received protection orders. In order to create a clearer and more complete picture for the applicant regarding the situation of services in the municipality and the level of information that women have, as well as to get acquainted with the shortcomings related to the issue in question, interviews with persons were used. key. The purpose of the interview for both women and the multidisciplinary group was to understand what services they receive and what services are lacking in this institution. To reach reliable findings, the study population should be divided into groups and each group should have reliable features, according to Cohen.

### *Interviews*

In this study were conducted 7 interviews with women / girls who received a Protection Order. The number of interviews provided information on a range of issues related to the information that women have in receiving services from the institution, the quality of services for this ferry group, the provision of services when they need it, as well as the information they have about the benefit of UM, and the existence of structures for their protection. 11 interviews with the multidisciplinary group were also conducted. These interviews highlighted what services are provided to victims of violence, how well they meet the needs of abused women and girls, and what needs to be further improved to help this category more effectively in the opinion of the professionals.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSIONS

Services, decisions, experiences and needs of abused girls and women.

### **Table 2. Demographic data on victims of violence**

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Case	Age	Age	Place	Gender	Status	Education	Job
1	28	30	Elbasan	Female	Divorced	University	Teacher
2	25	20	Elbasan	Female	Married	Secondary	Unemployed
3	33	30	Mollas	Female	Married	Primary	Unemployed
4	50	55	Gostivar	Female	Divorced	Primary	Unemployed
5	66	30	Klos	Female	Married	Secondary	Unemployed
6	70	40	Klos	Female	Divorced	Primary	Unemployed
7	72	30	Shalës	Female	Married	Secondary	Unemployed

The experiences of abused girls and women are very different, they depend on their psychological state and socio-economic status. Most of the victims are married and have children. From the interviews conducted with abused women and girls, they claim that in their lives they have faced various forms of violence and that this violence is a recurring phenomenon in the family relationship.

Based on the data obtained during the interview process we see that the age of women victims of violence varies from 25-50 years old. Domestic violence occurs in all women, regardless of their education and social status. The women interviewed have a low, secondary and high level of education, breaking the myth that "violence occurs and affects only uneducated women". Based on the data reflected in Table 2, this phenomenon is widespread in some rural areas.

One of the victims of violence states that case no. 2: "my daughter, being always present in the scenes of violence between me and my husband that night, did not hesitate to inform the police... and then let's leave because I called my uncles..."

Respondents claim that the violence they experience has not only happened once in their lives, but is a recurring phenomenon. The situation of these women has been getting worse and that violence is not a random phenomenon, but part of their daily life... Victims feel life-threatening, often appearing in Hospitals in critical condition due to violence experienced by their partners. Many of the victims of violence are with the child directly or indirectly are affected emotionally, psychologically but also physically.

All victims of violence admit that they are most often raped by their spouses, the person who should provide them with security, support and care in a family relationship, not only as a woman and a woman, but as the mother of his children.

All respondents have had and experienced more than one form of violence in their lives. Most of them claim to have experienced physical and psychological violence. Perhaps these are the two forms that they encounter most often and that have a direct impact on their mental and physical health. Many of them do not conceive of sexual and economic violence as damage to family relationships, for several reasons such as low level of education, lack of information, mentality and masculine environment of our society. One of the victims of case no. 3 states that "never I have money in my hands, even my husband withdraws the financial aid, I could not buy anything for myself..." The Law on Social Assistance and Services stipulates that the monthly

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payment for the family must be withdrawn by the wife, giving them the opportunity to manage their income well for the family.

Many of the victims of violence were informed of the eUM benefit after appearing in the police region. They had no previous information and did not know the ways in which this UM was obtained. Victims of violence say they need more information about the services provided to this category. The women reported that the lack of information on DV law and the benefit of UM hindered the process of obtaining professional help because they were uninformed about where to go to seek proper help. Thus, case no. 3 states that: "as a raped woman, I want to be informed more about what the municipality offers, how homeless I am and without economic income, both to me and to my two children".

Victims of violence often face socio-economic difficulties after obtaining UM, or starting divorce proceedings. They seek more security, legal protection, employment and housing. Women victims of violence do not have a profession, aggravating it even more their situation.

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the evaluation and analysis of social services that emerged during this paper, we are provided with a clear picture of the practices used by representatives of institutions to come to the aid of victims of violence.

The results of the study showed that the social services provided by the municipality for girls and women victims of domestic violence are attended by the local coordinator who is also the representative of the social services office in each municipality or social administrator in the commune. Services offered for this category include identification, immediate intervention, free legal aid, psychosocial counseling, and monitoring. Through the local coordinator, who serves as a mediator with NGOs, the police, health services, courts, social services, and other referral institutions or organizations, the local government assists victims with information, connects them to services, and ensures the continuity of care for them.

One of the most important findings of the study is that despite the existence of structures they are not very efficient, often times in meetings organized not all actors are present due to other professional commitments, this creates a problem in case management and in providing direct services to beneficiaries. The services provided in most cases are insufficient and uncoordinated between actors.

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