

Prospects for Gender Equality Policy in Uzbekistan

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Abstract

This article discusses the issues that women have the same rights and freedoms as men in our country, that the state policy on motherhood and childhood is pursued, that special attention is paid to strengthening the role of women in public life, increasing their political activity, expanding their participation in government and society.

KEYWORDS: gender equality, society, family, social policy, strategy, gender policy.

The issue of achieving gender equality is a prior policy direction for Uzbekistan. In recent years, several laws and normative-legal regulations have been adopted in this regard. Although the accepted norms are sufficient, but there are still some problems in their implementation in practice.

Priorities for the development and democratization of society inevitably stem from issues related to the achievement of equality between men and women, and as a result, there is a need to raise the status of women and expand their rights.

To this end, a strategy to achieve gender equality in 2020-2030, which aims to ensure equal rights for women and men in all spheres of society has been adopted in our Republic.

The main goal of the strategy is to achieve providing fundamental human rights for all women, men and children, regardless of their race, social origin, beliefs, status, social, economic and political life.

Our society strives for equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres. The Strategy includes 9 goals:

- Creation of equal opportunities and rights for the participation of men and women in socio-political life;
- Ensuring gender equality in protecting the rights of women and men in the economy, employment and labor migration;
- Ensuring fair and quality education for all throughout life;
- Ensuring gender equality for all women, protection them from violence, ending human trafficking;
- Ensuring social protection and a healthy lifestyle for all men and women;
- Development of national gender statistics;
- Consideration of gender issues in planning and budgeting;
- Ensuring wide coverage of gender issues in the media;
- Involvement of women in ensuring a safe environment for all.¹

During his speech at the 75th anniversary session of the UN General Assembly, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev presented to the international community his views on topical issues of regional and global significance. In particular, he outlined the priorities of political, social and economic modernization of Uzbekistan. Among the directions, the issue of gender was of particular importance.

Today, the world community is also trying to create international mechanisms that correctly understand the role of women in human development. The adoption by the UN General Assembly on 18 December 1979 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is proof of our view.² The Convention is a key document that clearly defines the issues related to the achievement of practical equality between women and men, ie ensuring gender equality, the exercise of their rights by women in practice.

¹ Strategy for achieving gender equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030. Tashkent. 2021.

² UN General Assembly Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 18 December 1979.

The problems identified in the convention are characterized by multiplicity. Along with identifying the urgency of the problem of ending discrimination in various forms, important rules related to the promotion of the status of women as an equal person, their political, socio-economic and cultural rights, equality with men, maternity dignity are reflected.

In the fulfillment of international obligations, it requires improvement of laws and normative legal acts in all levels, precise monitoring of their implementation and control over the implementation of international legal acts. A solid legal framework is being created in our country through the harmonization of international legal instruments on ensuring gender equality with national legislation.

Special attention should be paid to the fact that women have the same rights and freedoms as men, the state policy on motherhood and childhood, the strengthening of the status of women in public life, increasing their political activity, expanding their participation in government and society are being carried out.

Today, the institutional framework for the implementation of gender equality policy in our country is also expanding. At the same time, a new Committee on Women and Gender Equality has been established within the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan to harmonize international standards in national legislation to ensure women's rights and eliminate all forms of discrimination.

As a member of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the state pays special attention to the harmonization of national legislation with its norms. In particular, important steps have been taken in this direction in our country. In September 2019, the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for women and men" and "On protection of women from oppression and violence" were adopted.

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The purpose of this law is to protect women from all forms of oppression and violence in marriage, workplaces, educational institutions and elsewhere.

Regulation of relations in this area, as well as ensuring legal and social protection of victims of repression and violence is also one of the important objectives of the law.

In his address to the Oliy Majlis, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said that "further strengthening the role and status of women in public administration is one of the priorities of our reforms."

Today, about 1,400 women hold senior positions in the system of state and public organizations of the republic. Their share is 82% in health and social services, 72% in science, education, culture and arts, 45% in agriculture and 38% in industry.

"We must do everything possible to create decent conditions for more than 17 million sisters, daughters, mothers and grandmothers living in our country," the President said in his address.⁴

As a result of reforms to increase the role of women in public administration, 30 percent of the new members of parliament have been women. The position of adviser on women's issues to regional, city and district governors has been introduced.

At the initiative of the head of our state, the Republican Women's Public Council was established to increase the role and prestige of women in society and create new opportunities for them. The activities of local women's councils will be headed by advisers to the governors on these issues.

The proposal to transfer the republican and regional funds for the support of women to the newly established councils also determines the socio-economic mechanism for this issue.

The Women's Council is a voluntary, self-governing, non-profit, independent public organization established on the initiative of women in order to adequately protect the interests and status of women in society, increase their role in socio-political, economic and cultural life.

Ensuring the rights and interests of women, gender equality, development of entrepreneurship among women, creation of new jobs for them, improvement of working and living conditions have become a priority of state policy in

³ Law on Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men. September 2, 2019, No. ZRU-562

⁴ Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis. December 29, 2020.

Uzbekistan. As a result, women's activity is increasing in all spheres, and their participation in society is expanding year by year.

The number of women entrepreneurs is growing and thousands of new jobs are being created due to the establishment of women's entrepreneurship centers in the regions, which provide women with the necessary knowledge and skills to start a business.

The level of culture of any society is determined by its attitude towards women. In this regard, the President set important tasks to ensure the vital interests of women in our country, to comprehensively improve their living conditions. Therefore, creating the necessary conditions for them to work worthily and realize their potential, helping to strengthen their place and status in society should become the main task of all of us.

There is no doubt that the main "mirror" of any society today is women. Because no matter what the social order of the society is, the level of well-being of the population, the stability of families, the upbringing of the next generation, the intellectual potential of society, spirituality and culture, enlightenment, achievements in all spheres are determined by the contribution of women to the development of society and its attitude to women.

In our country, all conditions have been created for women to show their talents and work according to their abilities. The level of use of these opportunities depends on them.

If a woman realizes her place in society not only as a woman but also as a human being, if she is able to direct the abilities given to her by nature, if she considers that the goal of her life is to make a worthy contribution to the development of society through honest work, this woman can certainly be satisfied with her life, live contentedly. If she only makes the family the main purpose of her life, in the end the untapped ability, the unused opportunity, the unattainable achievements will be a wish for her and a feeling of jealousy will be formed in her heart towards women who have achieved everything.

Abruraif Fitrat, in his book "The family", said: "Women's social and political activism is necessary for national liberation: women should not be preoccupied only with housework and child rearing."⁵

More than half of the world's population are women. That is why gender issues have become one of the most pressing issues today. Today, women are working effectively and actively in all spheres of socio-spiritual, political and economic life. Our basic law, the Constitution, also recognizes the equal rights of women in all spheres. The interests of women, families and children have always been a priority in the decisions and orders issued by the government. It is also true that these efforts are reflected in the active participation of women in society. There are other aspects of attention paid to increasing the socio-political activity of our women. In particular, the issues of improving their legal culture and legal literacy, expanding economic activity, improving the social protection system were among the important goals of the state.

Equality, in relation to the concept of human development, implies the creation of equal opportunities for all people to meet their material and spiritual needs, and above all, this applies to education, health, employment and opportunities to participate in the political life of society. Equality of opportunities is based primarily on the equality of human rights and fundamental freedoms, regardless of the level of material well-being, social status, beliefs, gender and ethnicity, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human dignity is "the foundation of freedom, justice and general peace." Lack of fundamental rights and freedoms can lead to the crisis of man and society, social and political unrest, the spread of violence and the emergence of conflicts.

As stated in the UN Human Development Documents, "in no society do women have the same opportunities as men. Such unequal status leads to the remaining of the disproportion between the significant share of women's human potential in development and the small size of their share in the benefits that this process gives." In this regard, the priority issues of human development and democratization inevitably stem from issues related to the achievement of equality between men and women, and, as a result, there will be a need to raise the status of women and expand their rights.

Uzbekistan was one of the first Central Asian states to take a number of measures to give women equal rights with men. In 1995, Uzbekistan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). A number of its articles have been incorporated into national legislation. In this regard, the development and implementation of an appropriate program to achieve gender equality is becoming the most pressing issue. This is a long-term goal, which requires serious fundamental changes in cultural, social, political and economic norms and the formation of an entirely new way of thinking.

⁵ Abdurauf Fitrat. Family or family management procedures. Tashkent. "Ma'naviyat" 2000. Page 28

Gender equality is a fundamentally important factor in achieving the UN goals in the field of development in the XXI century. Accordingly, the improvement and implementation of gender approaches remains a key issue in achieving social justice, equality and sustainability of human development. The search for ways to effectively address the issues raised by the UN has led to the development of new gender approaches.

The application of a gender approach to the participation of different groups of the population in development activities in accordance with their social roles and specific needs has enabled the development of a gender development strategy, which includes the following components:

identifying and improving the status of women in society relative to the status of men;

- awareness of their situation, demands and needs by women themselves;
- identifying barriers to improving the situation of women;
- Expansion of women's activities, their mastery of traditional men's roles and professions;
- elimination of direct or indirect consequences of past discrimination;
- priority development of vulnerable groups of women.

Gender equality is an equal right, responsibility, opportunity, value and outcome for women and men, girls and boys. Gender equality is not only an issue for women, it also means the rights and responsibilities of men. Because society expects to act themselves in accordance with gender norms and standards. Equality does not mean that women and men remain the same. But their rights, responsibilities, and equality depend on whether they are born girls or boys. Gender equality shows that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into account. Such issues as improving policies to ensure equal representation of women in government, non-governmental and private organizations, especially in senior decision-making positions, and efforts to change perceptions of the role of men and women in public opinion raise the pride by equating the rights of the representatives of the two categories.

It is natural that the more we manage to raise the dignity of women, the more our national pride, spirituality and culture will grow, the stability of our families will be ensured, the number of our children will be honest and clean, selfless, patriotic, socially beneficial. After all, it is true that not only her family, but the whole society is interested in the work and potential of an active and intelligent, wise, inquisitive, modern woman. We should not forget the fact that the main force that boldly bears the heavy burden of the society we are building and strengthens its foundation is every family in our society, every person, every citizen, including women.

Conclusion. In this regard, in recent years, ensuring the rights and interests of women, gender equality, protection of family, motherhood and childhood, development of entrepreneurship among women, creating new jobs for them, improving working and living conditions have become a priority of state policy.

Most importantly, the number of women leaders in our country - ministers, governors, chairmen of industrial associations, banks and companies, women holding responsible positions in law enforcement agencies is growing.

Consequently, significant work has been done in our country over the past years to fully support women, alleviate their burdens, realize their potential and potential. In particular, women's entrepreneurship centers have been established in all regions of the country, and they have been provided with practical assistance in entrepreneurship, handicrafts, retraining and employment. Thanks to such opportunities, the number of women starting their own businesses is growing and thousands of new jobs are being created by them.

It should be noted that a top-down practical system has been created to implement the rights of women enshrined in our Constitution, to enhance their dignity. For this new system to work effectively, it will be necessary to work together.

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