

ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF GENDER EQUALITY AND INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ENSURING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

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Abstract. This paper analyzes the conceptual framework and practical mechanisms of gender policy in the context of building a "New Uzbekistan," emphasizing the unique synthesis of universal democratic principles with national values. It evaluates key legislative advancements—including the 2019 Gender Equality Law and Article 58 of the new Constitution—alongside grassroots institutional structures like the Mahalla system and the "Wise Women" movement. Finally, the study highlights state-funded educational incentives for female students as a primary catalyst for developing a new generation of intellectual and socially active female leaders.

Keywords: *Gender equality, New Uzbekistan, Legislative reform, Mahalla system, Educational incentives.*

In the context of building a new Uzbekistan and shaping its democratic image, ensuring the full rights and interests of every member of society, especially women, who constitute a significant part of the population and intellectual resources, has become one of the fundamental foundations of state policy. It is impossible to build a society in which human dignity is glorified without ensuring equal rights for women in state and public administration and without mobilizing their potential. After all, as the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted: *“Our people, proud of their intelligent, beautiful women, consider the creation of equal rights and opportunities for women in all spheres of social life to be their most important task.”*

During the years of independence, especially in the last decade, Uzbekistan has implemented fundamental and systematic legal reforms in order to strengthen the socio-political activity of women and their place in society and public administration. In Uzbekistan, the state policy on improving the status of women in society has a unique conceptual character, which is based on a rational synthesis (harmony) of universal democratic principles with the Uzbek national mentality, age-old values, and oriental family ethics. Unlike Western de-modeled gender approaches, the activation of the female personality in Uzbek society goes hand in hand with the preservation and further enhancement of her authority as a sacred mother in the family, the spiritual support of the family fortress. After all, in the Uzbek mentality, family and society are not opposed to each other, but are viewed as a holistic system that complements each other. The state institutionally encourages a woman to be both a devoted wife and loving mother in the family and to become an active leader, scientist, or entrepreneur in society.

The most important and detailed domestic legal document that legally and institutionally guarantees the political role of women in state life is the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men”, adopted on September 2, 2019. The main purpose of this law is to regulate relations in the field of ensuring real gender equality for women and men in all spheres of society and state life, including politics, economy, law, culture and education. The law strictly prohibits any discrimination on the basis of gender (gender discrimination).

Separate chapters of the law directly define mechanisms for supporting women's socio-political activity at the state level. In particular, Chapter 3 guarantees equal access and promotion of women and men to leadership positions in state bodies (including in the formation of a personnel reserve). It is stipulated that equal opportunities are provided for women and men in competitions for holding positions, regardless of gender.

Chapter 4 on the exercise of electoral rights stipulates that equal rights and opportunities be created for women and men in the formation of election commissions, as well as in the process of nominating candidates for deputies by political parties. For information, it should be noted that, in accordance with this law, the amendments to the Election Code stipulate that the share of women among candidates for deputies nominated by political parties must be at least 30 percent, and this figure is being further increased in subsequent reforms.

Gender policy is now clearly reflected in the content of new concepts and institutions introduced into public administration. In particular, the following legal concepts in line with international standards were introduced into the legislation of Uzbekistan for the first time through the law:

- Gender legal expertise: It was established that all regulatory and legal acts adopted in the country and their drafts must be analyzed for compliance with the principles of equal opportunities for women and men.
- Temporary special measures: In order to more quickly eliminate gender inequality and increase the political and social participation of women, it was legislated that the application of quotas or special privileges by the state for a certain period of time is not considered discrimination.
- Gender audit: A system has been introduced to study the extent to which guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for women and men are implemented in state bodies and organizations, and the fairness of personnel policy.

This strategic approach is reflected in the solid legal foundation created in our country. For example, Article 58 of the new Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan strictly stipulates the equal rights of women and men, and the state shall ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the management of public and state affairs, as well as in other areas of public and state life. This norm is a constitutional guarantee of transformational processes in society.

In order to consistently implement this constitutional provision in practice, fundamental laws in the field were adopted. In particular, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” defined the legal status of the concept of gender equality in the socio-political life of the country. This legal mechanism serves to eliminate some stereotypes that have formed in the thinking of society, namely, the outdated prejudices that limit women's activities only to the household and family sphere. To date, in order to increase the share of women in public administration, a completely new system of training personnel for leadership positions has been established, and the share of women in the political sphere has significantly increased. At the same time, an institutional system of supporting women in line with national values has been formed. In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to further intensify work on systematic support for families and women”, the Family and Women's Committee was established. The introduction of the position of “women's activist” in each mahalla as the lowest link of this structure is fully consistent with the philosophy of the Uzbek mahalla institute. This created a targeted, effective system at the mahalla level for identifying women's problems, addressing them, and providing assistance to families in difficult social situations. Also, the “Wise Women” movement, organized taking into account the high respect in society for the words and teachings of the elderly and mothers with rich life experience, has become an important social institution in improving the spiritual and moral environment in mahallas and preparing young girls for family life¹.

The attention paid to improving the status of women in science and intellectual fields is also commendable. The allocation of special grant places for women from needy families when enrolling in higher education institutions, the reimbursement of contract funds for all women studying at the master's level from the state budget, have

¹ O'zbekiston Respublikasi Vazirlar Mahkamasining “Oila va xotin-qizlar qo'mitasi huzuridagi «Oqila ayollar» harakati faoliyatini tashkil etish chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida”gi 437-son qarori, 08.08.2022-y. // Qonunchilik ma'lumotlari milliy bazasi.

become an important pedagogical and economic impetus for the formation of a layer of intellectually capable women. These opportunities are a practical reflection of the wise philosophy of our national mentality that “educating a girl means educating an entire society, the future generation.” Nevertheless, the full understanding of these legal guarantees and positive opportunities by members of society, especially young people and students who are the owners of our tomorrow, and their incorporation into their legal and political consciousness determine the practical effectiveness of state policy. In this process, educational platforms, in particular systematic dialogues and roundtable discussions, are the most optimal means of increasing the social initiative of young girls and developing their leadership and organizational potential within the framework of Uzbek educational standards. The attention paid to improving the status of women in science and intellectual fields is also commendable. The allocation of special grant places for women from needy families when enrolling in higher education institutions, the reimbursement of contract funds for all women studying at the master's level from the state budget, have become an important pedagogical and economic impetus for the formation of a layer of intellectually capable women. These opportunities are a practical reflection of the wise philosophy of our national mentality that “educating a girl means educating an entire society, the future generation.” Nevertheless, the full understanding of these legal guarantees and positive opportunities by members of society, especially young people and students who are the owners of our tomorrow, and their incorporation into their legal and political consciousness determine the practical effectiveness of state policy. In this process, educational platforms, in particular systematic dialogues and roundtable discussions, are the most optimal means of increasing the social initiative of young girls and developing their leadership and organizational potential within the framework of Uzbek educational standards.

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