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## ENSURING EQUAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND MEN: THE EXPERIENCE OF UZBEKISTAN

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**Abstract.** *The article analyzes the reforms carried out in Uzbekistan to ensure gender equality and their prospects, the adopted legislative acts and their importance, the issues of increasing women's participation in public administration; reducing poverty, supporting entrepreneurial initiatives, creating suitable working conditions, covering young people with higher education, in particular, the issues of women's enrollment were analyzed. Suggestions were made to improve the legal framework for gender equality provision and to address the challenges that await their solution.*

**Keywords:** *women's rights, gender, equality, poverty reduction, education, UN Sustainable Development Goals, equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men.*

### ХОТИН-ҚИЗЛАР ВА ЭРКАКЛАР ТЕНГ ҲУҚУҚЛИЛИГИНИ ТАЪМИНЛАШ: ЎЗБЕКИСТОН ТАЖРИБАСИ

**Гаффарова Шахноза Нуритдиновна,**

Тошкент давлат юридик университети докторанти

**Аннотация.** *Мазкур мақолада янгиланаётган Ўзбекистонда гендер тенглигини таъминлашда амалга оширилаётган ислохотлар ва уларнинг истиқболлари, қабул қилинган норматив-ҳуқуқий ҳужжатлар ва уларнинг аҳамияти, хотин-қизларнинг давлат бошқарувидаги иштирокини ошириш, камбағалликни камайтириш, тадбиркорлик ташаббусларини қўллаб-қувватлаш, муносиб иш шароитлари яратиш, олий таълим билан ёшларни, хусусан, хотин-қизларни қамраб олиш масалалари таҳлил қилинган, гендер тенгликни таъминлашнинг ҳуқуқий асосларини такомиллаштириш ва ечимини кутаётган муаммоларни ҳал этиш бўйича таклифлар билдирилган.*

**Калим сўзлар:** *хотин-қизлар ҳуқуқлари, гендер, тенг ҳуқуқлилик, камбағалликни камайтириш, таълим, БМТнинг Барқарор Ривожланиш Мақсадлари, хотин-қизлар ва эркаклар учун тенг ҳуқуқ ва имкониятлар.*

### ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЕ РАВНОПРАВИА ЖЕНЩИН И МУЖЧИН: ОПЫТ УЗБЕКИСТАНА

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**Аннотация.** *В настоящей статье освещены осуществляемые в обновляемом Узбекистане реформы по обеспечению гендерного равенства и их перспективы, нормативно-правовые документы и их значение, проанализированы вопросы совершенствования участия женщин в государственном управлении, сокращения бедности, поддержки предпринимательских инициатив,*

*создания достойных условий труда, покрытия высшим образованием молодежи, в частности женщин, даны предложения по совершенствованию правовых основ обеспечения гендерного равенства и ожидающих своего решения проблем.*

**Ключевые слова:** права женщин, гендер, равноправие, сокращение бедности, образование, Цели Устойчивого развития ООН, равные права и возможности для женщин и мужчин.

## Introduction

At present, the issues of ensuring equal rights of women and men in any state cannot be said to be fully resolved. Even in developed countries, there are problems in the field of gender equality in a certain sense. In particular, it cannot be said that the tasks to ensure equality between women and men have been fully achieved. The main thing is to timely identify the existing problems and create a legal and practical system for their elimination. In the following years, the shortcomings in this regard are also openly expressed; the legal basis for eliminating the existing shortcomings is being developed.

Gender is the social aspect of relations between women and men, manifested in all spheres of life and activity of society, including politics, economy, law, ideology and culture, education and science. This means that the concept of gender does not only ensures women's rights and interests, but also promotes the same opportunity for representatives of both genders to take a bold step towards their goals, to improve the quality of life [1]. The effective implementation of gender policies means that quality indicators in public administration have raised to a higher level.

The mutual efforts of responsible and partner organizations established to ensure gender equality in our republic will serve to increase the efficiency of work in this area. It should have an overall plan for the long-term, since the individual plans in this area do not provide adequate consistency, coherence and effectiveness of gender equality reforms. TClarity and commonality of the goals and plans for gender equality will ensure efficiency.

It is necessary to acknowledge that the reforms carried out in the following years have achieved positive results in the field of gender equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan. It is no secret to anyone that achievements in the role of women in Parliament are highly appreciated not only by our country, but also by the world community. "Wherever women are active in political and social life, in that place, the economy grows, stability improves, and citizens prosper," said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

The trend of step-by-step and systematic resolution of a set of issues indicates that the implementation of the UN principle "no one should be ignored," which is the main principle of the Sustainable Development Goals [2], is ensured in practice in Uzbekistan:

- to protect the rights and legitimate interests of women;
- to increase their role and activity in the socio-political life of the country;
- to identify the problems of women on a timely manner, including those of women who need help and have a severe social situation;
- to create address lists of women with disabilities, and provide social, legal, psychological and material assistance to them;
- to provide employment of women and girls;
- to improve working conditions, and comprehensive support to young girls in rural areas, especially in matters of wide involvement in family and private entrepreneurship, craftsmanship;
- to prevent violations among women in the early stages, in the first place, the issues of conducting individual work with those who are prone to violations;



- to ensure close cooperation with state bodies and institutions of civil society in the implementation of measures for social rehabilitation and adaptation of women and girls freed from detention facilities.

In 2015, according to the UN General Assembly Resolution 70, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 were developed. In Uzbekistan, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted the Resolution “On measures to implement the National goals and objectives in the field of sustainable development for the period until 2030” [3] to ensure the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Uzbekistan, and mainly under the leadership of the Prime Minister for the implementation of national goals and objectives. At present, our urgent tasks are to reduce poverty, eliminate income inequalities, increase productive employment, create legal framework for decent employment of men and women, and improve their living conditions. To do this, we need to take into account the laws “on the minimum living wage,” “on the minimum social standards.” The aim of the Sustainable Development Goals is in full harmony with our national interests, with the strategic objectives of our country.

In fact, our country is undergoing large-scale reforms aimed at strengthening equality between women and men, adopting a number of legislative acts, amending and supplementing existing ones. From the above, we can conclude that legal solutions to the problems of ensuring equality of women and men have developed in our country. A total of 27 normative-legal acts were adopted in this regard.

Still, the issue of ensuring the quality of the implementation of the legislative acts adopted to ensure the equality of women and men is an important aspect that should be addressed. In our opinion, executive efficiency plays a decisive role in the collaborative efforts of responsible government agencies and public organizations. It should be noted

that parliamentary control is of particular importance in this regard.

### **Materials and methodology**

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoev has assigned the main tasks that are aimed at increasing women’s role and status in society. First of all, to ensure the participation of women in Parliament and territorial representative bodies, to take into account their views in the preparation of bills and the formation of the state budget; secondly, the establishment of a working body on gender equality issues in the Senate of Parliament; third, improvement of gender equality legislation; fourth, increasing the role of non-governmental and non-profit organizations in ensuring women’s rights [4].

However, in our view, it would be desirable to carry out large-scale additional activities in Uzbekistan in ensuring equal rights of women and men.

In particular, it is necessary to guarantee equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the fields of politics, economy, law, ideology and culture, education, health and science. We can create equal opportunities in obtaining knowledge, namely coverage with higher education. Provision of additional quotas for women by the state and private higher-educational institutions for an increase in the share of women in the higher-educational institutions; opening a wide way to receive correspondence, evening and distance education; establishment of an online educational institution with the aim of supporting online higher-educational institutions (a full-time online higher-educational institution is not available in Uzbekistan, and the possibility of carrying out practical work in this regard is sufficient); allocation of a quota of type in the population to girls with disabilities, who are in need of social support, without a breadwinner and a low-income family. In fact, studying in higher education allows women to have access to highly competitive labor market, and to

contribute to the family budget. In the labor market the gender asymmetries are clearly preserved: “female-specific” and “male-specific professions” and specialties, which are still preserved to this day, that is, we can observe that women are in the majority in such sectors as education, health, social services, arts and culture with low pay, and men in construction, finance, transportation, communications, jurisprudence, industries with high pay. It is crucial to increase the share of women in these sectors, to allocate additional quotas for women in the higher education institutions, especially, in these sectors, to carry out promotional work using the media in engaging women, to organize the implementation of studies on the basis of a state grant; to introduce a training course aimed at increasing gender knowledge among students constantly in the higher education institution into the educational process. The reason for this is that there is still no gender education in a higher education institution is available. Taking into account their capabilities and to work without distance, education or main job, we should develop a system of equal pay, reconsider the use of criminal liability measures directly or indirectly after administration in cases of violation of the print order of equality and etc. Of course, now it is worthwhile to take temporary special measures to ensure the implementation of gender policies in order to ensure gender equality.

### Research findings

In order to achieve Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, women’s equal participation and leadership in society, as well as the elimination of violence, are considered important. Goal 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring full and effective participation of women in the life of the state and society as well as political, the creation of equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in economic and social life is linked to the Goal 16.7, which includes

the provision of responsible decision-making by representative bodies at all levels with the participation of all segments of society. At the moment, the pace of efforts to ensure women’s participation in the world is stagnant, and if there is no acceleration, it will be impossible to achieve these goals.

A significant result has been achieved in increasing the number of women elected or appointed to leadership positions, but there is still no full gender equality in decision-making, that is, equality between men and women has not been achieved.

“Some believe that gender is the aspiration of women to power. But in fact, it can be said that this is a broad and pressing problem related to the issues of men and women — equality of both genders. Today, the gender perspective in the system of international relations, education, science, culture, social policy is perceived as a prototype of a new vision, a new module of public relations and interaction.

The nominal appointment of women to various positions over the decades has led to the stereotype that women should not or are not entitled to be in regional, city and district authorities and in general government, in the structures of state power. The amount of women in elected and appointed local government bodies is 17.1 percent.

There are almost no women in the government. Among the ministers there is one woman, several deputy ministers, no deputy governors now, there is only one female rector of a higher-educational institution, the share of women at the provost level is negligible, the representation of women in the international arena reaches only 3 percent of the total number of ambassadors and diplomatic representatives of foreign countries” [5].

### Review of research findings

The analysis revealed that “also in the Commonwealth of Independent Countries there are problems with gender equality. In particular, there is no unanimous opinion



on gender equality in Russia. 62 percent of respondents agree that it is necessary to fight for gender equality. Also, 59 percent say that women and men should strive for equal obligations. Only 13 percent support the feminist movement. In Ukraine, 66 percent of men and 58 percent of women believe that there is gender equality. Despite the fact that there is a law on family violence, only 1,1 thousand women from 110 million victims appealed to the police with a complaint, only 4,4 thousand people reached the court.”

Belarus ranked 48th among 80 countries in the “Best Countries for Women 2019”. Kazakhstan ranks 60th in terms of gender equality, according to research from the World Economic Forum [6].

As part of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Committee on issues of women’s and gender equality was established. The Committee ensures the provision and protection of women rights, the elimination of any form of discrimination, the harmonization of national legislation with international standards. The Commission on Gender equality is working. In addition, to further ensure women’s rights to labor, in order to help victims of domestic violence and for prevention of suicide – the Republican Center for Rehabilitation and Adaptation of Persons affected by violence, as well as its departments in the regions, the Women’s Entrepreneurship Center, a new ministry within the government – the Ministry of neighborhood and family support were established.

Now, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, gender equality and elimination of discrimination against women should become a single integrity.

“It should be noted that the adopted legislative documents, and practical measures are an important step in the field of gender policy of Uzbekistan and fully comply with international norms and standards of

legislation and practice, at the same time, some of them are based on the recommendations of the UN human rights agencies” [7].

The main problems of gender inequality between women and men not only in Uzbekistan but also in the world: it is seen that the difference between job wages; lack of women in the main positions of government and public administration; mental, economic, physical and sexual violence in the family. In such a situation, it will not be easy to achieve gender equality.

### Conclusions

Based on scientific analysis, in order to eliminate the above shortcomings, the followings are proposed:

- timely identification of women issues, employment of unemployed women, creation of a system of social, material, psychological and legal support for women with disabilities, in need of assistance, in a difficult social situation;
- the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in all aspects of life, not only in public administration;
- strengthening interaction between state institutions and civil society institutions in the organization of support for women, ensuring regular work to protect their rights and legal interests, and increasing their socio-political activities;
- development and implementation of effective measures to combat all forms of violence against women, including human trafficking and sexual violence;
- joint action development of responsible state authorities and public organizations to ensure the implementation quality of legislative acts adopted to ensure equality of women and men.

Foreign experience shows that progress has been made in recent decades as a result of reforms to ensure gender equality. In this regard, separate state programs, National Action Plans and strategies have been developed and implemented. The

legal framework is also being improved in Uzbekistan. Despite the achievements, there are still many problems regarding gender equality. To illustrate, discriminatory social norms (stereotypes) are preserved, women are less involved at all levels of political leadership, the share of men in high-paid professions and spheres is big, every fifth woman and girl from the age of 15 to 49 years report physical or sexual abuse of relatives (husbands) throughout the year. Besides, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the achievement of gender equality and women's rights. The Coronavirus outbreak has led to inequality that exists for women and girls in areas such as health, economy, security and social protection. Its economic impact has affected women more because they work in disproportionately risky labor markets. Nearly 60 percent of women work in an informal economy, which makes them more vulnerable to the risk of poverty. New evidence suggests that violence against women and girls, especially those in the family, has increased after the outbreak of the pandemic. Rapid and targeted measures have been developed by "UN Women" to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women and girls and for long-term recovery.

These measures are aimed at five priority areas:

1. To mitigate and reduce gender violence, which includes family violence.
2. To direct social protection and economic stimulus packages that are beneficial to women and girls.
3. To support and implement equal distribution of maintenance work.
4. Women leadership and participation in planning and decision-making COVID-19 response.

5. Extensive introduction of gender in data and coordination systems. The COVID-19 pandemic gave women the opportunity to take radical positive measures to overcome the inequality that has long existed in many areas of their lives and to restore a more fair and sustainable world [8].

"According to the report, the climate crisis, the increase in the number of refugees and displaced people, poverty and insecurity will result in a surge of violence that will have a major impact on women and girls in economic spending.

Today, 39 percent of women work in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, but only 14 percent of them is landowners. 75 percent of parliament members, 73 percent of decision-makers, 70 percent of climate negotiators and almost all peacekeepers are men" [9].

But according to some reports, there were also positive developments in the field of gender equality in 2020. In particular, based on the results of the event called "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights", which is written, on the occasion of the International Women's day, there are grounds to hope that this year (2020 year) will lead to positive changes, despite the fact that the achievement of gender equality in the world is developing slowly, the events under the slogan "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights" [10].

Achieving gender equality and expanding opportunities for all women and girls are not only a fundamental human right, but also an important basis for peace, prosperity, and sustainable development.

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