

## ENCOURAGING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT AS AN IMPORTANT TREND IN CONTEMPORARY STATE GOVERNANCE

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the promotion of women's engagement as an important trend in contemporary state governance. The author examines the participation of women in socio-political processes and explores the legal, institutional, and social mechanisms for encouraging their active involvement. The paper also highlights the essence of reforms and initiatives implemented in our country to support women. The research findings demonstrate the positive impact of enhancing women's activity on the development and stability of society.

**Keywords:** women's engagement, socio-political processes, state governance, gender equality, reforms, women's rights, civil society, promotion of female participation, public policy, priority directions.

The processes of building a humane society in our country are closely linked with the interests, dignity, and rightful place of women in social life, as the level of a society's moral and ethical maturity has always been determined by its attitude towards women. In this regard, the high status of women in society and their active participation in state and social affairs are organically connected with the successful outcomes our people expect from reforms. One of the priority directions in the development of our statehood is to ensure the social, political, and, accordingly, legal activity of individuals. The level of moral and ethical maturity of society has always been reflected in its attitude towards women. The status of women in society and their active involvement in state and social matters have positively influenced the successful implementation of reforms.

The activity of women, their full realization of rights, and their awareness of how these rights are protected by the state and its institutions are closely connected.

Therefore, considering the importance and urgency of this issue, on February 2, 2018, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan issued a Decree on "Measures to Fundamentally Improve Activities in Supporting Women and Strengthening the Family Institution." According to the Decree, broad efforts are being ensured in Uzbekistan to increase women's socio-political and social activity, create conditions for them to realize their abilities and opportunities in various fields and sectors, guarantee unconditional observance of their rights and legal interests, comprehensively support motherhood and childhood, as well as strengthen the family institution. Attention is also focused on other important pressing issues [1].

The leadership of Uzbekistan is implementing the policy of widely involving morally rich and politically active citizens in the field of public administration as an important direction of state policy. In his congratulatory message to the women of Uzbekistan on March 8, 2018, on the occasion of International Women's Day, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat M. Mirziyoyev, emphasized that "Honoring women, who are the pillar of the family and society, as well as the grace

and beauty of our lives, and showing them respect and reverence has always been a great value for our people since ancient times and will remain so"[2].

An important factor ensuring the effectiveness of political institutions is the active aspirations of youth and women. Emphasizing the extremely high role and position of political institutions in the dynamic development of the political system, it can be stated that merely establishing political parties, public organizations, non-governmental non-profit organizations, mass media, and local self-government bodies does not guarantee the creation of a democratic state or a strong civil society. Primarily, enhancing the activities of these institutions and achieving the intended goals require the development of politically active individuals with modern perspectives, through whom political institutions can evolve.

To ensure such a policy, the engagement of women and youth in political life, as well as the legal and political protection and strengthening of their activities, are of particular importance. Currently, expanding and reinforcing the practical significance of women's and youth wings within political parties must be realized as a vital direction of political reforms. This can only be effectively carried out by politically active individuals. Therefore, politically active individuals emerge as the most crucial factor in the functioning and development of political institutions.

It is well known that the political elite plays a crucial role in accelerating political reforms, ensuring the holistic development of society, and maintaining national unity. This role becomes especially evident in determining and implementing the country's political development, as well as in making political decisions related to ensuring progress. The mere existence of a political elite, to some extent, contributes to the emergence and development of political activity. From an institutional perspective, the political elite understands well that unless it ensures its own activity and integrates efficiency into its work, it will inevitably lead to the replacement of elites.

One of the important characteristics of the political elite is ensuring national unity. National unity, in turn, leads to the development of the country. In such processes, the activity of the political elite contributes to the acceleration of political reforms, and the acceleration of these reforms enhances public trust in politics, ultimately serving to ensure the overall prosperity of the nation.

Recent studies conducted at the "Social Opinion" Republican Center for Public Opinion Research regarding the understanding by women of the conditions created by the country's leadership to ensure their political activity and comprehensive development are noteworthy. Sociological analyses of such research, which reflect women's attitudes and moods towards ongoing events in the political life of our state, allow us to draw certain conclusions. Public opinion surveys provide an opportunity to somewhat define the profile of women in our country during the years of independence.

Today's woman is primarily a young and sufficiently educated individual. Her average age is 27, and this fact is reflected in the social policies implemented by our state. Every second woman in the country has a secondary specialized education, while every fifth woman holds higher education. This situation allows for a confident comparison with developed European countries. Furthermore, after completing higher education, women have the opportunity to engage in professional activities or pursue scientific careers under fully supportive conditions. Not only has the educational level of women increased, but their qualifications, knowledge, and skills in various professions have also

improved. Women have nearly dominated the labor market in the social sphere—accounting for almost 80% nationwide—and their political activity is steadily increasing day by day. Women are also effectively active in the real sector of the economy, including industries such as manufacturing, craftsmanship, trade, light industry, and even machinery and heavy industry.

According to statistical data, in recent years, 67,475 women have been provided with employment. In the first half of 2023 alone, over 235,000 women were ensured employment, and within the first ten months of 2023, 90,336 unemployed women received vocational and entrepreneurial training. Currently, women account for 77% of those employed in the healthcare and education sectors, and 46% in the economy and industrial sectors. The number of women enrolled in higher education institutions has increased sixfold. In particular, the proportion of women in bachelor's programs has risen from 38% to 49%, while in master's programs it has grown from 37% to 50%. Moreover, in 2023, nearly 200,000 women received vocational and entrepreneurial training [3].

The social activity of women is increasingly reflected in psychological changes, particularly in their aspirations for economic independence. This trend is contributing to the growing number of women engaging in entrepreneurial activities. According to research conducted across all regions of the country, one in every three women is currently involved in entrepreneurship. This encompasses a wide range of fields, from retail trade to manufacturing. Thanks to the comprehensive support measures in place for the development of women's entrepreneurship, every second economically active woman aspires to engage in business or farming in the future. Research also indicates that one in every two women shows an interest in politics and actively participates in the activities of political parties, social life, and local community (mahalla) organizations. Furthermore, women's participation in national elections remains high, exceeding 90%.[4].

It is no secret that the political activity of the population is shaped by various socio-psychological factors, particularly by individuals' consciousness, level of culture, social status, family conditions, place of residence, and other related factors. For instance, the political engagement of people living in smaller settlements may differ significantly from that of residents of large cities or metropolitan areas. Likewise, women living in educated, intellectual families with stable household conditions tend to exhibit a relatively higher level of political activity, which is a natural outcome.

Women's political activity and participation in public administration in Uzbekistan is becoming increasingly dynamic. This trend reflects the practical outcomes of state policies aimed at ensuring gender equality. In the 2024 parliamentary elections, women secured 57 seats in the Legislative Chamber, accounting for 38% of all deputies. This figure surpasses the results of the previous elections (33.6%), indicating a growing presence of women in the political arena.

For the first time in Uzbekistan's history, a woman—Tanzila Narbayeva—was elected as Chairperson of the Senate in 2019, and she continues to serve in this position to the present day. In accordance with the new edition of the Electoral Code, political parties are now required to include no less than 40% female candidates on their lists (compared to the previous 30%). In the 2024 elections, 44.74% of candidates nominated for the national parliament and 42.45% of candidates for local councils were women. Despite these advancements, several issues remain regarding women's participation in the labor market. For instance, in 2021, the labor force participation rate of women was 28% lower than

that of men. The unemployment rate among young women stood at 15.5%, compared to 10% among young men [5].

In conclusion, the participation of women in the political and social life of Uzbekistan is steadily increasing. At the same time, it remains essential to continue implementing measures aimed at ensuring equal opportunities in the fields of labor and education. The political and legal reforms carried out by the country's leadership serve as a vital foundation in this regard.

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