

THE ROLE OF STATE POLICY IN ENSURING WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

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Abstract The article highlights the role and significance of state policy in protecting women's rights and ensuring gender equality. It analyzes the reforms and legal frameworks implemented in Uzbekistan to promote gender equality and their practical outcomes. The paper also provides suggestions for improving gender policy.

Keywords: women's rights; gender equality; state policy; social justice; legislation; human rights; gender stereotypes; civil society; equal opportunities; sustainable development.

Introduction

Ensuring and protecting human rights is one of the most important criteria for building a democratic society. In recent years, the Republic of Uzbekistan has made the protection of human rights — particularly women's rights and the promotion of gender equality — a top priority of state policy. Extensive reforms are being implemented in the country to enhance women's participation in political, economic, social, and cultural life, to safeguard their rights and interests, and to create equal opportunities. These reforms are aimed not only at improving the national legal system but also at fulfilling international obligations.

According to Article 58 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, "Women and men shall have equal rights." This provision serves as a fundamental constitutional guarantee for ensuring gender equality in the country. The principle of equality is reflected in all spheres of state policy, including labor, education, healthcare, politics, and public administration.

Legal Framework for Ensuring Gender Equality

Uzbekistan is a party to several international legal instruments aimed at promoting gender equality. In particular, in 1995 the country ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This document serves as the main source defining Uzbekistan's international obligations in the field of protecting women's rights.

At the national level, the Law "On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men", adopted in 2019, plays a significant role. This law establishes mechanisms for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men and for implementing gender equality policies. According to the law, all state bodies, organizations, and institutions are required to adhere to the principles of gender equality in their activities.

In addition, the Law "On the Protection of Women from Oppression and Violence" is one of the key legislative acts aimed at guaranteeing women's rights in practice. This law provides mechanisms to protect women from physical, psychological, economic, and sexual abuse, as well as to ensure their dignity and self-respect.

State Policy and Directions of Reform

The Government of Uzbekistan has developed gender policy as an independent component of its national development strategy. On the initiative of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the "Gender Equality Strategy – 2030" was adopted in 2022, marking an important step in this direction. The strategy defines key objectives such as promoting women's participation in socio-political life,

strengthening their economic independence, combating domestic violence, and improving women's digital literacy.

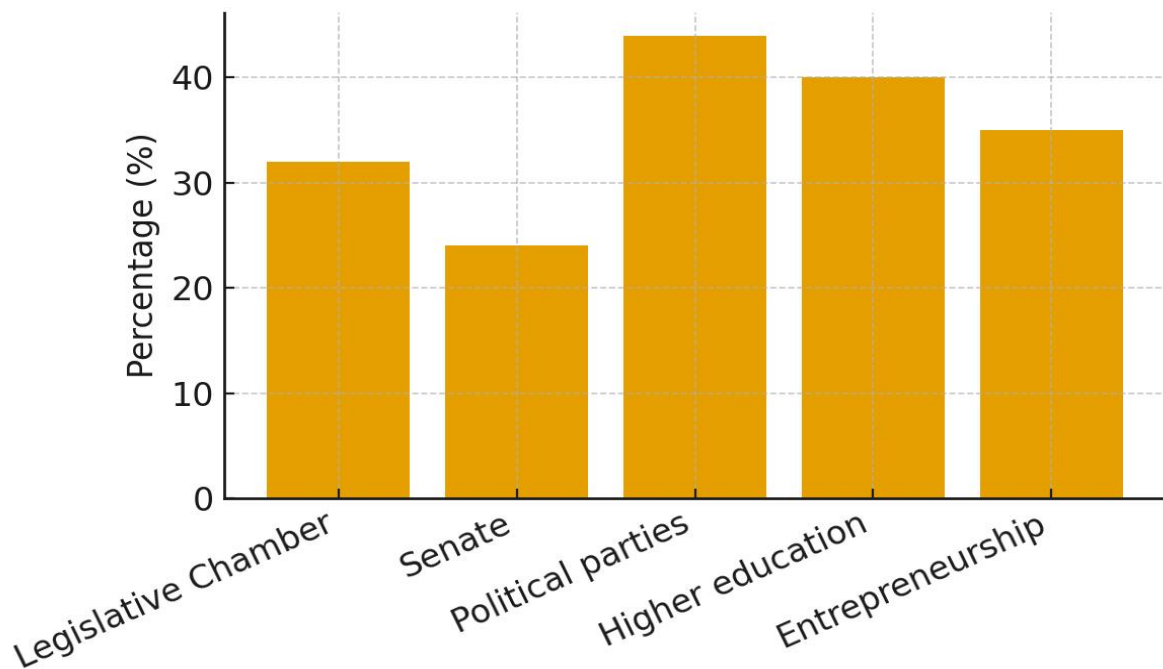
Today, women play an increasingly active role in the political life of the country. The proportion of women in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) has reached nearly 32%, while in the Senate this figure exceeds 25%. In addition, systems for supporting women's entrepreneurship — including the allocation of loans and subsidies — have been established.

One of the key areas of state policy is the implementation of programs aimed at vocational training for women, developing their modern skills, and enhancing social protection. Through the "Women's Register" system, thousands of women receive social assistance, which contributes to their growing social activity and engagement in public life.

Women's Participation in Politics and Society of Uzbekistan (2024–2025)

This chart illustrates women's representation across various sectors of Uzbekistan's public life, highlighting progress under the Gender Equality Strategy–2030.

Figure 1. Women's representation by sector (Bar Chart)



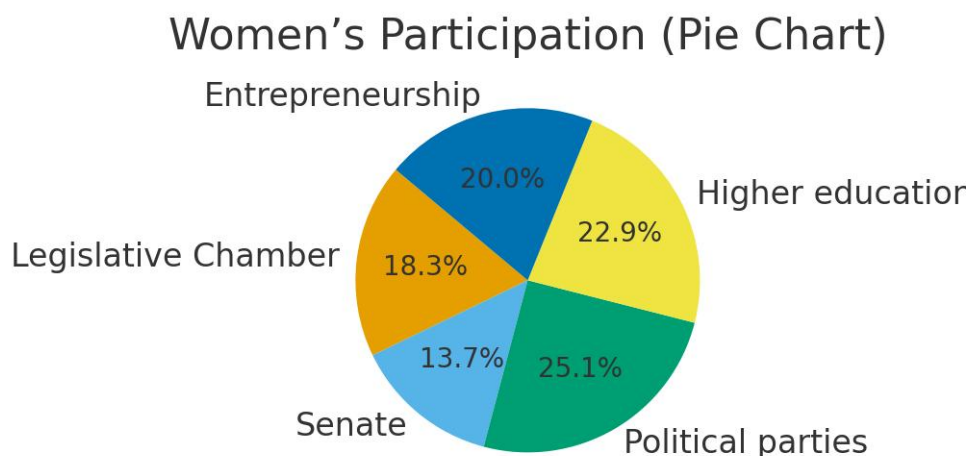


Figure 2. Women's representation by sector (Pie Chart)

Source: Gender Equality Strategy–2030 (2022); Equal Future Eurasia (2024); Kun.uz Monitor (2021).

The Role of Education, Employment, and Social Protection Systems

The education system plays an invaluable role in ensuring women's rights. The state continues to expand opportunities for girls to access quality education and to increase their participation in higher education institutions. In particular, the introduction of quotas for girls in technical and engineering fields represents a significant achievement.

In the field of employment, legislation has been strengthened to protect women's labor rights, ensure safe and suitable working conditions, and provide social guarantees during maternity. The relevant provisions of the Labor Code are aimed at preventing discrimination and any form of inequality against women in the workplace.

Within the social protection system, a comprehensive approach to promoting gender equality has been established through mechanisms such as the "Women's Register," "Iron Register," and "Youth Register." These instruments serve as important tools for addressing social vulnerability and promoting equal opportunities across society.

Eliminating Gender Stereotypes and the Role of Civil Society

Eliminating traditional stereotypes about women's roles in society constitutes an essential direction of gender policy. In this regard, the active participation of the mass media, the education system, and non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs) is of great importance. Civil society institutions such as the Committee on Family and Women Affairs, the "Yuksalish" Movement, and the Association of Women Entrepreneurs play a key role in promoting women's activism and protecting their rights.

Collaborative projects with international organizations — including the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and UN Women — contribute to aligning Uzbekistan's gender policy with global standards.

Recommendations for Strengthening Gender Policy

1. Enhancing legal education:

To raise public legal awareness and culture regarding equal rights of women and men, gender equality-related disciplines should be integrated into educational curricula at all levels.

2. Improving the gender monitoring system:

A unified national monitoring system should be introduced to measure real indicators of gender equality within the activities of state institutions. In this context, a new approach is proposed —

the “Regional Gender Index” concept — designed to assess the effectiveness of state policy in ensuring gender equality in Uzbekistan. This index would enable a comprehensive analysis of women’s participation levels across politics, the economy, education, and the social sphere. It would also help identify regional disparities and sectors with weaker indicators, thereby facilitating targeted policymaking. The proposed approach would establish a scientifically grounded mechanism for evaluating gender policy effectiveness and assist state bodies in making evidence-based analytical decisions.

3. Supporting gender policy through digital innovation:

To strengthen the practical implementation of gender policy, the creation of a “Digital Platform for Women” is recommended. This platform would serve as an integrated information system providing women with legal, psychological, social, and economic support. Through the platform, women could access real-time information about local employment opportunities, educational grants, legal advice centers, and government programs. This initiative would enhance women’s legal literacy, expand their economic participation, and consolidate gender equality through digital innovation.

4. Promoting women’s entrepreneurship:

It is essential to expand special grant and credit programs aimed at ensuring equal access to financial resources for women entrepreneurs.

5. Reducing gender stereotypes through mass media:

Media outlets should actively promote positive representations of women by producing educational programs, social campaigns, and awareness-raising projects that challenge traditional stereotypes.

6. Strengthening international cooperation:

Further harmonization of national gender policies with international standards should be pursued through continued collaboration with organizations such as the UN, UNDP, and UN Women.

7. Supporting women in the digital economy:

Women should be encouraged to participate in IT education and digital entrepreneurship, and their start-ups should be financially supported to strengthen their position in the digital economy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Republic of Uzbekistan has implemented wide-ranging reforms aimed at ensuring women’s rights and achieving gender equality. The constitutional guarantee of equal rights between men and women, the adoption of the Law “On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men”, and the development of the “Gender Equality Strategy – 2030” under the initiative of the President have established a strong and systematic foundation for gender policy in the country.

The state continues to create broad opportunities to support women and to increase their participation in political, economic, and social life. However, to achieve full gender equality, it remains essential to overcome social stereotypes, enhance legal awareness, and strengthen the gender-sensitive approach within the education system.

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