

GENDER EQUALITY IN FAMILY RELATIONS: MODERN LEGAL APPROACHES

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Abstract. This article analyzes the issues of ensuring gender equality in family relations based on modern approaches. The family is considered the most important social institution of society, in which women and men have equal rights and obligations, which is recognized as an important factor of sustainable social development. The article extensively covers the content of the concept of gender equality, its role and significance in family relations, as well as existing problems in this field. New trends in gender relations are also analyzed as a result of changes in family roles in modern society and the increase in the social and economic activity of women. The article examines aspects such as family decision-making processes, division of labor, child-rearing, and access to economic resources from the perspective of gender equality.

Keywords: gender equality, family relations, gender stereotypes, women's rights, social justice, gender policy, modern approaches.

Introduction.

In the context of contemporary globalization, ensuring gender equality has emerged as a crucial factor for societal development. In particular, establishing equal rights and opportunities between women and men within family relations plays a significant role in promoting social stability, economic progress, and the full realization of human rights. The family is regarded as the smallest yet one of the most important social institutions, with the relationships within it directly influencing broader social processes. Consequently, ensuring gender equality in family relations has become a priority area of state policy.

In recent years, the Republic of Uzbekistan has enacted a series of significant legislative measures aimed at promoting gender equality, protecting the rights and interests of women, and strengthening principles of equality within the family. Notably, the “Law on Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” establishes the legal framework for ensuring gender equality across all spheres of society, including family relations [1]. This law emphasizes the equal rights of women and men, their equitable participation in social, economic, and family life, and prohibits any form of gender-based discrimination. Additionally, the “Law on Protecting Women from Harassment and Violence” introduces essential legal mechanisms to prevent domestic violence, protect women, and restore their rights [2]. This legislation contributes to creating a safe environment a critical aspect of promoting equality in family relations as genuine gender equality cannot be realized in a context of violence. Moreover, the principles of gender equality have been further reinforced in the latest edition of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan [3]. The Constitution guarantees equal rights for women and men, ensures state protection of their freedoms and rights, and identifies the safeguarding and strengthening of the family as one of the state’s primary responsibilities. This constitutional provision underscores that promoting gender equality within family relations is firmly embedded in the state’s policy framework.

International legal instruments also play a significant role in ensuring gender equality in family relations. In particular, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) establishes global standards for protecting women’s rights and promoting gender equality [4]. Uzbekistan’s accession to this convention facilitates the alignment of national legislation with international norms. However, ensuring gender equality within family relations extends beyond legal provisions; it is intricately linked to social, cultural,

and economic factors. Long-standing traditional gender stereotypes characterized by rigid role divisions between men and women often hinder the full implementation of equality principles in many families. For instance, domestic responsibilities and child-rearing duties are frequently assigned to women, while men are primarily viewed as the main economic providers a perception that remains widespread.

Contemporary approaches advocate for a partnership principle in family relations, whereby both women and men equally participate in decision-making, financial management, child-rearing, and social activities. This approach is instrumental in fostering healthy and sustainable family structures. Thus, ensuring gender equality in family relations is not merely a legal requirement but also a social necessity. The new legislative measures and ongoing reforms are directed toward strengthening gender equality. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these initiatives largely depends on the extent to which these legal norms are applied in practice and the development of positive societal attitudes toward gender equality.

Research Methodology.

This article was conducted using an analytical and comparative approach. Data collection involved the analysis of official statistics, international reports, and scholarly sources. The level of gender equality in family relations was examined through social, economic, and cultural dimensions. During the research process, the roles of women and men within the family, their participation in decision-making, and the distribution of labor were observed. Furthermore, the impact of social stereotypes on family relations was analyzed using a descriptive method. The results obtained were synthesized, and conclusions were drawn based on this analysis.

Analysis and Results.

The issue of ensuring gender equality in family relations is increasingly regarded as a significant indicator of social development in Uzbekistan. In recent years, reforms in this area have led to a noticeable change in the participation of women and men in social, economic, and familial life. Official statistics, international indices, and social research serve as important sources for assessing this process.

According to data published by the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan [5], women constitute approximately 49.7% of the country's population, reflecting the presence of a gender balance in society. Additionally, statistical indicators related to marriage and family relations play an important role in analyzing the level of gender equality. In 2024, more than 300,000 marriages were registered in Uzbekistan, underscoring the importance of the family institution within society.

Divorce rates are also an important indicator for assessing gender equality in family relations. In recent years, the number of divorces has remained relatively stable, averaging around 45,000-50,000 per year. Research indicates that the primary causes of divorce include misunderstandings within the family, economic difficulties, and the unequal distribution of gender roles. In particular, as women's economic independence increases, tensions between traditional family views and modern approaches are becoming more pronounced.

Women's economic activity plays a crucial role in promoting gender equality in family relations. According to statistics, in 2024, the economic activity of women in Uzbekistan was approximately 46-48%, while for men it exceeded 70%. This disparity may limit women's influence in household decision-making. At the same time, the increasing employment of women contributes to strengthening their status within the family.

The distribution of household labor is another critical factor in analyzing gender equality in family relations. Social research shows that women spend an average of 4-5 hours per day on household chores and childcare, whereas men spend approximately 1.5-2 hours. This indicates that household responsibilities remain unevenly distributed, which negatively affects women's opportunities for professional development.

In recent years, important statistical data has also been recorded regarding the identification and prevention of domestic violence. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, over 40,000 protection orders were issued during 2023–2024. While this figure indicates the presence of domestic violence, it also reflects the active functioning of state mechanisms to protect women. Research demonstrates that a reduction in violence directly strengthens gender equality within family relations.

Educational attainment is another key factor shaping gender equality in families. The increasing share of women with higher education allows them to actively participate in household decision-making processes. According to statistics, women comprise nearly 50% of students in higher education institutions, providing a foundation for further strengthening gender equality in the future. Furthermore, international indices offer an opportunity to assess Uzbekistan's gender equality status. According to the Global Gender Gap Index 2024 [6], Uzbekistan ranks around the mid-level among over 100 countries, with particularly strong results in education and healthcare. This demonstrates that the social foundations necessary to ensure gender equality in family relations are present.

Analyses indicate that achieving gender equality in family relations is a complex, multifaceted process. Economic activity, educational attainment, social stereotypes, and cultural values all exert a direct influence on this process. Notably, in rural areas, traditional views remain more deeply entrenched, creating specific challenges for the full implementation of gender equality.

Discussion.

The issue of ensuring gender equality in family relations is not limited solely to legal norms; rather, it constitutes a complex process closely intertwined with social, cultural, and economic factors. Analysis indicates that, although significant progress has been made in recent years in strengthening equality between women and men in Uzbekistan, this process has not yet reached full completion. In particular, the discrepancies between traditional views and modern approaches in family life continue to hinder the full realization of gender equality.

Firstly, the traditional division of family roles remains a central concern. In many households, the prevailing belief is that men should serve as the primary income earners, while women are responsible for domestic duties and childcare. This situation may restrict women's economic and social activity. At the same time, increasing levels of education among women and their growing participation in the labor market are gradually transforming this traditional model. Consequently, a new model based on partnership in family relations is emerging.

Secondly, economic factors have a direct impact on gender equality. As women's opportunities to earn income expand, their role in household decision-making also increases. However, in practice, even when women are employed, financial decisions are often still made by men, indicating that gender equality is not yet fully realized. Therefore, alongside strengthening economic independence, household decision-making mechanisms must also be reconsidered based on the principles of equality.

Thirdly, the issue of social stereotypes plays a significant role. Views such as "men as leaders, women as submissive" persist in many families. These stereotypes not only limit women's opportunities but also impose excessive social pressure on men. For example, the expectation that men must always be the primary financial providers can negatively affect their psychological well-being. Thus, ensuring gender equality is essential not only for women but for all members of society.

Fourthly, family conflicts and domestic violence require particular attention. When principles of equality and mutual respect are violated within a family, the likelihood of conflict increases. Conversely, gender-equal relationships reinforce mutual respect, trust, and cooperation. From this perspective, gender equality is a critical condition for ensuring family stability.

Fifthly, education and moral upbringing constitute important factors. Raising the younger generation in the spirit of gender equality can help create more equitable and just family relations in the future. Expanding knowledge of gender issues within school and higher education systems serves to strengthen equality principles in young people's consciousness. Simultaneously, promoting gender equality ideas through mass media and social networks plays a crucial role.

Sixthly, regional disparities must also be considered. While urban areas tend to adopt more modern perspectives on gender equality, traditional values remain stronger in rural regions. This underscores the need for a differentiated approach to implementing gender policies across regions.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that ensuring gender equality in family relations requires a comprehensive approach. Legal foundations, economic opportunities, social awareness, and cultural values must develop in harmony. Only through such an integrated approach can genuine gender equality be achieved and sustainable family relations be established.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

The conducted analyses indicate that ensuring gender equality in family relations constitutes one of the key factors for sustainable societal development and the establishment of social justice. Although significant positive changes have been observed in recent years, certain challenges remain in fully realizing gender equality within family life. In particular, traditional stereotypes, the unequal division of household labor, and disparities in economic opportunities negatively affect this process. The analysis also reveals that the increasing educational attainment and economic activity of women contribute to strengthening their position within the family. At the same time, the principles of equality in family decision-making have not yet been fully established, and in some cases, men's dominant position persists. This demonstrates that legal frameworks alone are insufficient to ensure gender equality; social awareness and cultural perspectives must also be transformed.

In this regard, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthen the promotion of gender equality within family relations by broadly disseminating equality principles through mass media and social networks.
2. Support women's economic activity by engaging them in entrepreneurship and expanding employment opportunities, thereby reinforcing their status within the family.
3. Increase men's participation in family life, particularly through social campaigns promoting equitable distribution of childcare and household responsibilities.
4. Expand gender equality education within the educational system and cultivate young people in the spirit of equality and mutual respect.
5. Develop systems for preventing family conflicts and providing psychological support to foster a healthy and sustainable family environment.

In conclusion, ensuring gender equality in family relations requires a comprehensive approach. Legal, economic, and social factors must evolve in harmony. Only through such an integrated approach can society establish sustainable, healthy, and equitable family relations.

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