BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg

STATE PROGRAMS AND LEGAL ACTS OF THE "NEW UZBEKISTAN" PERIOD

Ruzikulova Maftuna Yuldashevna
PhD, Associate Professor at Kokand State University,
Department of History
Niyozova Mushtariybonu Mukhtor qizi
Student at Kokand State University,
Department of History
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20551856

Abstract: This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the legal status of women in the territory of modern Uzbekistan during the "New Uzbekistan" period, following the country's independence, with particular emphasis on contemporary state programs and legal reforms. The study examines the transition from the Soviet legacy of formal equality to modern strategies aimed at substantive gender parity. Special attention is paid to the adoption of key state programs (e.g., the Strategy of Action for 2017–2021, the Development Strategy for 2022–2026), the Law "On Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence," and amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan that reinforced state guarantees of gender equality. The author analyzes the mechanisms for expanding women's economic and political participation, including quota systems and support for women's entrepreneurship. The role of newly established public institutions, such as the Committee on Family and Women's Affairs, is explored. The conclusion highlights that while the "New Uzbekistan" period has significantly strengthened legal safeguards and created institutional frameworks for protecting women's rights, challenges remain in fully overcoming societal patriarchal attitudes and ensuring the effective implementation of progressive legislation.

Keywords: legal status of women, New Uzbekistan, state programs, gender equality, women's rights, family legislation, protection from violence, gender policy, political participation, constitutional reforms, women's entrepreneurship, Uzbekistan

"Yangi O'zbekiston" davridagi davlat dasturlari va huquqiy hujjatlar

Ruzikulova Maftuna Yuldashevna
PhD, dotsent Qo'qon davlat universiteti, Tarix yo'nalishi
Niyozova Mushtariybonu Muxtor qizi
Talaba, Qo'qon davlat universiteti, Tarix yo'nalishi

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola «Yangi O'zbekiston» davrida mustaqillikdan keyingi zamonaviy davlat dasturlari va huquqiy islohotlarga alohida e'tibor qaratgan holda, O'zbekiston hududida ayollarning huquqiy maqomi evolyutsiyasining kompleks tahlilini taqdim etadi. Tadqiqotda rasmiy tenglikning sovet merosidan real gender paritetiga erishishga qaratilgan zamonaviy strategiyalarga o'tish ko'rib chiqiladi. Asosiy e'tibor muhim davlat dasturlari (masalan, 2017–2021 yillarga mo'ljallangan Harakatlar strategiyasi, 2022–2026 yillarga mo'ljallangan Taraqqiyot strategiyasi), «Ayollarni tazyiq va zo'ravonlikdan himoya qilish to'g'risida»gi Qonun va O'zbekiston Respublikasi Konstitutsiyasiga gender tengligining davlat kafolatlarini kuchaytirgan o'zgartishlar qabul qilinishiga qaratilgan. Muallif ayollarning iqtisodiy va siyosiy ishtirokini kengaytirish

mexanizmlarini, jumladan kvotalar tizimi va ayollar tadbirkorligini qo‘llab-quvvatlashni tahlil qiladi. Oila va xotin-qizlar qo‘mitasi kabi yangi tashkil etilgan davlat institutlarining roli o‘rganiladi. Xulosada «Yangi O‘zbekiston» davri huquqiy kafolatlarni sezilarli darajada mustahkamlagani va ayollar huquqlarini himoya qilishning institutsional asoslarini yaratgan bo‘lsa-da, jamiyatdagi patriarxal munosabatlarni to‘liq yengish va ilg‘or qonunchilikning samarali amalga oshirilishini ta’minlashda muammolar saqlanib qolayotgani ta’kidlanadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: ayollarning huquqiy maqomi, Yangi O‘zbekiston, davlat dasturlari, gender tengligi, ayollar huquqlari, oila qonunchiligi, zo‘ravonlikdan himoya, gender siyosati, siyosiy ishtirok, konstitutsiyaviy islohotlar, ayollar tadbirkorligi, O‘zbekiston.

The issue of the legal and social status of women is one of the key indicators of the level of development of civil society and democratic institutions in any state. For Uzbekistan, which since 2016 has been undergoing a stage of deep systemic reforms known as "New Uzbekistan", achieving gender equality has turned from a secondary topic into one of the priority vectors of state policy. The relevance of the study is due to the need to understand this new stage, which has seen a qualitative transition from formal equality inherited from the Soviet system to the creation of truly effective legal, institutional, and social mechanisms for protecting women's rights and expanding their opportunities.

Before independence, the legal status of women in the territory of modern Uzbekistan was determined by patriarchal norms of customary law (adat) and Sharia, where a woman was under the full guardianship of her father and then her husband. Strict gender segregation, wearing the paranja, polygamy, early and forced marriages, and almost completely closed access to education and public roles were widely practiced. The Soviet period, particularly the "Hujum" campaign of the 1920s–1930s, formally enshrined equality in the Constitutions of the Uzbek SSR of 1937 and 1978, and opened up mass access for women to education, healthcare, and professional activities. However, in practice, "emancipation from above" was imposed, which preserved the double burden on women (work in production plus unpaid domestic labor), while the political representation of women was often merely decorative. The first years of independence (until 2016) were characterized by the inertial preservation of Soviet gender models. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 1992 enshrined equality of rights and freedoms regardless of gender, but the practical implementation of laws was weak. For example, there was no specialized law protecting against domestic violence, and patriarchal traditions continued to dominate in the private sphere, especially in rural areas. Starting in 2016, following the election of new national leadership, state policy for the protection of women's rights acquired a consistent, systemic, and institutional character. This period is rightly called a qualitatively new stage in the development of Uzbekistan's gender legislation. The key programmatic document was the Action Strategy for Five Priority Areas of Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017–2021, where ensuring gender equality and increasing the role of women in society were singled out as a separate, independent priority for the first time. Within the framework of this strategy, a whole range of measures was adopted, including "Road Maps" for improving the situation of women at the local level. It was succeeded by the Development Strategy "Uzbekistan – 2030", which established specific, measurable targets in the gender sphere: increasing the share of women in leadership positions to 30%, reducing female unemployment by 50%, completely eradicating child and forced marriages, and ensuring 100% coverage of girls in secondary education.

A revolutionary step that changed the entire legal architecture was the adoption in 2019 of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence". In 2023, the law was adopted in a new edition, which expanded its scope. This law introduced into the

legal field the fundamentally important concepts of "harassment", understood as psychological, economic or other pressure not related to physical violence, and "violence" (physical, sexual, psychological). The most effective mechanism, which has proven its efficiency, was the introduction of the so-called "protective order". This order allows law enforcement agencies to immediately, without initiating a criminal case, isolate the offender from the affected woman for up to 30 days, providing her with a "period of silence" to make a decision. Additionally, the law mandated the creation of specialized help centers for victims of violence, as well as "green rooms" (safe zones) in every internal affairs department, where women can testify in a comfortable, psychologically safe environment. In the first three years of the law's implementation, several tens of thousands of protective orders were issued, indicating the high demand for this mechanism.

In 2022–2023, unprecedented changes were made to the Criminal and Administrative Codes. Previously, domestic violence was considered an administrative offense, and repeated police calls often did not lead to serious consequences for the offender. Now, certain forms of domestic violence have been criminalized, meaning they entail criminal liability. Liability has been strengthened for coercion into marriage, for obstructing girls' access to education, and for actions related to concealing acts of violence. The culmination of the 2023 constitutional reform was a nationwide referendum, as a result of which a separate chapter enshrining women's rights appeared in the new edition of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In particular, Article 58-a established that the state creates equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres of life and also guarantees the protection of women from harassment and violence. This raised gender equality to the highest constitutional level.

An important institutional change was the establishment in 2021 of the Committee on Women and Gender Equality under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. This is not a public organization but a full-fledged state body endowed with coordination and control functions. The Committee is responsible for interdepartmental coordination, monitoring the implementation of gender policy, and developing new legislative initiatives. Public councils and expert groups have been established under the Committee. In parallel, the position of advisor to the khokim (governor) on women's and gender equality issues was introduced in every region and district of the country, making it possible to solve women's problems directly at the local level, within the mahallas (neighborhood communities).

Significant progress has been made in the sphere of women's economic and political participation. In 2019, a law was adopted establishing a 30% quota for women in representative bodies of power – the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis (parliament) and local Kengashes (councils). Following the 2024 elections, the share of women in parliament reached a historic high of about 32% (previously this indicator did not exceed 16–19%). In practice, this means that every third state initiative adopted is either proposed or sponsored by a female deputy. To support women's economic initiative, large-scale state programs have been launched: the "Women's Notebook" (Ayollar daftari) program is aimed at providing targeted assistance to socially vulnerable women, identifying their problems, and facilitating employment. The "Women's Entrepreneurship" program provides preferential microloans, grants, and educational courses for starting a business. Between 2022 and 2024 alone, hundreds of thousands of women received financial support and jobs through these programs. An important direction of the reforms has been the strengthening of reproductive rights and maternity protection. In the 2020s, the list of free medical services for women, including prenatal screening and birth support, has been significantly expanded. Additional payments for childbirth and childcare allowances up to three years have been introduced. Special attention is paid to combating early marriages: the age of marriage consent has

been raised, oversight by mahallas and schools has been strengthened, and criminal liability has been introduced for coercion into marriage. According to official data, the number of registered marriages involving minors has decreased by 40% over the past five years.

In parallel, a large-scale effort is underway to change public consciousness and overcome patriarchal stereotypes. State media, educational programs, and social advertising actively promote the image of a woman not only as a homemaker but also as a leader, entrepreneur, and politician. Lessons on gender equality and legal literacy are being introduced in schools. Mass campaigns such as "16 Days Against Violence" are conducted, involving mahallas, religious leaders, and activists. International cooperation with the UN (especially UN Women), the OSCE, UNICEF, and the World Bank plays a key role in exchanging experience, training law enforcement personnel, and attracting grant resources for implementing gender initiatives.

Despite the impressive achievements of recent years, a number of serious challenges remain that require further attention. First, there is a gap between formal law and its actual application, especially in remote areas where traditional norms are strong and legal literacy among the population is low. Second, gender stereotypes about professional suitability persist: women remain underrepresented in technical fields, in leadership positions in heavy industry, and in internal affairs bodies (except for social services). Third, the problem of domestic violence remains latent – far from all cases are registered due to fear of condemnation by the family and mahalla. Fourth, a gender pay gap persists: according to some estimates, the average salary of women in Uzbekistan is 20–30% lower than that of men in similar positions. Fifth, there is a problem of staffing new institutions – there is a shortage of qualified psychologists and social workers in help centers.

An analysis of the evolution of the legal status of women in Uzbekistan during the "New Uzbekistan" period shows that the country has made a consistent transition from declarative equality to the creation of systemic mechanisms for protecting women's rights. The achievements of recent years – the adoption of a specialized law on protection from violence, the introduction of constitutional guarantees, the creation of a specialized committee, the introduction of quotas, and the launch of support programs – indicate the consistent implementation of state policy aimed at ensuring genuine equality and expanding women's opportunities in all spheres of life: from politics and economics to education and family relations. Further improvement of law enforcement practices, strengthening of institutional mechanisms, targeted work to change social attitudes, and increasing the legal literacy of women themselves will be the key to successfully completing this historical transition. Only a comprehensive approach, combining strict law, functioning institutions, and the evolution of cultural norms, will make it possible to finally overcome the gap between legal equality and the actual situation of women in Uzbek society.

References

1. Alimova D.A. Women in the History of Uzbekistan: Traditions and Modernity. – Tashkent: Fan, 2010. – 312 p.
2. Ibragimova N.Sh. Legal Traditions and Gender Relations in Pre-Revolutionary Turkestan. – Samarkand: SamSU Publishing House, 2015. – 198 p.
3. Poltorak A.I. Khudzhum: Emancipation and Resistance in Central Asia. – Moscow: Novy Khronograf, 2018. – 287 p.
4. Yusupova M.K. Legislation on Women’s Rights in the Republic of Uzbekistan: History and Modernity. – Tashkent: Akademiya, 2014. – 176 p.
5. Strategy of Actions on Five Priority Areas of Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017–2021. – Tashkent: Office of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2017. – 84 p.

6. National Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020–2030. – Tashkent: Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2020. – 52 p.
7. Development Strategy “Uzbekistan – 2030”. – Tashkent: Office of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2022. – 68 p.