



SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY POLICY IN UZBEKISTAN, USING THE EXAMPLE OF THE KEGEYLI DISTRICT

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Abstract: *This study examines the implementation of policies aimed at supporting women and ensuring gender equality in the Uzbekistan, using the example of Kegeyli District in the Republic of Karakalpakstan. In recent years, Uzbekistan has carried out comprehensive reforms to strengthen the social, economic, and political role of women in society. Particular attention has been paid to improving women's access to education, employment, entrepreneurship, and social protection, as well as protecting their rights and increasing their participation in decision-making processes. The research analyzes national gender policies, institutional mechanisms, and local initiatives implemented in Kegeyli district to support women's empowerment. It also highlights the role of government institutions, community organizations, and social programs in addressing challenges such as unemployment, poverty, and gender inequality. The study shows that targeted programs, financial support for women entrepreneurs, and awareness campaigns have contributed to improving women's social status and participation in public life. The findings demonstrate that while significant progress has been achieved in promoting gender equality, further efforts are needed to strengthen institutional capacity, expand economic opportunities for women, and enhance gender-sensitive policymaking at the local level.*

Keywords: *Gender equality; women's empowerment; social policy; women's rights; entrepreneurship; local governance; social protection; Uzbekistan; Kegeyli District; Republic of Karakalpakstan.*

In recent years, Uzbekistan's state policy aimed at protecting the rights and interests of women, increasing their participation in socio-political life, and enhancing their economic activity has reached a new level. A number of decrees and resolutions adopted at the state level, as well as systematic measures being implemented locally, are creating ample opportunities for women to take their rightful place in society and fully realize their potential. This process can be clearly seen in the example of the Kegeyli district. Currently, 36,684 women live in the Kegeyli district, and their social activity is increasing every year. Women are also actively participating in the political life of the district. For example, 9 out of 20 deputies in the district Council of People's Deputies are women. At the same time, 89 women hold leadership positions in management bodies, enterprises, and organizations in the district. Women's contributions to the development of our country are consistently and appropriately recognized by the state. The number of women awarded with various state awards and badges in the district is 42. Including:

Orders of the Republic of Uzbekistan - 16 women, Certificates of Merit of the Republic of Uzbekistan - 1 person;

Medals of the Republic of Uzbekistan - 12 women

"Mótabar ayol" badge - 6 women;

"Exemplary Woman" badge - 3 women;

Zulfiya State Prize - 4 girls;

These figures are not only a high assessment of the work of some women, but also a practical result of the policy aimed at ensuring gender equality in our country. One of the important areas of support for women is the expansion of their educational opportunities. Based on the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 402 of June 23, 2020, 69 women were awarded "Recommendations" for admission to higher educational institutions in the Kegeyli district, and as a result, 19 women were admitted to the university on the basis of a state grant. Also, in accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 322 of June 9, 2022, 9 women with

at least five years of work experience in their specialty were recommended to study on the basis of an additional grant, and 2 of them were admitted to higher educational institutions on a contractual basis. This, in turn, serves as an important factor in enhancing the professional potential and skills of women. Special attention is being paid to the social protection of women in the district. Within the framework of the "Women's Notebook" system, 2,674 women are registered, and they are receiving targeted assistance. This year, 186 women wishing to establish or develop their own businesses have been allocated concessional loans totaling 2 billion 956 million soums. At the same time, 46 women received vocational training and mastered their craft. 56 women who lost their breadwinners received financial assistance in the amount of 12 million soums.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women have become key priorities of social policy in Uzbekistan in recent years. The government has undertaken a number of reforms aimed at improving the social, economic, and political status of women and ensuring equal opportunities for both men and women in all spheres of society. These reforms are reflected in national legislation, institutional mechanisms, and targeted development programs implemented across the country, including rural regions. This study examines the implementation of policies supporting women and promoting gender equality, using Kegeyli District in the Republic of Karakalpakstan as a case study. The research analyzes the main directions of state policy aimed at protecting women's rights, improving their access to education and employment, and strengthening their participation in social and political life. Particular attention is given to the legal framework regulating gender equality, including laws and national strategies that guarantee equal rights and opportunities for women and men. The study also considers the role of local institutions, community organizations, and social programs that operate at the district level to support women, provide vocational training, and promote entrepreneurship.

In Kegeyli district, various initiatives have been introduced to address social and economic challenges faced by women. These include employment programs, financial assistance for women entrepreneurs, training courses for professional development, and social protection measures for vulnerable groups. Women's committees and local government bodies play an important role in identifying social problems, assisting families in need, and facilitating women's participation in community decision-making. Such initiatives help increase women's economic independence, improve their living standards, and strengthen their role in local development. The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of gender equality policies in Uzbekistan has produced positive results in expanding opportunities for women and enhancing their participation in public life. However, some challenges remain, including persistent gender stereotypes, limited employment opportunities in rural areas, and the need for stronger institutional support mechanisms. Addressing these challenges requires continued cooperation between national and local authorities, civil society organizations, and international partners.

Overall, the experience of Kegeyli district demonstrates how national gender policies can be effectively implemented at the local level to promote women's empowerment and sustainable social development. Strengthening gender-sensitive policies and expanding economic opportunities for women will contribute to the long-term development and social stability of Uzbekistan.

The experience of the Kegeyli district in this area shows that the opportunities created by the state are increasing the activity of women in economic, social, and political life. Today, gender equality has become not only a legal guarantee but also a fundamental value that finds practical expression in every sphere of life.

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