



Women's rights in Central Asia: a comparative historical analysis

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ABSTRACT

Gender equality is not just a human right, it is a great opportunity for society to overcome some of the most pressing challenges of our time, from economic crises and global pandemics to climate change and rising poverty. Being disproportionately affected by these issues, women have the ideas and leadership to address them. This article provides a brief analysis of the modern development of women's rights in the post-Soviet space, Central Asia. In brief, such countries as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan are compared with each other

Keywords:

gender equality, human rights, women's rights, gender inequality index, Central Asia

In addition to being a fundamental human right, gender equality provides society with a fantastic opportunity to address some of the most important issues of our time, such as global pandemics, economic crises, climate change, and rising poverty. Women have the solutions and leadership to deal with these problems because they are disproportionately affected by them.

One tool widely used to measure gender is the Gender Inequality Index (GII), which measures gender inequality in three important dimensions of human development – reproductive health, as measured by maternal mortality and adolescent birth rates; the presence of representation and opportunity, as measured by the proportion of parliamentary seats held by women and the proportion of adult women and men aged 25 and over with at least a secondary education; and economic status, as measured by labor force participation rates of women and men aged 15 and over.

The situation for the Central Asian region is characterized by the fact that Kazakhstan leads the ranking in terms of gender equality, ranking 44th out of 162 in the world ranking. This also

makes Kazakhstan the only country in the region placed in the first category of the list – “very high human development”. The closest neighbor is Uzbekistan, which ranks 62nd in the world ranking of gender equality. Tajikistan is next on the list, ranking 70th. Kyrgyzstan ranks 82nd in the world in terms of gender equality. Unfortunately, the GII does not have sufficient data on Turkmenistan, which is why it is not included in the list. Uzbekistan, which ranks second in the GII ranking in Central Asia, is in the second HDI category - "high human development". In terms of GII criteria, three out of five categories drag Uzbekistan down: maternal mortality, the proportion of women in parliament, and teenage births. However, out of the three, Uzbekistan is still the best in the Central Asian region in terms of teen births, with a birth rate of 23.79 per 1,000 people.

In 2019, Kyrgyzstan passed a law guaranteeing at least 30% of seats for women in local elections, which resulted in the election of women chairmen in 43 local keneshes, and the representation of women in local government leadership also increased markedly. In Tajikistan, following the results of the 2020

parliamentary elections, the representation of women in the lower house of parliament increased from 19% to 23.8%, in the upper house of parliament - from 18.7% to 25.8%. In Uzbekistan, the representation of women at the highest levels of government has reached 26.6%. Uzbekistan has formed a solid personnel reserve of 15,000 advanced, highly educated women to work in government structures.

During the Soviet period, the state promoted a telling story of its own achievements in liberating women from what were thought to be the heavy shackles of sharia and local customs. Often, however, they kept silent about the role played in the modernization of Islam by the Jadid movement, led by well-known figures of the traditional persuasion, which almost half a century anticipated the efforts of the Soviet authorities to reform society and the position of women in it. The main emphasis in the Jadids' approach to the "women's issue" was placed on equality and the secular education of women as a necessary prerequisite for the renewal and progressive development of the nation.

The development of huge human potential, although debatable, is declared in the reforms of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev as a priority. Sh. Mirziyoyev actively raises issues of gender equality in Uzbekistan. The adopted Action Strategy for five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021. highlights in the block of development of the social sphere the task of increasing the socio-political activity of women, strengthening their role in governing the state and society, ensuring the employment of women, graduates of professional colleges, their wide involvement in entrepreneurial activities, and further strengthening the foundations of the family.

In 2018, by presidential decree under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the scientific and practical research center "Oila" ("family" in translation from Uzbek) was established, the purpose of which was to pursue a unified state policy in the field of strengthening the institution of the family. In 2019, in accordance with the Decree of the

President of Uzbekistan "On measures to further strengthen guarantees of labor rights and support for women's entrepreneurial activities", a Commission on Ensuring Gender Equality of the Republic of Uzbekistan is being created. Also in 2019, legislative reforms of a breakthrough nature were carried out: the laws "On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men" and "On the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence" were adopted, the Committee of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis on Women and Gender Equality was formed, a draft gender equality strategies.

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