THE HISTORY OF WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES IN THE CULTURAL SPHERE OF UZBEKISTAN DURING THE INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

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Abstract *This article examines the history of women's participation and activities in the cultural sphere of Uzbekistan during the years of independence. It analyzes the role of women in the development of culture, art, literature, education, and social initiatives, as well as the opportunities created for their professional and creative growth. The study highlights the contribution of women to the preservation of national cultural heritage and the formation of modern cultural values in independent Uzbekistan.*

Keywords: *women, Uzbekistan, independence period, cultural sphere, gender equality, women's organizations, national heritage, education, traditions, social activity.*

The independence of Uzbekistan opened a new historical stage in the development of society. During this period, significant attention was paid to increasing the role of women in social, cultural, political, and economic processes. Women's intellectual potential, creative abilities, and contribution to the development of national culture became important factors in the modernization of society.

After independence, the state created new legal and institutional mechanisms to protect women's rights and expand their opportunities. The establishment of the Republican Women's Committee, the introduction of the Zulfiya State Award, and the organization of thematic years such as the "Year of the Family", "Year of Women", "Year of a Healthy Generation", and "Year of Mother and Child" became important examples of state support for women's development [1].

Women have always played a significant role in the preservation and transmission of cultural values. In Uzbek society, women traditionally acted as guardians of family traditions, national customs, language, and moral principles. During the independence period, their role expanded beyond the family sphere and became an important part of cultural, educational, and social development.

The intellectual and spiritual development of women is directly connected with the progress of society. Equal participation of women and men in social life contributes to democratic development, social stability, and economic growth. Therefore, gender equality has become one of the priorities of public policy in Uzbekistan.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” established legal foundations for ensuring equal opportunities in various fields of social life. The Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 also defines the expansion of women’s participation in cultural, educational, scientific, and decision-making processes as an important objective [2].

International documents have also influenced the development of women’s rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948 established the principle of equality of all people regardless of gender. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, became one of the major international legal instruments protecting women’s rights [3].

In independent Uzbekistan, women’s cultural activity has developed in several directions: participation in education, literature, art, scientific research, handicrafts, national traditions, and social initiatives. Women artists, writers, teachers, researchers, and cultural workers have made a significant contribution to the development of national culture.

The cultural activity of women should be studied not only as a social phenomenon but also as an important part of the history of independent Uzbekistan. The experience of the independence period demonstrates that women’s participation

in cultural processes strengthens national identity, preserves historical heritage, and contributes to the spiritual development of society.

After gaining independence, Uzbekistan began to form a new approach toward the role of women in society. The protection of women's rights, improvement of their social status, and expansion of opportunities for their participation in public life became important directions of state policy.

One of the first institutional steps was the establishment of the Republican Women's Committee, which played an important role in coordinating activities related to women's social protection, education, cultural development, and professional growth. The creation of the Zulfiya State Award also became an important incentive for supporting talented young women in literature, culture, art, education, and other fields [5].

The policy of supporting women was closely connected with the idea of building a democratic and socially oriented state. Equal rights and opportunities for women and men were recognized as an important condition for the sustainable development of society. The state policy in this field was based on the principles of protecting women's interests, supporting their initiatives, and ensuring their active participation in social processes.

During the independence period, a number of national programs were implemented to support women and families. The declaration of thematic years, including the "Year of the Family", "Year of Women", "Year of a Healthy Generation", and "Year of Mother and Child", demonstrated the importance attached to women's role in society and cultural development [8].

The adoption of legal documents aimed at ensuring gender equality created a new legal framework for women's participation in various spheres. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men" defined the legal mechanisms for preventing discrimination and ensuring equal participation of women and men in social life [9].

The Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 further strengthened these directions. It emphasizes increasing women's

participation in decision-making processes, education, employment, cultural activities, and social development [11].

Thus, state policy during the independence period created favorable conditions for women's cultural activity and encouraged their participation in the development of national values and modern cultural processes.

Education has always been one of the main areas where women have demonstrated significant activity. During the years of independence, women's access to higher education and professional development opportunities increased. Female teachers, researchers, artists, writers, and cultural workers contributed greatly to the intellectual and spiritual development of society.

Women's participation in literature and art became an important part of cultural development. Female writers, poets, musicians, and artists continued national traditions while introducing new ideas into contemporary culture. Their creative works reflected social changes, national identity, family values, and moral principles.

The role of women in preserving national heritage is especially important. Uzbek women have traditionally been responsible for maintaining cultural traditions within families and communities. Through handicrafts, embroidery, traditional clothing, folk art, and family customs, women contributed to the preservation of cultural identity[6].

During the independence period, traditional handicrafts received new attention. Women actively participated in the revival and development of embroidery, sewing, carpet making, and other forms of applied art. These activities not only preserved cultural heritage but also created opportunities for women's employment and entrepreneurship.

Educational programs aimed at preparing young women for social and family life also played an important role. Various training courses and clubs were organized to improve girls' knowledge, professional skills, legal awareness, and cultural education. These programs included sewing, handicrafts, cooking, family economics, and other practical skills [7].

Women's organizations cooperated with educational institutions and local communities to organize cultural and educational events. In different regions of Uzbekistan, seminars, meetings, discussions, and competitions were held to promote national traditions and moral values among young people [15].

The role of historical female figures also remains important in modern cultural education. Uzbek history includes many outstanding women such as Nodirabegim, Jahon Otin Uvaysiy, Anbar Otin, and Nozimaxonim, who contributed to literature, enlightenment, and women's education. Their intellectual heritage continues to influence modern views on women's education and cultural participation [14].

Women's organizations have played a significant role in increasing women's cultural and social activity in independent Uzbekistan. Their activities focused on protecting women's interests, supporting education, developing professional skills, and strengthening family and moral values.

Local women's organizations conducted various educational and cultural programs. These initiatives aimed to increase women's knowledge, promote healthy lifestyles, develop professional skills, and encourage participation in community life.

Programs dedicated to preparing girls for family and independent life were implemented through cooperation between women's committees, educational institutions, and healthcare organizations. These programs emphasized cultural education, responsibility, legal awareness, and professional preparation [12].

In regional areas, numerous cultural and educational events were organized. For example, women's committees conducted meetings, seminars, discussions, and competitions devoted to national traditions, family values, and women's rights. Such activities involved thousands of women and young people and contributed to increasing social awareness [10].

The role of women as transmitters of cultural and spiritual values remains significant. Through participation in social initiatives, women contribute to strengthening national identity, educating younger generations, and maintaining

social stability.

The development of women's activity in independent Uzbekistan demonstrates that cultural progress is closely connected with the active participation of women. Their contribution covers not only artistic and educational spheres but also the preservation of historical memory and national traditions.

CONCLUSION

The period of independence has become an important stage in the history of women's cultural and social activities in Uzbekistan. During this period, women's participation in various spheres of society significantly expanded, and their role in the development of culture, education, literature, art, and preservation of national traditions increased.

The establishment of women's organizations, state awards, and special programs created new opportunities for women to demonstrate their intellectual, creative, and professional abilities. The activities of institutions such as the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan and the Zulfiya State Award contributed to supporting talented women and increasing their participation in cultural processes.

The implementation of gender equality policies became one of the important factors in ensuring women's rights and opportunities. Legal reforms, including the adoption of the Law "On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men", strengthened the legal foundations for women's participation in social and cultural life .

Women have played an important role in preserving Uzbekistan's cultural heritage. Through education, literature, art, handicrafts, and family traditions, women have contributed to maintaining national identity and transmitting cultural values to future generations. The activities of modern women in cultural institutions, educational organizations, and creative fields demonstrate the continuity between historical traditions and contemporary development.

The historical experience of independent Uzbekistan shows that women's participation is not limited to social issues but represents an important element of cultural development. Supporting women's intellectual and creative potential

contributes to the development of society, strengthening national values, and promoting cultural progress.

Therefore, the history of women's activities in the cultural sphere during the independence period should be considered as an important part of Uzbekistan's modern history. Further research in this field will help to better understand the contribution of women to the cultural and spiritual development of the country.

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