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POLITICAL STATUS OF WOMEN: NATIONAL AND FOREIGN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract: This article analyzes the socio-legal aspects of women's political status based on Uzbekistan and foreign experience. In particular, the rights, duties and opportunities of women in public administration and civil service were studied on the basis of the legislation of developed countries and international agreements. Several mechanisms have also been proposed to increase and support women's participation in politics.

Keywords: gender equality, political rights, election, political participation, women's activity, political party, "The White Paper on Singapore Women's Development".

Gender equality is a fundamental human right, which means that men and women have equal and equal opportunities and potential for development in all areas of life. For a long time, politics was the preserve of men, and women stayed away from politics for centuries. There has always been debate about whether women can be political leaders and hold high positions in politics. Governments believed that only men should dominate the political arena, and women were underrepresented in power due to a number of problems they faced in a male-dominated society. Factors such as culture and gender inequality are the main factors that significantly influence women's participation in political life. Culture mainly affects the role of women because their status, role and behavior is determined by the society that excludes women from the political arena. However, the number of women holding political positions is now increasing.

Nowadays, in many countries of the world, especially in developed countries that promote gender equality, women occupy leadership positions in public administration. A functioning democracy requires equal participation of men and women in the political arena. Therefore, the active and equal participation of women in politics is considered an essential condition of a true democracy, as such democracy helps to establish the principle of a society for all, in which all citizens have the right to vote and participate in elections. And the government protects the interests of citizens. Recognition of this principle is necessary to ensure human rights in all democracies. Women have a great influence on international politics and the political culture of society. They actively participate in solving many issues arising in the life of the society. In addition, the range of problems is not limited to gender issues, but covers almost all areas of modern civilization. In general, gender equality policy is an equitable policy that takes equal and fair consideration of the interests of women and men. Women play an important role in modern society and women's participation in politics is no longer a topic of discussion. Women's struggles for their rights over the centuries show that women's empowerment is a priority. For this reason, governments around the world promote gender equality and ensure women's

access to political power. According to most experts, *the 21st century is the era of women's politics and gender democracy*¹.

Women's political activity is characterized by indicators such as the number of women in national and local legislative bodies, the number of women in state and other public authorities. It is necessary to distinguish between the concepts of "women's political rights" and their "political opportunities": the first refers to electoral rights, the second to women's political influence, the sum of social opportunities to use power and institutions of power.

According to the Convention "On the Political Rights of Women" adopted by the UN on December 20, 1952, women have the right to vote and be elected in all elections, without any discrimination, under equal conditions with men, to hold all public and public service positions in accordance with the procedure established by national legislation, and have the right to implement them².

Women in the Commonwealth of Nations are playing an increasingly important role in addressing issues of sustainable economic development, the global climate agenda, new approaches to education, and defining equitable principles of the social support system, among other important areas of life.

Their activeness in searching for answers to global and local problems, their active participation in all spheres serves common interests, serves the maximum development of human potential. Equal participation of women in political processes is important for the development of a free society. Women deputies have a special place in this way.

In Commonwealth parliaments, women make up between 16 and 40 percent of deputies and senators. In a number of CIS countries, appropriate quotas are provided for when forming legislative bodies³.

Thus, 30% of the seats in the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia are reserved for women. If this requirement is not met, state funding for parties is reduced in proportion to the gender imbalance in the party. In Kazakhstan, there is a 30% quota for candidates on party lists and in the distribution of mandates for women, youth and persons with disabilities. 30% of candidates on party lists and in the distribution of mandates by parties is assigned by law to women in Uzbekistan (According to articles 70 and 91 of the Election Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the number of women should be at least thirty percent of the total number of candidates for deputy from a political party).

Gender issues are an integral part of the political agenda of the Commonwealth countries. At the legislative level, mechanisms for protecting the civil, political, economic and social rights of women have been created and are constantly being improved.

Since the first years of its work, the CIS Inter parliamentary Assembly has been paying attention to issues of gender equality, family protection, motherhood and

¹ <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/vliyanie-gendera-na-politicheskuyu-sotsializatsiyu-molodyozhi>

² This Convention was joined based on the decision of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated August 30, 1997 No. 501-I "On Accession to the Convention on the Political Rights of Women".

³ https://iacis.ru/novosti/mezhparlamentskaya_assambleya_zhenshini_v_parlamentah_sodruzhestva

childhood, and reproductive health of citizens. The Assembly adopted a number of model laws, recommendations and concepts in this area.

The Charter of Social Rights and Guarantees of Citizens of Independent States (adopted in 1994) represents all the main directions of harmonization of national legislation of the Commonwealth countries in the context of social development of society. The main sections of the Charter served as the basis for the development of model legislative acts regulating the formation of social policies of states, and, in turn, for the preparation of a national legislative framework in the social sphere.

In 2005, a model law “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women” was adopted. The document, prepared by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, formed the basis for the laws “On Gender Equality” in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Moldova.

The preparation of the IPA CIS model law “On the protection of reproductive rights and reproductive health of citizens” was carried out jointly with the United Nations Population Fund. International experts from the European and Asian Parliamentary Forums on Population, the European Center for Reproductive Rights, and the International Federation for Responsible Parenthood also took part in the discussion of the document. The model law was adopted by the IPA CIS in 2014.

Close cooperation links the IPA CIS, the IPA CIS Permanent Commission on Social Policy and Human Rights with the international organization UN Women.

During the reforms implemented in Uzbekistan, to ensure the effective implementation of the state policy to support women, to protect their rights and legal interests, to increase their role and activity in the social and political life of the country, to guarantee equal rights and opportunities for women and men - provision is one of the priority tasks.

50% of the population of Uzbekistan, of which 29% are under 14 years old, 28% are 15-30 years old, 21% are 31-45 years old, 15% are 46-60 years old, and 7% are women over 60 years old.

According to the information of the Central Election Commission, this requirement was complied with by the political parties in the process of nominating candidates in the elections of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis and local Councils held on December 22, 2019. In particular, 750 candidates from 150 constituencies were registered, of which 41.4% (310) were women.

There are 48 women (32%) deputies in the lower house of parliament, and 24 women (24%) senators in the upper house. 247 (30%) of newly elected deputies to the Dzhokorgi Council, People's Deputies of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Tashkent city councils, 1,422 (25%) women are working in district and city councils⁴.

However, despite the ongoing reforms, the role of women in public administration remains low. In particular, President Sh. At the meeting of video selectors held on March 2, 2022 under the chairmanship of Mirziyoyev, it was noted that the percentage of women leaders working in state offices does not exceed 10

⁴ <https://saylov.uz/uz/docs/markaziy-saylov-komissiyasining-saylov-2019-yutuqlar-muammolar-takliflar-yakuniy-akhboroti>

percent. Also, the small number of women among the deputies of the local council is the reason why the rights and freedoms of women in the regions and the problems they are suffering are rarely discussed in the councils. As a result, it has been observed in the experiments that women whose rights and freedoms have been violated or who have faced problems in the society explain their issues to female deputies a little easier.

To date, countries such as Spain, Finland and France have 50% of women in management positions. Austria, Belgium and the United States have also seen significant increases in the number of women in government since 2017, to more than 29%. Also, the share of women in Hungary, Korea and Portugal is 18%.

In Finland, there are women's organizations registered as associations in political parties. They take part in the annual meetings of the party, in the election to the management council. The activities of women's organizations in political parties are financed by the state. In practice, spending on "women's activities" is set every four years after parliamentary elections and during coalition government negotiations. Today, these costs make up 10% of the party's political activity funding.

Women in the Austrian civil service are constantly encouraged. According to the Federal Law "On Equal Treatment", the requirement that the share of women in state bodies is not less than 50% is imposed on the employer. If the share of women in the relevant state body is less than 50 percent, women are characterized as underrepresented in that departmental sector. In cases where women are underrepresented, relevant institutions are required to take measures to address this situation by attracting and encouraging women to work. Until this 50 percent threshold is reached, the recruitment and promotion of women requires continued implementation⁵.

Despite the high level of economic and political development, Japanese society still maintains a strong division based on gender, which took root in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, when social stratification deepened in society. In addition, the status of women has not changed much over the centuries - with the exception of the Taisho period (1912-1926), which passed under the slogan of "general democratization" and the emergence of the feminist movement. Only after the Second World War, a new legal framework (1947 Constitution) appeared in Japan, according to which women had equal rights with men. In particular, everyone's equality before the law - equal participation in political, economic and social life was guaranteed.

In 2018, the Law "On Gender Equality in the Political Field" was passed, which called for efforts to achieve as much equality as possible in terms of the number of male and female candidates in elections. However, this law is more of a recommendation in nature as it provides for voluntary actions to increase the percentage of women politicians at the national and local levels.

After the implementation of the law, the first local elections were held in 2019 - they were held throughout the country. As a result, 6 out of 59 governor positions were occupied by women; About 12.7% of those who participated in the prefectural assembly elections were women, and women won 10.4% of the parliamentary seats.

⁵ https://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/1556/Act-on-equal-status-and-equal-rights-of-women-and-men_no-10-2008.pdf

The second election in 2019 was the election to the upper house of the parliament. A total of 104 women applied for seats - 28.1% of the candidates. As a result, they won 28 out of 124 seats - 22.5 percent. In 2019, the percentage of women in the House of Commons was 10.11%, according to the bar chart below⁶.

According to the 2021 Global Gender Gap Report, Japan ranks 120th (out of 156 countries) on the Gender Gap Index. Japan ranks even lower, 147th, on issues of political empowerment.

We can make a general conclusion that currently the role of women in Japanese politics is not very noticeable. Only 3 out of 20 people are female ministers, and the percentage of female deputies in the parliament is also low. There are also few women leaders in political parties.

In fact, Japan has not yet created a competitive environment to support female politicians. Although laws have been enacted to end gender discrimination in politics, they are few. In addition, a quota system equalizing the number of male and female politicians has not yet been introduced.

In the Republic of Singapore, women are constitutionally entitled to equal political rights with men. However, the percentage of women represented in government is not proportional to the country's female population. Of the 84 members of parliament, 23 are women (24.47%).

Although women make up 42% of Singapore's workforce, they mostly occupy low-paid positions. Women's total wages are on average only 75% of the male population's total wages (60% ten years ago). Women gained the right to vote in Singapore in 1947.

In the Singapore Public Service, women are appointed to leadership and decision-making positions based on the principles of equal opportunity and meritocracy. These principles also apply to selection for talent and leadership development programmes in the public sector. The Public Service Division of the Prime Minister's Office ensures there is no structural gender bias in our policies and programmes. Candidates, both men and women, are nominated and selected for such programmes based on merits. As part of these talent and leadership development programmes, officers are given equal access to a core set of developmental initiatives that include milestone courses and mentorship/coaching programmes at various stages of their careers to better prepare them for their roles and responsibilities. The White Paper on Singapore Women's Development effects the shared vision of Singaporeans, and outlines concrete actions we are prepared to take collectively, towards a fairer and more inclusive society, where men and women partner each other as equals, and both can pursue their aspirations freely and to the fullest.

The White Paper sets out 25 collective action plans by the Government and the community in five main areas, informed by the insights gained from the Conversations. These action plans effect the whole-of-society effort required to advance Singapore women's development. They aim to support the diverse

⁶ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1262138/japan-number-members-house-of-representatives-by-gender/>

aspirations of and challenges faced by Singapore women at different life-stages, centring around our shared values of fairness, equality, respect and solidarity⁷.

Pursuant to Article 15 of the Law "On Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men" adopted in Iceland, it is necessary to ensure the equal number of men and women when appointing positions in state and local government bodies and councils, if there are more than three representatives in one body, less than 40 percent. there is a requirement not to be. This norm also applies to the management of open joint-stock companies and enterprises owned by the state or municipality.

It is worth noting that at the international level, methods of setting mandatory or voluntary gender quotas or allocating reserve seats for women are widely used to increase the weight of women in parliament. Such requirements are seen as a necessary and effective means of "fast-tracking" women's representation in parliament.

Mandatory candidacy quotas define the minimum percentage of women who must be included in the list of candidates in electoral law. 60 countries and territories around the world use statutory quotas for parliamentary candidates. These quotas are usually a mandatory form of candidate quota formation for all parties.

According to UNDP's recommendation, the state, in turn, can encourage them to ensure gender equality during elections by providing additional financial support to political parties that have seats in parliament and have fulfilled the gender quota. Political parties that fulfill the gender quota will have the opportunity to receive additional funds from the budget to finance their activities and therefore have the motivation to attract women.

Voluntary electoral quotas are becoming increasingly popular in many European countries. According to it, any political party can include gender quotas in its list during elections. For example, in Sweden, many political parties have introduced voluntary party quotas in the form of the rule that "no gender should be less than 40 percent". Voluntary party quotas have significantly increased women's representation in national parliaments in countries as diverse as Australia, Germany, South Africa and the United Kingdom. About 37 countries and territories have one or more parties using voluntary party quotas.

According to the Women's Power Index developed by the Council of Foreign Relations as part of the "Women and Foreign Policy Program", despite the fact that Uzbekistan occupies 78th place out of 193 UN member countries, the share of women in the government was 3%, and in local government bodies specific data on the participation of women is not specified.

Experts say that in 14 out of 193 countries of the world (mainly in European countries), the share of women in government is at least 50%. According to United Nations estimates, the "critical mass" of women in decision-making should be 30%. This level of women's representation was also established by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action⁸.

⁷ WHITE PAPER ON SINGAPORE WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT Towards a fairer and more inclusive society
<https://www.scwo.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/White-Paper-on-Singapore-Womens-Development.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1262138/japan-number-members-house-of-representatives-by-gender/>

As recommended by the UN World Federation, appointing or electing women to local positions will ensure that they have the skills needed for high-level government positions.

A number of countries have developed their own mechanisms and policies to increase the participation of women in politics, and international organizations and institutions such as UNDP, UN Women, OSCE, IHTT, and the European Institute for Gender Equality have developed their recommendations. These include:

Gender policy of political parties. The establishment of quotas within the party shows the important role of political parties in involving women in politics at various stages. For example, since the 1990s, the Malta Labor Party has introduced rules such as a 20% quota for women in the party's electoral lists and one-third (4 out of 12) of party executive committee leaders at the national level. The party's strategy has yielded significant results: two-thirds of Maltese MPs are now women.

By conducting a gender audit in the party, it is possible to determine how the participation of women can help the party in the political arena. As a result of such audits, party programs and policies are developed that give women opportunities for career advancement and social recognition. Among other things, parties are recommended to create various funds to support women with children engaged in political party's work.

Inter-factional associations and groups. Cross-party associations and groups aimed at ensuring gender equality help women to raise important issues in politics, to be recognized in society, to support other female MPs, and to oppose various gender-related discriminations. Such associations are an important platform for mutual support and the development of solutions for gender equality.

Coaching. Fear of "big politics", self-doubt, stereotypes and other factors prevent women from entering politics. Special mentoring programs (including those developed by political parties) help such women learn from more experienced women politicians and improve their skills by becoming assistant female MPs. Mentoring programs can also be useful for women who have already been elected MPs, such programs can help them realize their potential and become leaders rather than MPs.

Training and leadership programs for women. Consideration should also be given to various training and leadership programs for women already in office and women who are just planning their political careers. Such programs not only teach women to understand budgets and draft decisions, but also help them expand their communication skills, gain self-confidence, learn self-defense mechanisms, be assertive, and thus help shape female politicians.

Based on the above, we consider it important to carry out the following activities in order to increase the socio-political activity of women in the society:

Firstly, it is appropriate to carry out scientific and practical research on increasing the political and social activity of women. Also, in determining the research topics, it is appropriate to proceed from the tasks defined in the development strategy of New Uzbekistan to increase the socio-political activity of women;

Secondly, conducting scientific-practical conferences and sociological surveys aimed at increasing the political and social activity of women became important;

Third, take advantage of various interactive services to increase women's chances of becoming members of a political party. It is appropriate for each political party to review the activities of "women's wings" and expand the scope of projects and activities aimed at increasing the political activity of women.

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