



NATIONAL VALUES AND THE DYNAMICS OF GENDER EQUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

This article examines the significance and role of national values in shaping gender equality within the family. Family relationships, formed on the basis of national traditions and culture, play a crucial role in ensuring equality between genders. The study analyzes both the encouraging and restrictive aspects of national values regarding gender equality and explores ways to strengthen gender equality within the family institution. Additionally, the necessity of harmonizing national values with gender equality in modern society is emphasized.

Keywords: National values, gender equality, family, family relations, gender equality, culture, society, gender education.

Introduction

In Uzbekistan today, modern education plays a unique role in achieving gender equality. Several programs and legal documents aimed at improving the educational process have been adopted. Among them are decrees and resolutions by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan focused on ensuring women's rights, particularly promoting gender equality, protecting women from violence and oppression, and strengthening the status of women's entrepreneurship. Additionally, a national strategy on gender equality is planned for adoption.

It is well-known that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, specifically recognizes women's equality. Article 1 of the Declaration states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Furthermore, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by the UN in 1966, highlights in Article 3 that "States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men



and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present Covenant."

However, despite centuries of evolving national values, misunderstandings of these values, along with the misinterpretation and violation of universal social norms by men in private settings, have contributed to gender inequality. The incomplete fulfillment of women's roles in emotional and intimate relationships between spouses, coupled with stereotypes that lead to behavior inconsistent with women's nature, results in discrimination and gender inequality.

Our independent state, having ratified international documents, gives serious attention to the issue of gender equality in its national legislation, in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law. However, despite the existence of legal guarantees for equality between women and men in our national laws, a significant portion of family conflicts arise because men sometimes violate women's rights or fail to recognize them adequately. This situation, in our view, indicates the necessity of studying the ethnopsychological aspects of the problem, exploring why men in Uzbek families do not sufficiently value the rights and opportunities of women, and whether this is influenced by national or psychological factors.

In a renewing Uzbekistan, national-ethnic values have a distinctive influence on the manifestation of gender equality. Such particularities also affect the interactions and communication processes between spouses and the actual realization of gender equality.

Particularly, in front of the elder members of the family, young spouses often do not openly express their feelings and manifestations of affection toward each other. The presence of stereotypes such as "shame" and "blame" in this regard leads to disruptions in the psychological harmony of their interpersonal relationships. This can result in disharmony in neuro-associative connections in their bodies, underdeveloped compatibility in the immune system, imbalances in habits, and disturbances in the "psycho-emotional," "intellectual," "biochemical," "intimate-sexual life," and the biological laws governing the organism's life processes.

The harmonious alignment of husband and wife as a unified organism ensures the overall stability of the family. Traits traditionally associated with femininity include passivity, dependency, emotionality, intuition, irrationality, and empathy. The general gender role of a woman has been understood as encompassing the roles of



“mother,” “wife,” “housekeeper,” and “protector of the family hearth,” and only subsequently as a “worker” or “professional specialist.”

Similarly, the traditional male gender role is characterized as “provider,” “protector,” “professional individual,” and “head of the family,” which later includes the roles of “husband” and “father.”

The analysis of literature related to the topic reveals the presence of stereotypes formed around traditional views that attribute dominance, social activity, aggression, rationalism, and logical thinking primarily to men. In our research, based on the questionnaire by O.L. Kustova, gender-specific demands, standards, norms, characteristics, and personal semantic differences (PSD) related to gender stereotypes describing men and women were studied.

The study identified gender stereotypes existing in the “life-normative” and “ideal-symbolic” senses in both men and women, comparing male and female behavioral models according to the inherent characteristics of each gender. Notably, bipolar statements describing and defining “personal” qualities were used to shape the image of “Woman” during the process of perceiving communicative influence, considering that women often perform psychotherapeutic roles within the family, and the formation of femininity traits is an important factor in gender recognition. The research employed personal semantic differentiation and psychosemantic experimental methods. Empirical results from the analysis identified several key factors:

- General attractiveness factor;
- Independence factor;
- Emotionality-affectivity factor;
- Social status factor;
- Dependence-submission factor;
- Sympathy-empathy factor;
- Femininity factor;
- Masculinity factor;
- Androgyny factor.

Based on statements describing gender qualities and characteristics, the percentage results of men’s and women’s evaluations of themselves and their spouses in “life-normative” and “ideal-symbolic” contexts are reflected in Table 1. The



attractiveness factor included traditionally feminine (“female”) traits, masculine (“male”) traits, and androgynous gender-neutral qualities.

Emotionality, dependence, empathy, and femininity factors reflect traditional views about women, with these characteristics being rated at 70–80% in exemplary families, indicating a high adherence to traditional evaluations. The ideal ratings for these factors ranged from 80 to 98 percent. For masculinity factors, high values corresponded to the men’s elevated status both as individuals and as members of society, including strength, social standing, and modernity, which align with traditional perspectives of the male role. Both families showed high scores for men, ranging between 80 and 98 percent.

However, in families with conflicts, women’s confirmation of empathy was only 32 percent, and masculinity was rated at 54 percent, indicating that men in these families have less developed traits in these areas relative to normative life standards. Specifically, men in conflict-ridden families were found to possess fewer traditionally feminine qualities. This deficiency is identified as a contributing factor to unresolved gender equality issues.

The question of gender equality between spouses in Uzbek families is somewhat controversial and can be explained by psychogenetic, psychophysiological, social-psychological, and national-ethnic factors. Couples with well-developed emotional and psychological harmony tend to perceive each other as beloved individuals and idealize one another, recognizing positive, intelligent, beautiful, and unique qualities in their partners.

Mutual altruism is expressed, with feelings of affection and kindness prevailing between spouses. However, men tend to have a low level of skill in establishing cooperation and harmony with their wives, often favoring dominance and control. In families experiencing emotional and psychological alienation, women tend to adopt the perspective of “I can manage without my husband’s help; I am strong and capable,” which is identified as a root cause of the problem.

The concept of the “togetherness” effect, characterized by the development of emotional-psychological harmony, mutual recognition, equality, and compromise, explains positive marital dynamics. Emotional and psychological compatibility between spouses fosters this “togetherness” effect, which in turn leads to the formation of psychologically equal relationships.



Conclusions

The analysis of family dynamics in Uzbekistan reveals that while mutual altruism and affectionate feelings often characterize spousal relationships, significant challenges remain in achieving genuine gender equality within the household. Traditional gender roles and stereotypes continue to shape the expectations and behaviors of men and women, frequently leading to dominance by men and emotional distancing between partners. Women in families with strained relationships often adopt an independent stance, reflecting both resilience and emotional isolation, which underscores the complexity of gender interactions in such settings.

Emotional-psychological harmony and the development of a “togetherness” effect are crucial for fostering equality and mutual respect between spouses. This harmony promotes psychological compatibility, enabling partners to recognize, accept, and support each other as equals, which is essential for a stable and healthy family environment. However, the persistent low levels of cooperation and communication skills among men, coupled with culturally ingrained stereotypes, hinder progress toward true gender equality.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes raising awareness about gender stereotypes, encouraging emotional intelligence, and promoting mutual respect and partnership within the family. Enhancing gender education and integrating national cultural values that support equality can help to reshape traditional roles and foster more balanced relationships. Ultimately, advancing gender equality in Uzbek families is not only a matter of legal or policy reform but also involves transforming deep-rooted social and psychological patterns to build more harmonious and equitable domestic environments.

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