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PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL LIFE OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract. This article discusses the issues of increasing the participation and political activity of women in public administration in Uzbekistan. The participation of women in elections and their appointment to leadership positions were analyzed on the basis of statistical data. In addition, the article analyzed contemporary researches dedicated to gender equality, and the existing problems have been critically studied and conclusions have been drawn.

Keywords: independence; women; political activity; social and political life; Oliy Majlis; Parliament; elections; gender equality; public administration.

Special attention is paid to the role and potential of women in the economic and socio-political spheres, as well as the further enhancement of their prestige in the spiritual and cultural life of society in Uzbekistan. In this regard, the country's and regional governments, many social institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations pay special attention to the full support of women. In particular, the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan was established in 1991, as a non-governmental non-profit organization. From the first years of independence, Uzbekistan has begun to create a legal framework for the protection of the rights and interests of women. On March 2, 1995, the Decree of the President of the Republic "On measures to increase the role of women in the state and social construction of the Republic of Uzbekistan" was issued. This decree raised the development of the system of women's committees to a new level and created conditions for further improvement of women's lives in the country. However, international experiences

have been extensively studied. Uzbekistan was one of the first Central Asian states to ratify the United Nations Convention "On the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" on May 6, 1995 (New York, December 18, 1979) [1] and the Convention "On the Political Rights of Women" on August 30, 1997 (New York, December 20, 1952). Representatives of women of our country also participated in the IV World Conference of Women, held on May 6, 1995, under the motto of Peace, Development, and Equality, and joined the Beijing Declaration aimed at improving the situation of women in Uzbekistan [2]. The conference was attended by 47,000 women from 189 countries, and several documents aimed at enhancing the social status of women were signed and specific goals were set. One of the main goals of the Beijing Declaration is to ensure that participating countries adhere to the international standard that women should make up 30 % of the staff in each organization. In Uzbekistan, 1998 has been declared the Year of the

“Family” and 1999 the Year of “Women”, and state programs have been adapted accordingly. This means raising the status of women in society and increasing women's participation in socio-economic and political processes, developing entrepreneurship, ensuring women's participation in political governance, and implementing international and domestic regulations protecting women's rights. Following the positive results of gender equality reforms, Uzbekistan submitted four national reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2001, 2005, 2008, and 2011, which were highly recognized by the Committee [3].

Indeed, the fact that women are working effectively in all spheres of public life deserves attention and recognition. However, the participation of women in the country's political processes and public administration over the past years cannot be assessed satisfactorily. In particular, in the 1994 elections to the Oliy Majlis, 52 of the 634 candidates were women, of whom 15 were elected. Even in the 1999 elections, the situation remained virtually unchanged. For example, 171 out of 1242 candidates were women, of whom only 18 were elected deputies. This situation can be seen in the low rate in the provinces. In particular, out of 24 women candidates for the Oliy Majlis from Tashkent region, only 4 were deputies. In some provinces, none of the female candidates nominated for the Oliy Majlis received enough votes. For example, 16 women were not elected in Andijan, 12 in Namangan, 11 in Bukhara, and 5 in Syrdarya. According to the researchers, women were often unaware of the election law and its procedures. He also believes that he has not been successful in campaigning, explaining his election programs to the public, working with the community, and not paying enough attention to the culture of speech [4]. Elections to the Oliy Majlis in 1994 and 1999 were unsuccessful for women who ran for parliament. Therefore, in order to ensure the active participation of women in the next elections, support their initiatives, increase

the role of women in the political life of society, Article 22 of the Law on Elections to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated August 27, 2004, should not be less than 30 % of the number [5].

As a result of the change in the attitude to women in the political life of the state and society, the participation and activation of women in socio-political processes and public administration have also increased. In particular, the share of women in the highest bodies of government was 8.2 % in 2000, 13.7 % in 2002, 18 % in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis since 2005, 15 % in the Senate, 16 % in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis in 2015, and 15 % in the Senate. Although women's participation in the country's political life and governance has increased since the first elections, these figures are unsatisfactory in line with international standards. In 2015, the UNDP Office in Uzbekistan conducted a study on gender balance in the country, according to which the following results were identified. Women make up 45.5 % of the total employed population and 44 % of the unemployed. The share of women in health, sports, education, and the arts is 72.3 %, 10 % in construction, transport, and communications, and 17 % in crime and lawlessness. Also, according to the analysis of the activities of women in public administration in the first 25 years of independence, we can not positively assess the share of women in this regard. In particular, women accounted for 6.5 % in the Cabinet of Ministers, 13.2 % in the judiciary, 19% in local governments, 16.6 % in the councils of people's deputies, 26.8 % in the economic management sector, and 11.2 % of mahalla chairmen [6]. Comparing these figures with the total number of women in the population of the republic, it is clear that the participation of women in the socio-political life of society is unsatisfactory. The fact that there are still no women leaders in political parties in Uzbekistan, half of whom are women, makes it necessary to prepare women for leadership, communication with the population, important decision-making, and to in-

crease their knowledge of management and politics.

According to the statistics in 2018, 45 percent of workers and employees working in various sectors and industries in the country are women. In particular, about 1,400 women hold senior positions in the system of state and public organizations. Of these, 17 were senators, 16 were deputies of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, and 1,075 were members of local councils of people's deputies [6]. Currently, about 80 % of women in the country work mainly in two social spheres – education and health [7]. In particular, 71 % of public education staff and 62 % of health care workers are women. Now it is necessary to pay special attention to the issue of increasing the number of women in important positions in government and society, as well as in the country's parliament.

In recent years, special attention has been paid to ensuring the participation of women in government and society. In particular, on the proposal of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev in his speech at the twentieth plenary session of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan on June 21, 2019 [8], a new Senate Committee on Women and Gender Equality was established. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan also noted that the participation of women, who make up almost half of the population, in the socio-economic, cultural, and political life of society is insufficient. It was at this meeting that Tanzila Norbaeva, the first chairwoman of the Women's Committee in the history of independent Uzbekistan, was nominated for the chairmanship of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis. This proposal was unanimously approved by the deputies. This was an important political step towards ensuring gender equality in the country. With the election of a woman to the presidency of the Senate, Uzbekistan became one of the 56 countries where the head of the chamber is a woman.

The elections to the Oliy Majlis in 2019 under the slogan New Uzbekistan – New

Elections were held based on international democratic principles, and this election has played an important role in the last 28 years, as women have played a significant role in parliamentary history. In particular, according to the results of the 2019 elections, 48 out of 150 deputies elected to the Legislative Chamber of the Republic of Uzbekistan, or 32 %, and 23 out of 100 senators are women [9]. In this regard, it is the best result in the history of the Uzbek parliament compared to previous elections.

It is known that the President has put forward 5 important initiatives to organize work in the social, spiritual, and educational spheres based on the new system. The fifth initiative addresses the issue of women's employment. On this basis, in 2019–2020, it is planned to build lightweight sewing and knitting enterprises in each district and employ women [10]. This will play an important role in ensuring women's employment and improving the welfare of the population in remote areas of the country. The appointment of women to authority in dozens of districts and cities in 2020 is also a practical result of positive changes in attitudes towards women in public life, increasing confidence and reforms aimed at ensuring gender equality in the country.

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