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SOCIAL ACTIVITY OF RURAL WOMEN IN UZBEKISTAN: REFORMS, EXPERIENCES AND PROSPECTS IN THE FIELD OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Abstract

This article analyzes the issues of social and economic support for women in Uzbekistan during the years of independence, with particular attention to women living in rural areas, increasing their social participation, and developing women's entrepreneurship. The study highlights state policy, the legal and regulatory framework, and practical mechanisms aimed at promoting women's entrepreneurship. It also presents examples of measures implemented to ensure employment in remote regions, provide vocational training, and develop handicrafts and home-based work. In addition, the article scientifically summarizes certain challenges related to women's employment, education, health, and legal protection, as well as possible ways to address them. The role of women's entrepreneurship in societal development is emphasized, and systematic approaches and practical recommendations for further improvement in this field are proposed.

Keywords: Women, rural women, women's entrepreneurship, employment, vocational training, handicrafts, home-based work, social participation, state policy, socio-economic development, legal protection.

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INTRODUCTION

During the years of independence, large-scale reforms aimed at modernizing socio-cultural life, along with the economic and political spheres, began to be implemented in Uzbekistan. In this process, the issue of strengthening the role and authority of women in society, increasing their activity in social, cultural, economic and political life was identified as one of the priority areas of state policy. In particular, consistent measures were taken to ensure the employment of women living in remote and remote areas, direct them to professions, support entrepreneurial initiatives and strengthen their social activity.

Initiatives aimed at protecting the interests of women, expanding their opportunities and ensuring gender equality are developing in line with current international trends. In particular, in accordance with the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly of December 18, 2007, October 15 was recognized as the “International Day of Rural Women”, and today this date is widely celebrated in many countries of the world. This initiative is also supported in Uzbekistan, and the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal of the Ministry of Agriculture to widely celebrate October 15 as the “International Day of Rural Women”.¹

Currently, in our country, effective mechanisms are being formed to improve the well-being of families, ensure employment of the population, and serve the socio-economic development of regions by providing financial and organizational support to women entrepreneurs. In particular, “The Best Project of an Entrepreneurial Girl” competition, which has been held regularly within the framework of state programs since 2016, is of great importance in supporting graduates of vocational colleges and young girls interested in entrepreneurship, implementing their initiatives, exchanging experiences, and popularizing advanced projects.² In general, systematic work is being consistently carried out to increase the socio-economic activity of women, provide them with vocational

¹ Shokhista Bozorova: "A country that respects women is powerful." Village Life//October 15, 2019. -B.14.

² Sabahat Sultanova: "Women are always in the spotlight." Hurriyat // November 16, 2017. -B.8

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training and employment, promote the development of entrepreneurship, create the necessary conditions for them to receive education and engage in professional and scientific activities, improve their living standards, and, most importantly, comprehensively protect their rights and freedoms.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

During the years of independence, the issue of women and their comprehensive support in Uzbekistan has risen to the level of state policy, and this direction has been formed as an important component of the development strategy of New Uzbekistan. In particular, in recent years, the issue of increasing the activity of women, especially women living in rural areas, in the processes of socio-cultural upliftment of society, preservation of cultural heritage, passing on age-old traditions to future generations, development of national crafts and strengthening local economic potential has been recognized as one of the urgent tasks. On this basis, fundamental reforms are being implemented aimed at attracting rural women to the active stratum of society, directing them to professions, supporting entrepreneurial initiatives, and strengthening their material and social protection. However, studies aimed at improving the social status of women in society and eliminating their problems show that some issues related to the lifestyle, health, access to education and professional development of women living in rural areas have not been fully resolved. In particular, it is observed that some shortcomings and problems related to improving their living standards, systematic monitoring of reproductive health, strengthening the quality of education and professional training, financial support for women entrepreneurs and strengthening their legal protection remain. This situation indicates that programs and projects being developed to increase women's activity are not fully implemented in practice in some regions, and there is a need to improve organizational and institutional mechanisms.

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From this point of view, the adoption by the government of the Decree “On additional measures to support the activities of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan” served as an important legal basis for increasing the activity of women in social life, realizing their potential in the field of entrepreneurship and business. In particular, within the framework of the State Program “Year of a Strong Family”, business forums were organized at the republican and regional levels on the topic “Women entrepreneurs and artisans who have matured in the spirit of independence” in order to popularize the experience of women entrepreneurs and artisans, improve their professional skills and knowledge, create new jobs and ensure women's employment. These events served to expand the necessary conditions and opportunities for women's entrepreneurship, increase women's economic activity, and strengthen their role in the development of society.³

From the first years of independence, certain reforms were implemented to improve the living standards of the population in remote districts and villages, and to effectively apply women's professional skills and qualifications in practice. In particular, experiences were formed aimed at providing women with employment by establishing entrepreneurial entities in remote areas. For example, the "Turon" diversified trade and industrial company in Asaka district of Andijan region provided employment to more than 220 women, and the enterprise's activities served to increase local economic activity by directing the production and sale of 50 types of products.⁴ Also, the establishment of embroidery training for rural women and girls who have graduated from educational institutions under the “Social Protection of the Family” center operating in the Shofirkon district of the Bukhara region is of great importance in developing regional crafts, ensuring employment, and expanding women's self-employment opportunities. In particular, the activities of the center under the

³ Sh.Bozorova: A businesswoman. She has a worthy place in the development of the country.//Kashkadarya, 2012, №036 - B.1

⁴ “Xalq so’zi”.//December 23, 1995. B.-2.

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leadership of Oysara Ruziyeva, who continues the traditions of the Bukhara Embroidery School, indicate that the scope of learning crafts and earning income from home-based work is expanding among women.⁵

In Uzbekistan, organizations such as the Republican Women's Committee, the "Tadbirkor Ayol" business women's association, and the "Women's Wing" of UzLiDeP are conducting systematic activities aimed at strengthening institutional mechanisms to address women's problems, implementing international experience taking into account national characteristics, and increasing the socio-economic activity of women. The measures implemented by these organizations contribute to the sustainable development of society by strengthening women's employment, entrepreneurship, vocational training, legal literacy, and social protection.⁶

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, today women's entrepreneurship is not only an important form of personal income and self-employment, but also a factor that directly affects the socio-economic stability of society, the development of regions and cultural progress. In particular, the involvement of women living in remote and marginal areas in entrepreneurship is of great importance in increasing the well-being of families, reducing poverty, ensuring employment, increasing social activity and strengthening the authority of women in society.

Today's Uzbek woman is becoming an important subject of economic processes, working in various fields such as services, trade, education, agriculture, crafts and digital technologies. The opportunities created by the state and society, along with supporting women's entrepreneurship, help them improve their knowledge and skills, acquire modern professions, create products and services that meet market demand, and realize their potential. At the same time, in order to further increase

⁵ Tohir Istatov: Women's Assistant. //Village Life, 2011. No. 40 -B.1

⁶ Farida Egamberdiyeva: The ranks of women entrepreneurs are expanding. //Village Life. 2011, No. 129 -B.4

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the effectiveness of the reforms being implemented for women's entrepreneurship, it is necessary to conduct a thorough analysis of regional needs, strengthen practical assistance mechanisms, and further improve the support system.

Practical suggestions and recommendations

- It is necessary to expand the activities of centers providing advice, legal assistance, project writing, and financial literacy training in each district and neighborhood, especially in remote areas and villages;
- It is necessary to organize practical training in areas such as marketing, accounting, taxation, sales, service culture, and e-commerce through short-term courses;
- Women's labor will enter the market faster by providing raw materials, product certification, branding, and assistance in participating in exhibitions;
- It is important to expand the opportunities for women with young children to have mini-kindergartens, flexible work arrangements, and work from home;
- Monitoring based on indicators such as women's employment, income growth, and business stability at the regional level will increase effectiveness.

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