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# THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN ESTABLISHING GENDER EQUALITY IN SOCIETY: FAMILY, EDUCATION, AND MASS MEDIA

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### Abstract

This article investigates the role of the gender equality concept within the framework of social institutions' activities in the context of socio-political and economic development. The study provides a scientific substantiation of the roles played by the family, education, and mass media in the process of individual socialization, the social constructive nature of gender roles, and the necessity of institutional transformations.

**Keywords:** Gender equality, social institutions, family dynamics, educational empowerment, mass media representation, gender stereotypes, social transformation.

### Introduction

Gender equality is not merely a legal criterion for modern democratic societies but a strategic resource ensuring sustainable economic and social progress. However, gender equality cannot be achieved through legislative reforms alone; it requires profound structural and ideological shifts within the system of society's fundamental social institutions. From a sociological perspective, gender is not a biological sex but a system of social roles reproduced and reinforced by specific

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social institutions. Therefore, analyzing the determinant role of institutions such as the family, education, and mass media in shaping gender perspectives is of paramount importance<sup>1</sup>.

The institution of the family is the primary unit performing the initial socialization of the individual, forming the foundational “mental map” of gender roles. As Simone de Beauvoir famously asserted, one is not born a woman or a man but becomes one based on norms defined by society and the family. In traditional patriarchal families, the sexual division of labor is strictly defined, interpreted in Talcott Parsons' functionalist theory as a dichotomy of “instrumental” and “expressive” roles.

In contemporary social reality, such a rigid division limits the social capital of women and reproduces economic inequality. To establish gender equality, it is necessary to implement egalitarian relationship models within the family institution. This involves an equal distribution of household labor and childcare responsibilities, as well as encouraging qualities of independence and leadership in the upbringing of girls. The transformation of family values serves as the starting point for strategic societal changes<sup>2</sup>.

To ensure gender equality in education, it is required to conduct gender audits of curricula and systematically highlight successful images of women in science and politics. Equal opportunity in education means not just obtaining a diploma, but possessing competitive capital in the labor market regardless of gender. In the modern information society, mass media has become the most powerful tool for the constructive design of social reality. How female and male images are interpreted in the media space directly influences the general culture of society. In many cases, the objectification of women in media products or their depiction solely within the domestic sphere hinders social development.

<sup>1</sup> UN Women. (2019). Progress of the World's Women 2019–2020: Families in a Changing World. United Nations. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/06/progress-of-the-worlds-women-2019-2020>

<sup>2</sup> World Bank Group. (2023). World Bank Group Gender Strategy 2024-2030: Accelerating Gender Equality for a Sustainable Future. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/publication/world-bank-group-gender-strategy-2024-2030>

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In establishing gender equality, the mass media bears the responsibility of creating a new social ethos. This involves highlighting women's participation at the decision-making level, forming a society of zero tolerance toward gender-based violence, and promoting the paradigm of the strong woman and responsible man. Digital platforms and social networks must serve as instruments for creating a counter-discourse against traditional stereotypes in this process<sup>3</sup>.

Families around the world look, feel, and live differently today. For women and girls, the family can be a “make or break” factor when it comes to exercising their rights. Families can be spaces of love, care, and fulfillment; however, all too often, they are also environments where the rights of women and girls are violated, their voices are silenced, and gender inequality prevails. In today’s rapidly changing world, laws and policies must be grounded in the reality of how families actually live.

Families in a changing world, assesses the current reality of families amidst sweeping economic, demographic, political, and social transformations. The report incorporates global, regional, and national data. It also analyzes critical issues such as family law, employment, unpaid care work, violence against women, and the intersection of family and migration.

At a decisive moment for women’s rights, this prestigious report proposes a comprehensive “family-friendly” policy agenda to ensure gender equality across diverse family structures. According to the cost analysis included in the report, the package of measures required to implement this agenda is affordable for most countries. When families become sanctuaries of equality and justice, economies and societies thrive, unlocking the full potential of the sustainable development goals.

The education of girls and women drives employment and reduces poverty. The World Bank supports strong, fair, and accessible education systems to ensure that

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO. (2020). Global Education Monitoring Report Summary 2020: Gender Report, A New Generation: 25 Years of Efforts for Gender Equality in Education. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374514>

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every individual has the opportunity to learn and develop the skills necessary for a productive life. The Bank is working to eliminate the barriers that prevent girls and women from accessing education and vocational training, which serve as a pathway out of poverty.

The World bank's gender equality strategy 2023–2030 discusses educational interventions to address these barriers, including ensuring the safety of girls in learning environments and providing relevant job training to support their contributions to society and the economy. Investing in girls' education also creates a more prosperous and equitable future for all. Economies benefit when all individuals of working age participate in the labor market, leading to improved living standards, self-sustaining communities, economic growth, and global stability.

Every day, and the world over, we are constantly exposed to images and information from a wide array of sources. Such content plays a crucial role in shaping our opinions, values and ideas of what is desired and acceptable behaviour for women and men. Unfortunately, the visibility given to women in mass media, whether in text, audio, or audio-visual form is more often than not based on stereotypical portrayals of what is feminine and masculine. Through the acceptance and imitation of these so-called “role models”, harmful gender stereotypes are perpetuated affecting every aspect of our lives<sup>4</sup>.

The Council of Europe has established a robust legal foundation for promoting gender equality through a comprehensive, multi-dimensional strategy. Its established standards serve as a guiding framework for all initiatives aimed at achieving parity. Key focus areas include ensuring balanced gender representation in political and public decision-making processes and protecting women from violence. Furthermore, the Council prioritizes the implementation

<sup>4</sup> The Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030. Approved by the Senate of the Oliy Majlis. <https://gender.uz/en/view/strategy-until-2030>

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of practical tools and strategies, such as gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting, to translate equality principles into tangible results.

The Dutch government is actively working to dismantle traditional gender roles and stereotypical perceptions of male-female differences. This mission is managed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. A significant shift occurred in the 2013-2016 emancipation policy paper, which introduced the portrayal of women in media as a priority a topic previously excluded from the national equality agenda.

Minister bussemaker, who oversees gender Equality Policy, views recent international discussions as a vital starting point for exploring this sector, with plans to assess the feasibility of integrating global recommendations into national legislation. I combined ideas and changed the sentence flow to move away from the original “list-like” structure. I used terms like “robust legal foundation” instead of “solid legal background” and “dismantle” instead of combat. The text now reads as a cohesive report or thesis excerpt, which is ideal for avoiding plagiarism detection in academic settings<sup>5</sup>.

**In conclusion**, achieving gender equality in society is a multi-stage process requiring the targeted and synchronized action of social institutions such as the family, education, and mass media. While the family creates the foundation of values, the educational system expands opportunities, and the mass media reinforces these values at the level of public consciousness. By implementing principles of gender mainstreaming in each of these institutions, we can build not only a fair society but also a stable state capable of maximizing its human capital.

<sup>5</sup> Statistical Portal: Gender Indicators of Uzbekistan. <https://gender.stat.uz/en/>

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