

**WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP TRENDS IN UZBEKISTAN:
THE IMPACT OF REFORMS AND TARGETED PROGRAMS**

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Abstract. This article analyzes Uzbekistan’s recent gender equality policies, state programs aimed at supporting women’s leadership, the effectiveness of ongoing reforms, and the participation of women in socio-political processes. The research examines, on a scientific basis, the increasing activity of women in the country and strategic initiatives directed at strengthening their role in public administration, business, education, and civil society. The analysis employs statistical data, international rankings, normative-legal documents, and comparative assessments of practical outcomes. The article concludes by identifying existing challenges in the development of gender equality, as well as future tasks and directions for improvement.

Keywords: gender equality, women’s leadership, social reforms, state programs, women’s empowerment, Uzbekistan, gender policy, women, social life, economic participation.

INTRODUCTION. Since gaining independence, Uzbekistan has been implementing a series of systemic reforms to ensure gender equality, strengthen the role of women in society, and expand their participation in socio-political life. In recent years, the development of women’s leadership potential, the enhancement of their economic independence, the prevention of gender-based violence, and the expansion of educational and employment opportunities have become among the priority directions of state policy. The following sources were used in writing this article [1–13].

The adoption of the Law “On Gender Equality,” the activities of the National Commission on Women’s Issues, and the introduction of social mechanisms such as the “Women’s Register,” “Iron Register,” and “Youth Register” have contributed to elevating women’s engagement to a qualitatively new level.

Leadership is a complex socio-psychological phenomenon associated with an individual’s ability to inspire others, make decisions, motivate, and manage social change. From a gender-based perspective, leadership is not considered a quality exclusive to men; rather, women’s

managerial capacity—such as empathy, compassion, communication skills, and strategic thinking—is recognized as an equally important component of effective leadership.



Share of women in the management of enterprises and organizations in Uzbekistan

2017 year

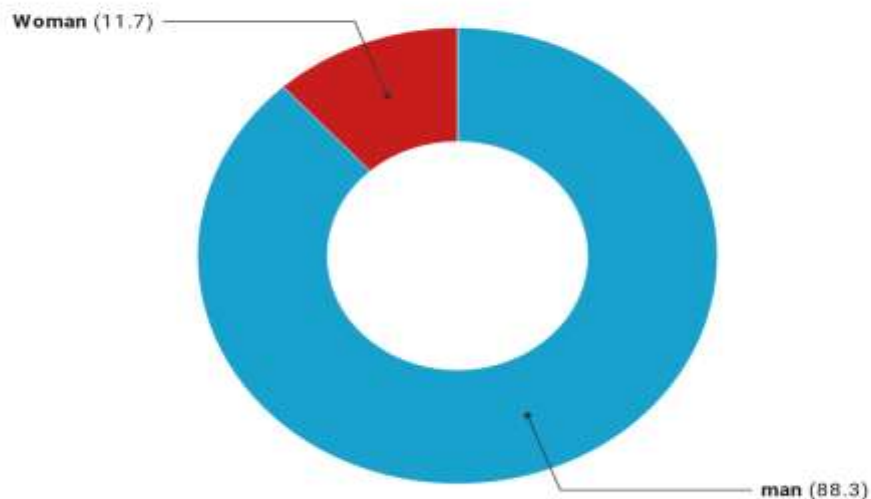


Chart: Algerim Akyzbekova • Source: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics • Created with Datawrapper

The modern leadership model is distinguished by several key features: inclusive governance, open communication with the team, peaceful conflict resolution, social responsibility, and innovative thinking. These qualities closely align with management styles typically associated with women.

Women's Leadership in Uzbekistan: Historical Development and a New Stage

Throughout Uzbek history, women have played an important role in social life. Figures such as Tomiris, Nodira, Zebuniso, Uvaysiy, Jahon Otin Uvaysiy, and Sarakhonim were active in state governance and cultural life. During the early 20th century, particularly in the era of the Jadid movement, women's education and their role in society were also highly relevant and widely discussed topics.





Since 1991, several important reforms have been implemented in the following areas: Programs to support women were introduced. The Women's Committee was established. The share of women in parliament increased gradually. Wide opportunities were created for women in the fields of education and employment.

Major Transformations in Recent Years In the 2020s, the following significant developments took place: The Law "On Gender Equality" was adopted. The National Commission on Gender Equality was established. The Fund for Supporting Women Entrepreneurs was created. Through the "Women's Register," more than 1 million women received material, social, and psychological assistance.

State Programs Aimed at Supporting Women's Leadership The Law on Gender Equality. Adopted in 2019, this law strengthened guarantees related to women's political participation, economic activity, the right to education, and protection from violence.

The "Three Registers" System for Supporting Women. Through this mechanism, socially vulnerable women, low-income families, survivors of violence, as well as school- and university-aged girls receive necessary support.

Programs for the Development of Women's Entrepreneurship Preferential loans, grants, business trainings, and mentoring programs are increasing women's economic independence.



Political and Economic Participation of Women: Statistical Analysis. According to recent data on women's representation in parliament and public administration: the share of women in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis is 32%; in the Senate — 25%; and the proportion of women in local councils continues to grow. These indicators position Uzbekistan as one of the leading countries in Central Asia in terms of gender equality.

Women's Employment and Economic Activityю Women account for 47% of the labor market, with particularly high participation in education, healthcare, services, and the light industry sector. Women's entrepreneurship has increased 2.5 times over the past decade. The number of female students admitted to higher education institutions is rising each year, and a certain share of state grants is allocated specifically for girls and women.

International Cooperation in Expanding Women's Leadership. Uzbekistan actively cooperates with the following international organizations: UN Women, UNICEF, the European Union, the World Bank, and UNESCO. As a result of this cooperation, gender education programs, leadership training for women, and various social projects aimed at supporting women and girls have been implemented.



Challenges and Solutions. Existing challenges: traditional gender stereotypes; limited employment opportunities for women in certain sectors; male dominance in leadership positions; the disproportionate burden of household and care work placed on women; and cases of gender-based violence.

Proposed solutions: promoting gender-sensitive education; establishing special leadership schools for girls; expanding incentives for women's entrepreneurship; increasing quotas for women in public administration; and creating more psychological and legal support centers.

CONCLUSION. In recent years, Uzbekistan has achieved significant progress in ensuring gender equality and developing women's leadership. The normative-legal framework supporting women is being strengthened, and their participation in political, economic, and social life is steadily expanding. However, gender stereotypes, inequalities in certain sectors, and cases of violence against women have not yet been fully eliminated.

In the future, further strengthening women's leadership and supporting their professional and personal development will continue to be an integral component of Uzbekistan's sustainable development strategy.

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