

**ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM: LEGAL FRAMEWORKS
AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

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Abstract. *This article is dedicated to studying the legal foundations of ensuring gender equality in the education system and its social significance. The article analyzes the concept of gender equality, legal mechanisms in international and national legislation, as well as practical issues related to the equality of women and men in educational institutions. The article not only analyzes the current situation but also provides proposals for further strengthening gender equality in the education system.*

Keywords: *gender equality, education system, legal framework, social significance, representation of women and men, educational policy, social development.*

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring gender equality in the education system is currently one of the priority issues in the social and legal policies of every country. Gender equality not only reflects the principle of respecting human rights but also plays a crucial role in promoting social stability and justice.

Article 58 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan guarantees equal rights for all citizens, regardless of gender [1]. Furthermore, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" dated September 23, 2020 [2] emphasizes providing equal opportunities for girls and boys in educational institutions, preventing discrimination, and ensuring that no student is deprived of education based on gender.

The 1995 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by Uzbekistan [3], established a series of measures to guarantee equal rights and opportunities for women in the education sector. This convention specifically requires states to ensure gender equality in access to education and to eliminate discrimination against women in this sphere.

International experience demonstrates that gender equality in education is a key factor in enhancing social stability. Reports by UNESCO and UN Women [4] indicate that girls' continued access to school and quality education has a direct impact on a society's economic growth and political participation. Therefore, Uzbekistan's legal mechanisms for ensuring gender equality in education are aligned with international standards.

Gender equality in education is not only a legal issue but also a significant social concern. Existing societal stereotypes, traditional family norms, and limited access to

education for girls in some regions remain challenges. In this regard, it is essential to implement gender policies in educational institutions, provide professional development for teachers, and integrate gender content into curricula. These measures not only expand educational opportunities for girls but also strengthen social justice and encourage women's active participation in society.

Moreover, the Resolution SQ-297-IV of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated May 28, 2021, "On Approving the Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan by 2030" [5], outlines measures to ensure gender equality at all educational levels, from preschool to higher education. These measures include providing equal opportunities for boys and girls, reducing gender stereotypes in education, and enhancing the professional qualifications of teachers and educational staff.

Research Methodology.

This article was written based on scientific analysis and empirical observations. Statistics, surveys, and available scientific sources were analyzed during the data collection. Participation in education among girls and boys, access to online and offline resources, and participation in STEM were evaluated using digital indicators. Gender stereotypes and social views were also observed among young people. In the process of analysis, practical situations in the education system, international educational statistics and the results of social studies were used as the main sources. The article focuses on an in-depth study of the issue of gender equality using analytical and descriptive methods. This approach allowed the article to combine a scientific basis with a real social context.

Analysis and Results.

The issue of gender equality in the education system in Uzbekistan is analyzed through a number of complex indicators. The statistical publication "Women and Men in Uzbekistan: Facts and Figures", prepared by the National Statistics Committee, provides detailed gender-disaggregated data [6] and compares the status of women and men across various social sectors. This collection is also enriched with data related to education and serves as one of the main sources for monitoring gender equality in this field.

One of the most widely used indicators for measuring gender equality in education is the Gender Parity Index (GPI), which compares the participation of girls and boys in school and higher education [7]. According to World Bank data, in 2021 the GPI for primary and secondary education in Uzbekistan was approximately 0.994. A value close to 1 indicates near equality in access to education between girls and boys at the school level. At the same time, women's participation in higher education in Uzbekistan has been steadily increasing. According to World Bank data for 2024 [8], the GPI in higher education reached 1.1126, indicating that female participation slightly exceeds that of males. This reflects the growing engagement of women in higher education.

These statistics demonstrate a positive dynamic in gender equality indicators at both school and higher education levels. The gap between women and men is narrowing, and in some cases, girls are even slightly ahead. This can be considered a result of the measures

implemented to promote gender equality in Uzbekistan. However, statistical analysis also reveals certain internal disparities within the education system. In particular, as of January 1, 2024, the gender composition in preschool education institutions shows a predominance of boys (57.7%), while girls account for 42.3%. This indicates a noticeable imbalance at the early childhood education stage. Such data highlight the importance of developing targeted strategies and social programs to encourage girls' participation in education from an early age. Supporting this stage is also part of the government's strategic objectives in developing gender statistics.

Gender approaches to the quality of education are also being considered. UNESCO's program on revising teacher training from a gender perspective [9] is regarded as an important initiative for deepening gender inclusion in education. According to 2025 data, gender-related curricula and training programs are being introduced in teacher education systems. However, it is reported that approximately 86% of teachers have not received formal training in gender approaches, and only 4.8% of students in pedagogical universities have participated in gender-related courses. These figures reveal gaps in professional training regarding gender awareness. They indicate that gender equality in education is not limited to student participation but also requires improvements in teachers' qualifications and pedagogical approaches. This underscores the need for a more integrated gender policy within the education system.

Statistical analysis also shows that women's access to education and professional qualifications strengthens their economic activity. Global experience and UNICEF data [10] suggest that women with higher levels of education tend to secure stronger positions in the labor market, with better employment opportunities and wages, thereby contributing to greater equality. However, UNICEF reports also indicate that the NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) rate among young women in Uzbekistan remains relatively high, limiting their opportunities for continuing education and employment after completing their studies.

Uzbekistan also demonstrates strong performance in education-related gender indices. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2024, Uzbekistan scored 0.990 in the education dimension, indicating near parity in this sector. However, lower scores in economic participation and political empowerment highlight the need for further improvements in achieving overall gender equality.

Discussion.

Recent analyses in the field of ensuring gender equality in the education system indicate that Uzbekistan is striving to deepen its understanding of gender issues within the context of major demographic changes, scientific and economic development, and social policy. International studies suggest that quantitative indicators of women's and men's participation in education are converging; however, significant differences still remain in terms of social, cultural, and labor market outcomes of gender equality.

According to World Bank data, by 2025 Uzbekistan's higher education gender representation has approached record levels, with female participation nearly equal to that of males. At the same time, women's involvement in academic research and among teaching staff is increasing, indicating an expansion of their role within the education system. However, statistical analysis reveals that disparities persist when female graduates enter the labor market: women often face lower wages and fewer career advancement opportunities compared to men in similar fields.

Although trends in Uzbekistan's education system show positive progress in reducing gender gaps, certain disparities remain. For instance, the proportion of female students in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) is still relatively low, requiring targeted strategies to increase their participation. According to the UNESCO Science Report 2024, female participation in STEM fields in Uzbekistan remains below the global average, demonstrating that gender equality in education cannot be fully addressed through quantitative indicators alone. This situation is closely linked to societal norms, family expectations, and perceptions regarding career choices.

Social research also indicates that gender perceptions begin to form at an early age. According to a 2025 UNICEF report, approximately 32% of school-aged students believe in traditional gender roles, such as the idea that certain professions are suitable only for men or women. These stereotypes influence educational choices and limit students' academic interests, thereby hindering progress toward gender equality.

At the same time, the expansion of digital education opportunities has contributed positively to gender equality. International analyses show that online learning platforms provide particularly valuable opportunities for girls: in 2024, women accounted for more than 48% of participants in online courses. This expands their access to education regardless of physical infrastructure limitations. However, to fully benefit from these opportunities, it is essential to implement programs aimed at improving digital literacy among women and girls.

When discussing gender equality in education, it is also important to consider targeted measures for groups that have historically faced social, economic, or geographic disadvantages. Recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN agencies emphasize the importance of creating psychologically safe learning environments, ensuring physical safety, and implementing programs to prevent gender-based violence in schools. In Uzbekistan, efforts are being made to develop such initiatives, including investments and educational programs aimed at creating a safe and inclusive educational environment. The discussion shows that although positive statistical outcomes exist in ensuring gender equality in Uzbekistan's education system, these results cannot be fully understood through numbers alone. Key challenges such as gender disparities in STEM fields, persistent stereotypes among youth, issues related to digital literacy, and the need for safe educational environments remain central elements of gender equality strategies.

In the future, further practical analyses, comprehensive socio-psychological programs, and measures to improve digital infrastructure in education will be required. Effective implementation of educational policies and raising social awareness are essential conditions for deepening this process. Gender equality should be reinforced not only as a legal principle but also as a fundamental opportunity for every individual to access education and achieve active participation in society.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

In conclusion, the results of the analysis and discussion indicate that positive changes are being observed in ensuring gender equality within Uzbekistan's education system. Statistical data at both school and higher education levels demonstrate that participation rates between girls and boys have become nearly equal. In particular, the increasing participation of women in higher education has strengthened their academic and professional potential.

Additionally, online learning platforms and digital resources have expanded educational opportunities for girls, playing an important role in reducing gender disparities at preschool and primary education levels. However, the analysis also shows that gender equality cannot be limited to quantitative indicators alone. The low participation of girls in STEM fields, the persistence of social stereotypes among youth, and the lack of safe learning environments in schools remain significant challenges. These issues highlight the need for a deeper understanding of gender equality in education and the development of practical measures.

Furthermore, considering the social context of gender equality, it is essential to develop psychological and pedagogical support systems in schools and higher education institutions. Educating young people with gender-neutral perspectives allows them to fully realize their interests and talents. This, in turn, contributes to increasing women's social activity and strengthening their legal and economic opportunities in society.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- ✓ Develop specialized programs to encourage girls' participation in STEM fields, including scholarships, mentorship, and social support mechanisms.
- ✓ Expand online and digital education platforms and organize specialized courses to improve digital literacy among girls and women.
- ✓ Conduct training sessions and seminars in schools and higher education institutions to raise gender awareness, and enhance teachers' qualifications in gender-related issues.
- ✓ Implement campaigns, public events, and informational resources to reduce social stereotypes and promote equality among youth.
- ✓ Ensure safe and inclusive environments in preschool and primary education, strengthening psychological support and monitoring mechanisms.

If these measures are implemented, gender equality will be strengthened not only through statistical indicators and legal frameworks but also through real-life opportunities

and social practices. This will contribute to sustainable social development by expanding opportunities for future generations in education, career choice, and active participation in society.

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