



Socio-Economic Well-Being of Rural Women as a Subject of Sociological Analysis

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Abstract: This article presents that the research of the socio-economic well-being of rural women helps to determine the measures that the Government of Uzbekistan can take to improve their status in society, increase their social status and capacity. This study revealed that the socio-economic well-being of women is determined by the level of creating conditions for the full realization of labor, social, intellectual potential, achieving financial stability, and quality of life. This article presents gender aspects of rural women employment and their participation at the labor market in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: rural women, well-being, sociological analysis, gender, Uzbekistan.

Introduction

The socio-economic well-being of women is determined by the level of creating conditions for the full realization of labor, social, intellectual potential, achieving financial stability, and quality of life. It is advisable to analyze the indicators of assessing the socio-economic well-being of women from the point of view of quality of life. The concept of quality of life assumes a high quality of life presented by following indicators: demographic indicators; health status; social protection system; level of education; legal protection; access to healthcare; and leisure conditions. These indicators are general, but can be supplemented depending on the goals of the sociological analysis of the social well-being of individual population groups.

The analysis of sociological literature has shown that in modern sociology there are both general and specific indicators of socio-economic well-being. Since the subject of analysis in this dissertation is the socio-economic well-being of women, it is advisable to use the following parameters for analysis: socio-demographic parameters, socio-economic, legal, socio-cultural, socio-political. The group of socio-economic indicators of women's social well-being primarily includes the situation on the labor market and employment issues, therefore, taking into account gender specifics when planning measures to support women's employment seems appropriate, especially during the period of transformations and reforms. [1] In the scientific literature, the concept of the labor market is associated with the sphere of relations on the supply and priority of labor. The subjects of the market are employers who need a certain category of labor, and personnel who can fill the needs of employers. The subject of interaction in the labor market is an exchange relationship, which is based on the qualifications, experience, abilities of potential employees; on the other hand, employers offer appropriate conditions to potential employees, including social insurance, a satisfactory level of remuneration, working conditions, etc. The labor market depends on many factors, including personnel policy, tax policy, investment activity, demographic situation.

Material and methods

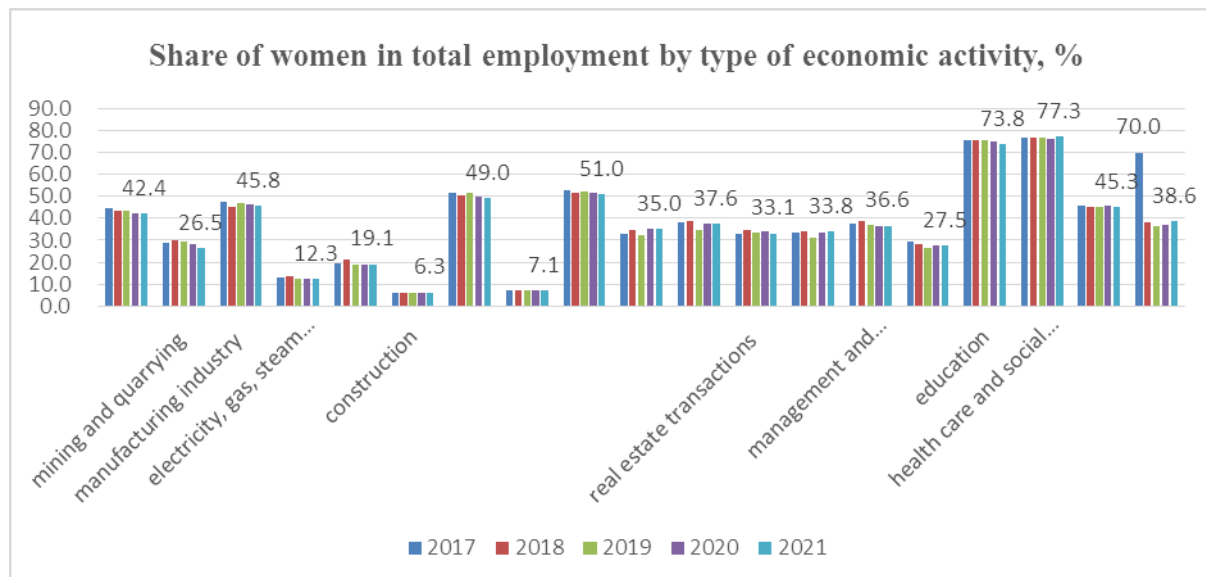
The role of the state is dominant in these processes by controlling, regulatory bodies, that builds personnel policy and labor market. As of January 1, 2022, the proportion of women in Uzbekistan is

about half of the permanent population of Uzbekistan 17,527,126 (49.7%), which as of January 2022 has more than 35 million people. The number of urban people is 17.487 thousand people (50.6%), the rural population is 17,071.4 thousand people (49.4%), i.e. agriculture remains the most important industry in the country's economy. In 2021, 318 investment projects worth 5.9 billion were implemented, in 2022 it is planned to attract 16.57%, of which 6 billion are foreign direct investments, there are difficulties with the development of investments that are associated with climate conditions, lack of drinking water in the regions, obsolescence of irrigation equipment for the implementation of projects in agriculture. [2]

Results and discussion

According to the State Statistics Committee, in January-March 2022, GDP per capita amounted to 4.6 million soums (420 US dollars), increased by 3.7% compared to the same period in 2021. An increase in the standard of living of the population also causes an increase in women's incomes, however, according to experts, there are significant gender differences in income - in 2018 it was \$ 4,656 for women and \$8,277 for men, i.e. women's income is 56% of men's income.

According to the International Labour Organization, over the past 10 years, the structure of employment has not changed much, and the distribution of employment by type of economic activity in the period from 2010 to the present remains stable. [3] The main sectors of women's employment are agriculture, forestry and fishing. Over the past decade, the structure of the labor market has not changed significantly, and the distribution of employment by type of economic activity in the period from 2010 to 2021 remained mostly stable. The main employment sectors of the population are agriculture, forestry and fishing, in which more than a quarter of the population was employed. [4] In addition, women are employed in industry and trade – which accounts for about a tenth of employment. [5] In 2018, women occupied 46% of jobs, of which 44% are agriculture, forestry, fishing, industry and 52% in trade. (**Graph 1**).



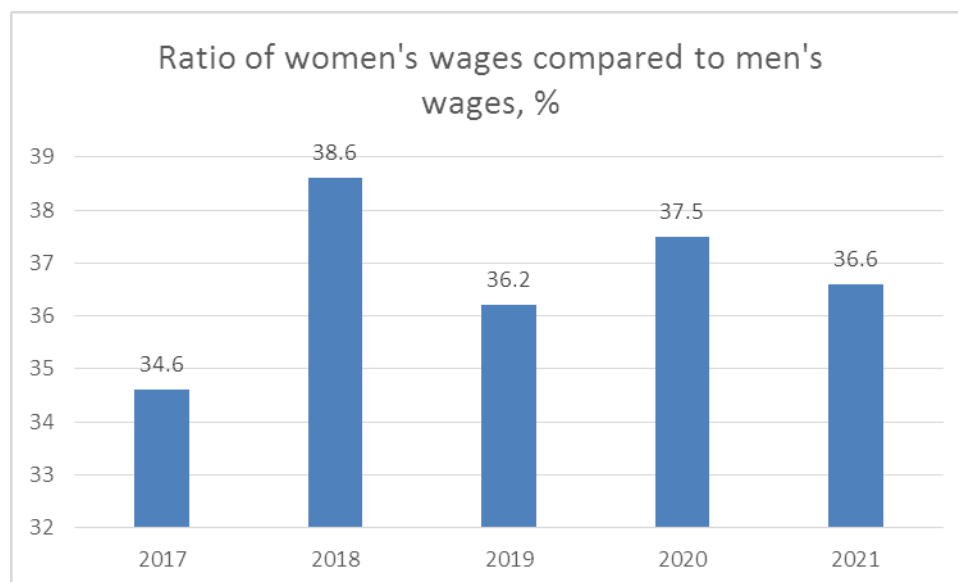
Source: <https://gender.stat.uz/uz/asosiy-ko-rsatkichlar/mehnat>

As can be seen from the information provided, it is observed that the share of women in agriculture is a significant part, and accordingly, when analyzing specific indicators of socio-economic well-being of women, it is necessary to take into account the region of residence and regional peculiarities. In this regard, effective measures to regulate the labor market and women's employment determine the socio-economic well-being of women. According to a report by the International Labour Organization, the majority of working women and men are employees. The overrepresentation of women in the field of wage labor is associated with the desire for decent work with the provision of social protection measures. Women's employment is associated with a double burden, since they also have household and child rearing on their shoulders. Employed women are

more likely to work in government organizations – in 2018, 58.7% of women and 41.3% of men worked in the public sector. [6]

At the same time, the employment of women is not the only indicator of socio-economic well-being. [7] One of the parameters that sociologists and economists use is the amount of a woman's salary. In international practice, this indicator is also used, in particular, the minimum wage introduced in Uzbekistan in 2019 (minimum wage). The minimum wage is an instrument of social guarantees of the state to ensure the level of income for a decent standard of living, which allows improving the conditions of payment for employees, not allowing wages to be reduced below a certain level, which contributes to the establishment of social protection. Achieving and maintaining the minimum wage at a certain level is an important socio-economic regulator of the social well-being of the population. [8] According to the data of the State Statistics Committee, the amount of women's income compared to men is significantly lower, the dependence can be traced in the areas of women's employment, which initially assume lower wages. The share of women's wages compared to men's wages, increased for almost 2% from 2017 to 2021. (Graph 2)

Graph 2.



Source: <https://gender.stat.uz/ru/dopolnitel-nye-pokazateli/ekonomicheskie-resursa>

The report on the assessment of the social protection system in Uzbekistan, prepared by the ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank, provides the following indicators: 14% of women of working age were employed on a part-time basis in 2016, in 2018 more than 40% of all employed women were also engaged in unpaid work - household, 32% were employed in agriculture. These indicators indicate a rather low participation of women in the labor market. [9] The authors see the reasons for this as a decrease in the amount of funding and availability of childcare facilities, which seems to be a serious obstacle to employment and continuing work after the end of parental leave.

In modern society, the promotion of women in employment is a priority of state policy and one of the forms of employment is the development of entrepreneurship among women, especially in rural areas. According to the data presented by the Senate of the Republic of Uzbekistan, concessional loans have been allocated to 224 thousand women in the amount of 6.9 trillion for the development of women's entrepreneurship. 14 women's entrepreneurship centers have been established in the regions of the country. [10] A socially significant regulator that contributes to maintaining the well-being of citizens is the protection of the purchasing power of wages, which implies accounting for inflation. The protection of the purchasing power of wages in conditions of constant price growth is carried out through indexation, which compensates for the inflationary depreciation of wages.

One of the significant regulators of the socio-economic well-being of the population is social security, which is formed at the expense of social funds that provide a system of social protection

and support for vulnerable categories of citizens. In Uzbekistan, the main source of the formation of social funds is the unified social tax (ESP). Changes in the tax system entered into force in January 2019 and provide that enterprises in which the state owns a controlling stake pay a contribution to the social insurance fund in the amount of 25% of gross wages, for legal entities this tax has been reduced from 15% to 12%. [11] As the analysis of the study shows, socio-economic regulators of social well-being are primarily related to the regulation of the labor market and employment of the population, ensuring and maintaining a decent level of wages, social protection and support of the population. The socio-economic well-being of women also depends on the regulatory framework for the protection of women's rights. Thus, in the process of analyzing the socio-economic well-being of women, there is a need to study the legal mechanisms for protecting women's rights. [12] The legal norms that underlie the legal regulators of women's social well-being represent the normatively fixed values of society in relation to certain phenomena. Laws, decrees, resolutions, orders of the government represent a kind of social guarantor of the security of the individual and society itself, regulating the behavior of the individual in all spheres of life. To ensure the socio-economic well-being of women, social legislation aimed at protecting women's rights and freedoms, guaranteeing their provision and implementation are important.

The significant efforts are being made in Uzbekistan to protect women's rights and strengthen their position in all spheres of society. It is obvious that if the needs of an important part of society – women - are not respected and taken into account in society, such a society cannot achieve well-being. In Uzbekistan, the equality of women with men is constitutionally enshrined; in addition, the republic has adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. For example, article 18 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan stipulates that "All citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan have the same rights and freedoms and are equal before the law without distinction of gender, race, nationality, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, personal and social status."

Equality of opportunities in labor relations is enshrined in the Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Thus, article 6 of the Labor Code establishes that all citizens have equal opportunities in the possession and use of labor rights, the establishment of any restrictions or the provision of benefits in the field of labor relations, depending on gender, age, race, nationality, language, origin, property and official status, attitude to religion, etc. The right of women for qualified medical care, enshrined in article 40 of the Constitution, has found its concretization and has been further developed in the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On public health protection", "On State sanitary supervision" and others, which have created the necessary legal framework for the implementation of reforms in the health sector.

Violence is a serious social problem that damages the socio-economic well-being of women in Uzbekistan.¹ Violence against women in Uzbekistan, including domestic violence, is becoming a serious and large-scale problem that generates many other social and individual problems. Therefore, in this context, the adopted Law "On the Protection of Women from harassment and violence" seems to be one of the serious steps to recognize the problem of violence against women. The purpose of this law is to regulate relations in the field of protecting women from all forms of harassment and violence. [13] The law also reflects the concept of violence, according to which violence is an illegal act (inaction) against women, encroaching on their life, health, sexual integrity, honor, dignity and other rights and freedoms protected by law through the use or threat of physical, psychological, sexual or economic impact. According to the law, information about victims of harassment and violence, as well as about persons prone to violence, is entered into a single electronic database of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The basis for entering into the database is the appeal of a victim of violence or harassment, reports of individuals or legal entities, direct detection of the commission of harassment or violence, or attempts to commit them, materials received from state bodies and other organizations. In addition, the republic has adopted a number of laws aimed at protecting women and men, including the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On

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guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for women and men", the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 02.07.2018 N PP-3827 "On measures to improve the system of social rehabilitation and adaptation, as well as prevention domestic violence".

The achievement of gender equality in the country is the main priority. From the a systematic approach point of view, there is a building of a system of support for women in order to equalize the imbalance in the proportions of their participation in various processes. In this direction, the Senate of the Republic of Uzbekistan has approved the Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030, which provides for an integrated approach to the implementation of the principle of equality between women and men in all spheres and levels of decision-making and execution. The strategy will promote gender equality in economic and social life in order to create conditions for the realization of equal rights and opportunities for men and women, as well as respect for fundamental human rights.

Conclusion

To sum up, the empowerment of rural women in national socio-economic life should be analyzed based on the combination of the demographic indicators; health status; social protection system; level of education; legal protection; access to healthcare; and leisure conditions. The achieving of gender equality as an indicator of women's socio-economic well-being is also determined by various variables, including the regulatory framework for strengthening the position of women in various spheres of women's life, providing opportunities for rural women's participation in political processes and governance processes at the community, district, region and country levels.

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