



THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE IN UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This article comprehensively analyzes the participation of women in the agricultural sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan, their role in economic, social and cultural development. The study highlights the activity of women in the labor market and employment system, the level of their entry into farming and dekhkan activities, as well as their leadership potential in the process of agrarian reforms implemented in the country since the years of independence. The article analyzes the specific features of women's labor, especially their role in areas such as cotton growing, horticulture, animal husbandry and greenhouse farming from a sociological and economic perspective. Based on statistical data, trends related to women's employment, income level, education and professional qualifications are considered. At the same time, the effectiveness of state policies and programs to improve the working conditions of rural women, ensure gender equality and support their entrepreneurial activities is also analyzed. The article highlights the social significance of women's active participation in agriculture, their contribution to family well-being, food security, and local economic stability. The results of the study include proposals and recommendations aimed at strengthening the gender approach in the agricultural system of Uzbekistan, creating new opportunities for women, and increasing their professional potential.

KEYWORDS: Women, agriculture, gender equality, employment, farming, socio-economic development, rural women.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is an important factor in economic and social development in many countries. Uzbekistan also has great potential in this area, operating in agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and many other sectors. At the same time, women participate in this process as a large labor force. Their role is also widespread, from crop production to home gardens, food security, local markets and additional sources of income. However, women's opportunities, access to resources, and participation in management are still limited compared to men. Studies show that although women make up almost 40% of the agricultural workforce, they are very rarely represented in leadership positions[1].

The purpose of the article is to review the roles of women in agriculture in Uzbekistan, the challenges they face, as well as ongoing positive changes and proposals. Women are an important part of the agricultural labor force in Uzbekistan. For example, according to one source, women make up about 40% of the country's agricultural labor force. In addition, other sources indicate that women are active in food production, livestock farming, and home gardens. In his speech on rural women, UNDP Resident Representative in Uzbekistan Anas Fayyad Karman acknowledged the important role of rural women in agriculture and praised

the efforts of the Government of Uzbekistan to ensure gender equality in agriculture. "Women have been the backbone of our society, especially in agriculture. Women make up more than 40% of the agricultural workforce in Uzbekistan and play a key role in ensuring food security, food security, and therefore climate sustainability. By empowering rural women in agriculture, we are not only taking a step towards ensuring gender equality, but also investing in ensuring food security," he said[2].

Materials and Methods

In many rural areas, women work in family gardens, homesteads, or small-scale farming areas (e.g., "homesteads"). They grow vegetables, fruits, and seedlings to meet their family needs and sell surplus produce to the local market. Women are involved not only in the production phase, but also in processing, sorting, packaging, and small-scale trading. For example, within the horticulture project, women were reported to make up 60% of the workforce.

Result and Discussion

Participation in decision-making and management. Unfortunately, women's participation in senior management positions is low. For example, in 2019, it was noted that while women made up around 40% of the workforce in the agricultural sector, they only held around 7% of management positions [3]. There are a number of barriers to women's full participation in the sector. Below we will look at the main challenges.

Limited access to resources. Women have significantly lower access to land, credit, technology, innovation and services than men. For example, women manage a very small proportion of the total number of registered farms.

Social stereotypes and job evaluation. There are also often cases of social stereotypes and disproportionate job evaluation. Traditionally, women are seen as "family helpers", "on-farm workers", and their work is often not formally evaluated. Women simultaneously perform household, childcare, and agricultural work, which increases their labor costs and limits their opportunities. Women have few leadership roles and are marginalized in decision-making processes. This reduces the ability to take their needs into account.

Weakness in adaptation to climate change and emissions. Factors such as climate change, water scarcity, and technological innovation are placing additional burdens on women — especially since they have limited access to clean water or new machinery [4].

Positive experiences and opportunities. There are also positive developments in Uzbekistan aimed at increasing women's participation in agriculture. A "Gender Strategy" for 2025-2030 was adopted in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This document envisages improving women's land rights, increasing their access to financial services, and expanding their participation in decision-making. Productivity is being increased in the horticulture sector through the use of new technologies and the expansion of women's participation. For example, the planned project provided training for women, which resulted in the creation of additional jobs.

Conclusions

As discussed above, women in Uzbekistan play a crucial role in agriculture—from crop production to home gardens, processing, and market sales. At the same time, they face significant barriers: limited access to resources, stereotypes, low access to senior management, and climate and technological change.

Several recommendations can be made to further strengthen women's role in the future:

Strengthening legislative and practical mechanisms for women's land rights and access to financial services.

Expanding women's access to specialized equipment, innovation, and training programs—especially climate-adapted technologies.

Increasing women's participation in management positions (e.g., cooperatives, farmer associations, decision-making bodies).

Reducing household chores to reduce working hours and workload, and improving household infrastructure and water and energy supply.

Support logistics, storage, packaging and marketing to enable women to market their products.

Combat social stereotypes and organize campaigns to promote gender equality in rural areas.

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