



IMPLEMENTING THE PRINCIPLE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN A BALANCE OF SECULARISM AND RELIGIOSITY

Mirakbarova Dildora Miralisher qizi

PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Social science and law,
Tashkent State Agrarian University, Uzbekistan
<https://www.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10316739>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 03rd December 2023
Accepted: 08th December 2023
Online: 09th December 2023

KEY WORDS

Islam, gender equality, gender approach, feminism, society, family strength, education, upbringing, women's rights, freedom, religiosity, secularism.

ABSTRACT

The article notes that the issue of gender equality in Uzbekistan has become a priority of public policy, especially the creation of an equal legal framework for the activities of women in all areas. But unfortunately, our people do not use them widely or are not allowed by their relatives. The gaps in our legal consciousness, in our spirituality, are clearly visible in the problem of gender equality. Gender equality is sometimes seen as the opposite of our national and religious values. To what extent do Islamic morality conform to the principle of gender equality, including whether there are equal opportunities for Muslims and non-Muslims in matters of education, and what is the status of gender equality in Muslim families? Issues such as whether it is supported are covered in the scientific article on the basis of clear arguments.

INTRODUCTION

We call the current, national stage of our national development New Uzbekistan. One of the most important features of this stage is the large-scale openness in our country, the policy of gradual liberalization of our society. In the context of such renewal, the issues of gender equality and religious and secular aspects in its provision are very important. Gender equality in any society is determined, first of all, by the attitude towards women in it. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan said: "We should consider our efforts to create work places for our women, to alleviate the burden of our mothers and sisters, including creation of all-round opportunities in increasing the role and prestige of women in our social life, taking into account the living conditions too" (Mirziyoyev 2016).

Present day, the Republic of Uzbekistan takes 44th position among 188 countries of the world in terms of gender equality. So, the share of women in the Parliament of Uzbekistan is 32 percent. Moreover, in the system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 16 women have been appointed to senior positions. On June 20, 2019, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the twentieth plenary session of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis mentioned: "One thing is clear: women feel and know the problem of our society better and



more deeply than others” (Mirziyoyev 2019). That same day, on the proposal of the President, Tanzila Norboeva became the first woman who was elected as chairman of the Senate of Uzbekistan. It is notable to underline that today the Upper House of the Oliy Majlis 22 out of 100 senators are women and the number of women in the legislative chamber is 18 out of 150 deputies. Additionally, necessary to remind 22-23% of candidates for district and regional councils of deputies are women.

State and public figure, a member of the commission for the promotion of gender equality in Uzbekistan Saida Mirziyoyeva participated in the world women's Forum in Dubai on February 17-18, 2020 and she gave a speech there. In the new strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the provision of human rights is one of the most important aspect, which cannot be reached its goal without the provision of women's rights. Women have done a lot great contributions to the social and economical development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, but their work has not in many cases been adequately evaluated. Therefore, today the gender situation in Uzbekistan has changed due to the constant efforts of the president directed to change the position of women in society. Gender equality in the republic increases the role of women in decision-making; as a result, in this case country is able to solve social problems more effectively because women are more responsible to solve different types of social issues. A happy woman is a happy family, a happy country and a great future. So, it cannot be different way. Wisdom proverb says: “Behind every successful man, there is usually a successful and wise woman”.

MAIN PART

At the time when countries of the world are taking various measures to promote gender equality, there are some cases of women disrespect among our people, various forms of violence and oppression, obstruction of education and negative flash mobs that negatively reflect to the nation reputation. Among men, we can observe negative attitude towards the concepts of “gender equality” and “feminism”. Before expressing an opinion, it is desirable to acquaint with these concepts closely.

In 1955, the American scientist J.Mani first time used the term “gender” in science. So, in the 1970s, this term was widely used and developed mainly by feminism supporters. The main purpose of using this term in science was to study the role, development and differences of biological sexes in social life. If biologically gender means man and woman, so this term in social life means interrelationship and status between men and women. Malika Inakova - a lawyer and gender expert, describes the gender concept said following: “Gender equality – when men and women can use their rights freely. So, discrimination against a person's role in society is known as violation of gender rights. For instance: the idea when women should be busy only with their household and understanding that their place is in the kitchen, superiority of men over women, trying to oppress them (women) leads to a violation of gender equality.” Every citizen, whether male or female, public figure or worker, authority or criminal, they are all equal in front of law. Today, our country raised the concept of gender equality to the political level and adopted appropriate rights. Through gender equality, our country can provide equal rights for women and men. It's known that every country operates according to the basis of gender approach in its policies and legislation. When we talk about “gender approach”, necessary to understand that this term takes into account the specific



circumstances and characteristics of women and men, including their rights and interests. For example, the presence of women in the field of law-making helps to explain some cases when men do not understand correctly, and they convey their interests and make necessary decisions together with men. Same way, men understand the interests of men better than women. So, gender equality is the right of society - regardless of gender, where everyone has right to freedom of expression.

During the study gender equality rights necessary include here same time those who disagree to study world religions, and compare all results. The most important tasks for ensuring interethnic harmony and religious tolerance have been outlined in the fifth priority of the Actions Strategy for further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021. As stated in the Declaration of the Principles of Tolerance, "Without compassion there will be no peace, and without peace there will be no progress and democracy." It is noteworthy that over the centuries, mankind has matured a virtuous attitude toward representatives of other faiths, as well as the deep respect for their religious regards. In the new phase of today's democratic reforms, the priority of the religious tolerance idea in our society performs primary importance. After all, tolerance means respecting, accepting and understanding the diversity in our world (I. Saifnazarov 2020, 1846).

It is known from history that Buddhism is one of the world religions that seek to break all ties with the cares of the world and suffering, and to attain spiritual peace. According to Buddhism teaching, it is important for everyone to reach spiritual maturity, regardless of men or women. It is known that in Buddhism, mostly men are living as monks. Buddha was the first person in the East to who supported and protected the rights women's worship and created a women group known as Sanghe. So, women monks group created to make all conditions for women and achieve spiritual maturity and worship. According to the Buddhism teaching, in a society where women are facing with various forms of women discrimination and violence, his teachings cannot be fully achieved their results. In Buddhism, gender equality cannot be recognized women and men equally in every field, but it is favorable to pursuit spiritual maturity and spiritual life of society (Usalko O.V. 2019, 134). One of the main requirements for women who wanted to join the Sanghe women group was to serve the monks. Unfortunately, after passing much, even in the chapter of worship, there were discriminations against women by monks. But later, high-ranked monks developed a special codex called "Pratimokshi" against women discrimination. So, these disciplinary norms set twice higher requirements for men. It created lot difficulties for women (Robert C. Luster 1997, 31).

Christianity is also against women violonace and doesn't justify it. Christianity, like other world religions, emphasizes the dignity of the man, as well as the divine commandment, "Love others like yourself" (The Bible 1993, 49)., so as not to discriminate against men or women, and promote mutual respect and compassion. So, Islam is also a religion of peace. Islam religion includes not only peace keeping among nations, peoples, and tribes, but also it prevents internal conflicts in the family, and keeps stability of the family. For example, Surah al-Mujadala in Qur'an means "Woman dispute". According to hadith, once a woman who had a conflict with her husband came to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and complained him about the right freedom of speech and the right of education.



In this situation, no one asked her whether she was against her husband. According to Shari'ah rules, the husband of the same woman also realized his mistake and received punishment. This story accepted as one of the biggest phenomena of gender equality in the post-ignorance period.

Unfortunately, judgments made before the 14th century without discussion by companions, subordinates, without in-depth knowledge, such as recognizing their own mistakes and trying to correct it, bravery, compromises are diminishing among people in our prosperous period. Various disagreements today arised because of lack knowledge in field of religion and lack of interest towards the religious and national history. So, because of above-mentioned knowledge gaps, today people do hasty assessment in many situations. Putting Islam and gender equality as opposites is evident problem of modern society. Let's analyze it deeper. Some people who desire to argue doing it not to acquire some knowledge, but they do it to confuse other people, and they have taken as their basis the Surah an-Nisa 3rd ayat from Qur'an. These people and their followers have taken this ayat as a "weapon", they do not think that it is necessary to get acquainted with ayats in the previous and next ayats of Surah, to ponder their meaning, and to understand the reasons for their revelation through authentic hadiths. Various misunderstandings could be avoided if ayats are looked and studied deeply, not outwardly or slightly. According to ayat 2-3 of Surah an-Nisa, there is noted, "Share with orphans of your wealth. Avoid changing clean to unclean. Avoid adding their wealth to yours. It is one of the greatest sinn. (Ayat 2). If you are afraid of not being able to be fair with orphans, so you can marry two, three or four women you like. If you are afraid of not being able to do justice, so you can take just one or share with property you have. That is to avoid doing hurt someone. (Ayat 3) (Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq 2018b, 460). To understand these ayats better, we should address to the hadiths to find out the reasons.

Zukhri narrated: "Urwah informed me, he got it from Aisha "If you are afraid of not being able to be fair with orphans, so you can marry two, three or four women you like". If you are afraid of not being able to do justice, so you can take just one or share with property you have. That is the act of avoid doing harm someone". (Surah Niso, Ayat 3). And he said: "Oh, my nephew! Remember that orphan girl would be in the care of the guardian, and then he (the guardian) would be interested in her wealth and beauty and wanted to marry her exchange for customary dowry. Therefore, if they did not do justice to them and did not give the dowry fully, they would return them from marriage and order to marry other women" ("Sahih Bukhari" 2018a, 533). So, when we study ayats and hadiths, there we can not find the phrase, "It is obligatory for every Muslim to have (or marry) four wives". According to the hadith, a man who took orphan girl into his care during the period of ignorance tried to marry her when she grew up by saving dowry expenditures that they would spend for other women. In other words, the orphan girl was allowed injustice. Because of orphanance, she was looked down in society and economical than other women because she did not have close people to protect her rights. That is why words of Allah are given in the holy Qur'an, if you can't be in good relation with orphan girls equally as other women, if you don't respect their rights, if you oppress them, do not marry them, just leave them in peace and alone. Instead of that, marry those women who respect their rights and who can restrain themselves from materialistic



greed. It has been revealed in the sense of orphans rights, fear disappoint the rights of orphans and respect them.

Additionally, the phrase of allowance “marry two, three, four of your favorite women” in this ayat proves that Islam is religion of goodness and truth. Scholars have studied historical processes and family problems of modern time and concluded that this ayat is not in vain. According to medical workers, girls are born more often than boys, and girls have more abilities to survive. If we take a look to the history, in the battles mainly took part male people, and most of them as the soldiers were killed in the battles. Taking into account this fact, many women in the past became widows or lived without having any child. Such kind of events during the period of ignorance in the past, when women were unable to provide themselves financially, hard times were the main factor of increasing immorality and prostitution. So, it led to polygamy and that wasn't restricted and women's rights were not taken into account.

Narrated by Ibn Abbas: “If a husband died in the war, his closest men would be entitled to his wife. If they wished, one of them would marry her or let another to marry her, or prohibited anyone to marry her” (“Sahih Bukhari” 2018b, 499). Because of these situations and problems in the life of the past, Islam religion has limited the number of wives and rights of women were not be violated, and treated fairly. Moreover, it was explained that people who could not provide the material and other needs of women, and people who could not be in a relationship with Justice, should be satisfied with one woman only. It is known that not always life can be without problems and shortcomings, as we dream. This ayat is mentioned in the Qur'an, and naturally almost everyone dislikes it, especially women. But when we look at life thoughtfully and study carefully, we can conclude that impossible to find out the problems in life which can't be solved. Of course, polygamy is also not allowed on its own. It also has its own demands and judgments. By the way, we can also find out the sad consequences of polygamy from historical events. Although the rulers had their own harems but their children grew up under the control of women of different spiritualities, morals and values. Because of this reason, children of rulers were brought up at different levels of spirituality and morality, and they were mainly rivals each other. So, later we can notice in History, it led to the degradation of Kingdom or Empire, and appeared in history the children who killed his own father for the wealth and power, they are known as “Padarkush” or Father killer.

The Jadidist and scientist Abdurauf Fitrat, in his book "Family or Family Management Procedures", enumerated the causes of polygamy, and clarified that polygamy is harmful for cultural aspect and might cause enmity relations between women and children, later when father become old and helpless, the children who are full grievances could take vengeance from father without mercy (Abdurauf Fitrat 2016, 18). It's known, who could not give mercy, can not find it later.

It is fact that no prophets came out from women if we study history of Islam, the right to inherit in Islam constitutes different amount for women and men, the passage of two women testimonies to a man could be painful issue for gender equality. But we should remember when these religions appeared not all women of that time were well educated, self-awared and self-sufficiented as women today. As all religions lead people to morality, discipline, and mutual respect, we can see that religions have tried to keep women from various trials,



tribulations, and controversial processes and fairly as possible. It is up to us, how we evaluate each situation. It is better to make great strides by taking full advantages and opportunities of Shari'ah, rather than just arguing about the religious limitations and opposing them.

The concept of "feminism" first appeared in the West. It is known that in the early of twentieth century, in west, women were understood mainly as a person who was busy with household. So, these women were limited of opportunities to express themselves in field of science or achieving in a certain specialization due to the narrow worldview in society. Mostly low-income or enslaved women were involved the lowest works in society. Because of that reason, in west ereged the concept of "feminism" and women fought for their rights to get knowledge and take equal place in society. Today, in western countries, women have gained their rights and freedoms in many areas, the right of birth control, the right to get higher education in universities, and the right in society. Unfortunately, the issue of building strong family remains as a weak point of Western countries. Present day, the appearance of western women includes itself achievements in science, in social position, but most of them are single women ("Chrestomathy of the Basics of Gender Research Course" 2003, 345). So, such kind of situation in west can lead to the demographic crisis. Impossible to be happy, if the family is not full. So, two meanings have two different aspects, feminism is not acceptable for women of east because of mentality, national customs and traditions. Necessary to understand that gender equality is not unknown concept for Islam, because Islam supports gender equality to develop the society in general. But demand gender equality from Islam is not appropriate for its rules.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our purpose of writing this scientific article is not to create discord or discrimination between men and women. But to remind about our national, religious and humanitarian values to them who have obvilion about mentioned concepts. We should remember that everyone is happy when they respect each other, do not violate their rights, and gain dignity, not when they demand their rights. In Islam, one of the 99 names of Allah is "Rahim" – "the giver of subtle blessings", "mercy giver", and it is defined that every Muslim should have this quality in himself. Necessary to remember, in hadith is also given: "Who doesn't give mercy, won't get mercy" (Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq, 2018a).

In conclusion, it is not enough to take administrative measures to ensure the balance of religion and secularism in matters of gender equality, but in today's Uzbekistan we consider it very important to liberalize both secular life and religious rules it will be difficult to find a solution.

References:

1. Abdurauf Fitrat 2016. "Family or family management procedures". Manaviyat Publishing House. Tashkent.
2. Chrestomathy of the Basics of Gender Research Course 2003. Uzbek edition: Representative Office of the Open Society Institute Assistance Fund in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan Publishing House. Tashkent.



3. Ismoil Saifnazarov, Azamat Mukhtarov, Tursunboy Sulstonov, Abdurauf Tolibov 2020. «Religious tolerance, unity of knowledge and faith issues highlighting in Imam Bukhari Hadiths». International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology Vol. 29, No. 5.
4. Mirziyoyev Sh.M. June 22, 2019. Speech by President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the Twentieth Plenary Session of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis.
5. Mirziyoyev Sh.M. December 15, 2016. "We will build a free and prosperous, democratic state of Uzbekistan together with our brave and noble people." Speech at the joint session of the chambers of the Oliy Majlis dedicated to the inauguration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
6. Robert C. Luster 1997. "Religious traditions of the world." Directory. "Buddhism. The path to Nirvana. " Publishing house "Turon". Bishkek.
7. Sahih Bukhari. The Golden Series: Volume 6" 2018. HILOL-NASHR Publishing House. Tashkent.
8. Sahih Bukhari. The Golden Series: Volume 8" 2078. HILOL-NASHR Publishing House. Tashkent.
9. Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf 2018. "Spiritual education". 3 - juz. HILOL-NASHR Publishing House. Tashkent.
10. Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf 2018. "Tafsiri Hilal" 1-juz. HILOL-NASHR Publishing House. Tashkent.
11. The Bible, the Genesis, and the Psalms 1993. Translators: V.Zunnun and others. Institute for Bible Translation. Stockholm.
12. The Holy Quran 1992. The author of the translation and commentary is Sheikh Alouddin Mansur. Cholpon Publishing House, Tashkent.
13. Usalko O.V., Kaldinova G.P. 2019. "Gender Equality and Buddhist Culture." Kalmyk University Bulletin. No. 4. eLIBRARY scientific electronic library.