

УДК 061.215-055.2

WOMEN OF KAZAKHSTAN. ENTERING THE AUTHORITIES

Шевченко Л.Я.,*кандидат исторических наук,
доцент, КГПИ***Назарова С.В.,***кандидат педагогических наук,
старший преподаватель, КГПИ,
г. Костанай, Казахстан***Аннотация**

Мақалада ерлер мен әйелдердің билікке талпыну жолындағы теңдік мәселелері гендерлік тұрғыда қарастырылған. Авторлар аталмыш мәселе бойынша дәстүрлі стереотиптер мен қоғам мен саясаттағы әйелдердің орны мен рөлі туралы көзқарастарды талдаған.

Аннотация

В данной статье сквозь призму гендерного подхода рассматриваются проблемы равенства мужчин и женщин на пути к власти. Авторами анализируются традиционные стереотипы по данному вопросу, а также изменение взглядов на роль и место женщины в обществе и политике.

Abstract

The gender policy, breaking the existing traditional stereotype of the necessity for the social and political involvement of the woman only in successful solution of the family and youth problems, and children's upbringing, is directed to the achieving the equality among the sexes, and to the change of views on the role and place of the woman in the society and politics.

Түйінді сөздер: *гендер, билік, әйелдер, саясат, саяси қызмет.*

Ключевые слова: *гендер, власть, женщины, политика, политическая деятельность.*

Key words: *gender, power, women, politics.*

1. Introduction.

Modern woman is simultaneously a product and an active subject of the system crisis and decay of the patriarchate relations, structures and mentality, and their gradual replacement by polycentric reality.

The mentioned orientations originate from the achievement of the social inequality of man and woman, as a required prerequisite of the overcome of man- and woman-centrism aimed at the revival of their culture creating dichotomy. This is the essence of emancipation of the new type, which is defined by the gender notion.

Gender approach to political, and socio-economic processes and events reflects their study from the point of view of both men's and women's interests. The gender policy, breaking the existing traditional stereotype of the necessity for the social and political involvement of the woman only in successful solution of the family and youth problems, and children's upbringing, is directed to the achieving the equality among the sexes, and to the change of views on the role and place of the woman in the society and politics.

2. Discussion.

The most important issue of the gender politics is gender equality in all spheres of social life, abolishment of all types of discrimination in women's respect and their political socialization. Social discrimination exists in practically all spheres of the social life, but it is most vivid in the profit distribution, politics, sex sphere and everyday life.

Legislation, regulating the citizenship rights of women has always been rather progressive in the countries of Eastern Europe and the former USSR republics. Formally it has never been an obstacle for the achievement of the gender equality, and inclusion of women into the highest ranks of political authorities. However, the totalitarianism principle of social organization with its one-party system, non-alternative elections and non-limited power of the nomenclature has been a barrier.

The practice of women integration into politics in the majority of countries has shown that even the existence of the whole complex of the state laws and acts that guarantee the political, economic, and cultural equality of women and ban any form of sexual discrimination, does not automatically lead to the political activeness of women, and their inclusion into the state ruling processes equally with men.

Most generally the source of the existing practice can be defined as the inconsistency between the legal equality of men's and women's rights and their real opportunities to realize this equality.

Women in all leading posts show interest to the spheres, which are ignored by the men-in-power: protection of maternity and childhood, protection of the sexual assault victims, development of children's institutions, social insurance, equality of pay for the similar type of work, access to bank loans, etc. Women are resourceful for the formation of the state policy that favors the development of patriotic feelings and dedication to the state, which takes care of all its citizens' well-being.

On the basis of sociological questionnaires and publicist materials we can draw a conclusion: hierarchy of gender relations is still apparent in Kazakhstan, when men take a higher and more favorable position, than women. During 1990-2000 the decrease of total employment took place, mostly, at women's expense and there was an active push of women from the economic sphere of paid labor into unpaid house work, and/or irregular non-qualified employment. Unemployed women in Kazakhstan constitute 58 per cent, and their wage in all types of activities constitutes 60.8 per cent from men's pay. Even in traditional women's spheres, like health care, education, social service and others, women earn less in comparison with men (The Kazakhstan weekly newspaper the Panorama № 25, of June, 23, 2000 [the Electronic resource]. – 2000. –access Mode: <http://www.panorama.kz/archiv/2000/25.htm>. - access Date: 2011).

Struggle against sexual discrimination is one of the priorities in gender politics of states. At present Kazakhstan is considered one of the most progressive among post-soviet states in respect of discrimination abolishment. The 1979 UN “Convention on abolishment of all types of discrimination against women” was ratified by Kazakhstan in 1998. This convention is directed to ensure the following women rights:

1. To elect and be elected in all publically elected organs;
2. To take part in the formation of the state policy and be a state employee;
3. To be a member of a non-governmental organization, working on the social and political problems of the country's life.

Having ratified the given convention, Kazakhstan one more time demonstrated its pursue to carry out the Beijing action platform accepted by the International Women Forum in 1995.

Moreover, Kazakhstan is a participant of more than twenty various agreements and conventions in human rights, including those that are directed to ensure equality of sexes and protection of women and children (“On women's political rights”, “On a married woman's citizenship”).

Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan guarantees equal rights and opportunities to all citizens, irrespective of their sex, ethnic or religious belonging, though such guarantees do not ensure automatic achieving such quality in real life.

One of the important stages of the gender movement development in Kazakhstan was the establishment of the National Committee in family and women's issues at the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Agency on State Service Affairs. Besides, with the aim of women's interests' lobbying there is a Parliament Members' group “Otbasy|Family” functioning in the

Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In the frame of these organizations' work there has been worked out and legalized by the Government regulation a National Plan of Actions to improve the women's position.

Thus, state policy strategy incorporates the elements of the principles of the gender development. The notion of the gender equality primarily suggested a wonderful opportunity for the state to make men's and women's rights equal under the changing social, political, and economic conditions. Educational work has been activated to raise issues of keeping political, economic, social rights of women and children; certain measures for ensuring legal responsibility for violence, home violence included, have been carried out.

A marking feature of the gender policy of Kazakhstan is the fact, that gender projects are initiated by the state in the first turn, which undertakes preventive measures in the sphere of the gender development. Equal participation of women in the political and economic life is viewed by the democratic public as a necessary condition for achieving the progress in socio-economic development, solving urgent political, socio-cultural, race, ethnical, and other problems.

For the progress in the issues of the gender equality a Conception of Gender Politics has been adopted in Kazakhstan, which supposes realization of the following measures:

- Introduction of compulsory gender expertise of the working laws and law projects; implementation of the gender indicators into all state plans and programs;
- Stimulating of the development of state and private pre-school children's institutions with the aim of lowering of women's home work load, their professional qualification improvement and professional growth;
- Development of small and medium business on the basis of financial support of women's businesses;
- Creation of the national net for training and education of women-politicians;
- Introduction of changes and amendments into the law acts and regulations in issues relating to women's employment and firing.

At present according to the Republic of Kazakhstan President's direction an appropriate state strategy is being worked out basing on the Conception of the gender politics. This document will define the system of measures for ensuring men's and women's equality, with certain dates assigned for their implementation.

Activities of women's non-governmental organizations have considerably changed in the recent ten years. Initially most of them were oriented to the social protection of women and children, carrying out psychological and legal consulting, struggle for rights of certain categories of population, such as families with many children, single-mother families, handicapped women, etc. under various conflicting circumstances. However, today activities of these organizations are directed to the increase of the level of women's political activeness, issues of their equal participation in the political process, political socialization of the woman as a full-right subject of the political relations. Thus, at present women share in the number of first level leaders constitutes 9 percent, while their share in the number of specialists with higher education and special professional training exceeds 62 percent. The Parliament Majilis is represented by 19 women among 107 members (which makes 17.8 percent of the total number of Parliament members). In the Senate this figure is lower and constitutes 4.3 percent: from the total number of 47 Senate members only two are women (Kazakhstan in number of women – deputies has occupied 69 place in the world. [An electronic resource]. 2011. – access Mode: http://rus.azattyq.org/content/kazakhstan_woman_parliament_/2337079.html. – access Date: 2011).

There is a direct connection between the policy of the country in relation to women and the degree of social stability, and, consequently, the national security of the state. That is why working out the mechanisms of sustaining the political and socio-economic stability of the state is a fundamental task of the theoretical and applied political science in Kazakhstan.

In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan (art.33), citizens have equal rights and opportunities of access to the participation in the ruling state affairs. However, there is a stable tendency when the total number of women in the elective organs varies at the level of 11-12 percent. It is connected not only with the existence of certain financial and legal barriers, but, mainly, with the existing mental stereotypes.

At present low participation of women in Kazakhstani politics can be explained by their minimal representation in the electoral groups that are recruited into politics. As a rule, women-politicians come to this sphere from social branches (health care, education, social security and the like) and have little political experience in comparison with men. Discrimination, existing in practically all spheres of the society, is an obstacle to women's political activeness and is and is apparent primarily in the barriers (the so-called "glass ceilings") on the way to the key political posts both in the centre and rural areas.

A significant factor here is also unwillingness of the electorate to vote for women. At present time Kazakhstan such factors as fragmental activities of women's non-governmental social unities, movements and parties, headed by women, weakness of the social electoral base and political support, are conditioned by the low level of political culture and overall passiveness, which inevitably influences the radical changes in the political sphere.

In accordance with the equality principle, economic, political and social resources should be distributed between men and women on equal basis. The state policy, formed mainly by representatives of one sex, cannot meet the requirements of all citizens. Unequally low representation of women in the organs that make political decisions is a drawback of the modern liberal democracies.

Beginning with the 1980-1990 realization of the equality principle becomes an inseparable attribute of state policy. In spite of the fact that governments of many countries have adapted to the national conditions and legally consolidated a certain number of measures, directed to insure this equality. However, it often happens that nobody assesses their effectiveness or monitors their realization. Means that now exist suffer from over academic character that does not take into account the gender constituent.

Variety of political socialization orients men and women to different roles, different attitudes to politics and active work as such. Political sphere is considered inappropriate for a woman's life force application.

After the change of gender roles idea in 1970-es, politics remained the sphere where various roles of the woman come into a maximal opposition with each other. A politically active woman "...should come down to realizing herself as a personality..., who solves... the opposition between her own political activeness ... and the social idea of impossibility for a woman to reach a sufficient for a competent politician level" (Genovese, 1993, p. 5.).

In T. Parson's tradition influence of the political socialization was interpreted as follows: a man comes into politics exclusively for his own carrier's sake. In this sphere he specializes in "instrumental" functions, orienting onto the outer tasks of the system. Women-politicians are lesser oriented on their own carrier, they specialize on "expressional" functions, internal problems of system, providing integration of its members.

3. Conclusions.

The structural factors of participation connected with social structure of the society, represent one more serious block of the reasons. Among them non-uniformity in distribution of the resources, which men and women can use in politics, is allocated.

The inequality in educational level, incomes, experience, caused by gender, leads to the fact that women are less presented in those layers which are sources of new recruits in politics, therefore their chances of political participation are much lower.

Women often come to politics from education sphere and public health service, possessing less political experience, than men. Lately, however, the situation has changed – now the quantity of women-lawyers and businesswomen who have political experience is growing.

Situational (biographic) factors have an important value, too. They are connected with peculiar features of the course of life of the woman in modern society.

The majority of women bear the responsibility for housekeeping and their children's education of and for this reason they do not have enough time or energy for political activity.

It is not by chance that women, as a rule, come to politics in later age as compared with men, and among "female political elite" there are many single, divorced women and widows. It doesn't mean that men don't face the conflict between political career and family life. However, men politicize, despite such conflict, and women because of the similar conflict are inclined to refuse political career. According to some research, women much rarer, than men, satisfy their political intentions.

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