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THE WOMEN'S QUESTION IN THE UZBEK SSR

Abstract

This article examines Soviet state policy toward women using the case of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic from the 1920s to the 1980s. The study focuses on the goals, mechanisms, and social consequences of Soviet women's policy implemented in the context of a traditional Central Asian society. The author argues that the officially proclaimed principle of gender equality was closely connected not only with social modernization but also with ideological and political objectives of the Soviet regime.

The article analyzes institutional mechanisms for involving women in public and political life, including women's departments, clubs, delegate meetings, and the "Hujum" campaign. Particular attention is paid to the contradictory outcomes of these policies: alongside increased literacy, employment, and civic participation among women, coercive methods, social resistance, and tragic consequences for many local women were observed.

Based on archival materials, legal documents, statistical data, and scholarly works, the study reveals the real impact of Soviet policies on women's social status. The article also highlights the contribution of Uzbek women to industrial development, agriculture, and especially to the wartime economy during World War II, when women became a key labor and social resource for the state.

The author concludes that Soviet women's policy in the Uzbek SSR played a significant role in accelerating social modernization and expanding women's public roles. However, it simultaneously served as a tool for ideological control and economic mobilization, which determined its complex and controversial nature.

Keywords: Soviet women's policy; Hujum campaign; social modernization; anti-religious policy.

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ӨЗБЕК КСР-ДАҒЫ ӘЙЕЛДЕР МӘСЕЛЕСІ

Аңдатпа

Бұл мақалада 1920–1980 жылдар аралығындағы Кеңес мемлекетінің әйелдерге қатысты саясаты Өзбек Кеңестік Социалистік Республикасы мысалында қарастырылады. Зерттеу кеңестік әйелдер саясатының дәстүрлі Орталық Азия қоғамы жағдайында жүзеге асырылған мақсаттарын, тетіктерін және әлеуметтік салдарын талдауға бағытталған. Автор ресми түрде жарияланған гендерлік теңдік қағидасы әлеуметтік модернизациямен қатар, кеңестік режимнің идеологиялық және саяси мақсаттарымен тығыз байланысты болғанын дәлелдейді.

Мақалада әйелдерді қоғамдық және саяси өмірге тартудың институционалдық тетіктері, атап айтқанда әйелдер бөлімдері, клубтар, делегат жиналыстары және «Хужум» науқаны талданады. Бұл саясаттардың қайшылықты нәтижелеріне ерекше назар аударылады: әйелдердің сауаттылығының, жұмыспен қамтылуының және азаматтық белсенділігінің артуымен қатар, мәжбүрлеу әдістері, әлеуметтік қарсылық және көптеген жергілікті әйелдер үшін қайғылы салдарлар орын алғаны көрсетіледі.

Архивтік материалдар, құқықтық құжаттар, статистикалық деректер және ғылыми еңбектер негізінде зерттеу кеңестік саясаттың әйелдердің әлеуметтік мәртебесіне нақты ықпалын ашады. Сондай-ақ мақалада өзбек әйелдерінің өнеркәсіптің дамуына, ауыл шаруашылығына және әсіресе Екінші дүниежүзілік соғыс жылдарындағы әскери экономикаға қосқан үлесі атап көрсетіледі, бұл кезеңде әйелдер мемлекет үшін негізгі еңбек және әлеуметтік ресурсқа айналды.

Автор Кеңестік Өзбекстандағы әйелдер саясаты әлеуметтік модернизацияны жеделдетуде және әйелдердің қоғамдық ролін кеңейтуде маңызды орын алғанымен, бір мезгілде идеологиялық бақылау мен экономикалық мобилизация құралы ретінде қызмет еткенін және осының нәтижесінде оның күрделі әрі қайшылықты сипатқа ие болғанын қорытындылайды.

Түйін сөздер: Кеңестік әйелдер саясаты; «Хужум» науқаны; әлеуметтік модернизация; дінге қарсы саясат.

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ЖЕНСКИЙ ВОПРОС В УЗБЕКСКОЙ ССР

Аннотация

В статье рассматривается политика советского государства в отношении женщин на примере Узбекской ССР в 1920–1980-е годы. Основное внимание уделяется анализу целей, механизмов и последствий реализации советской женской политики в условиях традиционного общества Средней Азии. Автор показывает, что провозглашённая советской властью идея гендерного равенства имела не только социальный, но и ярко выраженный идеологический и политический характер.

В работе анализируются институциональные формы вовлечения женщин в общественно-политическую и производственную жизнь, включая деятельность женских отделов, клубов, собраний делегатов, а также кампанию «Худжум». Особое внимание уделяется противоречивым последствиям этой политики: с одной стороны — росту женской грамотности, занятости и общественной активности, с другой — насильственным методам, социальным конфликтам и трагическим последствиям для значительной части местных женщин.

На основе архивных документов, нормативно-правовых актов, статистических данных и научных исследований раскрывается реальное влияние советской политики на положение женщин в обществе. В статье также рассматривается роль узбекских женщин в индустриализации, коллективизации и в годы Второй мировой войны, когда они стали важной трудовой и социальной опорой государства.

Автор приходит к выводу, что советская политика в отношении женщин в Узбекской ССР способствовала модернизации общества и расширению социальной роли женщин, однако одновременно использовала их как инструмент реализации экономических и идеологических задач государства, что обусловило её сложный и противоречивый характер.

Ключевые слова: Советская гендерная политика; кампания «Худжум»; социальная модернизация; антирелигиозная политика.

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ÖZBEK SSR'İNDE KADIN SORUNU

Özet

Bu makalede, 1920-1980 yılları arasındaki Sovyet devletinin kadınlara yönelik politikaları, Özbek Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti örneğinde incelenmektedir. Araştırma, Sovyet kadın politikalarının geleneksel Orta Asya toplumundaki uygulanma amaçlarını, mekanizmalarını ve sosyal sonuçlarını analiz etmeye yöneliktir. Yazar, resmî olarak ilan edilen cinsiyet eşitliği ilkesinin, sosyal modernizasyon ile birlikte Sovyet rejiminin ideolojik ve siyasî hedefleriyle yakından bağlantılı olduğunu kanıtlamaktadır.

Makalede, kadınları toplumsal ve siyasî hayata katmanın kurumsal mekanizmaları, özellikle kadın bölümleri, kulüpler, delege toplantıları ve “Hujum” kampanyası ele alınmaktadır. Bu politikaların çelişkili sonuçlarına özel dikkat gösterilmektedir: kadınların okuryazarlığı, istihdama katılımı ve sivil aktivitesindeki artışın yanı sıra, zorlayıcı yöntemler, toplumsal direniş ve birçok yerel kadın için trajik sonuçlar ortaya çıkmıştır.

Araştırma; arşiv materyalleri, hukuki belgeler, istatistikî veriler ve bilimsel yayınlar temel alınarak, Sovyet politikalarının kadınların sosyal statüsü üzerindeki somut etkilerini ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca makalede, Özbek kadınlarının sanayinin gelişimine, tarıma ve özellikle II. Dünya Savaşı yıllarındaki askerî ekonomiye katkıları vurgulanmaktadır. Bu dönemde kadınlar, devlet için temel bir emek ve sosyal kaynak haline gelmiştir.

Yazar, Sovyet Özbekistan'ındaki kadın politikasının sosyal modernizasyonu hızlandırmada ve kadınların toplumsal rolünü genişletmede önemli bir yer tuttuğunu ancak aynı zamanda ideolojik kontrol ve ekonomik seferberlik aracı olarak işlev gördüğünü ve bunun sonucunda politikaların karmaşık ve çelişkili bir yapıya sahip olduğunu sonuç olarak belirtmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sovyet Kadın Politikası; “Hujum” Kampanyası; Sosyal Modernizasyon; Dine Karşı Politika.

Introduction

The political system of the former Soviet Union, which took shape in the first quarter of the twentieth century, brought about profound transformations in the socio-political structure of society in Central Asia, particularly in the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (Uzbek SSR). Within this process, the women's issue was promoted as one of the priority directions of Soviet state policy. The active involvement of women in social life, the improvement of their literacy, the expansion of their participation in the labor market, and the strengthening of their socio-political engagement were officially interpreted by the Soviet authorities as a policy aimed at ensuring gender equality.

However, a deeper analysis of the essence and content of this policy demonstrates that the measures concerning women were not solely directed toward the expansion of their rights and freedoms. Especially in the conditions of the Central Asian republics, where traditional socio-cultural structures predominated, Soviet women's policy acquired a complex and contradictory character. By broadly involving women in production processes and public life, the Soviet state sought, on the one hand, to meet economic needs and, on the other, to form a social base loyal to communist ideology. Consequently, the women's issue in Soviet policy functioned not only as a social concern but also as an ideological and political instrument.

The ideological monopoly that prevailed during the years of Soviet power and Communist Party dominance led to a one-sided interpretation of the women's issue for a prolonged period. In official historiography, Soviet women's policy was predominantly presented as a positive phenomenon, while its internal contradictions, its real impact on local society, and its negative consequences were not sufficiently analyzed. During the years of independence, opportunities emerged to approach this issue from a new perspective and to conduct a critical and objective reassessment of Soviet women's policy.

From this standpoint, the main objective of this article is to analyze Soviet state policy toward women using the example of the Uzbek SSR, including its implementation mechanisms and social institutions, as well as the actual impact and outcomes of this policy on social life. The study examines the true nature of the rights and opportunities granted to women by the Soviet state and the extent to which they served political and ideological objectives.

According to the author's hypothesis, although Soviet policy toward women was officially presented as being aimed at expanding their social and legal freedoms, in practice it was intended to broaden the ranks of supporters loyal to Soviet ideology and to shape women as a labor and political resource serving state interests in production and public life.

To test this hypothesis, historical-analytical, historical-comparative, and generalization methods were employed. The research is based on the analysis of normative legal documents, archival materials, statistical data, and scholarly literature. The article examines the formation of the women's issue during the Soviet period and the institutional mechanisms designed to address it, particularly through the example of the activities of women's departments in the Uzbek SSR.

Methods and Materials

In this article, general scientific and specific methods of historical research were employed to examine Soviet policy on the women's issue in the Uzbek SSR. In particular, the methods of historicism and systemic analysis made it possible to consistently analyze the stages of formation, goals, and objectives of Soviet policy toward women, as well as its socio-political outcomes.

Using the historical-comparative method, Soviet women's policy was compared with the pre-Soviet period and with historiographical interpretations that emerged after independence. This approach helped to reveal the ideological essence of the concept of "women's liberation" promoted during the Soviet era.

Through methods of analysis and synthesis, the activities of institutional mechanisms such as women's departments, clubs, delegate meetings, and the Hujum campaign, as well as their impact on social life, were systematized and generalized.

The study is based on a source-critical approach and draws extensively on archival documents, Soviet-era normative legal acts, decisions of party and state bodies, statistical data, periodical press materials, and scholarly works by historians of both the Soviet and post-independence periods.

In particular, studies published during the Soviet period generally assessed women's policy positively, whereas post-independence scholarship critically examines its internal contradictions, coercive elements, and violent practices. These differing approaches were subjected to comparative analysis, on the basis of which the author's conclusions were formulated.

This methodological framework made it possible to substantiate scientifically the argument that Soviet policy on the women's issue was aimed less at ensuring genuine gender equality than at creating an ideologically loyal social base.

Analysis and Results

Within the scope of the researched topic, numerous historians have conducted scholarly studies. An analysis of their works allows them to be conditionally divided into two groups. The first group consists of scholars who evaluate the policy pursued by the former USSR as having led to the liberation of Eastern women and regard this outcome as evidence of the correct implementation of Soviet policy. According to their views, the idea of equality between women and men generated positive attitudes and perceptions toward society in women's lives, work activities,

and everyday experiences. Despite oppression and humiliation exercised by men, women followed the course of Soviet power and began to participate actively in all spheres of social production. Naturally, this group primarily includes researchers whose works were produced during the Soviet period.

The second group comprises studies conducted after the collapse of the USSR, in which the darker aspects of the previous political system are revealed. According to these scholars, Soviet policy had not only positive but also negative consequences for women's lives. The political, social, economic, and ideological policies pursued by Soviet power and the Communist Party left adverse traces in women's consciousness and contributed to the emergence of resistance movements. This was largely due to the one-sidedness and inconsistency inherent in the Soviet system and Communist Party policy. Archival documents indicate that adopted laws and resolutions often directly or indirectly contradicted one another, or that certain decisions generated new problems.

The period from 1919 to 1930 was particularly active with regard to the women's issue. During these years, departments, clubs, circles, and educational institutions were established and became the main instruments for involving women in public life. Unlike women's departments in central Russia, women's departments in Turkestan were required to carry out far more diverse activities. These departments organized literacy schools for women, handicraft artels, orphanages, nurseries, and consultation centers. They actively involved women of the local population in social life and promoted Soviet government decrees at the local level. Such activities were predominantly directed and supervised by the Communist Party.

After the Communist Party seized one-man rule on behalf of workers', peasants', and soldiers' deputies, it assumed direct control over governing society, unlike the Russian Empire. Special organizations operating in the name of the Party and the Soviets emerged in all spheres of the social system. In particular, women's departments, the Qo'shchi Union, the Komsomol, Pioneer, and Octobrist organizations and associations were established. Although these organizations were legally independent, in practice they strictly followed the Party line and collectively implemented its policies under the slogan that the "Party is the mind, honor, and conscience of our era."

The Soviet government and the Communist Party did not overlook the significant potential of women in the development of the state and society. Under the patronage of the Communist Party, each organization developed special systems, forms, and methods of work among women. From the end of 1919, women's departments began to be established under district and city party committees in Turkestan [1, 12].

Women's departments had an organizational structure consisting of a head, instructors, and a board (seven members), as well as representatives from trade unions, Komsomol organizations, party committees, the Qo'shchi Union, women delegates, and agitators [2, 56]. In 1920, there were 45 such units operating in the territory of Turkestan, bringing together nearly one thousand Muslim women and one thousand European women [1, 12].

Women's departments soon gained considerable authority, and the trust of local women in these institutions steadily increased. Women's clubs and "red corners" in mahallas and villages provided substantial support to women's departments. This form of activity had not been practiced in Russia. Within these clubs, outpatient clinics, consultation centers, schools, cultural and educational circles, and workshops were established for women. For example, a club established in Tashkent included a children's consultation center (visited daily by 60–80 Uzbek women), a sewing workshop for 25 people, a school educating 30 girls, a literacy school for 35 adult women, a quilt-making artel, a library, and a Pioneer detachment uniting Uzbek girls. The club published a wall newspaper and held weekly meetings of its members. It also hosted political circles, including groups focused on maternal and child welfare, choir, music, and Russian language studies. Lectures and reports on various fields of knowledge were organized weekly, and excursions were arranged.

Such clubs carried out extensive work to involve Uzbek women in education. Typically, parents were invited for lengthy discussions to persuade them of the necessity of educating their daughters. In 1924, similar women's clubs were opened in other cities of Uzbekistan. In 1926,

2,327 women joined these clubs, while in 1927 their number increased to 4,723—almost twice as many [1, 13].

In this process, the government paid particular attention to increasing the socio-political activity of local women, their “modernization,” and ensuring their equal participation with men in society (subsequently enabling broader use of their labor). Measures to accelerate this process were discussed at a meeting held with the participation of staff from women’s departments of the Central Asian Party Committee in September 1926, where a decision was made to forcibly “liberate” women, that is, to remove the paranja [3, 105].

Delegate meetings organized under women’s departments of party committees became a genuine school for involving Uzbek women in the work of Soviet, trade union, and cooperative bodies. The number of Uzbek women participating in these delegate meetings steadily increased. While at the beginning of 1925 their number reached 820, by the end of that year it had risen to 1,500.

By 1926, women’s political activity had also intensified. In the 1926 elections, more than 32,000 women participated in the Fergana region alone, and 665 women were elected to village Soviets. By contrast, in 1925 only about 200 women worked in the lower Soviet apparatus throughout Uzbekistan. During this period, women’s efforts to join the Qo’shchi Union also intensified. While 3,000 women were members of the Qo’shchi Union in 1925, by 1926 the number of women members in the Fergana and Tashkent regions alone reached 4,900 [4].

Another factor that negatively affected the lives of women in Uzbekistan was the struggle against religion—militant atheism. One of its objectives was the fear that “the local population would remain forever alien to the Russian state under the pressure of their clergy” [5], as well as the aim of imposing spiritual dependence and “poisoning” public consciousness. In propaganda activities, religion was increasingly portrayed as the root cause of all backwardness. Special “machinery” and pressure mechanisms were created to implement atheistic policies.

In 1927, directives were issued stating that “intensifying anti-religious propaganda among women removes them from social and labor activities,” and therefore that “polygamy and bride price are the fault of religion,” proposing to use these practices as grounds for combating religion [2, 61]. As a result, specialized anti-religious propaganda activities were carried out within organizations. However, in the view of the government and the Party, such efforts were proceeding too slowly. Sharp confrontation became especially evident in the Hujum policy.

In 1927, the Party declared this policy a “Hujum” (“Attack”) against the old way of life. The slogan “Attack on the old way of life” was enthusiastically supported by communists as well as by broad sections of workers and peasants. To implement this major task, the Party launched large-scale agitation and propaganda campaigns among the population. Notably, within a short period, 112 meetings devoted to women’s “liberation” were held in the Andijan region [6].

At women’s conferences held in 1927, 1,550 women participated, after which 704 women removed the paranja. In the early months of 1927, 300 women in the Namangan region abandoned the paranja [1, 13].

Although during the initial years of the Hujum campaign many women removed the paranja and began participating in socio-political processes, the implementation of this policy was accompanied by negative consequences. According to reports submitted under strict secrecy to the Prosecutor’s Office of the Uzbek SSR, in 1927 the Hujum movement was supported by certain segments of the population, including the wives of men employed in state institutions, as well as poor peasants and laborers, while religious scholars, wealthy individuals, and merchants carried out propaganda against it [7].

The Hujum campaign assumed such an aggressive character that the process of unveiling women was even organized in the form of a “socialist competition” among Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and other republics. Notably, the Soviet judicial and legal system, internal affairs bodies, the prosecutor’s office, and investigative agencies were also involved in this initiative. During this competition, which lasted from September 1, 1929, to March 1, 1930, court officials

expedited divorce proceedings, while other participants were tasked with delivering educational lectures in villages on women's roles in society and their rights.

In addition, tasks were set to involve local women in judicial and legal institutions and to create conditions for their participation in court proceedings as people's assessors. During this period, the number of women seeking divorce from much older husbands increased, and such cases intensified further during the "competition." As a result, many families were broken up, and some women who expressed a desire for divorce were punished by their husbands or relatives.

The Soviet authorities' radical policy of "liberating" women also led to tragic consequences, including the loss of life among many local women. Numerous documents confirm this. In particular, a report submitted in June 1927 by the Kokand district office of the State Political Administration to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan recorded criminal cases related to the killing of women who had removed the paranja in the Buvayda and Beshariq districts, as well as in the villages of Oqtepa and G'ori [8].

As a result of the aggressive implementation of the Hujum policy in Uzbekistan during 1927–1928, the premature deaths of more than 2,500 women were recorded [9]. According to data from the Khorezm city prosecutor, in only 20 criminal cases reviewed, the killing of 68 women was established [10]. Another document notes that in 1928 criminal cases were initiated across the republic regarding the deaths of 208 women; however, it is emphasized that in reality this number was significantly higher. For example, in Khorezm region alone, 68 women were killed, yet only 20 criminal cases were opened in connection with these incidents. Reports submitted by district prosecutors for the first four months of 1929 indicate that 21 women were killed and two others injured [11].

On May 23, 1927, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets adopted a resolution to grant personal pensions to individuals who had become disabled as a result of the hastily implemented policies, as well as to the families of those killed in the course of women's "liberation." According to data from the People's Commissariat of Justice, in 1928 a total of 60 cases related to women's liberation were heard. Soviet courts sentenced 107 individuals to execution for the murder of active women. Most of these killings occurred in the Bukhara, Samarkand, and Zarafshan districts [1, 26]. Nevertheless, attitudes toward women in society gradually changed. As a result of the Hujum campaign, nearly 100,000 women removed the paranja.

The struggle against the paranja continued for several years. Special campaigns lasting two weeks or ten days were held around March 8 and March 22. Women's departments were even provided with small brochures indicating which slogans should be used during March 8 demonstrations. Examples included: "Women laborers, poor and middle peasant women, be vigilant so that the rich do not enter the kolkhoz. Be disciplined members of the kolkhoz," "Organize shock brigades," "Do not allow the construction of separate houses and households. Demand communal housing with shared kitchens and kindergartens," and similar slogans [2, 69]. Many women believed in these appeals. As a result of such policies, women's activism increased to some extent.

In 1927, the number of Uzbek women involved in press cooperatives increased from 225 to 5,916. During the Hujum period, 120 literacy schools were established. Prior to the Hujum, 2,113 Uzbek women studied in literacy schools, whereas in 1927 this number rose to 4,605. The number of Uzbek women employed in production also increased. While in 1926 a total of 512 Uzbek women participated in the Soviets, one year later, during the Hujum, the number of Uzbek women involved in leadership activities within the Soviets doubled [1, 26].

In the mid-1930s, at the initiative of S. Ordzhonikidze, a movement of socially active women emerged. These women became involved in the production and public life of industrial enterprises. Councils of socially active women appeared in many industrial enterprises. In Uzbekistan, such councils were established in almost the entire textile industry. Women acquired professional skills. Among them, Alla Nazarova, a worker at the Khojayli cotton factory, as well as X. Umarova from Fergana, Yuldosheva, and others, consistently exceeded production targets.

By 1940, approximately 40,000 women in the cities of Soviet Uzbekistan were employed in various sectors. In the republic's textile industry, women accounted for 48 percent of all workers. More than 2,000 Uzbek women were enrolled in higher education institutions [1, 30].

During the years of the Great Patriotic War, women of the Uzbek SSR demonstrated high patriotism, a strong sense of duty to the homeland, and examples of labor heroism. Many of them directly participated in military operations. For their bravery in battles against German fascism, Uzbek women such as machine gunner Rahima Alimova and sniper Zebokhon G'aniyeva were awarded the Order of the Red Banner.

During the war years, hundreds of thousands of women replaced their husbands, brothers, and fathers who had gone to the front and worked in production. They mastered the most difficult professions, guided by the slogan "Everything for the front, everything for victory!" In the very first month of the war, 20,000 women in Tashkent alone volunteered to work at factories and other production enterprises. As of January 1, 1941, women constituted 40.7 percent of the total workforce in the economy of the Uzbek SSR; by 1943, the share of women workers in industry had increased by 20.5 percent, reaching 63.5 percent [12, 116]. At the "Krasnaya Zarya" factory, Komsomol member A. Kondratyova worked on two, and later three, machines simultaneously, fulfilling her production plan by 200 percent and earning the title of "Two-Hundred-Percent Worker." Stulnikova, Monova, and others followed her example, achieving daily output rates of 220–240 percent [13, 12].

Working women in rural areas demonstrated no less labor heroism than women in industry. During the war years, rural women in Uzbekistan became a decisive force in agriculture. They worked as tractor drivers and led brigades and units within kolkhozes. For her labor achievements, Jorayeva from the 1st Machine-Tractor Station in the Ohangaron district of Tashkent region was awarded the badge "Excellent Worker of Socialist Agriculture" [14]. On the initiative of Tursunkhon Karimova, head of the Oltinkol unit, shock front-line units were established in kolkhozes and sovkhoses across the republic. These units were mainly led by Communist and Komsomol women. In the Bekobod district of Tashkent region alone, more than 60 such units were formed, whose members fulfilled daily norms by two to three times [15, 12].

At the Ilich collective farm in the Jambul district, the work brigade led by Rahima Akimova additionally produced nearly 40 tons of sugar beet. This amount of sugar was sufficient to supply approximately 8,000 soldiers for one month. Women of the Uzbek SSR provided significant assistance to Soviet soldiers by collecting funds, valuables, warm clothing, and gifts to meet the needs of the army. They also demonstrated remarkable generosity in caring for the families of front-line soldiers, as well as for the families of Soviet citizens evacuated from temporarily occupied regions and for orphaned children.

For instance, collective farm women of the O'rta Chirchiq district in Tashkent region took the initiative to sow various crops on 30 hectares of land and established a food fund to support the families of Soviet soldiers. The collective farms of the Yangiyo'l district in Tashkent region used the funds they collected to establish orphanages. Nine collective farms in the same district took responsibility for raising 100 evacuated children. Collective farms in the Kalinin district of Tashkent region donated 105,000 soums to support an orphanage. In the Syrdarya district, eight collective farms assumed responsibility for the care of 190 children [16, 36].

The courage demonstrated by Uzbek women during the years of the Second World War is immeasurable. In the hearts of millions of working women, faith in victory surged powerfully.

In the post-war years, a new large group of Uzbek women emerged who worked alongside men in all sectors of communist construction. They mastered the operation of complex machinery, electronic computing devices, and trains; successfully engaged in grain and cotton cultivation; provided education and upbringing for children; treated the sick; created literary and artistic works; conducted scientific discoveries; and actively participated in resolving state affairs.

By the 1980s, more than one million women were employed across all sectors of the national economy and culture of the Uzbek SSR. According to data from 1978, 1,678,000 women were

employed in the national economy of the Uzbek SSR, accounting for 43% of the total workforce, including workers and employees, in the republic [17, 203].

In the final quarter of the twentieth century, women constituted a major labor force in collective and state farm production in Uzbekistan. More than 3,000 women worked as tractor drivers and operators of cotton-harvesting machines, while 3,200 women were employed as agronomists, zootechnicians, and veterinary doctors. Many women held leadership positions in collective and state farms. The names of renowned mechanized female workers such as Tursunoy Okhunova, Svetlana Prodan, Chinnixol Khudoyorova, Maria Kovalyova, and many others gained widespread recognition throughout the USSR.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that in Soviet Uzbekistan, the women's question constituted one of the stable priority directions of state policy. The process of broadly involving women in socio-economic life, supervising literacy and safety awareness, and ensuring their active participation in labor, political, and cultural processes was consistently pursued. The activities of women's departments, clubs, cultural and educational centers, and various social organizations contributed to the formation of a new social status for women in Uzbekistan. Through these institutions, thousands of women were involved in literacy programs, received vocational training, obtained legal and medical consultations, and benefited from the establishment of nurseries and schools for children.

These measures facilitated an increase in the role of modern equipment in production processes and created conditions for women's active participation across various sectors of the economy—including industry, agriculture, education, and healthcare. As a result, Uzbek women moved beyond the confines of traditional domestic life and secured a place in the socio-political life of society. Thus, Soviet policies toward women in Uzbekistan accelerated the modernization of society and contributed to the growth of women's social activity, moral development, and professional contribution to production.

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