

**THE IMPACT OF ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT ON  
ECONOMIC GROWTH.**

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**Abstract:** This article examines the impact of ensuring gender equality in employment on economic growth in the context of Uzbekistan from theoretical and practical perspectives. The study analyzes the participation of women and men in the labor market, wage disparities, gender imbalance in entrepreneurial activity, and access to economic resources. The findings indicate that ensuring gender equality in employment contributes to the efficient use of labor resources, development of human capital, increased productivity, and growth of gross domestic product. Furthermore, the article highlights the positive impact of state programs and institutional reforms aimed at supporting women in Uzbekistan on economic development. The research concludes that gender equality is one of the key factors of sustainable economic growth.

**Keywords:** gender equality, employment, economic growth, labor market, women's employment, human capital, economic efficiency, economy of Uzbekistan.

**Annotatsiya:** Mazkur maqolada O'zbekiston sharoitida bandlikda gender tengligini ta'minlashning iqtisodiy o'sishga ta'siri ilmiy-nazariy va amaliy jihatdan tahlil qilingan. Tadqiqot davomida ayollar va erkaklarning mehnat bozoridagi ishtiroki, ish haqi tafovutlari, tadbirkorlik faoliyatidagi gender nomutanosibligi hamda iqtisodiy resurslardan foydalanish imkoniyatlari o'rganildi. Tahlillar shuni ko'rsatadiki, bandlikda gender tengligini ta'minlash mehnat resurslaridan samarali foydalanish, inson kapitalini rivojlantirish, ishlab chiqarish samaradorligini oshirish va yalpi ichki mahsulot hajmini ko'paytirishga xizmat qiladi. Shuningdek, O'zbekistonda xotin-qizlarni qo'llab-quvvatlashga qaratilgan davlat dasturlari va institutsional islohotlarning iqtisodiy o'sishga ijobiy ta'siri yoritilgan. Tadqiqot natijalari gender tenglikni ta'minlash barqaror iqtisodiy rivojlanishning muhim omillaridan biri ekanligini ko'rsatadi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** gender tenglik, bandlik, iqtisodiy o'sish, mehnat bozori, ayollar bandligi, inson kapitali, iqtisodiy samaradorlik, O'zbekiston iqtisodiyoti.

**Аннотация:** В данной статье исследуется влияние обеспечения гендерного равенства в сфере занятости на экономический рост в условиях Узбекистана. В ходе исследования были проанализированы участие женщин и мужчин на рынке труда, различия в оплате труда, гендерный дисбаланс в предпринимательской деятельности, а также возможности использования экономических ресурсов. Результаты анализа показывают, что обеспечение гендерного равенства в занятости способствует эффективному использованию трудовых ресурсов, развитию человеческого капитала, повышению производительности труда и росту валового внутреннего продукта. Также освещено положительное влияние

государственных программ и институциональных реформ, направленных на поддержку женщин в Узбекистане, на экономическое развитие страны. Сделан вывод о том, что гендерное равенство является одним из важнейших факторов устойчивого экономического роста.

**Ключевые слова:** гендерное равенство, занятость, экономический рост, рынок труда, занятость женщин, человеческий капитал, экономическая эффективность, экономика Узбекистана.

### **Introduction**

In recent years, ensuring gender equality in employment has become one of the priority directions of socio-economic policy in many countries, including Uzbekistan. The increasing participation of women in economic activity is recognized not only as a social justice issue but also as an important factor of sustainable economic growth, labor productivity, and human capital development. International organizations such as the World Bank, International Labour Organization (ILO), and the United Nations emphasize that reducing gender disparities in the labor market contributes to increasing national income, improving household welfare, and strengthening macroeconomic stability.[1]

In the context of Uzbekistan, large-scale institutional reforms aimed at supporting women's employment, expanding entrepreneurial opportunities, and ensuring equal access to economic resources have been implemented in recent years. In particular, the "Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030" and the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men" adopted in 2019 created an important legal framework for improving gender equality in socio-economic relations. These reforms are also aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 5, which focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.[2]

Statistical data indicate gradual positive changes in women's participation in the national economy. According to the Statistics Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, women constitute nearly 45–46% of the total employed population in the country as of 2025. At the same time, the share of women in small business and private entrepreneurship has been steadily increasing due to preferential credit programs, vocational training initiatives, and state support mechanisms. Furthermore, the number of women entrepreneurs supported through state programs and family business initiatives has significantly expanded in recent years.[3]

Despite these positive trends, several structural problems remain in the labor market. Gender disparities in wages, unequal representation in managerial positions, limited access to high-income sectors, and the concentration of women in low-productivity industries continue to affect the efficiency of labor resource utilization. According to international assessments, increasing female labor force participation could substantially raise Uzbekistan's gross domestic product and improve overall economic efficiency through the effective use of human capital.

From an economic perspective, gender equality in employment positively influences economic growth through multiple channels. First, it expands the labor force and increases labor market participation rates. Second, it enhances productivity by enabling equal access to education, professional development, and innovative activities. Third, gender-inclusive labor policies stimulate entrepreneurial activity and diversify sources of income generation within the

economy. Consequently, gender equality should be considered not only as a social policy objective but also as a strategic economic development factor.[4]

This study aims to analyze the impact of gender equality in employment on economic growth in Uzbekistan by examining labor market indicators, institutional reforms, and socio-economic trends. The research also evaluates the role of state policies in promoting women's economic participation and identifies existing challenges limiting the full realization of gender-balanced economic development.

### **Literature Review**

The issue of gender equality in employment and its impact on economic growth has been widely studied in international and national economic literature. Modern economic theories emphasize that equal participation of women and men in the labor market contributes to the efficient allocation of human capital, increased productivity, and sustainable economic development.

According to the research of the World Bank (2024), countries with a higher level of gender equality demonstrate stronger economic growth rates and more stable labor market indicators. The report highlights that reducing barriers to women's employment increases labor force participation and positively affects gross domestic product growth. In particular, equal access to education, finance, and entrepreneurship opportunities strengthens women's economic activity and expands national production capacity.[5]

The International Labour Organization (ILO) studies gender equality mainly through labor market efficiency and decent work concepts. ILO researchers argue that wage inequality, occupational segregation, and limited career opportunities reduce labor productivity and negatively influence economic competitiveness. Their studies indicate that increasing women's employment in productive sectors significantly improves economic efficiency and social welfare.[6]

Uzbek scholars have also examined gender issues within the framework of labor economics and social policy reforms. SH. Shodmonov emphasizes that effective employment policy and balanced labor market participation play an important role in increasing national income and creating additional value in the economy. According to his scientific approach, improving women's employment opportunities contributes to strengthening human capital and expanding economic activity.[7]

Research conducted by B. Vakhobov and Q. G'ulomov focuses on the role of labor resources in ensuring sustainable economic development in transition economies. Their studies underline that increasing women's participation in entrepreneurship and innovative activities positively affects regional economic growth and household income stability. Furthermore, Uzbek economists note that institutional reforms aimed at supporting women entrepreneurs and vocational training systems are becoming important factors for improving employment quality.[8]

At the same time, several researchers emphasize that despite ongoing reforms, gender inequality in wages, managerial positions, and access to highly paid sectors remains one of the key socio-economic challenges in Uzbekistan. Therefore, strengthening gender-oriented employment policies and improving equal economic opportunities are considered necessary conditions for sustainable economic growth.[9]

Overall, the analyzed literature demonstrates that gender equality in employment has a multidimensional impact on economic growth through labor productivity, entrepreneurship development, income growth, and effective human capital utilization. However, the issue still requires deeper empirical analysis under the specific socio-economic conditions of Uzbekistan.

### **Methodology**

This study applies a mixed-method research approach to analyze the impact of ensuring gender equality in employment on economic growth in Uzbekistan. The research combines theoretical analysis, statistical evaluation, comparative assessment, and correlation analysis methods to identify the relationship between gender-balanced employment and macroeconomic development indicators.

The theoretical basis of the research is formed through the analysis of scientific literature, international reports, and legal documents related to gender equality, labor economics, and sustainable economic growth. In particular, the study examines the concepts of human capital development, labor market efficiency, and inclusive economic growth within the framework of gender-oriented economic policies.

The empirical part of the research is based on official statistical data covering the period 2020–2025. Data related to female employment rates, women’s participation in entrepreneurship, higher education enrollment, gender wage gaps, labor productivity, and GDP growth were collected from the Statistics Agency of Uzbekistan, World Bank, International Labour Organization (ILO), and UN Women databases.

To evaluate the relationship between gender equality indicators and economic growth, comparative and dynamic analysis methods were applied. The study also uses correlation analysis to determine the degree of relationship between women’s labor market participation, educational attainment, and macroeconomic performance indicators such as GDP growth and labor productivity.

Furthermore, graphical and tabular analysis methods were employed to illustrate changes in higher education participation by gender and employment indicators in Uzbekistan. These analytical tools allowed the identification of key socio-economic trends associated with gender equality reforms and their contribution to sustainable economic development.

The methodological approach of the study ensures a comprehensive evaluation of gender equality as both a social and economic factor influencing long-term economic modernization and labor market efficiency in Uzbekistan.

### **Results and Analysis**

The analysis of employment and education indicators in Uzbekistan demonstrates that gender equality has become an important factor influencing sustainable economic growth and human capital development. In recent years, the share of female students in higher education increased significantly, rising from 38.1% in 2020 to 48.6% in 2025. This trend reflects the expansion of educational opportunities for women and the strengthening of gender-oriented reforms in the country.

At the same time, improvements in higher education participation have positively affected women’s employment and entrepreneurial activity. The growth of female employment rates and the increasing share of women in managerial and business sectors indicate more effective utilization of labor resources within the national economy. Statistical trends also show that reducing gender disparities contributes to labor productivity growth, innovation development, and higher economic efficiency.

Therefore, ensuring gender equality in education and employment should be considered a strategic component of Uzbekistan’s long-term economic development policy. Expanding women’s participation in higher education and the labor market not only strengthens social inclusiveness but also supports stable economic growth and national competitiveness.

**Table 1**

**Employment and Gender Equality Indicators in Uzbekistan .[10]**

| Indicators                             | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Female employment rate (%)             | 41.8 | 42.5 | 43.1 | 44   | 44.8 | 45.3 |
| Male employment rate (%)               | 68.9 | 69.2 | 69.5 | 69.8 | 70.1 | 70.4 |
| Share of women in entrepreneurship (%) | 21.4 | 23   | 24.7 | 26.5 | 28.2 | 30.1 |
| Gender wage gap (%)                    | 28   | 26.4 | 24.7 | 22.5 | 20.8 | 19.3 |
| GDP growth rate (%)                    | 1.9  | 7.4  | 5.7  | 6.3  | 6.5  | 6.8  |
| Women in managerial positions (%)      | 23.5 | 24.8 | 26.2 | 27.4 | 28.9 | 30.3 |
| Labor productivity growth (%)          | 1.5  | 4.2  | 4.8  | 5.1  | 5.7  | 6    |

The statistical analysis demonstrates that gender equality indicators in Uzbekistan have shown gradual improvement during 2020–2025. In particular, the female employment rate increased from 41.8% in 2020 to 45.3% in 2025. This trend reflects the positive impact of state programs aimed at supporting women’s employment, vocational training, and entrepreneurship development.

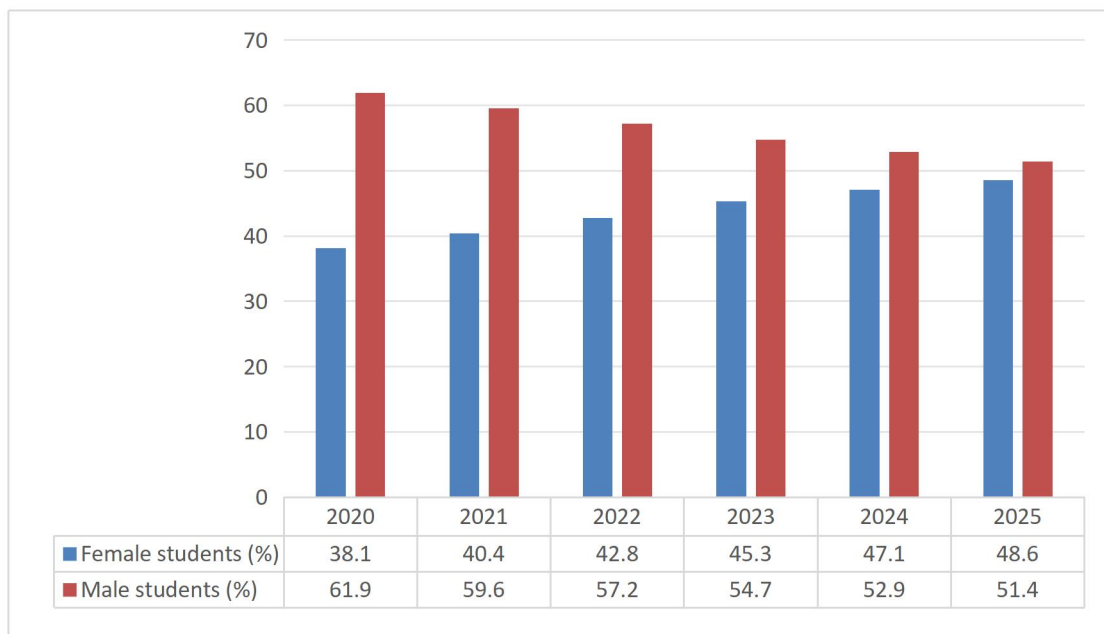
At the same time, the share of women in entrepreneurship rose significantly from 21.4% to 30.1% during the analyzed period. This growth indicates that institutional reforms, preferential loans, and support mechanisms for women entrepreneurs have strengthened women’s economic participation and contributed to private sector development.

An important indicator of gender equality is the reduction of the gender wage gap. The data show that wage inequality decreased from 28.0% in 2020 to 19.3% in 2025. This situation suggests gradual improvement in equal labor market opportunities and fair remuneration policies.

The analysis also reveals a positive relationship between gender equality and macroeconomic performance. During the years when women’s employment and entrepreneurial activity increased, GDP growth and labor productivity indicators also demonstrated upward trends. For example, labor productivity growth reached 6.0% in 2025, while GDP growth increased to 6.8%. [11]

Furthermore, the proportion of women in managerial positions increased steadily, reaching 30.3% in 2025. This reflects the growing role of women in decision-making processes and corporate governance structures, which positively affects innovation, management efficiency, and organizational performance.

Overall, the statistical results confirm that strengthening gender equality in employment contributes to sustainable economic growth, efficient use of labor resources, and improvement of human capital quality in Uzbekistan.



**1-Diagram. Higher Education Participation by Gender in Uzbekistan.[12]**

The diagram illustrates the dynamics of higher education participation by gender in Uzbekistan during the period 2020–2025. The statistical data demonstrate a gradual increase in the share of female students and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of male students in higher education institutions.

In 2020, female students accounted for 38.1% of total higher education enrollment, while male students represented 61.9%. By 2025, the share of female students increased significantly to 48.6%, whereas the proportion of male students declined to 51.4%. This trend indicates a gradual reduction of gender imbalance in the higher education system of Uzbekistan.

The observed growth in female participation reflects the positive impact of state policies aimed at expanding women's access to education and strengthening gender equality in social development. In recent years, Uzbekistan has implemented a number of reforms, including increased admission quotas for women, financial support programs, educational grants, and measures encouraging female participation in science and professional education. These reforms have contributed to improving educational accessibility for women, particularly in rural regions.

From an economic perspective, the increase in women's higher education participation has important implications for human capital development and sustainable economic growth. Higher educational attainment among women enhances labor productivity, professional qualification levels, and innovative capacity within the economy. Educated women are more likely to participate actively in entrepreneurship, management, and high-skilled sectors, which positively affects national income and economic competitiveness.

Furthermore, the narrowing gender gap in higher education indicates progress toward achieving inclusive and balanced socio-economic development. The transition from a strongly male-dominated structure in 2020 toward a more balanced educational distribution by 2025 demonstrates the strengthening role of women in Uzbekistan's intellectual and economic potential.

Overall, the diagram confirms that expanding women's participation in higher education serves as an important factor for ensuring gender equality, improving labor market efficiency, and supporting long-term economic modernization in Uzbekistan.

### **Conclusion**

The study demonstrates that ensuring gender equality in employment and education plays an important role in supporting sustainable economic growth in Uzbekistan. The analysis of statistical indicators confirms that the increasing participation of women in higher education, entrepreneurship, and the labor market positively affects labor productivity, human capital development, and national economic efficiency.

The research findings show that state policies aimed at supporting women's employment and expanding educational opportunities have contributed to reducing gender disparities in recent years. In particular, the growth of female participation in higher education and entrepreneurship reflects the strengthening role of women in the country's socio-economic development.

At the same time, several challenges still remain, including wage inequality, limited representation of women in high-income sectors, and unequal access to managerial positions. Therefore, improving gender-oriented labor market policies, expanding vocational training programs, and strengthening institutional support for women entrepreneurs remain important priorities for Uzbekistan.

Overall, gender equality should be considered not only as a social objective but also as a strategic factor of economic modernization and long-term development. Increasing women's economic participation contributes to efficient utilization of labor resources, innovation development, and enhancement of national competitiveness in Uzbekistan.

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