

Gender Equality as a Sustainable Development Goal and its Implementation in Kazakhstan

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Abstract:- The purpose of this study is to assess the level of gender inequality in Kazakhstani society in order to achieve sustainable development in Kazakhstan. The paper raises the issue of women's participation in political, economic and public life. Literature review shows that the issue of gender equality is still relevant, as empowering women can achieve a significant economic and social shift in the country's economy. In this article, a quantitative method of analysis was used. The study revealed that the number of women studying in pre-school and secondary education is lower than men, women's wages are lower than men's, and despite the level of education, women's wages are also lower than men's. Consequently, gender inequality is present in many spheres of life in the country. Women's potential and opportunities are hidden and require additional measures to achieve the goal of sustainable development

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Gender, Salary, Inequality

1. Introduction

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - provides for the elimination of poverty and poverty, combating inequality and injustice, requires respect for nature, ensuring peace and prosperity for the entire population. To realize the Sustainable Development Goals, 17 key areas have been selected until 2030, which could potentially lead the country to sustainable development of all major spheres of life and to solving global problems affecting every person in this world. To achieve the 17 goals, a system of 205 global indicators 75 national indicators in Kazakhstan were developed. For the effective achievement of the SDGs, the Interagency and Expert Group on Indicators of Achievement adhere to and implement special measures to improve the named indicators. Goal 5 provides for gender equality. Gender equality is an important element of a society that ensures sustainable development and prosperity. Gender equality dates back to the first UN convention, where women were empowered in the political sphere of the country. Consequently, progress has been made over the past decades with more girls going to school, fewer girls being forced into early marriage, more women serving in parliament and in leadership positions, and reform of laws to ensure gender equality. However, there are countries, regions, and people around the world that neglect women's rights and opportunities in different spheres of life. This is reflected in the problems:

Discriminatory laws and social norms remain pervasive, women are similarly underrepresented at all levels of political leadership, and one in five women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 report physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner during the year. As the internet spreads, social media increasingly highlights the disempowerment of women, the pandemic has exacerbated the situation and the problem requires even more attention to be addressed.

The issue of gender equality has a relevant basis for study, as it is the fifth goal of sustainable development and aims to empower all women and girls in the world. According to statistics, over 1 billion women a year are subjected to disempowerment and violence. The level of domestic violence in the world is reaching catastrophe proportions, with an average of one in three women experiencing violence. In addition to human rights violations, gender inequality permeates the socio-economic structure of society, women are discriminated against, accept low pay, face a glass ceiling on the career ladder, and there are generally barriers to career advancement. Thus,

women's potential in the economy is not unlocked, and this problem has repercussions in the next generation - children. According to UN experts, there is a gender imbalance, which manifests itself in the unequal representation of women and men in political, economic and public life [1]. In addition, UN experts note that the promotion of gender equality will contribute to reducing the income gap and improving the quality of life of both women and men. There is significant gender segregation in Kazakhstan, and this is particularly evident in political, economic and public life. Women have less access to primary and secondary education.

2. Motivation and Objective

Maintaining a balance and non-discrimination in public, social, political life in the gender aspect will positively affect the economic development of the country. In recent years, there is a sufficient number of scientific studies that raise the issue of gender equality. There are studies that raise the issue of positive effectiveness for economic growth of gender balance [1,2,3]. Girón and Kazemikhasragh [4] attempted to evaluate the impact of gender equality on economic growth using autoregressive analysis of data from 2010 to 2018. The results indicate a negative and significant relationship between gender inequality index and economic growth. Hence, the study shows that gender equality should be promoted to improve social welfare in the country. Other authors reveal the problem of education from a gender perspective. That is, improving the quality of women's resources, as measured by education, health and participation, is a necessary but not sufficient factor to stimulate overall economic growth. However, it should be noted that for any state, appropriate policies for women should be stable, namely women should have good employment opportunities, safe working conditions and decent wages [5]. For realization in career growth women face a glass ceiling, which also discriminates women's rights. In the CIS countries, women in the conditions of modern survival are forced to take on both unprestigious and unskilled jobs and to continue doing household chores. This has resulted in women having to work 24 hours, seven days a week. Thus, the workload of women is increasing. Also, there are studies by scholars who look at discrimination [6-10], etc.

Existing research on the gender pay gap shows that men and women who do single work for the same employer receive the same pay. However, there are very few precedents that show the same work and the same pay. Hence, the pay between men and women is different. Penner et al. [11] conducted a survey among 15 countries and found that pay differentials within jobs remain significant between men and women. Litman et al.[12] surveyed over 22,000 employees of one company and found that on average, women's hourly wages were 10.5 per cent lower than men's. There were several reasons for this, including the tendency of women to choose less demanding work tasks than men. However, this question remains open and requires further research. In sum, studying this problem raises the question of the situation of gender inequality in Kazakhstan.

3. Methodology

Much research has been conducted on the impact of gender equality on sustainable economic development. Researchers have used both qualitative research methods and quantitative methods. For a clear understanding, researchers use econometric methods of analysis to identify important factors that contribute to women's empowerment in society [13]. In the form of qualitative research, researchers choose the methods of questionnaire, focus group survey, case study. In this study, comparative methods of empirical analysis will be used [14,15,16,17]. As initial data were used indicators in the context of regions of Kazakhstan. The data are publicly available on the official Internet resource of the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan and cover the years 2017-2022. The results of the study will be presented by analyzing the indicators:

- (a) the number of students in the educational sphere (2015-2022);
- (b) political involvement of genders in the parliament of Kazakhstan (2017-2021);
- (c) average monthly nominal wages of employees (2017-2022);
- (e) wages of employees by education level (2021).

The educational sphere is the basis for the foundations of sustainable development of the economy, as a child from a small age learns to take care of nature and treat with care natural resources such as electricity, water, etc.

Therefore, in order to build a civilized society with sustainable development, it is necessary to give basic knowledge from a small age. Decision making in a problem situation has two approaches, the male approach, which has a clear understanding and one facet of the problem, and the female approach, which will take into account the other facet of the problem. Hence, it is important that the share of women in political life increases to generate better solutions. Also, the issue of wages of women and men is being raised all over the world. When doing the same job, the gender element should be eliminated because the work is done in the same way.

4. Analysis And Discussion

Before starting the analysis, we should consider the numerical facts of gender inequality. UN statistics shows that in 18 countries women are officially prohibited from entering the labor market, in 39 countries articles discriminating against the female sex are prescribed at the legislative level, and in 49 countries there are no laws that contain articles punishing counteracting and violent actions against women. In many countries, the share of women in political structures averages 23.7%, in Kazakhstan 24%. Also, in many countries early marriage of women is practiced, namely about 750 million women and girls married before the age of 18, 42% of women can not get medical care or use contraceptives without men's permission. However, there are positive facts, everyone knows that there are famous women politicians, namely women presidents, prime ministers, etc. Also, in European countries the level of empowerment of women has positive stereotypes where they have the right to refuse to have children in marriage or to marry and have children at a later age. Nearly two-thirds of countries in developing regions have achieved gender balance in primary education. More than 100 countries around the world record the budget allocated to promoting gender equality.

Gender inequality is manifested in various aspects of life in the country, including education. Kazakhstan's education system has three levels: preschool, secondary and higher education. According to Table 1, in 2022, the number of girls in preschool organizations is lower than the number of boys. From 2015 to 2022 the number of girls increased by 26%, the number of boys - by 29%, in dynamics both genders show positive dynamics over the last 7 years.

Thus, males outnumber females in secondary and preschool education for several reasons, first, the birth rate of boys is higher than that of girls. Second, the absence of girls at these levels of education is related to religious elements and poverty levels

In the secondary education system, there is a similar trend of growth in the share of women and men among students. This trend is explained by the fact that the population is growing in the country, and the birth rate of men is higher. In 2022, the number of women in secondary education is lower than men by 73,453. In this case, there is another reason for the lower number of girls, which is poverty. In underdeveloped regions, the poverty rate is high, thus students cannot have basic necessities of life. In higher education, the proportion of women is higher than men. In 2022, 21741 more women than men are enrolled in master's programs. There are 1,800 more people studying in doctoral programs.

Comparing the statistics with 2015, the number of men studying at master's programs increased by 20%, the number of women by 19%. The situation in doctoral studies shows that the number of women increased by a record 188% and the number of men by 162%.

Table I. Number of students in education 2015,2022

Level of education	Gender	2015	2022	The ratio between 2015 and 2022, in %
Preschool education	Girls	371703	467204	26
	Boys	387069	498000	29
Secondary education	Women	1371678	1814144	32
	Men	1413619	1887597	34
Higher education	Women	256814	308555	20
	Men	202555	269682	33
Magistracy	Women	18279	21741	19
	Men	11603	13919	20

Doctoral studies	Women	1348	3878	188
	Men	871	2278	162

In this case, the number of students in the postgraduate level of education is low, however, the number of women is higher than men. There are several reasons for this, first, the female population is more inclined to study than to labor. Secondly, women consider postgraduate education as an additional source of income.

Women's participation in political life is assessed as low. The number of women officials in Kazakhstan's political system does not exceed 25 percent. Women are also absent from key political positions, including the Supreme Court. Foreign practice shows that enterprises or organizations and political structures with gender diversity, especially at the management level, produce better and more effective solutions to problems, leading to additional profits or benefits. This is according to a new report for 2022 by the Employers' Action Office of the International Labor Organization.

Table IIII. Number of Seats in the “Majilis” of the Parliament, ratio of men and 2017-2021

Seats in the “Majilis” of the Parliament, ratio of men and woman	men	women
2017	0,726	0,274
2018	0,724	0,276
2019	0,726	0,274
2020	0,735	0,265
2021	0,726	0,274

Thus, the situation in Kazakhstan shows that in terms of the number of seats in the parliament, the ratio of men and women in 2017 is 0.726 men and 0.274 women. In 2021, this indicator shows that the ratio of men and women in the parliament is also. It turns out that the trend is flat, there is no dynamics. However, the place and role of women in Kazakh society are underestimated and have a hidden potential for sustainable development of the country.

Gender inequality takes place in the labor market. There is an imbalance in the labor market, the share of men with jobs exceeds the share of women. In addition, it is observed that women tend to work in jobs where it is not necessary to apply physical labor or mental skills. Also, women accept the same jobs as men, but only with low wages, although the specifics of the work are the same. According to Table 3, the difference in average monthly wages between men and women has increased from 68% to 75% since 2015, an increase of 7%. In 2017, men receive 179575 tenge for work, when women reached this salary in 2019-2020. In 2022, the average monthly salary for men is 355296 tenge, which is 89534 tenge more even than women who have an average monthly salary of 265762 tenge.

In addition, the situation is different in different economic sectors. For example, in the banking sector, a male division head receives more salary than a woman in the same position. In technical-engineering industries, there is a similar trend, but the difference in wages can exceed several times.

Thus, the labor market shows a gender imbalance in wages and employment.

Table IVVVI. Average monthly salary man and woman in 2017-2022 y.

Average monthly salary	Men	Women	Share of women's wages in relation to men's wages
2017	179575	121793	68
2018	195959	129039	66
2019	222514	150779	68
2020	243524	182679	75
2021	281239	220160	78
2022	355296	265762	75

Statistics are also available for 2021 showing the wage gap between men and women by educational attainment.

Figure 1 shows statistics on wages by educational attainment of the population for 2021.

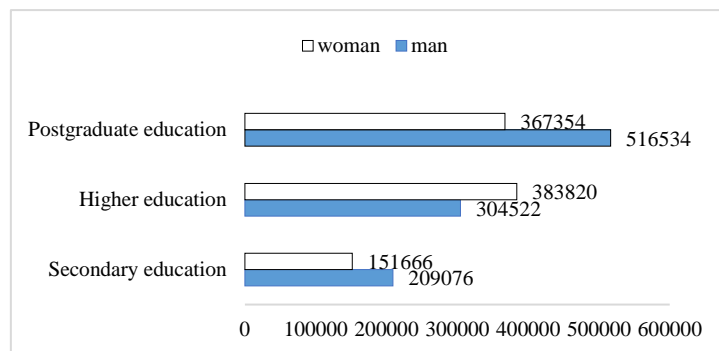


Fig. 1. Wages by gender with education level for 2021, tenge

According to Figure 1, by level of education, the wages of men and women have different dynamics. In 2021, a man with secondary technical education received a salary of 209076 tenge, while a woman with similar education received 151666 tenge of salary, which is 72% of the salary of a man. The labor of a man with higher education was estimated at 383820 tenge, the labor of a woman - 304522 tenge. A similar situation is observed in the level of postgraduate education. A man with postgraduate education had a salary of 516534 tenge, a woman's salary - 367354 tenge. This trend shows the obviousness of gender discrimination in the labor market.

5. Conclusion

In order to achieve the goal 5 of sustainable development it is necessary to achieve gender equality in Kazakhstan. Based on the study of the works of scientists it was found that gender equality in economic, social and political life will favorably affect sustainable development. Thus, in this study the aspects of gender imbalance in Kazakhstani society were considered. The obtained results of the study are reliable, as the data were taken from the official statistical site of Kazakhstan. In the course of the study were identified problematic aspects of gender inequality, which has a negative effect on the development of women in Kazakhstan. In this case, it is a decrease in the number of women politicians, cheap female labor, low wages in contrast to men and devaluation of female labor in family life, etc. Having analyzed the problem and analyzed the current situation, we propose measures to improve the system of support for women's development, business, employment, gender equality in promotion and conditions for combining a successful career with domestic responsibilities and child rearing, to provide additional measures to increase the share of girls in education, the creation of additional grants, etc. However, this problem requires a comprehensive solution at both the national and regional levels, and it is necessary to develop a national mechanism for gender equality, which should include the following points: institutional mechanisms should be clarified, e.g., the Labor Code should specify undesirable behavior of a sexual nature in the workplace and guarantee equal right to parental leave for women and men. The Wage Act provides for the obligation to pay the same wage to women and men if they perform identical work or work of equal value for the same employer; establishment of unions, agencies, bureaus, gender equality committees at the ministerial level. This organization will provide a link between the female population of the country with the financial, legislative system of the country. In addition, the creation of a women's club of professionals, where women who are on maternity leave will be able to use their potential and skills to obtain additional or basic income; creation of centers or "open windows" of complaints. Recently, abusive and violent acts towards women from loved ones are becoming more frequent. Therefore, this center will have the function of receiving complaints and inform girls or women about their basic and additional rights to protect their health and life. Thus, to achieve sustainable development, integrated work of both officials and government structures as well as the people is required. Integrated work will lead to positive changes in achieving gender equality.

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