

Article

The Interrelationship between Violence and Harassment Against Women and Gender Equality

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Annotation: This article analyzes the interrelationship between violence and harassment against women and gender equality. Through an examination of historical development, international standards, and the experience of Uzbekistan, the issues of ensuring gender equality and preventing violence are explored. The study examines the social role of the family, international conventions, UN conferences, and the significance of gender policy in national legislation. It also highlights the impact of violence and gender inequality on society, the legal system, and family relations, and outlines strategic directions for strengthening gender equality.

Keywords: Gender equality, violence against women, harassment and discrimination, women's rights, family relations.

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1. Introduction

Gender equality and the protection of women from violence and harassment have become central issues in modern international human rights discourse. Despite significant progress in establishing legal frameworks that guarantee equal rights for women and men, violence against women remains a widespread global problem affecting millions of individuals across different societies. Gender-based violence not only violates fundamental human rights but also undermines social development, public health, and the stability of families and communities [1].

Historically, women's social roles were often limited to domestic responsibilities, and their participation in public life was restricted. However, the development of democratic values and international human rights standards has gradually transformed perceptions of women's roles in society [2]. International organizations, particularly the United Nations, have played a crucial role in promoting gender equality and developing legal instruments aimed at protecting women's rights [3].

Major international initiatives, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, established global commitments to eliminate discrimination and violence against women [4]. These documents emphasize that gender equality is not only a matter of justice but also an essential condition for sustainable development and social stability [5].

The purpose of this study is to analyze the interrelationship between violence and harassment against women and gender equality through the examination of international legal standards, historical development, and the national experience of Uzbekistan in strengthening gender policy and protecting women's rights.

The equality of women is one of the significant historical achievements of humanity. Women are not only the primary contributors to the nation's gene pool but also an important labor force in the economy and preservers of national traditions [6].

As an integral part of human rights, respect for women's rights remains a matter of serious concern for the international community. Despite certain achievements in establishing equality between women and men, genuine equality for women in some societies remains unattained. Cases of discrimination manifested through restrictions and violations of their rights confirm this reality[7].

The issue of human rights is among the most pressing challenges of our time. Due to their universal nature, these rights are relevant to all countries, as it is difficult to find a nation where human rights are never violated. The situation regarding women's rights continues to raise global concern. Although legal equality between women and men has been formally established in many states, real equality remains elusive.

Historically, a woman's role in society was often defined by her duties within the family. For instance, about 150 years ago in the United States, the "Declaration of the Rights of Women" stated that "the history of women is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of men." In 1595, a book entitled *Dissertation on the Non-Human Nature of Women* was published in Germany, reflecting medieval views that limited women's interests to "children-kitchen-church" and denied their ability to contribute consciously to social development [8].

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, social transformations gradually changed attitudes toward women. Progressive thinkers such as Voltaire, Diderot, Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Joseph Proudhon, and August Bebel began to recognize women as full members of society. The nineteenth century witnessed significant movements for women's rights, historically known as the Feminist Movement and other advocacy initiatives, which contributed to the development of international standards on gender equality [9].

An organization aimed at protecting women's economic, political, and professional rights was established on March 18, 1871, during the Paris Commune. After World War II, the Women's International Democratic Federation was founded, playing a major role in the global women's movement. It organized several international congresses dedicated to women's issues, including those held in Paris (1945), Budapest (1948), Copenhagen (1953), and Vienna (1958) [10].

At the Vienna Congress, its president, Eugénie Cotton, presented a report entitled "The Role and Responsibility of Women in Modern Society," emphasizing the need for equal rights and respect for women's dignity as citizens, mothers, and workers [11].

2. Methodology

This research is based on qualitative legal analysis and comparative study of international and national legal frameworks related to gender equality and violence against women [12].

First, international legal instruments adopted by the United Nations were analyzed in order to determine the global standards for protecting women's rights and preventing gender-based violence. These include the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women [13].

Second, the study examines the legal framework of the Republic of Uzbekistan, including national legislation and strategic policy documents aimed at promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women. Particular attention is given to the laws adopted in 2019 on equal rights and opportunities for women and men and on the protection of women from harassment and violence.

Third, the research uses historical and comparative analysis to evaluate how social perceptions of women's roles have evolved over time and how these changes have influenced modern gender policies. The methodology therefore combines legal analysis, historical examination, and policy evaluation to explore the relationship between gender equality and the prevention of violence [14].

The struggle for gender equality gained new momentum with the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. The UN Charter affirmed the equal rights of men and women. Initially, efforts focused on addressing women's legal and civil rights and

collecting global data on their status. Over time, it became clear that legislative measures alone were insufficient to achieve substantive equality.

To advance gender equality, the United Nations convened four World Conferences on Women.

The First World Conference was held in Mexico City in 1975, declared International Women's Year. The UN General Assembly identified three key objectives:

- Ensuring gender equality and eliminating discrimination based on sex;
- Integrating women into the development process and ensuring their full participation;
- Strengthening women's contribution to international peace.

A global action plan was adopted for a ten-year period, addressing equality in education, employment, political participation, health care, housing, food security, and family planning.

In 1976, the United Nations Development Fund for Women was established to support gender programs financially and technically. Its priorities included combating poverty, eliminating violence against women, preventing HIV/AIDS, and promoting women's participation in governance [15].

In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), often referred to as the "Women's Bill of Rights," which became a cornerstone of international gender equality law.

The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, marked another milestone. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action identified twelve critical areas of concern, including violence against women, poverty, education, health, armed conflict, economic participation, decision-making, human rights, media, environment, and the rights of the girl child.

Violence against women is defined as any act of gender-based violence that results in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering, including threats, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

The family is recognized as the fundamental unit of society. It is within the family that individuals are born, raised, and socialized. Therefore, the stability of society largely depends on the stability of families.

In Uzbekistan, the Law "On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men" (2019) defines gender as the social aspect of relations between women and men manifested in all spheres of public life. The 2019 Law "On Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence" strengthened legal safeguards. The national Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality for 2020–2030 aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan declares human life, freedom, honor, and dignity as the highest values. Articles 18 and 46 guarantee equality regardless of gender.

Violence and harassment against women remain among the most pressing socio-legal challenges of modern society. This issue affects not only individual families but also broader social development, human rights protection, and social justice.

Historical experience demonstrates that although women's roles were long restricted, international recognition of gender equality has strengthened legal protections. However, legal norms alone are insufficient. Gender inequality, reinforced by stereotypes, economic dependence, and limited legal awareness, increases the risk of violence.

Preventing violence requires a comprehensive approach, including strengthening legal enforcement mechanisms, developing protection and rehabilitation services, raising legal and gender awareness, integrating equality values into education, and promoting healthy family relations.

Uzbekistan's experience reflects significant legal and institutional reforms. Enhancing the effective implementation of these norms remains a priority.

In conclusion, gender equality is not only a matter of protecting women's rights but also a foundation for sustainable development, human dignity, and social justice. A society built on equality, mutual respect, and shared responsibility leaves no room for violence.

3. Results

The results of the analysis show that the development of international legal standards has significantly strengthened the protection of women's rights worldwide. The adoption of global instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and CEDAW has established a normative framework that obliges states to eliminate discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for women and men.

International conferences on women organized by the United Nations have also played an important role in promoting gender equality. For example, the World Conferences on Women held in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), and Beijing (1995) contributed to the development of international strategies aimed at improving women's participation in political, economic, and social life.

At the national level, Uzbekistan has undertaken significant reforms to strengthen gender equality and protect women from violence. The adoption of the Law "On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men" and the Law "On Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence" has created a legal basis for preventing discrimination and ensuring the protection of victims of violence.

These reforms demonstrate the growing recognition that gender equality is an essential component of democratic development and social justice.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that gender inequality and violence against women are closely interconnected social problems. In many societies, traditional stereotypes and unequal power relations contribute to discrimination and increase the risk of violence against women.

Although legal frameworks play a crucial role in protecting women's rights, legislation alone cannot fully eliminate gender-based violence. Effective prevention requires a comprehensive approach that includes legal enforcement, education, social awareness, and support services for victims.

Furthermore, promoting gender equality contributes not only to protecting women's rights but also to strengthening family relations and improving overall social development. Societies that ensure equal opportunities for women and men tend to experience higher levels of economic growth, social stability, and democratic governance.

The experience of Uzbekistan demonstrates that the adoption of modern gender policies and legal reforms can significantly contribute to improving the status of women in society. However, continued efforts are needed to ensure the effective implementation of these policies and to raise public awareness about gender equality.

5. Conclusion

The analysis confirms that gender equality and the prevention of violence against women are closely interconnected issues that require comprehensive legal, social, and institutional approaches. International legal instruments have played a key role in establishing global standards for protecting women's rights and eliminating discrimination.

At the national level, Uzbekistan has made significant progress in strengthening gender equality through legislative reforms and policy initiatives aimed at protecting women from harassment and violence. These measures demonstrate the country's commitment to aligning national legislation with international human rights standards.

However, achieving genuine gender equality requires not only legal guarantees but also changes in social attitudes, increased public awareness, and effective institutional mechanisms for protecting victims of violence. Strengthening education, promoting equality values, and supporting women's participation in social and political life remain essential for building a society based on justice, dignity, and respect for human rights.

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