

GENDER DYNAMICS IN UZBEKISTAN: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF CHALLENGES AND SOCIETAL

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Abstract: *This essay explores the multifaceted challenges faced by women in Uzbekistan, addressing prevalent gender-related issues deeply rooted in societal norms. From the devaluation of girls to the expectations during pregnancy, the narrative delves into the intricate web of cultural expectations shaping the lives of Uzbek women. The article also examines the impact of societal norms on the behavior of both genders, shedding light on the complex interplay between selfless women and competent men. Drawing on personal experiences and observations, the author analyzes the consequences of traditional norms and emphasizes the need for a feminist perspective to foster positive change. The discussion extends to the broader implications of these gender dynamics on mental health, family dynamics, and societal progress.*

Keywords: *Uzbekistan, gender dynamics, societal expectations, women's challenges, feminist perspective, cultural norms, devaluation of girls, pregnancy expectations, domestic violence, societal behavior, selfless women, competent men, feminism, mental health, family dynamics, societal progress.*

“You face more hardships in this world if you are a woman.”

But is it actually hard to live as woman? The answer is yes. But individuals are also thrown into hardships, because of their certain disabilities, skin color and financial status, which means living as a female is hard, but not harder or the hardest. In this essay we will discuss about the gender related problems of the Uzbekistan and try to find the roots of them.

So, where is Uzbekistan? Statements below can be a clear answer.

- Uzbekistan, the country well-known for the groom who slapped her bride at their wedding. Reason was the victory of the bride in a game. With his slap the groom clarified who is the bread-winner with power in the family.

- Uzbekistan, homeland of a man killed his children and wife consciously.

- Uzbekistan, the country where women commit suicide with their children.

- Uzbekistan, the place where a teenager was killed after sexual harassment by a middle-aged man.

- Uzbekistan, the country where a woman put fire on herself.

- Uzbekistan, a place where men irritate their legal wives with the footage of themselves cheating on bed.

- Uzbekistan, a place where your status as a woman decreases as you get old and remain single.

- Uzbekistan, a place where orphan girls used for their body by the director of the

orphanage.

- Uzbekistan, a country where the relationship between bride and mother-in-law can be referred as a form of modern slavery.

- Uzbekistan, also the home country of a boy who rescued a Korean woman from the house on fire.

Those are just a few examples for how fruitful trees has grown from the tiny seeds which people of the society planted. When it comes to solve the problem, Uzbeks tend to blame the women for not being patient, obedient, and for being loud, emotional and intuitive. And most times being feminist understood as a woman against her husband's family or a selfish woman who against having a family and only focuses on building career.

In this essay as a female living in this society, I decided to share some of my personal experiences and observations:

Infertility and Expectation of a Son During Pregnancy

In a conventional Uzbek society, if the married couple struggles with having a child, despite the medical analysis, the woman is usually considered as an unhealthy and infertile one and forced to have certain treatment even when the problem is in the man, while also being abused and tortured in both physical and mental way.

It is so common fact that most Uzbek families usually want a son, not a daughter. Reasons can differ in accordance with families. Usually they want a son simply because he can carry the bloodline of the family and support the parents during their old age. But for a pregnant bride the son is considered as a weapon against those who tortured her (husband's side), and the return of power and voice that was taken away after the marriage.

But these expectations have their own drawbacks. Sometimes women with only daughters spend their pregnancy with anxiety and stress. Consequently, this distressing psychological position of the mother effects negatively on the development of the fetus, later creating mental or physical disorders. The expectation of a son is the root for most of the domestic violence too.

Devaluation of Girls and Restriction Put by Society

The devaluation of girls was more common in past, which is nearly diminished by now, but the concept still has some thin remaining layers in society. Traditionally, most girls are expected to forget their passion and choose family-friendly careers in order not to stand out of the crowd.

In Uzbek society the behavior of the women is more important than their education. But the good manners cannot be achieved without education, since the both ideas are so closely related. The focus solely put on the development of good, soft, naïve and obedient behavior later creates the artificial politeness which is designed to hide the inner hatred towards the instructors. (especially when the instructors are not a member from their family of orientation) This failure in personality causes frauds in family.

In some of the Uzbek social codes these ideas still remain. It can be noticed from the behavioral codes thought by society to girls.

But the coin has the second side too. Often, boys are not introduced with social norms and manners as closely as girls. They rather tend to form their identity fully by themselves without instruction by adults and elderly. Talking from a personal experience, I know a boy who always gives the way to ladies, and he thinks this etiquette works all the time, not knowing that there is an exception. When he was supposed to go upstairs, he followed the “Ladies go first” rule, being unaware of this fact: “Going up or down stairs, the gentleman always go first. When going down so that, should the woman slip, she will be able to catch at his strong shoulders and, going up, so that his eyes do not linger on her hips and legs.”

And it made me think that most boys are not naturally indifferent or impolite. They have wrong conceptions about things not because there is a malfunctioning part in their brain, but because they are thought differently. When raising a boy some fathers encourage their little toddler to hit aunts or pull their hair, claiming that if the child follows the instruction, he gets rewarded. This may sound just a little naughty child thing and have no effect on the child. But actually, the unconscious mind creates the concept in the little child’s brain that women are weaker and can’t react when treated disrespectfully. This three-year-old naughty behavior of toddler can be called domestic violence if done by a man in family setting.

This indifferent and often aggressive-towards-women behavior is shaped by society. It can be noticed that male audience is more competitive than females, and also against females. That can be resulted by the comments “Don’t act like a girl” and “Are you a girl?” that they received when they failed to do something or didn’t acted super though towards a situation. These comments from the outside makes them to think in a way that being defeated by the representative of the opposite gender makes them look naïve, and when compared with women they should be in higher position with a gap between them and women, so they can’t get compared with the opposite sex.

Girls also in the same way “mis raised”. They feel frustrated when they spend their time “unproductively” to relax. They also feel extremely thankful when their partner did something for them, while those things should be reacted as a common thing. Uzbek women are raised selfless.

In some way, Uzbeks are a mixture of selfless women and competent men. And the desire to find solution to these problems is also called feminism. After all, “Why do we need husband?” isn’t the question we, feminists are focusing on. Feminists are selfless women who worry about rights of others. And the patriarchy system which is against feminist movement formed by competent men who don’t want to lose the title “best”.

Every single detail is related, so if you want to change the world, change and educate yourself, so you can give the right education to the people within your reach.