

PECULIAR PROPERTIES OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN IN KYRGYZ SOCIETY

Аннотация

В этой статье рассматриваются вопросы о месте и роли женщины в кыргызском обществе, проблемы касающиеся их статуса. Раскрывается информация о месте женщин в обществе в древние времена и в настоящее время.

Annotation

This article deals with issues of place and role of women in Kyrgyz society and problems regarding their status. It reveals information about women's place in society from the ancient times to present day.

Kyrgyzstan is a country in Central Asia, which gained independence together with other countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union. At the time of independence our country had changes for the advancement of women and gender equality. It is caused by many different factors such as the emergence of new opportunities, defines the process of democratization of public life; transformation in order to create a democratic society with a market economy.

From ancient times Kyrgyz women play a special role in the home, in society, in the upbringing of children. At the same time woman was the bearer of goodness, holiness, beauty, generosity, and not surprisingly, the people said that Paradise is at the feet of the mother. It is important to note that the great Kyrgyz people valued their wise women as Kanykei, Aychurok, Kiz Sayqal, Janyl Mirza, Kurmanjan Datka and others. Above mentioned women, as well as men had their place in society as smart, wise homemakers, advisers of their husbands. But in a traditional Kyrgyz nomadic society the role of women was limited to the range of traditional, cultural and community roles determining its physiological capabilities, ethnic traditions, rituals and religious canon requirements.

During the period of Soviet history essentially revolutionary changes happened in the "women's issue". Fixed rights of women promoted the release of her performance beyond traditional domestic roles and more socialization. In the Soviet period were the roots of the current position of women in society. Despite significant progress in expanding the range of social status of women gender differentiation has been saved, which in modern conditions is the basis of the existence of gender inequality.

Traditionally, women in the East separated from the property by reason of inheritance in the male line. It is most clearly expressed in the countryside, where most firmly preserved national traditions. Negative social attitudes towards inheritance through the female line, low domestic self-esteem of women, lack of motivation to acquire property and economic independence - all barriers to business development of women.

Women having equal access to higher education are at the same time at a disadvantage. Often, the efforts they make to education are not equal, since women are burdened with domestic work, caring for children and parents. Women are often unable to continue their education in high school for family reasons, due to the fact that they cannot effectively combine family affairs and their own education. Therefore, the possibility of women's education, particularly higher education, is lower than that of men. One of the factors influencing the choice of women of

various professions formed in the society is the principle of division of professions into "female" and "male". In Kyrgyz society traditionally pedagogy and medicine are considered purely feminine activities. Therefore, most of the girls enrolling in the universities select the appropriate specialty. Women more likely to choose exactly those activities that give them the knowledge and skills that can be applied directly for the benefit of their family: knowledge in pedagogy is used on the education of children, in medicine - treatment of his family. Unfortunately, the data do not provide a profession to women appropriate remuneration for their work, so in recent years, an increasing number of women entering the economic profession.

A great deal of debating goes on concerning the role of women in society. How is it that in today's world, where everyone preaches about the value of equality, women still do not occupy the same social, economical or political position as men do? Women try relentlessly to mark their presence outside their kitchens and laundry rooms, yet in the same relentless manner they are being reminded of the true calling of their nature, which limits their perspective for a much more fulfilling life. Whether women ever stood equal with males on a physical and intellectual level in the eyes of society we do not know. Sure, in every era there are heroic and powerful women, but although equal of men, they became his inferior due to pregnancy, birth, and etc., forcing them to look to men for protection and economic assistance. This dependency, especially economic dependency, became the basis of women's slavery, which often existed, and still exists, after the dependent condition was long ago.

Women and today's society throughout the history, men have traditionally been regarded as superior to women in both power and status. A common view in most societies was that daughters should obey their fathers, and wives should obey their husbands, and this view still holds true in most eastern countries. Many women have achieved great things without fitting into the image that is presented through the media as beautiful. Even the women who are successful, those who have high income, or high status jobs, are viewed differently than they would be if they were men. In order to change these views, there should be deep improvements made to society. It is now acceptable for a woman to pursue whatever profession she chooses, yet she is still not treated equally in comparison to her male counterparts because of this objectification. Not only must a woman be intelligent and outgoing to become successful, but she must also be beautiful. Perhaps more than ever women are encouraged even pressured to focus on their appearances. Today society is telling people that caring about others is not as important as affluence, as having big house and a car. Instead of encouraging physical beauty more attention should be paid to inner beauty, character and accomplishments. Therefore, many women are forced to take the traditional male roles, making it difficult for those people who want to be caretakers, either for their own families or for others who need caring for. This is very discouraging to those men and women who want to be the nurses, stay-at-home parents, or workers in elementary schools, those who want to fill such caretaker positions.

The period of the history of sovereign Kyrgyzstan actualizes the need for disclosure of the true potential of women in its national peculiarities in a rich inner form, enabling it to active public manifestations of high social positions. Economic difficulties and the changes in general have had a serious impact on changing the status of women. There is a big difference between urban and rural women. Today, the number of rural women is about 1.9 million, or 65% of the total female population, over 52% of them is economically active and - 48% are employed. Psychological and physical load of work for them increases day by day. Situation of women living in rural areas is much more complicated than that of urban women. This is explained by the economic instability of agricultural production and living conditions of rural women. They have a lower educational level, have more children, they are provided with worse health, social, public services, they have less comfortable living conditions, and they suffer from discrimination and violence. If for urban women the hardest homework is washing and cleaning of the

apartment, the rural women is heating the house and working in the farms, gardening. But rural woman - is the force that holds everything and traditions, and moral roots, and communal character of rural life. Moreover, rural women - a force that actually moves the process of socio-economic development of the village.

Today in society there is a debate about how to solve the problem of discrimination and what measures can be proposed in this direction. An extremely important role in this, as the experience of many countries, belongs to non-governmental organizations. Under these conditions, the most important function of the state is to create an enabling environment for the expansion of gender equality. The role of the state is not to interfere and protect women from the problems of real life, but to support them, to assist in the acquisition of knowledge and experience and help them to become competitive in a market economy. An extremely important role in solving gender inequality belongs to public organizations. These organizations may have a different focus: to give women practical knowledge on how to start a business and succeed in it, helping to obtain additional education or get a new qualification.

At the same time with the shortcomings in gender politics, it is worth to point at the positive sides. In the political sphere in Kyrgyzstan about 20% of women are active, it is worth to note that there are women in the parliament, the courts, the government, and of the seven oblasts' governors the two are women. But there still exist problems concerning violence against women. There is a law that specifically prohibits domestic violence and spousal abuse. In Kyrgyzstan the common practice of bride kidnapping is raising serious questions about the rights of women. "Ala Kachuu" involves the kidnapping of women usually under the age of 25 by a prospective groom and his acquaintances. The woman is taken to her intended spouse's family home where she is pressured – through persuasion, threat or force – by the groom's female relatives into consenting to marriage. The practice has been on the rise in recent years, and most rapidly since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The practice of ala kachuu has existed in Kyrgyzstan for the past century. But in its current form, it cannot be considered a traditional cultural practice, as prior to Soviet control in the country it was very rare and when it did occur consensual. The violence and psychological pressure that women are subject to in the course of ala kachuu can often continue throughout the marriage. Women who are kidnapped and forced to marry do not decide their husbands on the basis of their previous relationship with them; many do not even know their kidnappers, or what they know of their character and history. Marriages can therefore often be very unhappy. The relationship is also founded on the basis of the force and is therefore more likely to involve domestic violence. When a woman's will is not respected during the marital agreement it is unlikely to be thereafter. And when force is a glorified aspect of male-female relationships, how much restraint does society expect of men in their treatment of women?

Taking into account all the above mentioned problems it is crucial to note that even if we can see some women among men in governing posts the women's status is still a problem in Asian society. The main goal of Kyrgyz society is protection of women's rights and elimination of discrimination in society; widening women's participation in policy decision making processes on the local, regional and national levels; support for cooperation between women's organizations on the national and international arenas; widening access to international resources and experience of women's organizations on an international level. There are a lot to do in this issue.

References:

1. Gender Relationships in Kyrgyzstan, United Nations Population Fund, 2000

2. Gender in State Governance in Kyrgyz Republic/UNDP, Bishkek, 1999
3. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Kyrgyz Republic (2007). United States Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (March 18, 2008)
4. Kyrgyz Women Empowered Despite Difficult Economic Transition – <http://www.isar.org/pubs/ST/KYwomen491.html>
5. Political Participation and Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan: <http://www.iacd.or.kr/pdf/journal/04/4-08.pdf>

Рецензент: ф.и.к., доцент Чоробаева Н.А.