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G.B. Urazalieva

*Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers, Tashkent, Uzbekistan,*  
g.urozaliyeva@tiame.uz

G.A. Khudayberdieva

*Specialized Branch of Tashkent State University of Law, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, gxudoyberdiyeva@inbox.ru*

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## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AS A FACTOR OF WOMAN EMPLOYMENT**

**G.B. Urazalieva,**

*PhD. in Sociology,*

*Senior lecturer, Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural*

*Mechanization Engineers,*

*Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

[g.urozaliyeva@tiiame.uz](mailto:g.urozaliyeva@tiiame.uz)

**G. A. Khudayberdieva**

*PhD. in Law,*

*Senior lecturer, Specialized Branch of Tashkent State University of Law,*

*Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

[gxudoyberdiyeva@inbox.ru](mailto:gxudoyberdiyeva@inbox.ru)

**Abstract.** *The article analyses the current state of ensuring gender equality and the development of information and communication technologies in Uzbekistan. There are given outline of the state strategy in these issues and the main achievements. The authors highlight the interdependence of the success of the ongoing economic reforms on the solution of gender problems.*

*It is noted that the Internet has changed the nature of communication in society, including between men and women. The introduction of modern ICT achievements into wide practice ensures the expansion of the horizons of human communication and the emergence of new opportunities for economic employment. This circumstance carries both positive and negative aspects.*

*Furthermore, in the article have been discussed the mechanisms of using modern information and communication technologies to address gender issues, including employment. The meaning of technology goes beyond the media, considering the Internet as an independent space. In conclusion, the authors offer a number of specific recommendations.*

**Keywords:** *gender, gender equality, information and communication technologies, information society, Internet, economy, addiction, proposals.*

### **Introduction**

Currently, issues of gender equality and full support for young girls to realize their abilities are at the center of attention in many countries around the world. This is due to the fact that gender equality and the realization of girls' potential are important criteria for assessing the sustainable development of various spheres of society, especially the economic wellbeing.

This is an important issue for the Republic of Uzbekistan as well. Therefore, according to official statistics, at the beginning of 2019, 16.544.9 thousand women (49.75% of the total population) or 990 women per 1 one thousand men lived in Uzbekistan. At the same time, the birth rate of girls is 22.3 per 1 one thousand people [17 P. 18]. The average age of women in 2019 was 29.5 years in Uzbekistan (29.3 for men), which indicates a young demographic situation in the country [22, P. 22].

We would like to emphasize that the adoption of an effective policy in the direction of gender equality contributes to the achievement of the strategic goals set by the state. Thus, in the January 2020 Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis, such a goal is highlighted as building a new Uzbekistan in order to create conditions for a prosperous life of the country's people [18]. Obviously, it is impossible to achieve these goals without addressing such gender issues as life expectancy, maternal mortality, women's employment, etc.

On the other hand, the degree of success of reforms largely depends on the state in certain areas. According to the UN office in Uzbekistan, professions such as teacher, doctor, or artist are typical "women's work" in Uzbekistan [19]. Moreover, according to official data, the share of women among the teaching staff of higher education institutions at the beginning of the academic year 2019 was 43.6% [17, P. 19]. As you know, science and education are of paramount importance for increasing the intellectual and spiritual potential of not only young people, but also the entire society of Uzbekistan.

If we will mention about the economic sphere, it is important to note the degree of relevance of employment issues as well. Thus, in the total number of unemployed in Uzbekistan, 834 thousand are women. Moreover, in 2020, 452 thousand boys and girls graduated from secondary schools. 70 thousand of them will be able to get higher education, 85 thousand-professional education. Even if more than 95 thousand people are employed, it is necessary to provide jobs for another 200 thousand young people, half of whom are girls [27].

As a well – known political figure T. Narbayeva notes "the shortage of decent work – in terms of quality, but also the number of jobs-affects women more than men. It's harder for women to find work. Employers are reluctant to hire them, since the cost of hiring women is higher, due to the obligation to provide women employees with compensation payments for birth and child care" [29].

Here, in the introduction, we would like to briefly discuss the scientific terminology. Today, the concept of "gender" in modern sociology refers to a set of social and cultural norms that society prescribes people to fulfill, depending on their biological gender. At the same time, it is socio-cultural norms, not gender, that ultimately determine the behavior patterns, activities, professions of women and men, and psychological qualities. Consequently, gender is constructed by society as

a social model of women and men, which determines their position and role in society and its institutions (family, political structure, economy, culture and education, etc.).

The essence of gender construction is polarity and opposition. In almost every society where socially prescribed characteristics have two gender types, one biological gender is assigned social roles that are considered culturally secondary (usually what is attributed and prescribed to women is rated as secondary). As a result, we can say that the gender system is a socially constructed system of gender inequality. Gender, therefore, is one of the ways of social stratification of society [20].

Authors also emphasize that, information and communication technologies (ICTs) are understood as a set of methods, production processes, and software and hardware integrated for the purpose of collecting, processing, storing, distributing, displaying, and using information in the interests of its users [21].

Furthermore, it is important to note the signing by the President of Uzbekistan in September 2019 of the Law "on guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for women and men". It defines direct discrimination on the basis of gender as any distinction, exclusion or restriction that is aimed at non-recognition of women and men's rights and freedoms in all spheres of society, including discrimination based on marital status, pregnancy, family responsibilities, as well as sexual harassment, different pay for equal work and qualifications.

According to the law, indirect discrimination, is the creation of a situation or criteria that puts persons of one sex in a less favorable position compared to persons of the other sex, including the promotion of gender inequality through the media, education, culture, and the establishment of conditions or requirements that may have negative consequences for persons of a certain sex.

The document emphasizes that the state guarantees women and men equal participation in managing the Affairs of society and the state, the electoral process, ensuring equal rights and opportunities in the field of health, education, science, culture, labor and social protection, as well as in other areas of state and public life. "Domestic work cannot be grounds for direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of gender, it is carried out equally by women and men," the Law States [24].

In General, because of the large-scale reforms being implemented in the country, the role of women in the socio-economic sphere is increasingly being strengthened. In recent years, practical work has been carried out to protect the rights and legitimate interests of women and encourage their participation in social life and public administration.

As foreign experience shows, Uzbekistan will be able to be one of the developed countries with accelerated reforms based on science, education and innovation. This requires the training of a new formation of personnel who are initiators of reforms, have a strategic vision, deep knowledge and high qualifications,

and the ability to effectively use the achievements of information and communication technologies. Consequently, Uzbekistan is a country where the successful solution of gender issues is objectively determined by the progress of reforms. That is why these issues are in the focus of attention of the government in Uzbekistan.

### **Literature review**

Research on women's issues, gender equality and, particularly, ensuring women's employment in modern conditions of digitalization has a prior direction in the field of social Sciences. In particular, foreign scientists R. Hof, West Kendes and Zimmerman Dean made a respectable contribution to the development of the concept of gender and gender equality. [1,2] according to the researcher Gurimarfu, in many countries the fundamental freedoms and rights of all citizens are guaranteed equally. However, women's lives are often defined by family responsibilities and religious traditions that contradict official rights. She believes that in order to achieve gender equality, it is important that the equal rights and opportunities provided by law are accepted by the whole society. [3]

Together with that, uzbek scientists, based on foreign theoretical and methodological research, and based on the study and analysis of theoretical and empirical resources; develop research on various aspects of this problem in relation to the conditions of Uzbekistan. In the scientific research of G. Matkarimova and S. Khodjayeva, it is noted that the Constitution has legislated equal opportunities for the realization of labor abilities of all market participants. However, due to the special position of women in the labor market, the problem of ensuring women's freedom to choose forms of employment is becoming urgent. [4,5]

According to M. Sukhomlinova, the social aspects of the problems of Uzbek women in modern conditions are of key importance, since women occupy a special place in the system of social relations of society associated with certain rights and opportunities for their realization. [6]

In the work of A. Kayumov and G. Zahirova, it is noted that one of the determining factors of the possibility of transforming the innovative potential of the economy and an active source of overproduction is the degree of women's participation in social production. Women's economic activity is characterized by a level of improvement in education and skills, especially in the field of information and communication technology.[7]

Hence, "Year of development of science, education and digital economy" in Uzbekistan sets the task of public science to further comprehensive research of women's issues in the framework of information and communication technology development.

### **Research methodology**

The methodological basis of given research is a systematic and analytical approach that lets us to present scientific research of socio-economic phenomena and processes in their development, interrelation and interdependence.

As we know the research methodology is determined by the principles of scientific knowledge, scientific achievements reflected in the publications of classics and modern scientists on the issue of gender, ensuring gender equality in all spheres of public life, in particular the digitalization of the economy of Uzbekistan

In this way, methodological basis was the development of modern scientists involved in optimizing the development and application of software in information systems, legislative and regulatory acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the progress of the information and communication technologies industry.

In the process of writing this article, we used methods of sociological research, in particular scientific and comparative analysis, generalization of empirical materials and assessment of expert opinions.

### **Analysis and results**

Strategic approach to gender issues has been reflected in a number of important steps in this direction. In particular, the laws "on guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women" and "on protection of women from harassment and violence" have been adopted, providing for full support for women, and the Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan on gender equality has started its activities as well.

Attention is paid to increasing the number of women in Central and local Executive, legislative and judicial bodies. There are currently 17 women senators, 15 deputies of the legislative chamber, 15 heroes of Uzbekistan, six academicians and 514 doctors of science in the Republic. Women make up 23% of the number of local Kengash deputies. More than two thousand active women are included in the personnel reserve of political parties for their further promotion to various leadership positions [22].

Notably, a Committee on women and gender equality has been established in the upper house of Parliament. The main tasks of the Committee are to develop proposals for the implementation of state policies aimed at ensuring gender equality in the country and the active participation of women in state and public work, to review gender equality issues and laws on the development of the family institution in order to ensure their compliance with the goals and objectives of the reforms being carried out in the country and the norms of international law, and to submit relevant conclusions.

The new structure is charged with the task of developing proposals for the implementation of generally recognized international norms on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women's rights in national legislation, monitoring the implementation of the norms of international instruments on gender equality to



which Uzbekistan is a party and implementing the recommendations set out in them.

Furthermore, the Committee examines the actual state of gender issues on the ground by conducting a dialogue with the population and taking measures to address the identified topical issues through parliamentary monitoring.

It should be noted that the attention paid to women's gender equality in the country is linked to a number of important factors. In particular, almost half of the Republic's population is made up of women. More precisely, the share of women among the economically active population exceeds 46%. In particular, 7 out of 10 employees in the areas of health and social services are women.

Conversely, despite this, women's participation in public administration remains low. It is no secret that a small number of women work in the leading and representative positions of the chambers of the Oliy Majlis, local Kengashes of people's deputies, state authorities and administrative bodies. In other words, the level of social activity of women in political life still does not meet the requirements of the time. In this context, it is noted that insufficient attention to gender issues often leads to many socio-economic problems.

For example, in Uzbekistan today, more than half of women work in the informal sector, 623.7 thousand unemployed women, just over 500 thousand work intermittently, and about 2 million work without registration. Of these, the vast majority are residents of the village [22]. All this entails a number of negative consequences, the budget does not receive part of the tax funds, creating an additional burden on the country's pension system.

Separately, the presidential Decree" on measures to radically improve activities in the field of support for women and strengthening the institution of the family " dated February 2, 2018 brought work in the direction of ensuring women's employment to a new level. Thus, the indicators of women's employment and their socio-political activity have significantly improved, and the facts of crime among them have decreased.

Our country has a strong legal framework for equality between women and men. The Constitution provides for their equality. Sex equality is also provided for in labor legislation. So far, despite this, in fact, women's opportunities to gain a decent place in the labor market are limited in some areas.

If we look at the world experience, the prestigious World economic forum annually prepares a report on gender differences in society. This report takes into account the political activity of women and men, the differences between them in the economy, education, and access to health services. Uzbekistan has never been included in the list of 150 countries in terms of gender differences.

From this point of view, the Law "On guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for women and men" adopted on September 2, 2019 laid the Foundation for the country's sustainable development, the development of targeted

programs aimed at specific goals, and the achievement of important results based on the principles outlined in the law. This law, which consists of 32 articles, reflects such concepts as "gender", "gender statistics", "gender-legal expertise", "gender discrimination", the tasks and functions of authorized bodies in this area, the norms for ensuring gender equality for participation in public administration, in hiring and hiring, obtaining credit and engaging in entrepreneurship, measures aimed at preventing gender inequality, as well as responsibility for this.

The law sets out the basic principles of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for men and women. A separate article explains in detail cases that are not considered gender-based discrimination. It is noteworthy that the law provides for a separate norm for conducting gender-legal expertise of normative legal acts and their projects. Now, in addition to anti-corruption expertise, they will undergo legal expertise from the point of view of gender equality.

Additionally, another important detail of the law is the reflection of the mechanism for generating gender statistics. State statistical bodies are appointed as the authorized bodies for the formation of statistical indicators of gender equality and their constant updating.

The regulation defines the powers of the Cabinet of Ministers, the Commission for gender equality and state bodies in the field of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, the participation of non-governmental non-profit organizations and other civil society institutions in this process.

Besides the law sets out the rules for hiring women and men, according to which a competition will be announced to fill vacant positions in the civil service, including senior positions. A special Commission will be formed in state bodies to review data on candidates. This document clearly outlines the employer's obligations to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in employment relations. In short, this law was an important step in regulating the provision of equal rights and opportunities for women and men [28].

In this situation, the positive role of ICTs can be seen in a number of aspects. For example, in Uzbekistan, it is planned to update the law "on employment" to take into account new types and forms of activity, as well as to switch to electronic workbooks. Electronic contracts will be introduced, and administrative responsibility for hiding vacancies and unjustified refusal to accept a job will be strengthened.

Indeed, all this shows the importance of using ICT as an effective mechanism for solving modern issues, including gender issues. First of all, this is due to the fact that every day the globalizing world is equipped with new and improved equipment. According to sociologists, in all countries there are more and more people in proportion, even among the elderly who have mastered modern technologies, and less and less people who do not have an idea about it. The Internet is actively penetrating all corners of the world, which allows you to unite people around the world and it is impossible to imagine a modern person who does not use the



Network. Speaking about Uzbekistan, it can be noted that "communication Informatization" services were provided in the country in 2019 in the amount of 10.332.6 billion soums (over \$ 1.1 billion), or an increase of 15.9%. At the same time, if Tashkent had the maximum growth of 23.5%, then the Republic of Karakalpakstan grew by 5.4% [23 P.153].

You can access the Network via a cell phone, computer, laptop, at any time, even without being at home. However, along with increasing mobility of people, they lead to new problems, such as changes in motivational and personal nature, deterioration of social relations, social adaptation and other problems associated with the socialization of an individual, including women in society. Such changes are of great interest for sociological analysis, namely, for the study of specific forms of behavior of women in society.

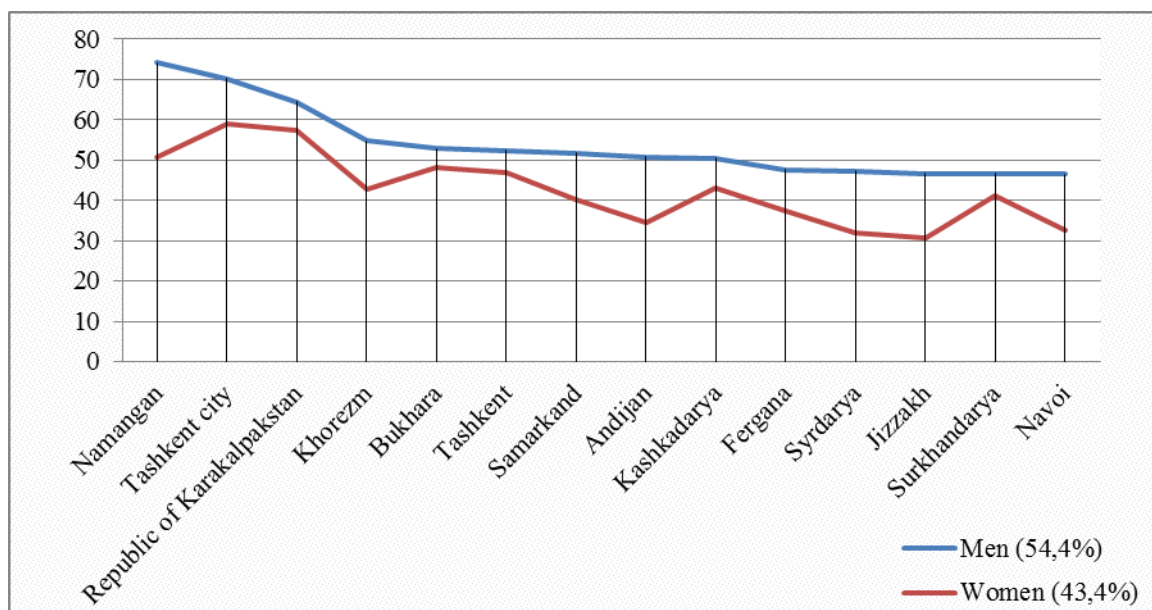
As you can see, the Internet is playing an increasingly significant role, both in professional activities and in the daily life of modern people. In the Internet space are reflected games, educational and employment activity. The forms of expression of the above methods of activity are quite diverse and are implemented mainly through communication between people.

Here we emphasize that gender inequality is amplified by the digital revolution, which affects all social strata of the population regardless of income, employment, family, etc. All over the world, women face serious problems not only of an economic, but also of a social and cultural nature, which restrict or completely deprive them of access to ICTs, the ability to use these technologies and benefit from them [8].

The State Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Uzbekistan provides quantitative data for the entire Republic for 2017. Thus, the number of people over 10 years of age using the Internet was 54.4% of men and 43.4% of women [9].

Considering this issue by region, it can be noted that the highest number of Internet users among men is in Namangan region – 74.1%, Tashkent city – 70.1% and the Republic of Karakalpakstan – 64.4. the Reverse trend, with the lowest number of Internet users in 2017 among men, is observed in Jizzakh - 46.7%, Navoi - 46.4%, Surkhandarya - 46.6%, Syrdarya - 47.3% and Ferghana - 47.6% regions.

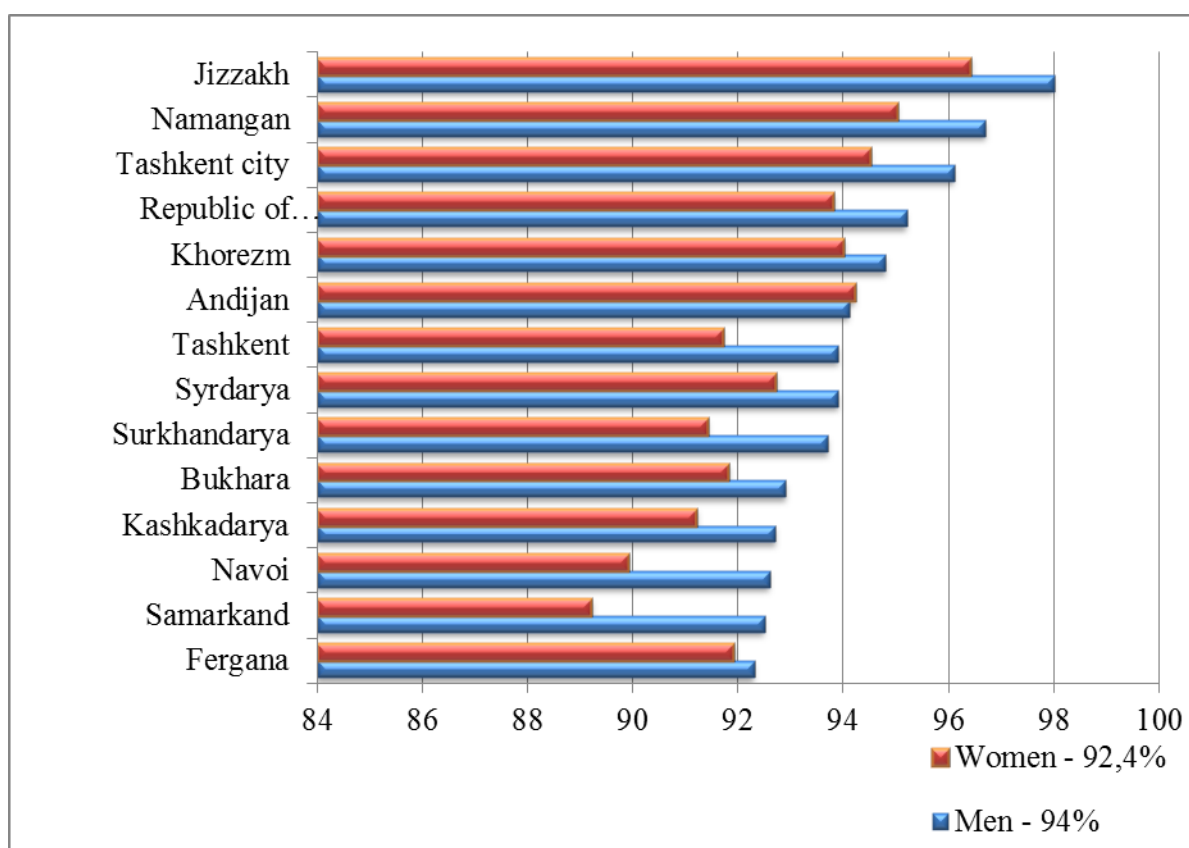
As mentioned above, women used the Internet slightly less frequently, while regional statistics are similar in relation to gender, for example, the most active Internet use is by women in Tashkent-58.9% and the Republic of Karakalpakstan-57.4%, passivity was detected in Jizzakh - 30.7%, Syrdarya – 32% and Navoi– 46.4% regions.



**Figure 1. Percentage of people 10 years and older using the Internet by gender in 2017**

Data from the State Committee on Statistics on gender for 2017 also showed that men in Uzbekistan (94%) use mobile phones to a small extent, but to a greater extent than women (92.4%). In General, in all regions there is a tendency for men to use mobile phones more often, except for the Andijan region (figure 2). the

Data showed that the number of mobile phone users in the Jizzakh, Namangan regions, the city of Tashkent and the Republic of Karakalpakstan is higher, both among men and women.



**Figure 2. Percentage of people 10 years and older using mobile / cellular phones by gender in 2017**

According to UNESCO, women make up the majority of the world's illiterate population [3]. In this regard, there is a need to develop activities aimed at reducing female illiteracy and ensuring basic levels of education. This circumstance may depend on the influence of various factors, both external and internal, such as age or availability of free time. Especially for women, age is an important factor for online presence, even negative to a certain extent. For example, women may have difficulty mastering ICT at an older age. Along with this, there are stereotypical opinions in the world that technology is a male field of knowledge.

Research has shown that there is a difference between men and women when accessing and using computers. For example, male students study more courses where there is a greater need to use computers than female students.

It is also necessary to mention the right to privacy, security and inviolability are basic legal norms for women, which must be observed, both in everyday life and in the field of ICT (in particular, the Internet) [11].

Nowadays, there is a growing understanding of the potential and opportunities that ICTs can provide for women. This phenomenon is an important step towards overcoming gender inequality in the digital space and providing new digital opportunities. Women's participation in the information society will directly affect income growth and make it more sustainable, thereby contributing to the social and economic success of humanity [8].

In the modern world, the information environment plays a special role in the life of every person, along with others, such as social, cultural, natural, etc. Recently, the information environment is called the noosphere, and it is customary to distinguish the Internet environment, or the so-called "cyberspace". Cyberspace as a virtual reality is social, because it is filled with people - more precisely, projections of people: texts generated by them, images-from realistic to fantastic.

Consequently, the information environment is of great interest for psychological analysis, namely for studying specific forms of human behavior. This kind of "environmental" behavior is not limited to the search, processing and transmission of information, acquisition and translation of knowledge. In "cyberspace" as an element of the information environment, a number of individual activities is distinguished, which are based on cognitive, gaming and communication activities.

The most active investigation in this case is the so-called "social" dimension. A striking example of this is the linguistic, cultural, and psychological characteristics of dyadic and group interaction. These types of features regulate communication and relationships between remote partners rules, as well as the formation of virtual groups. The principle of forming these communities is the self-expression of the individual, as well as changes in the "network" identity, i.e. there is a possibility of a "narcotic" type of Internet addiction, the so - called Internet addiction, and the paradigm of purchasing behavior of Internet users. For example, interest and interest in advertising, which is often available on a variety of Internet sites.

No doubt, that the Internet is not only a way or means of communication, but also a significant mechanism for the social, economic and environmental development of regions, as well as the intensive growth of the exchange of views in the world "electronic network". For example, a study was conducted at Carnegie Mellon University in the United States. The data obtained indicate negative consequences, since the intensive use of the Internet leads to a narrowing of social ties and leads to loneliness, this refers to negative consequences. These data also indicate a reduction in intra-family communication, and also lead to a depressive state. Another study was conducted at Stanford University (USA). The results of this study were almost identical.

Other data may be provided on the negative impact of the Internet on individual and group mental activity. It was shown that the use of the Internet can contribute to the autism of children and adolescents, as well as lead to inadequate effects in the processes of social perception, etc. [12]. Generally said, it is obvious that the Internet should take its assigned social status, since attempts to overestimate its significance for humanity and for the individual need to be corrected.

The main negative side of the communicative use of the Internet for a person can be considered Internet addiction or Internet addiction. According to the results

of numerous surveys, such communication can completely delay the subject, thereby leaving him neither time nor energy for other activities.

Today, the Internet environment is not so much informational as self-identifying. In contrast to the usual traditional communications, interactions in the Internet environment acquire new opportunities that carry both positive and negative potential, forming self-identification in the virtual environment [13].

Additionally, internet communication also raises the problem of the relationship of possible self-presentation strategies with a person's identity, as well as the issue of gender stereotypes. This space allows users to behave more freely and sincerely than in the process of real communication. This trend is seen on Dating sites, where the feature of the majority of the male half is the expression of open statements about their goals, while women in the process of communication position themselves more modestly [13].

Constructive aspects of personal development, when communicating via the Internet, can include such prospects as overcoming the communication deficit and expanding the circle of communication, increasing awareness of the issues discussed, protection from the most rude manipulative actions, a kind of compactness of the communicative chronotope, i.e. the unity of space and time when communicating in real time, it can also be the exchange of situational emotional States and moods [14].

Gender inequality, as in all spheres of society, is present in cyberspace and in the provision of information services. The human right to information was included in the set of basic provisions of the universal Declaration of human rights, it implies equal access to information for all social strata of the population. However, there are factors that hinder the spread of ICT infrastructure. First, it is computer and General illiteracy, second-the unavailability of information sources, and third-the traditional way of life and other social and economic conditions characteristic of a particular country in the world.

Issues of gender equality in ICTs were also raised by UNESCO, which developed the Women in the media program. This program is aimed at eliminating gender inequality in the field of digital technologies. At the same time, there is still a trend of inequality in the participation of women in the information and communication society on an equal basis with men. This fact may be related to existing socio-cultural stereotypes, as well as gender roles.

Among the facts available today, as the UN Commission on science and technology (UNCSTD) notes, is the existing gender gap in the ownership of communication technologies. It should be noted that the provisions adopted at the 4th world Beijing conference on women's issues, based on which international electronic networks of women's organizations were created, significantly served to expand women's opportunities [15].

The UN division for women's professional development (DWPD) estimates that there are more than 200,000 sites dedicated to gender issues on the Internet.

It can be noted that, if necessary, women can go beyond the socio-cultural restrictions imposed on them by stereotypes, national communities and States, creating their own associations, participating in forums on topics of interest, etc. In everyday life, a woman adapts to the male culture in one way or another, but in the virtual space, she becomes freer.

Speaking about the state of activities in Uzbekistan, we present statistical data that showed a high growth in the use of advanced technologies. Digital TV coverage in the country increased from 88 % to 100% in 2017. The number of mobile phone users increased by 7 percent to 22.8 million. As part of the Investment program, 260 million dollars were spent [16].

Uzbekistan is working to expand the coverage and increase the speed of Internet connection throughout the country, establish interaction with leading foreign companies in the field of software and telecommunications, and constantly improve the E-government system. This service of interactive public services is a single point of access to electronic public services provided by public authorities. Also in Uzbekistan, there is a constant work on reducing prices for Internet access, increasing the connection speed bringing it to the level of the CIS countries.

Overall, we can say that computer networks have changed the way people work together and communicate with each other. The meaning of the Internet is diverse. The Internet space allows each user, regardless of gender or age, to realize their desired image in real time.

Conclusion.

Hence, the rapid development of ICT has led to the emergence of a new virtual reality and a new concept of "cyberspace". However, this in turn creates opportunities to use them to improve the existing gender status. This applies to both the traditional and social components, where the first is the role of a mother, wife, Keeper of the hearth, educator of children, caring companion of men. The second is gender-oriented resources that promote the ideas of equality and combating discrimination against women [26. P. 36].

Uzbekistan, as can be seen from the above statistical indicators, has the necessary technical capacity to actively use the achievements of ICT in the field of gender issues. The main thing in Uzbekistan, as the above analysis of state policy demonstrates, is that there is a political will to improve the situation of women and girls and bring it to generally recognized democratic standards. This also applies to women's employment.

Summarizing all this, it can be emphasized that the use of ICT in the field of gender in Uzbekistan can develop in the following main directions:

- promotion of public policies on gender and ICT;



- training and capacity building for working in the ICTV, to increase the level of employment of women;
- promptly inform the population about the implementation of gender policy on the ground by exercising public and parliamentary control in this area, first of all, by implementing State programs aimed at ensuring women's employment;
- studying the content and "harm" of cyberspace, implementing positive content based on the knowledge gained;
- creation of websites, discussion groups and other online resources for women in Uzbekistan who are interested in getting more information about Internet technologies and women who are already working in the field of information technology;
- maintaining women's right to privacy of personal data on the Internet at all levels, rejecting the practice of using data for profit and manipulating behavior in social networks.

Generally, today it can be assessed as interrelated - the processes of ensuring women's employment and implementing the achievements of modern ICT. Our country's society is developing rapidly, relations between the genders are transforming and acquiring new features, which affects the form and content of gender processes. Today managing this mechanism by using the positive aspects of ICT is very important, which in turn will serve to address issues of poverty in Uzbekistan in a harmonious policy.

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