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Policy aimed at strengthening families in Uzbekistan as a guarantee of ensuring human rights

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Abstract: This article examines the state policy aimed at strengthening the institution of the family, as well as its main directions and functions. It also substantiates that, in the context of rapidly advancing globalization, an effective social policy pursued by the state and society, based on national and universal values, is a key prerequisite for preserving moral and spiritual values, successfully addressing issues of education and upbringing, and ensuring sustainable development.

Keywords: Family psychology, reproductive, productive, code, spirituality, spouses, marriage, tolerance, household, society, civic stance, sexual desire, emotionality, lineage.

Introduction

The emotional-affective function of the family is its capacity to maintain specific warm relations among its members, demonstrating mutual affection, mutual care, support, love, and being loved. This is critically important for the family, as human mental health directly depends on how effectively this function is performed. A healthy spiritual-psychological environment in a family essentially implies the existence of warmth, sincerity, mutual tolerance, and the positivity of human feelings such as kindness among its members.

The physical sustenance function refers to the conditions necessary to ensure that family members are physically healthy, vigorous, and feel well—for instance, each of us having a home, and furthermore, possessing necessary and comfortable opportunities within our territory, i.e., our dwelling, to rest, enjoy high-quality and nutritious meals, create, and study. Indeed, if any of these are not provided, such a family cannot consider itself happy and experiences a number of discomforts. For example, there are psychological studies confirming that homeless people suffer not only mental but also physical torments.

The function of ensuring spiritual communication stems from a person's aspiration to have a lineage and spiritual-cultural traditions; every individual takes boundless pride in knowing whose descendant they are and what traditions they are the heirs to. Regardless of what kind of family it is, it will be strong and happy only when it is capable of uniting its members within certain good customs and rules of communication. From the very moments when a newborn child begins to toddle, elders in the family teach them gentle communication through pampering, while concepts of respect for elders, care, and honor for younger ones are also cultivated within the family. In a family that fails to fulfill this function, the likelihood of constant distress, quarrels, and conflicts is always high.

Literature review

The sexual-emotional communication function serves to satisfy sexual needs exclusive to the husband and wife, thereby ensuring the continuity of generations. The performance of this function directly affects marital relations, serving to foster loyalty and fidelity between spouses, maintain their health, and stabilize a proper lifestyle.

The function of stabilizing happiness and peace of mind is also critically important, as the family helps resolve the problems of each of its members, protect them from various external influences, and, if necessary, form a protective immunity within them. Among Uzbeks, there is the saying "O‘z uyim – o‘lan to‘shagim" [1, p. 46]; everyone can find genuine peace in their own home.

After returning from long journeys or resting in hotels with high service standards, a person's greatest happiness is being in their own home, stretching their legs, and saying "shukur" (gratitude) [1, p. 47]. From this perspective, the role of the family is unparalleled in ensuring that children grow up safe and sound and protecting their minds from various external influences and alien ideas. If a family is peaceful and secure, then society and the state will likewise be peaceful, and stability within them will be sustained.

The reproductive function is not only the family's task related to creating generations and heirs, but through it, attaining the happiness of being a mother and father, while also helping the state maintain the size of the indigenous population at a specific level. Particularly among Uzbeks, from the very early moments of marriage, a blessing is pronounced: "uvali-juvali bo'linglar, qo'sha qaringlar" (may you have children and grow old together), and the bride's pregnancy is anticipated with eagerness. Because this very factor is of paramount importance in the stability of a young family. The concept of a "family with children" is important in both family psychology and family sociology, as it serves as a benchmark for indicators across nearly all aspects of lifestyle in the family. Specifically, the meaning of the Uzbek proverb "Bolali uy – bozor, bolasiz uy – mozor" (A home with children is a bustling bazaar, a home without children is a grave) implies that angels descend upon a home where a child is born, and a path opens for goodness, joys, and celebrations.

In family sociology and demography, families are categorized according to the number of children. From a socio-psychological perspective, for instance, a "small-family" is one with 1–2 children. When evaluated from a general demographic standpoint, this figure is insufficient to support population growth and compensate for natural population losses. According to sociologist A. Antonov (2015), to maintain population balance in society, the average number of children should not be less than 2.5. Alternatively, if one-fourth of all families consist of two children, one-third of three children, 14% are childless or single, and 7% are large families with up to five children, then the succession of generations is ensured. However, examining this issue through the example of Russia, a serious decline in the reproductive growth of the population is being observed [7, p. 38]. There, the proportion of small families—namely, those with 1 or 2 children—has sharply increased, accounting for 95% of total families today.

During the years of independence, issues of social protection of the family, motherhood, and childhood in our beloved country, Uzbekistan, have received attention as a priority direction of state policy. As recognized in Article 65 of our country's Constitution, "Motherhood and childhood are protected by the state." Furthermore, Article 64 of our Basic Law states that "the state and society ensure the maintenance, upbringing, and education of orphaned children and children deprived of parental care, and encourage charitable activities dedicated to children" [2, p. 8].

Consequently, the social protection of the family, motherhood, and childhood, and the creation of conditions for their comprehensive development and well-being are guaranteed by the state in Uzbekistan. At this point, a reasonable question arises: what serves as the basis for the necessity of conducting state policy regarding the family in this legally guaranteed and purposeful manner.

Research methodology

The absence of state policy regarding the family and the lack of policies to strengthen its foundation can lead to this unique social institution failing to take its rightful place among other social institutions, resulting in crises in family and marriage relations, strikes against human relations, the proliferation of various problems, and spiritual crises being observed at the primary hearth of the upbringing of the younger generation. Therefore, societies and their state systems steadily advancing on the path of continuous progress and national well-being are interested in the strength and stability of the family, and in ensuring that intergenerational succession does not disappear.

Thus, family policy is the activity of state bodies, political parties, and public organizations aimed at comprehensively supporting and protecting the social structure called a family—consisting of a husband, a wife, and their two or more children—which aligns with the interests of the individual and society [3, p. 43]. This is a policy of supporting the population to stabilize the family lifestyle and realize each person's desire to have their own family and lineage. Its true meaning indicates the confidence of the state and society that the maximal presence of complete families, intergenerational succession, the continuity of lineages, and the recognition of family and marriage as values by youth ensure the peace of the homeland, the development of the Motherland, and the well-being of the people.

Results and discussion

As a result of the analysis, during the years of independence, considerable positive work has been accomplished in practically strengthening the institution of the family in Uzbekistan. First of all, the legal framework for improving family and marriage relations was established. The "Family Code," adopted in 1998, regulates all aspects of these relations.

Furthermore, a number of other Codes and laws adopted by the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan also directly protect the interests and rights of family members, particularly women and children. Examples include:

- **The Civil Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan:** protecting property relations of family members, their shares, inheritance, and succession rights;
- **The Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan:** guaranteeing privileges applicable to women with children and the labor rights of all family members as citizens;
- **The Housing Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan:** ensuring the rights to own housing property;
- **The Law "On State Pension Provision of Citizens":** providing social protection for older family members and those who are pensioners due to labor or health conditions;
- **The Law "On Employment of the Population" (1998):** regulating privileges, quotas, and procedures for families with many children and disabled children;
- **The Law "On Protection of Public Health" (1995):** establishing procedures for state protection of women's health within the family, including reproductive health [3, p. 65];
- **The Law "On Additional Privileges for Women":** embodying rules regarding privileges and additional opportunities provided to women with children and those working in arduous labor conditions.

The practical enforcement of laws is ensured on the basis of Decrees and Orders of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted and implemented during the years of independence, as well as dozens of resolutions by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which define measures to strengthen the socio-economic potential of the family and reduce the number of low-income families through employment provision and the guarantee of labor rights. State programs adopted and successfully implemented in practice since 1994 reflect the state protection of large and low-income families, motherhood, and childhood. The most important among these are:

- Presidential Decree "On Additional Measures to Support the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan" (May 25, 2004) and Resolution No. 299 of the Cabinet of Ministers on ensuring the implementation of the Decree;
- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers "On One-Time Assistance Allowances for Serving Citizens" (2002);
- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers "On Providing Educational Credits for Studying in Higher Education Institutions on a Fee-Contract Basis" (2001);

- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers "On Measures to Strengthen Social Support for Families with Children" (1996);
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Payment of Pensions to Working Pensioners" (1995);
- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers "On Issues of Organizing Social Protection for Low-Income Families" (1994);
- Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Additional Measures for the Material and Spiritual Support of Young Families" dated May 18, 2007, alongside dozens of other decrees, normative documents, and resolutions.

The advantage of state policy in strengthening the family in our country lies in the fact that the state values the family as a unique sovereign structure and does not interfere in its internal affairs; however, should certain difficulties arise in the family for various reasons, citizens can protect their interests and secure state assistance by applying to local self-governing bodies, mahalla committees, and public commissions operating within them.

On the other hand, because an alliance is formed through the voluntary agreement and choice of two young people being raised in a family, the state does not interfere in these processes either, as this is a personal matter. Nevertheless, the state cannot remain indifferent to the "free marriages" of citizens, or individuals living together with whomever they choose, whenever they choose, whether entering into marriage or not. This can erode the moral foundations of society. Therefore, various family-support structures exist to take concrete measures—through public organizations including women's activists, Departments and Divisions of Family and Women's Affairs, mahalla elders, and youth leaders—to prevent and eliminate such negative phenomena when injustices occur in family-marriage relations, when human interests and rights of one or several family members are violated, or when children face the threat of ending up on the street due to inappropriate actions of parents, reinforcing them through government programs or resolutions when necessary.

Because the strength and stability of the family are directly related to the health of its members and psychological readiness for parenthood, precise mechanisms have been activated in our country in this regard. Evidence of this includes the practical implementation of Resolution No. 365 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan on medical examinations of persons entering into marriage, as well as state financing of courses such as "Family Psychology" taught in secondary specialized educational institutions and integrated into the continuous education system.

Another important feature of the socio-demographic situation in our country is the strong family system, which serves as the foundation of society. The marriage rate in Uzbekistan is high, and most importantly, the divorce rate among families is the lowest globally. For our people, the family is one of the most vital life values conforming to the centuries-old traditions and mentality of the nation. The number of existing families in the republic currently exceeds 8 million, the majority of which are undivided, multi-generational households where representatives of different generations live and manage a household together. Such a unique form of family has created favorable conditions for raising children, enabling them to enjoy universal spiritual values and traditions, while preserving our national traditions and raising knowledge levels. In precisely such families, people learn from childhood diligence, respect for elders, the pursuit of acquiring knowledge, and love for their birthplace, village, city, and united Motherland.

The primary goal of conducting scientific research directly related to the socio-economic prospects of Uzbekistan is to develop an electronically or scientifically grounded strategy for strengthening the family institution in conformity with national and universal values, by defining the main purpose, directions, and principles of state policy regarding families as the core of society in the processes of building a legal-democratic state and free civil society in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The growth in the number of families in recent years has occurred mainly due to young families and nuclear-type families—where the husband, wife, and their children live separately. Nearly 50 percent of existing families are nuclear families, while patriarchal families, where several separate families reside in a single household, account for nearly 23.5 percent of total families. Most nuclear and young families possess less than 9 years of marital experience, and instances of marriage dissolution predominantly fall upon such families. Specifically, according to data obtained from scientific research, over 70 percent of divorces occur in young families [4, p. 65].

Furthermore, a new condition concerning the family is that while in the 1990s women constituted the majority among migrants, moving primarily as a result of marriage (53% of total migrants), in recent years, conversely, the scale of labor migration among men has been increasing, which strongly affects the condition and quality of the family. This situation also demands serious research.

In other words, the population of Uzbekistan possesses high demographic potential and a favorable composition. Although the birth rate has decreased relatively over the past decades, existing indicators show that this potential and composition will be preserved only within a certain timeframe. Children under the age of 16 account for 18 million of Uzbekistan's population; the relatively low share of the working-age population in the total population structure and other features of the demographic situation in Uzbekistan necessitate active social protection of the population during the transition to market relations. Therefore, social protection of the population is one of the priority directions of Uzbekistan's policy, and this system is being consistently improved.

Today, one of the important aspects of state social policy is the issue of population prestige and quality. "Population quality" generally encompasses a range of characteristics such as the level of population health, child and maternal health levels, average life expectancy, reproductive attitudes, level of population education and employment, and the preservation of national values and traditions. It is worth noting that an important condition for accelerating the socio-economic development of our country is improving population quality. Numerous efforts are being implemented in our state to achieve this, but increasing their efficiency can be ensured only on the basis of a scientifically grounded national policy. In doing so, precise scientific data—including population composition, stratificational features, and national composition—must undoubtedly be taken into account [5, p. 66].

The national composition of the population of Uzbekistan is an integral part of the policy implemented among the population and is based on a scientifically grounded assessment and monitoring of the demographic situation in our state.

Thus, the work accomplished over the 30 years of the country's independence serves as proof that this people is uniting around a single idea on the path of creation, the scale of which has earned Uzbekistan recognition in the world community. Studying and scientifically researching such family-related problems is considered extremely urgent. Particularly, in finding solutions to problems, it is expedient to work in conjunction with the demographic situation in our country. Because in the processes of modernizing the country during the years of independence, changes are being observed in all aspects of family development, and naturally, a new demographic situation is emerging. As our President emphasized, "The specific demographic situation in the republic is one of the most important features determining the necessity of choosing its own socio-economic development path" [8, p. 44].

The long-term, prospective direction of family policy is aimed at strengthening the family institution in society. The comprehension of such a policy by citizens naturally forms within them a sense of boundless responsibility toward family-marriage relations, a psychology of pride in the family they have built, and the valuation of it.

Conclusion

Having studied the conclusions and proposals, the true meaning of the family policy being consistently pursued in our country is in harmony with our noble ideas concerning the future development and prospective directions of the 21st-century family as guarantees of societal progress. Based on this, the socio-political, spiritual-educational, and economic factors and principles underlying the development of families in the 21st century can be expressed as follows:

- **The family acts as a sanctuary** based on democratic principles prevailing in society, independent of the subjective will of any political forces, and capable of eliminating vices and consequences hindering the progressive development of society;
- **The family is a natural space** harmonizing aspects of national customs, national values, traditions, and rites that serve societal development and family stability with advanced traditions related to human progress;
- **The family serves as a school of enlightenment** for the genuine prevalence of the principles of humanism and democracy in society and their conscious perception by every citizen as a member of society;
- **The family is a social institution** acting as a spiritual fortress for loyalty to universal values and the ensuring of peace and security in the country;
- **The family is a favorable ideological environment** for instilling into the minds of its members the principles that "Man and his interests are paramount," "Man, his rights, freedoms, and especially dignity are the supreme value";
- **The family is a sanctuary** embodying the spiritual wealth of our people and the most advanced achievements of world civilization, thereby educating a comprehensively mature and healthy generation;
- **The family is a space of social relations** ensuring the economic improvement of the household through the honest and mobilizing labor of each citizen, thereby securing the efficiency and power of society's productive forces. In stabilizing the family economy, rational use is made of forms of family entrepreneurship, lease, family production, and cottage industry, and productive and appropriate use is made of modern machinery and technologies and consumer service facilities to improve the family budget and enrich the lifestyle;
- **The family is a social institution** ensuring a conscious attitude toward rights and freedoms granted to people by shaping high legal culture in its citizens, conveying the meaning and essence of national, universal, and democratic principles;
- **The family is a space** ensuring a healthy creative environment by directing innovative discoveries and high technologies toward family stability through the wide and effective use of scientific-technical potential, intellectual capacity, wit, and talent.

As noted above, studying the problems of family psychology and developing socio-psychological recommendations on this basis require shaping conceptions among the younger generation regarding the specific aspects of modern families, husband-wife, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, parent-child relations. This demands that teachers of family psychology possess an understanding of studying family psychology problems, theoretical and practical views being created in this regard, organize various meetings with comprehensively mature, exemplary family members in educational institutions, conduct socio-psychological trainings, and organize thematic evening meetings.

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