



***Gender aspects of agricultural and rural employment:
application for Uzbekistan***

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Abstract

Paper is based on research and study of gender aspects of farming in the context of Uzbekistan and highlights the feedback information from grassroots on positive and or/negative impact of the key policy reforms in agriculture from gender perspectives.

From the beginning of reforms it has been observed the process of decline in women's employment in rural areas, in view of decreasing job opportunities in formal sector. The government paid a special attention to the development of women's entrepreneurship in rural areas and women's attraction to farming activity. However, the level of women's participation in rural economic development is not sufficient yet and requires relevant studying and developing certain measures to increase a number of female farmers that lets essentially to affect on the growth of living standard of the population in rural areas.

Paper will includes socio-economic and gender analysis of current development in agriculture sector in Uzbekistan with the focus on women's status. Gender aspects of labour market, women's economic participation explored based on findings coming from comparative analysis of the official statistics and focus group discussions with women farmers in different areas of Uzbekistan.

1. Introduction

Uzbekistan is one of the countries experienced socio-economic transformations from centrally planned economy and establishing market mechanisms of economic development based on the strategy of macroeconomic stability and destructuralization of the productive sectors of economy. During transformation the living standards of the population has been negatively affected by the changes. Data analysis on the dynamics of gender related human development index shows that the transition process differently affected men and women, specifically in the area of rural development. The main objective is to create favorable economic condition for the development of private businesses and increasing population's welfare. Achieving of these goals very much depends on equal access for economic actors to key resources.

The processes of market infrastructure development in rural areas are followed by social, economical and political problems. From one side, forming of leasehold farms is directed to solution of issues on increase of productivity and effectiveness of agricultural production which requires availability of the relevant human recourses, from the other side, it is followed by the process of sudden release of considerable part of economical active population.

The impact of the transition on gender aspects of rural development includes specific features of rural employment- low level of employment and economic activity, high unemployment, occupation of low paid positions- in many respect related to women's lack of professional and nonproductive education they have.

The paper highlights previously shadowed gender aspects of rural development in Uzbekistan with the focus on women's employment opportunities in agriculture sector, which is currently under the policy reforms.

2. Case studies and data collection

Paper considers analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to identify gender gaps of agriculture and rural employment in Uzbekistan. The quantitative data derived from different sources, including official data supplied from government statistical offices and publications. The paper considers the data with findings from Welfare Improvement Strategy for Uzbekistan (WIS), PRSP, Asian Development Outlook, etc. Besides, the available qualitative data emerged from the surveys conducted under the ADB TA, related to the projects on monitoring and implementation of policy reforms in agriculture sector and poverty and social assessments in different regions of Uzbekistan under the water resource management sector projects.

Gender aspects of agricultural and rural employment

More than 27 million people live in Uzbekistan, 50% of which are women, and 64% of the population lives in rural areas. Economical development of Uzbekistan is exceptional for the last few years, since the growth of GDP from 7.0% to 7.3% in 2007 is observed as compared with 4.3% in 2003¹. However, the processes of keeping economical growth, creation of jobs and reduction of poverty goes through the certain difficulties.

According to the statistical data employment among women lower than among man, but their share in the structure of formal employment remained stable at 44% in 2001-2006. However, there is an imbalance of sectoral distribution of female labour. Women are mostly employed at low paid state sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, education, health care, and etc.

Women either occupy low-paid positions of the budget sector, or do unqualified low-paid work in informal labor markets. There is a growth of both open and latent female unemployment in rural areas, which takes a form of refusal from the search for a job (so called “disappointed unemployed”).

Table 1. Employment by sectors of economy in 2006.

	Distribution by sex, in percentage	
	Women	Men
Education	69.3	30.7
Health care and Sports	78.4	21.6
Industry	43.5	56.5
Agriculture	52.6	47.4
Transport and Communication	10.9	89.1
Construction	14.0	86.0
Governance	13.9	84.1

Source: SSC.2008

Existing gender stereotypes set household duties as a priority for women and the privilege for extending education is given for the boys. Family’s and local communities attitude towards girls education does not let them achieve future full and effective employment. Women’s duties include: cooking, laundering, house cleaning, taking care of children and feeble family members, working on the garden plot, looking after livestock and poultry, delivering water for drinking and domestic needs. Rural women experience very limited access to municipal services (gas, fuel, potable water), thus domestic work takes a lot of women’s time and energy. According to the survey, conducted in Zaravshan basin², in 76% of households, women and children are responsible for delivering water.

Women’s employment and education is very much under the influence of gender stereotypes related to the women’s role in patriarchal society. Girls more often encouraged by the family to learn professions that may be useful in a family, such as educatress, nurse, seamstress, etc.

This education provides little advantage in employment by several reasons. From one hand, it is an overabundance of medical and educational specialists with secondary professional education, which creates harsh competition in this segment; from other hand the area of application of labor for pedagogues and nurses with secondary professional education and is limited by an extremely small number of jobs in preschool and community medical establishments.

The wide range of women's duties in household does not allow them to be active on the labor market and forces them to give up looking for a job. In such conditions, women have a garden plot and market own agricultural products, but in many areas such employment is not available due to lack of irrigation water. Unfortunately, irrigating priorities are given for watering leasehold farms, working on producing wheat and cotton under the government order and dahkan plots, producing more than 80% of agriculture production in the country and ensure households food security have limited access to water resources.

It is a trend on increasing gender asymmetry in life opportunities for men and women, gender differences in employment and reassignment. Labor market inequalities, mentioned above, have been identified as "preference discrimination", when employers give the employment preferences for men, with the motivation that women are not reliable workers. Stereotyped "Do's and Don't's limiting women's employment opportunities effected women's preferences in education.

Gender aspects of education and training

Women either occupy low-paid positions of the budget sector, or do unqualified low-paid work in informal labor markets. There is a growth of both open and latent female unemployment in rural areas, which takes a form of refusal from the search for a job (so called "disappointed unemployed").

Specific features of women's employment (low level of employment and economic activity, high unemployment, occupying mostly low income jobs) in many respect related to women's lack of profession and noncompetitive professional education they have, as a result of gender segregation existing at the level of basic education. The list of "women's" professions was limited with the following: in the area of education- teacher, librarian, tutor; in the area of healthcare- nurse, druggist; among "workers" – seamstress and craftswomen; in the area of agriculture – milkmaid, field worker, working on the cotton picking³.

Current curriculum of education system is not adapted top the new requirements of the labour market. According to the ADB RETA Project "Sub-regional cooperation in managing education reforms" (2002), Uzbekistan women are almost totally absent from Management, Finance, and Information Technologies courses. The specific education programs preferred for women are not well linked to the existing demand of labour market.

Table 2. Distribution of students in Education (2005/2006)

	Professional/Vocational education		High education	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Education	81.3	18.7	50.9	49.1
Health care and Sports	79.8	20.2	44.1	55.9
Industry and Construction	35.7	64.3	19.0	81.0
Agriculture	30.2	69.8	13.8	86.2
Transport and Communication	23.5	76.5	16.5	83.5
Economics and Law	43.3	56.7	42.8	57.2
Art and Cinematography	43.5	56.5	43.5	56.5
Services	44.2	55.8	40.0	60.0
Total	48.1	51.9	40.8	59.2

Gender differences in wage and economic status

According to the data highlighted in Human Development report 2007/2008 women's income per capita was \$1.547 in 2005, and men earned \$2.585. Women's income constituted 59.8 percent of men's income.

It is a strong correlation between gender professional segregation and wages differences. Table 3 show the wage differences between sectors of economy and high level of women's occupation in Uzbekistan.

Table 3. Wage differences by the sectors of economy (per cent to the average wage)

	2000	2001	2003	2004
Average wage	100	100	100	100
Industry	197.3	213.1	224.6	234.6
<i>Sectors of high level of women's employment</i>				
Education	82.6	83.4	84.1	85.8
Health care	77.2	77.9	78.1	75.8
Culture	83.6	80.6	76.5	77.5
Finance	215.3	228.5	289.1	301.0
Light industry	107.6	109.1	110.6	-

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Uzbekistan. 2005.

Women's role in household economy is very low. Average income from women's employment constitutes around 13% -14% of family income. Taking into account entrepreneurial activities and social benefits (which are, in most cases, given to women⁴), women's contribution to the family income may grew up to 20%. More than a half of women's contribution to the family income consists of social transfers (old-age pensions, disability

pensions and children's benefits) and all types of women's incomes are lower than those of men, including income from hired employment: in non-agricultural sector, which is more than two times lower, old-age and disability pensions for women, which are 1.5 times lower.⁵

According to the data of survey conducted by Center for Economic Researches, level of remuneration in agricultural sector made up only 50% of an average level of salary in the beginning of reforms⁶. It is essentially to note that in the process of reforming agricultural sector a trend to the growth of remuneration in the sector emerged. However, the lower remuneration of rural women still remains. For example, according to the data of survey on "Study for incomes and expenditures of leasehold and dehqan farms" conducted in the framework of the project "Implementation and Monitoring of Policy Reforms in Agriculture Sector", it was revealed that the salary of women in the sector makes up 82% of the salary of men.⁷

Lack of opportunities for effective and productive employment of rural women has an impact on poverty level. Under these circumstances, the alternative types of individual and entrepreneurial activity important and will open wide opportunities for female part of the rural population to be self-employed in non-agriculture sector. The potential of rural women's entrepreneurial activities is high.

It is known, that there is no unified methodology for identification of poverty line in Uzbekistan. However, the Government of Uzbekistan facilitated in-depth study of poverty issues in order to establish basis for development of the National Welfare Improvement Strategy and the document was endorsed by the Government in 2007. Based on the Data of Household Budget Survey that is being carried out by the State Committee on Statistics (Goskomstat) of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the World Bank experts identified that the average poverty level for the country was 25,8%⁸ in 2005. The daily foodstuff consumption below 2,100 kcal per capita on average was adopted as poverty level.

According to the household survey, conducted under the ADB TA 7061 in June 2008, the total monthly income in the households was 251 thousand UZS on average, or 47.2 thousand UZS per person. The absolute majority of surveyed families (more than 80%) concentrated in two low-income quintiles, i.e. their income was less than 70 thousand UZS per month per person. Average income (per capita) of poor people was by 1.4 times less than that of for non-poor families and by 1.3 times less than on average by surveyed selection of households. These data are in good agreement with the data of Goskomstat for 2005-2006 on distribution of poverty in the regions and rural settlements.

The most significant income generating factor in all families irrespectively to their welfare is employment in non-agricultural sector. Employment in non-agricultural sector (including entrepreneurship and labor migration) generates around 60% of the total cash income for households. As a rule hired labors from poor families occupy low income positions in the production and services sector. Income from employment in agriculture is 22% of the total household income. Entrepreneurship in the non-agricultural sector is a quite substantial income for households (especially for the poor ones). Income from labor migration is very important for the households on the project area. Around 4% and almost 5% of poor and non-poor families respectively have received this income. Although this type of income is typical for insignificant number of households, it is of the same importance for the budget of families as pension payments.

Table 4. Gender Indicators of Income Generation in Households⁹

	Share of Households Having Income, %		Average Income Size, 000's UZS		Share in Income Structure, %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Income from Hired Employment in Non-agricultural Sector	17	55.8	76.4	167.3	5.5	39.8
Poor*	10.7	53.3	62.5	148.8	3.3	39.1
Non-poor	19.8	56.8	79.7	175	6.3	40
Income from Hired Employment in Agricultural Sector	6.8	20.3	55.7	80.5	1.6	6.9
Poor	5.7	17.2	99.4	109.5	2.8	9.3
Non-poor	7.2	21.6	40.5	70.3	1.2	6.1
Old-age Pensions	17.5	9.8	57.6	89	4.3	3.7
Poor	21.3	12.3	58.9	94	6.2	5.7
Non-poor	15.8	8.6	56.8	85.8	3.6	3
Disability Pensions	5.8	5.8	49.6	73.7	1.2	1.8
Poor	5.7	9.8	57.3	82.4	1.6	4
Non-poor	5.8	4	46.3	64.2	1.1	1

Note*: Poor households consumption is around 2100 Kcal per person a day, identified as a poverty line.

Women's entrepreneurship and employment opportunities in rural areas

Rural Women express their will to start business activities; however, they feel lack of entrepreneurial skills, they afraid of blindness, regarding laws and regulations and lack of mobility. From other hand the traditional Uzbek society does not encourage women empowerment and it is negative attitude towards women-entrepreneurs in communities. The lowest rural women's involvement in business activities is in Samarkand district (9.7%), Andijan district (11.7%) and Ferghana district (16.0%).¹⁰

Table 5. Number of member-entrepreneurs, registered under the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan. % by districts (as of January 1, 2006)

	Women	Men
Republic of Uzbekistan	23.1	76.9
Republic of Karakalpakstan	16.2	83.8
Districts:		
Andijan	11.7	88.3
Bukhara	21.4	78.6
Djizak	23.5	76.5
Kashkadarya	27.4	72.6
Navoi	20.7	79.3
Namangan	37.9	62.1
Samarkand	9.7	90.3
Surkhandarya	16.2	83.8
Syrdarya	20.0	80.0
Tashkent	22.8	77.2
Fergana	16.0	84.0
Khorezm	27.0	73.0
City of Tashkent	20.5	79.5

The entrepreneurial activities of rural women mostly focused on micro and small-scale enterprises, cross border trade, subcontracting work at home or street trading. The integration of rural women into the formal sector is constrained by limited access to credit and property.

It is essentially to note that Women's Committee successfully solve the issues related to strengthening women's status, promoting their role in economical, political and social spheres, however, still, a well-defined policy in the sphere of achieving gender equality has not worked out at the governmental level, and it is often happened mixing the idea of "gender" with women's issues. This circumstance largely complicates the activity for promotion of gender equality at all levels. It is being happened the greater process of women marginalization and of their sorting out to separate, vulnerable civil category. At the same time, the issues of gender equality referring to the male group of population are not touched upon, and that has a negative impact on the quality of implementation of governmental projects, specifically concerning the political reforms in agriculture sector.

Gender aspects of land holding and ownership of private farms

Women constitute up to 52.6 % of total number of population employed in agriculture. Out of 235 000 leasehold farms have been registered by January 2008 in Uzbekistan only 17 000 (or 7.2%) of the farms led by women. There are 1407 WUA registered (by January 1, 2007) and very few of them involve women in water resource management. As it was mentioned above, there is no specific regulation on equal legal water distribution for dehkan farms under WUA, thus they are not sustainable. Women do not participate at the decision making level in WUA, however, irrigation water conflicts are mostly linked with watering of dehkan farms where women's involvement is dominating. Unauthorized watering of garden plots is a permanent problem and a source of conflicts between private farmers, population, and WUA.

These numbers certify that the processes of reforming in rural areas and mechanism of reorganization of shirkat farms to leasehold farms went on with the definite difficulties which did not contribute to the wide women's attraction. Women's involvement into farming is higher at the regions, where women occupied managerial/decision making positions during Soviet times and there is a positive stereotype on women's capacity and work effectiveness in agriculture. For example, 95 private farms, headed by women registered in Ahangaran region, 84 women's farms registered in Piskent region (both regions are in Tashkent viloyat); in one of the regions of Feghana valley- Mingbulak 50 women are acting as private farmers. It is important to note that more successful female farmers are former leading kolkhozes workers, who start working at the fields after graduation from secondary schools professional colleges and their average age varies from 45 to 70¹¹.

As known that the process of reorganizing shirkats was happening on the basis of tender where a special attention was given to availability of initial capital and equipments for the persons who wanted to deal with farming, awareness of agricultural production being examined, and the priorities given to former shirkat members, inhabitants of the local area. However, not everywhere women could have opportunity for equal participation in tenders, as far as traditionally, they do not dispose of required resources.

Gender aspects of access to funding

One more barrier on the way of developing female farming is inability of the women to give collateral during addressing for credit. According to information of the State Statistical Department, 85% of micro-credits were allowed to men and only 15% - to women. Even in the southern oblasts of Uzbekistan where the programs of micro-crediting were successfully developing, share of women obtained micro-credits did not exceed 26%.

Commercial banks offer credit to agricultural enterprises on a commercial basis, in the banking system this accounts for 4% of the total portfolio. This usually entails loans to farmers who have already accessed directed credit to engage in other activities or loans for agro-processing. Depending on the client, banks offer different interest rates, tenor and collateral coverage policies. This can range from 5 year loans at 14% for preferred credit to good clients up to 20% loans for under 1 year for regular clients. Collateral coverage policy ranges from no collateral necessary to 125% coverage necessary. Banks do not have any specified loan terms, but tailor each to the business plans of the farmer, the mean term of the loans is almost 42 months in the agricultural sector¹².

Commercial credit terms are underpinned by the refinancing rate of the Central Bank which is currently 14%. Credits are usually offered up to 80% of the value of the collateral. For example “Pakhtabank”, “Savdogarbank”, and “Gallabank” require 120% coverage of the loan amount and “Microkreditbank” 125%. According to information of the Central Bank in 2006 the sector distribution of commercial loans was as follows: industry – 58%, agricultural economy – 4%, transportation and communication – 15%, building – 3%, trading and public catering – 4%, material-technical provision – 1,2%, housing service – 3,19%, personal services to the public – 0,11%, foreign commerce – 0,2%, other branches – 11,1% .

By the activities of local women’s organizations, specifically, initiative was coming from the Association of Business Women of Uzbekistan new developments, like Credit Unions started to operate since 2002. Currently 45 of them registered. Agriculture represents a small proportion of the portfolio of Credit Unions, only 15% directed for agriculture purposes. Credit Unions still do not have the resources, both in asset terms and delivery systems, to reach the large number of small farmers seeking credits. Women-farmers use the resources of credit unions mainly in cash for 3-4 months, because farmers can receive short-term credit in 2-3 days without unnecessary difficulties. Due to insufficient credit resources, credit unions can satisfy only 7-8% of the demand for their funds and do not have a right to conduct operations using foreign currency¹³.

National Machinery on improving women’s status

Women’s Committee is one of the key institutions urged to assist in every way to strengthen the status of rural women. Registered as a nongovernmental organization, Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan is financed by the side of government and has authority to be a governmental institution responsible for the policy and activity in solving women’s issues. Chairwoman of Women’s Committee is Deputy Prime Minister on women’s affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Women’s Committee has representatives in all administrative structures of all levels (oblasts, cities and raions). Deputy Hakims on women’s affairs in oblast and raion level are the chairwomen of Women’s Committee in appropriate administrative structures.

In order to achieve the goal of national development as well as to perform the global aims specified in Millennium Declaration, National aims of millennium and poverty reduction strategy, the Government of Uzbekistan has demonstrated the willingness to solve the problem of gender equality. Especially, a Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan #3434 as of May 25, 2004 “On additional measures for support of activity of Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan” is directed to solve the following issues, highlighted in Decree:

- Development and implementation of the national policy in the sphere of social and legal support for women, protection of motherhood and childhood, professional, physical, spiritual and intellectual growth of women; improvement of social and public activity of the women, their active participation in government building
- Development and implementation of measures for women’s health protection, support for healthy family, progress of women’s and family sport, and promotion of healthy life-style
- Development and implementation of measures and programs directed to securing of women’s employment, improving working conditions and educating women (especially in remote areas), as well as attracting them to business activity
- Organization of effective work in target oblasts (in family, makhallas, workplaces, educational institutions) on explanation and observance of the national traditions, realization and protection of women’s constitutional rights, effective prevention of destructive elements having influence on women’s mind and on their engagement to extremist and terrorist activity
- Effective coordination of activity of and cooperation with the women’s nongovernmental organizations
- Mobilization of the efforts of nongovernmental organizations to strengthen the role of women in modern and democratic society of Uzbekistan

It is essentially to note that Women’s Committee is trying to solve the issues related to strengthening women’s status, promoting their role in economical, political and social spheres, however, still, a well-defined policy in the sphere of achieving gender equality has not worked out in governmental level, and it is often happened mixing the idea of “gender” with women’s problems. This circumstance largely complicates the activity for promotion of gender equality in all levels. It is being happened the greater process of women marginalization and of their sorting out to separate, vulnerable civil category. At the same time, the issues of gender equality referring to the male group of population are not touched upon, and that has a negative impact on the quality of implementation of governmental projects, specifically concerning the political reforms in agriculture sector.

The Association of Business Women of Uzbekistan (BWA) (*Tadbirkor ayol*)¹⁴ Business Women’s Association is a nongovernmental organization and has representatives in all oblasts those are independent self-reliant structures, as well as has representatives in 90 raions of Uzbekistan. The main activity of BWA is directed to conduction of trainings for unemployed women (this organization assisted to 12 000 women throughout the country to establish

independent business). Over the period of its life BWA successfully promoted ideas for support of women's entrepreneurship and succeeded in approval of the Law "On credit unions" that contributed to the facilitation of an access of female entrepreneurs to money resources. BWA has trained more than 30 000 workers of the Credit Unions for all regions. Association also works on searching business partners to promote the sale of stitchcraft products in the retail network. Target group of BWA includes unemployed women and female entrepreneurs who are interested in establishment of a new business. Association has a close cooperation with the World Bank, UASID on the poverty reduction program, basically, by conducting various trainings and allocating micro-credits. BWA also cooperates with governmental organizations, private sector and donors. It has 12 payable employees and a huge number of volunteers in its staff. Assistance provided by BWA, is claimed by the women, study programs are claimed especially those are directed to establishment and strengthening of business as well as are about efficiency increase of an activity of nongovernmental organizations.

Association has taken the initiative to work with female farmers in various regions of the country. Specifically, BWA of Tashkent oblast is working on creation of data base of female farmers, has conducted Forums with female farmers of Tashkent oblast. Leaders of Association have taken the interest in assisting this Project and conducting trainings for female farmers on the following subjects: increasing gender awareness, business establishment and development, increasing legal literacy, leadership. BWA has an enough potential available to assist in distributing information on project activity and to hold discussions on the fundamentals of policy reforms in agriculture sector. In Annex 3 there presented an exemplary budget and subject areas of trainings to be conducted by BWA of Tashkent oblast.

BWA's each division leads the serious activity in its region. For example, BWA of Djizzak oblast delivers services to support their business, assists in business plans development, gives consultations on legal issues, presents trainings on the fundamentals of entrepreneurship and business management, conducts professional trainings for unemployed women (on production of confectionaries, tailoring, cooking, toys making and etc.). The main target group of Association are (1) the women who started or desire to start own business, (2) low-income women those were defined with participatory help of Women's Committee of oblasts, raions and makhallas, (3) unemployed women. BWA of Djizzak oblast has 3 permanent employees as well as volunteers in each raion of oblast. Association has a close cooperation with oblast and raion divisions of Women's Committee, Oblast Department for labor and social protection, Oblast Tax Committee and other key organizations. Leader of this organization also expressed her readiness to contribute to activity of the project. It is essential to note that on initiatives of employees of Business Women's Association there were established Credit Unions in various regions.

Association of dehkan and leasehold farms (ADLF). Association of dehkan and leasehold farms was founded in 1997. ADLF is a non-government and non-commercial organization, the main objectives of which are: (i) assisting in protection of rights and interests of the members of association – farmers; (ii) assisting in improvement of agrarian production, and rendering marketing services (iii) assisting in procurement of agricultural machinery; (iv) organization of the program on strengthening leasehold farms, on improving farmers' legal, economical and professional knowledge; (v) providing practical help in effective use of land, water, machinery and other resources; (vi) assisting in procurement of seeds, chemicals, medicaments, cattle, machinery and up-to-date equipments.

Association of dehqan and leasehold farms, as an organization representing the interests of the farmers, is one of the main institutional structures that urged to assist strengthening women's role and participation in development of agriculture sector in the context of reforms to be conducted. It is necessary to note that this association is a registered organization that is urged to appeal to issues of women's attraction to farmers' movement and provide all kinds of support to the female farmers. Candidacy of a Leader of organization is approved by Women's Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan and at the present time, the adequate leader is being searched.

The Association of women's nongovernmental organizations of Uzbekistan (*Mehr*) This organization was founded in 2003. Founders and active members of the association are Female Lawyer Association, Business Women's Association, "Women and Health" Association, "Women and Society" Institute, Female Scientists Association (*Olima*), International Foundation "Eastern Woman", Legal Center Himoya, Agency "*Tayanch*", Uzbek reproduction health association and Women's organization "Mehri". Mehr numbers 45 voluntary members of association and assists to establishment of new women's nongovernmental organizations. The Head Office of Mehr is located in Tashkent city, and coordination of activity by regions is carried out through the members of association. The main partners of Association of women's nongovernmental organizations are Women's Committee and National Association of Nongovernmental Noncommercial Organizations of Uzbekistan.

Basic types of activity of Association of Women's NGO include: consolidation and coordination of the activity of women's and nongovernmental organizations dealing with the women's issues; representation and protection of the interests of women's nongovernmental organizations; strengthening of the status of women's NGO in social, political and public life of Uzbekistan. «Mehr» gives special attention to activity for strengthening the role of women, women's leadership and for achieving the gender equality on the level of decision making, as well as helps national nongovernmental and governmental organizations promoting the interests and the rights of women. Association of women's nongovernmental organizations was leading to conduct the Forum of women's nongovernmental organizations. Organization can stand up as an active performer of tasks on strengthening of women's role in agricultural institutions, including assistance for foundation of associations of female farmers, as well as establishment of liaison between female farmers, representatives of legislative and administrative institutions, linear ministers and organizations, nongovernmental organizations involved in conduction of political reforms in agriculture sector.

The National Association of Non-governmental Organizations of Uzbekistan (NANOUz). The National Association of Non-governmental Organizations of Uzbekistan was founded in 2005 on initiatives of 150 local non-governmental organizations. The mission of this organization is to activate the role of nongovernmental organizations in the process of democratization, increase of a level of civil participation in building civil society and their role in social, political and economical life. Fund of support for nongovernmental organizations founded under NANOUz is urged to provide financial assistance to newly establishing and operating institutions of civil society. Taking into account that the members of association are 200 nongovernmental organizations (in general, all operating NGOs of the country), it can make a major contribution to the activity on strengthening the role of rural women in the context of reforms to be conducted in agriculture sector.

The Institute for Study of Civil Society (ISCS)¹⁵. ISCS is a non-governmental organization founded in 2003 under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Government

provides the financial support to this organization. The mission of this organization is to conduct researches on social, humanitarian and economical aspects of society's life. This Institute provides consultations and assistance on the following issues: support for establishing and developing the Institutions of civil society; strengthening the rights and role of civil society Institutions and their representatives; strengthening the processes of democratization, providing transparency, responsibility, increasing the level of political and legal competency of the citizens and their attraction to society's life. The main scopes of activity of this organization are: solving youth's problems; forming the bases of social and economical growth; activity in the field of legislation and law; providing the freedom of speech, political and civil freedoms; solving women's problems; developing the parliamentarianism and electoral system; working with the political parties; assisting in development of nongovernmental organizations; strengthening the system of self-government of the citizens.

This organization has a close cooperation with local administration and nongovernmental organizations, international donor organizations and has gained sufficient working experience in local communities. ISCS can assist the project in conducting monitoring and evaluation by participation method, in conducting information campaigns on the project activity as well as in arranging regularly active communication of female farmers and the representatives of key institutions responsible for effective conduction of the reforms in agriculture sector.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

This paper has shown that two different approaches on women's role are contradicting in Uzbekistan: from one hand there is a Government policy, requesting improvement of women's status and increasing women's involvement in economical, political and social life. From other hand there is a domination of the patriarchal ideology, supported at different levels, resulted in insufficient use of gender approaches in implementing economic and social policy and at the decision making level in general. Gender awareness of local authorities, government employees and community leaders is very low and they are not ready to resolve gender issues. Democratic reforms and modern changes have limitations in reaching local level and there is a trend on domination of patriarchal relationships between sexes.

Paper provides additional arguments on the main challenges in achieving gender equality in Uzbekistan highlighted in WIS, including issues related to the lack of full financing in implementing measures on gender policy, especially in the area of employment; insufficient use of gender approaches in implementing economic and social policy and in state decision making in general; lack of readiness of government employees to resolve gender issues, as well as a lack of a specific understanding of the role of women in society and the importance of ensuring gender equality; weakness of the gender analysis methodology and criteria for assessing gender equality in terms of the lack of local detail based on systematic data collection, processing and analysis of such gender-disaggregated statistics; lack of research in the area of gender development with the purpose of identifying the interrelations and interdependences of the gender inequality indicator with the basic socioeconomic indicators; existence of gender asymmetry with regard to the vulnerability of both women and men in the distribution of employment amongst sectors, remuneration, public health and education; significant amount of unpaid house work carried out by women as a result of them having children, along with a shrinking of the social infrastructure, especially in rural areas; existence of gender stereotypes

and a patriarchal way of life both in the understanding of society as a whole and at the decision making level.

It is important to establish permanently acting dialogue with women-farmers and rural leaders for identification the problems of development of rural development and overcoming existing gender misbalance in development. It is proposed to establish permanently acting Forum of Women-Farmers-jointly with Women's Committee of Republic of Uzbekistan, regional business women associations, and involve respective structures established to provide assistance to development of farming in the context of conducted reforms. Main goal is to get feedback and flexibility in performing the tasks of reforming of agriculture sector, improving rural development and increasing of status of women.

In order to increase the women's participation in rural development the following to be recommended:

- Initiate and gender awareness campaign with the focus on understanding of the role of women in society and the importance of ensuring gender equality for the employees of key structures operated in reforming of agriculture sector, including Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Ministry of Finance, Association of dehqan and leasehold farms, Water-users Association, employees of water supply companies, representatives of raion Hokimiyats, and personnel of operating under the support of international donor organizations
- Provide assistance for the development of initiatives from "bottom" on establishment of Associations (cooperatives) of Women on raion level, which would allow rural women to jointly solve the problems related to the improvement of effectiveness of their economic activities.
- Support the initiatives of female farmers to establish associations, cooperatives and unions to provide various services demanded by farmers
- Organize special trainings for women-farmers/rural women on the following topics:
 - i) on establishment of cooperatives, unions;
 - ii) legal literacy; specific types of management of leasehold farms-taxes, credits, bases of legislation on development of farming;
 - iii) increasing of agriculture knowledge;
 - iv) business-management;
 - v) insurance system;
 - vi) bases of business and its development;
 - vii) business planning

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Appendix 1: Glossary

<i>Dehkan farmer</i>	1) Peasant, farmer; 2) in Uzbekistan this word means an owner of a dehkan plot.
<i>Dehkan farm</i>	In Uzbekistan, a dehkan farm is a family-based small-scale enterprise that produces and markets agricultural products using labor of family members on a household land plot (tomorka) transferred to the head of family for lifelong inheritable ownership, registered or not registered officially as a legal entity.
<i>Makhalla</i>	Territorial community, community of neighbors; In Uzbekistan, this word means an organ of self-governance of citizens.
<i>Khokim</i>	Local authorities/government.
<i>Shirkat</i>	Agricultural cooperative.
<i>Oblast</i>	Area
<i>Raion</i>	District

Appendix 2: Abbreviations

<i>ADB</i>	Asian Development Bank
<i>MAWR</i>	Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources
<i>NGO</i>	Nongovernmental not-for-profit organizations
<i>SA</i>	Social Assessment
<i>SME</i>	Small and medium-size enterprises
<i>WRMSP</i>	Water Resources Management Sector Project
<i>TA</i>	Technical assistance
<i>WUA</i>	Water Users Associations

Notes

¹ Asian Development Outlook. ADB. 2007.

² ADB TA 7061 Uzbekistan:WRMP Appendix 9 SPASS. Summary poverty reduction and social strategy. Egic Bceom International in association with IKS. Tashkent. 2008.

³ Gender expertise of basic education textbooks in Uzbekistan. Report. Alimdjanova D. Project «Basic Education Textbook Development». ADB/The British Council/ME, 2001.

⁴ The total coverage rate of social assistance for child allowances is over 11% of all households and over 30% of all households with children aged 16 years and below. However, given the limited financial resources, the government face the problems in balancing out the coverage and amount of the allowance. Currently, the amount paid to household inadequate to protect the family. The child allowance es vary within 50-175% of the minimum wage, which is not connected to the minimum subsistence level.

⁵ “Poverty and Social Assessment on the Territory of Narpay sub-project, Samarkand Province”. TA 7061:Water Resource Management Sector Project. ADB/Government of Uzbekistan/IKS. August 2008.

⁶ “Linking Macroeconomic policy to poverty reduction. Family assets mobilization⁶ a survey of households in three oblasts of Uzbekistan. Unpublished. Tashkent.CER. 2004.

⁷ «Farm income and expenditure survey». Analytical report on the results of the surveys of TA 4820 - «Monitoring and Implementation of Policy Reforms in Agriculture Sector ». ADB/Government of Uzbekistan/Donaev Management Consulting. 2007.

⁸). WIS for Uzbekistan. 2007.

⁹ “Poverty and Social Assessment on the Territory of Narpay sub-project, Samarkand Province”. TA 7061:Water Resource Management Sector Project. ADB/Government of Uzbekistan/IKS. August 2008.

¹⁰ Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan. January 1, 2006.

¹¹ Focus group discussion with women farmers. ADB Interim report. TA – 4820 “Implementation and Monitoring Policy Reforms in agriculture Sector”. Uzbekistan. 2007.

¹² 2007 On Farm Survey. TA – 4820 “Implementation and Monitoring Policy Reforms in agriculture Sector”. Uzbekistan. 2007.

¹³ Welfare Improvement Strategy. Uzbekistan 2008.

¹⁴ The information was presented by BWA. Tashkent.

¹⁵ Information from IIGOs information leaflet and from meeting with the PPTA social team in Surkhandarya/Termez.