



Copyright: Original content from this work may be used under the terms of the creative commons attributes 4.0 licence.

Gender Policy And Role Of Women Farmers And Dehkans In Horticulture Sector: National Peculiarities Of Uzbekistan

Nodira Mannapovna Azizova

Ph.D. Student, National University Named After Mirzo Ulugbek, Uzbekistan

Lobarkhon Kadirjanovna Azizova

Student Bioeconomy Development Faculty At Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

ABSTRACT

This paper presents results of the process focused on achieving of the gender equality and development of the agriculture sector. Implementation of the both programs presents the parabola symmetry axes where the strengthening the capacity of the women farmers and dehkans and increasing of their family's wellbeing are going hand in hand in Uzbekistan. The Government of Uzbekistan has been prioritized improvement of legislative and institutional base for further ensuring equality for women in all spheres of life including agriculture sector. This paper shed lights on important gender aspects of rural development and concludes that the potential of rural women's economic status and involvement has not yet been reached.

KEYWORDS

Gender policy, farmers, dehkans, horticulture, Uzbekistan

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Uzbekistan harmonize its international responsibilities with national policy programmes specifically in the food and

agricultural sector. Government of Uzbekistan recognize that food, agriculture, and gender equality are key milestones to achieving the

entire set of the globally accepted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the



2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development. These SDGs are expected to

guide the actions of the international community over the next 15 years (2016-2030). Uzbekistan is a signatory to the "Sustainable Development Goals" (SDGs), and committed to integrate the implementation of SDGs in the development programs of the country and the observance of the target schedule for implementation of the SDGs by 2030, including the Sustainable Development Goal #5: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". In order to implement this goal, on February 15, 2016, in accordance with the decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated No. 111, the Coordination Council and thematic working groups have developed adapted goals and objectives for the country. In 2017, the government approved the plan of practical Measures, "Roadmap", for the further development of cooperation of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the United Nations for 2017-2020 in the framework of the implementation of the national SDGs. A national set of indicators was developed and approved to facilitate the monitoring of the progress in the implementation of the SDGs.

Enabling environment of agriculture sector

The 2030 Agenda offers a vision for food and agriculture as key to sustainable development. the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Water Resources, the Ministry of Mahkalla and Family Support possesses experience and expertise in supporting policymaking,

partnership-building, and projects and programmes built on 3-dimensional sustainability.

They are:

- Universal – the 2030 Agenda is as relevant to developed as it is to developing nations
- Indivisible – no one goal is separate from the others, and all call for comprehensive and participatory approaches.
- Sustainable, integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental
- Ambitious, aiming at ending poverty and hunger while sustainably managing natural resources.

Nowadays the Uzbek Government is working systematically to develop a comprehensive national agenda in line with SDGs, defining goals and targets for the period up to 2030. Since 2016 the Government of Uzbekistan prioritizes the modernization and intensive development of the agriculture sector with a special focus on the horticulture sector by stimulation and creation of favorable conditions for the development of farms, especially multidisciplinary ones involved in both agricultural production and processing, procurement, storage, marketing, construction work and the provision of modern market services.¹ The Strategy for the Development of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020 - 2030 (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy) is aimed at creating a favorable agribusiness climate and value chains, ensuring food security of the population and rural development. Sustainable development of the agri-food sector of the Republic of Uzbekistan requires the

implementation of state policy in the field on the basis of new approaches and the implementation of indicators of the Strategy Roadmap. The principles of the National Food Security Policy are based on four components such as availability, access, use and stability.²

This policy document stressed that existing rural development programs coordinated by the Ministry of Economy and Industry tend to focus primarily on eliminating of the regional economic imbalances in favor of large urban centers, sectoral support is provided only to the small rural population - farmers and other entrepreneurs involved in agricultural production, but the rural areas and local residents such as *dehkans*³ are left out. That is why the current Strategy is focused on the development of the rural areas and their *dehkan* farms. *Dehkans* are presenting the majority of the rural population and they are working every day on their land plots.

The main objective of the strategic priority is to ensure the sustainable development of rural areas.

To achieve these objectives, the Strategy has identified following tasks:

- Reforming the system of public administration in the development of rural areas;
- Conducting a detailed assessment of the real needs for rural development;

- Improvement of the legal and regulatory framework in order to provide state support, protection of interests, as well as decentralization of decision-making of rural communities
- Development and implementation as an experiment of transparent grant support and investment attraction mechanisms for the creation and development of non-agricultural enterprises, mobilization of local citizens' assemblies and development of public-private partnerships between local citizens, agribusinesses, civil society institutions and government agencies;
- Elaboration of a national rural development program.

The Government targeted annual growth in the agriculture sector of 5 per cent in 2017-2021, and for this growth to be sustained into the future. A specific aim is to diversify away from wheat and cotton production towards higher-value intensive crops. *Dehkan* farmers have a prominent place in plans to intensify production systems. To complement these efforts, it is also planned to increase the involvement of Uzbek industries in processing horticultural, meat and dairy products. There are opportunities for rural growth in both export and domestic markets. The growth of horticultural exports is already well documented and is strongly backed by private and public investment. In agriculture, main priority is defined as enhancement of labor

¹ Azizova N.M., Azizova L.K. (2020) "Implication Of Infrastructure Development On Rural Women's Welfare: Case of Uzbekistan" Scientific Reports Of Bukhara State University, Buxoro Davlat Universiteti Ilmi Axboroti, Научный Вестник Бухарского Государственного Университета, October 2020/5(81) page-254-261.

[Online resource] <http://buxdu.uz/index.php/uz/>

² Presidential Decree No. 5853 of October 23, 2019, the Strategy for the Development of the Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020 – 2030;

Presidential Decree No. 5853 of October 23, 2019, the Strategy for the Development of the Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020 – 2030.

³ A *dehkan farm* is a small-scale family farm that produces and sells agricultural products based on the personal labor of family members on a plot of land given to the head of the family as lifetime inheritable possession.

efficiency in Uzbekistan's rural areas, sustainable income generation based on both agrarian development and the enhancement of the infrastructure and industries that process agricultural products. It is recognized that an increase in labor efficiency in the agrarian sector decreases the prime costs of products, which in turn makes foodstuff more affordable for low-income populations, while an increase in employment can serve as a source of income and can enhance population welfare⁴.

The growth of horticultural exports is already well documented and is strongly backed by private and public investment. It is envisaged to significantly increase the share of fruit-and-vegetable processing industries in the total volume of production from 13.3% in 2012 to 20% in 2021. In order to achieve the projected parameters, the following were identified as the key objectives of the agrarian policy:

- The further implementation of measures designed to improve the structure of the cultivated area;
- The increase in the area dedicated to producing vegetables, fruits, berries, and melons around large and medium cities, where the populations have high purchasing power;
- The provision of stimulus to the development and introduction of new selected varieties of crops and breeds of animals, in addition to improved agrarian technologies and cultivation methods, in order to increase the productivity of crops and livestock;
- The improvement of the system of cooperation between the government and farmers;

- The formation of economic mechanisms created to stimulate the organization and development of cooperation between farmers, agro-enterprises, marketing firms and other infrastructure organizations that provide services within the field of agro-entrepreneurship. These services may include the stocking, processing and
- transportation of fruit-and-vegetable and meat-and-dairy products; and
- The improvement of the access of agricultural producers to necessary
- infrastructure and credit resources; and
- The development and adoption of a special target program designed to support the personal subsidiary plots and *dehkan* entities in rural areas.

Enabling environment of gender policy

The Government of Uzbekistan (GoU) has focuses on gender equality, mainstreaming and women's empowerment policy as a key factor of the implementation of the "National Development Strategy of Uzbekistan for 2017–2021". As a result, dramatic positive transformations in all sectors of the national economy and the social sphere, with a special focus on increasing the social and political activity of women and strengthening their role in governance, society, and the family have occurred. To ensure the effective implementation of the gender policy the "Commission for gender equality" chaired by the Chairperson of the Senate was established in June 21, 2019.

Uzbekistan joined several international institutions and participated in the conventions which are committed to protection of women's rights and equality and reports to

⁴ Azizova N, Tursunova Z, Azizova L (2017) "Social Policy and Empowerment of Women in the Agriculture Sector in Uzbekistan", Economic Science

for Rural Development Conference Proceedings, 2017, Issue 44, p29-35. 7p.

these international institutions about their achievements and challenges. In fact, all of the International Labour Organization conventions that proclaim equal rights of men and women were ratified by Uzbekistan and incorporated in Labor code of the Country Legislation. In order to implement the signed treaties Uzbekistan periodically reports to UN committee about the progress status. The last national sixth periodic report was planned to be submitted by November 2019 to UN CEDAW Committee. The periodic National Report on Implementation of Beijing Platform and Beijing Plan for Action in Uzbekistan was submitted on 10 May 2019.

The new adopted laws and normative documents have become the basis for carrying out reforms, developing policies, programs and implementing projects aimed at achieving gender equality and improving the status of women. The gender strategy identifies priorities for increasing the socio-political activity of women, strengthening their role in government and society, the active participation of women in peacebuilding processes, increasing economic independence and ensuring the employment of women and young people, especially those living in rural areas. This progress reflects in the development and adoption of the new national laws and normative presented in the

Table 1. The summary and quotes from the main policy documents

Name of the document	Information relevant for country gender policy
Presidential Decree #PP- 4947, from 07.02.2017 About the National Development Strategy for 2017-2021	<p>The Strategy includes development of the social sphere with a special focus on women empowerment and increasing their socio-political activity in all sectors.</p> <p>Section 4.2 Improving the system of social protection of the population and health care, increasing the socio-political activity of women:</p>
Presidential Decree #PP- 5325 dated February 2, 2019, “On measures for the fundamental improvement of activities in the field of supporting women and strengthening the family institution”	<p>Ensuring the effective implementation of state policy to support women, protect their rights and legitimate interests, as well as increase their role and activity in the public and political life of the country</p> <p>Provision of women with comprehensive targeted support in matters of employment creation, improvement of working conditions, wide involvement of women, especially young girls in rural areas, in family and private entrepreneurship.</p>
Presidential Decree, #4235 dated March 7, 2019, “On measures to further strengthen the	Women who express the willingness to be engaged in entrepreneurial activities will be trained through a special training programs.

guarantees of labor rights and support for women's entrepreneurial activities”	<p>Among women who have successfully passed a special training program, based on the recommendation of the relevant district's (city) committee of women, preferential loans will be issued for the organization of entrepreneurial activity for a period of at least 3 years or a 6-month period and 8% of the annual rate based on the procedure for lending employment to the population in regions and the development of family entrepreneurship.</p> <p>The source of preferential loan funds are resource funds in the amount of 100 billion UZS annually allocated to commercial banks by the Public Fund of to Support Women and Families. At least 50 percent of these resources are directed to the development of the business of women living in rural areas.</p>
The President's Decree No. PP-3827, dated July 2, 2018, "On measures to improve the system of social rehabilitation and adaptation, as well as the prevention of family and domestic violence" and "The Program of Practical Measures for the Improvement of Social Rehabilitation and Adaptation, the System of Prevention of Domestic Violence".	The Republican Center for Rehabilitation and adaptation of victims of violence, and prevention of suicide is established. The Center provides assistance to citizens who is in difficult social situations, and need urgent medical, psychological, social, pedagogical, and legal services. The center works with people who are facing family problems and domestic violence, as well as those prone to suicide.
The law of “Guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women” dated September 2, 2019	In accordance with the Law, women and men have equal rights and opportunities guaranteed by the state, their discrimination on the basis of sex is not allowed. A unified state policy in the field of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men is implemented by the Commission for Gender Equality.
“Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence”, dated September 2, 2019	In accordance with the Law, a victim of harassment and violence has the right to appeal to the relevant authorities or court with a statement about the case of harassment or violence, to receive free legal advice, economic, social, psychological, medical, and other assistance.
The Commission on Gender equality is established, dated June 21, 2019	Main tasks are to protect rights, create appropriate living and working conditions,

	support entrepreneurial initiatives and prevent their discrimination, maintain systemic parliamentary control over the progress of reforms in the gender equality area
--	--

The proposed project will finance the establishment of Agro-Logistics Centers (ALCs), initially for horticulture, in three locations—Andijan, Samarkand and Tashkent, taking into account international best practices. Such infrastructure will provide all necessary facilities and services under one roof: storage, auction, food safety certification, customs clearance, quarantine, transport, shipping, expert market advice, trade finance and commercial banking and etc. The project will help to increase production of agricultural products with higher value-added and thus will directly and indirectly benefit significant number of people dealing with production, marketing, processing, storage, and export of the agricultural produce. The ALCs will help to expand horticulture export and thus promote better linkages with production, post-harvest processing, and handling following international quality, and safety standards. Increased export and domestic marketing of horticultural products will increase price transmission to small-scale producers, as well as to small- and medium-sized agribusinesses. It will also help to increase the diversification of the agriculture sector from cotton to horticulture as it has more financial, economic, and less social and environmental concerns than cotton in the medium and long term. The proposed project will help to secure better access to markets for farmers, agricultural companies, processing enterprises, owners and operators of cold

storage, trading and logistics companies involved for horticulture sector. The project will also help to increase capacity in industrial processing horticulture products, greenhouses construction, storage and refrigeration.

This paper based on the results of a desk review, analyses of secondary data, available literature and previous reports in the framework of ICARDA and FAO projects, gender analysis of the situation, findings from focus group discussions with men and women-farmers and dehkans from regions of Uzbekistan. It highlights important gender aspects of rural development and concludes that the potential of rural women's economic status and involvement has not yet been reached. However, the Strategy has specified the priority of the development of rural areas it does not emphasize the specific group of rural women and dehkans. The data demonstrates that the processes of reform in rural areas have encountered difficulties and that rural women's employment and education are still under the influence of gender stereotypes related to the women's role in a patriarchal society. While men and women are seemingly equally affected by unemployment, women appear to face more difficulties than men in finding formal jobs. Most of the women lack basic proper education background, professional skills and access to information and therefore need a hands-on training in agribusinesses and other activities to be able to compete in the new business environment. It's

expected that farmers and dehkans especially women will have more opportunities to participate in gender awareness and business development trainings which will increase their access to natural and financial resources. In total, this project will improve access to commercial financial services for farmers, agricultural companies, processing enterprises, owners and operators of cold storage, trading and logistics companies involved for horticulture sector.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The global pandemic conditions significantly effect on the methodology approach of conducting the survey in the rural areas. In addition to the desk review, analysis of the secondary data, available literature and previous reports by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), JICA, USAID and World Bank , ADB and UNDP gender analysis, findings from phone-interviews and two focus group discussions with commercial farmers, dehkan (private) farmers, women-entrepreneurs, vulnerable groups such as unemployed men and women in the Tashkent region of Uzbekistan. This project research was implemented on May-June 2020, during quarantine period in Uzbekistan and the fieldwork was conducted in Tashkent region when borders between Tashkent city and Urta-Chirchik district were closed. Due to lockdown and lack of access to internet in the rural areas of the Urta-Chirchik district, the phone interviews with local residents and authorities have been chosen as the methods for the field survey. The Department of the Urta-Chirchik district khokimiyat and representatives of the Uzbek Agroindustry and Food Security Agency assisted in the meeting arrangements and conducting the disinfection measures for

safety of the local people and team experts. This section presents the results of fieldwork conducted in May- June 2020, during quarantine period in Tashkent region. Two FGDs, one with women dehkans, unemployed residents, and one with representatives of the local authorities, farmers, and Urta-Chirchik khokimiyat, district department of Cadastre have been conducted. The phone interviews with female women-entrepreneurs, heads, and deputy heads of the “Saidovul-Baht” community.

The authors of this article designed the methodology of the gender assessment survey and identified the level of rural population including women’s involvement in SME farming activities, decision-making at local levels, and gender aspects of rural development in Uzbekistan and (ii) developed recommendations for measures to increase women’s involvement in agribusiness SME development. The questionnaire was developed with an aim to reveal the main issues farmers, entrepreneurs and local administrations face: (a) availability of jobs in horticulture; (b) horticulture production operations and labor/gender issues, (c) specific issues faced by women in horticulture, particularly during COVID-19; and (d) women entrepreneurs in horticulture, specifically during COVID-19.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The results of the FGDs revealed that COVID - 19 negatively affect majority of rural populations and forced them to diversify the coping livelihood strategies. In addition, the current results of the FGDs and interviews with women leaders highlights important gender aspects of rural development and concludes that the potential of rural women’s economic

status and involvement has not yet been reached. The phone - interviews, literature reviews, qualitative surveys and focus group discussions suggest that the recent and ongoing economic reform processes may have resulted in significant labor shedding that makes livelihood of rural people much more difficult.² The results of the FGDs and interviews identified following challenges in the project area: (i) high unemployment rate increased consequence of the COVID-19, quarantine time; (ii) lack of access to financial resources; (iii) lack of access to infrastructure; (iii) lack of access to internet; (iv) prevailing gender stereotypes among communities' members. In total, 12 women from the "Saidovul-Baht" community of the Urt-Chirchik district, their ages vary from 37-62 years old, participated in the FGD. This FGD was carried out on 27 of May 2020 in the secondary school#40 of the Urt-Chirchik district. In addition, women-farmers and local residents from "Uygur" community of the same district were interviewed by phone and exchange the photos of their activities. During FGD representatives of the UzAIFSA presented that the new Agro-Logistic Center will be constructed close to "Saidovul-Baht"

community and open new opportunities for locals as well as other makhallas of the district.

Based on the results of the fieldwork it was revealed that female local residents and women-farmers encountered high formal unemployment in their living areas. One of the female participants shared that both ages categories of women faced the difficulties with official registration at the formal sector. Mostly women are occupied in the informal agriculture sector as seasonal workers. As women stressed there are no official female farmers in their community as well. Although the modern changes are going in the construction of the greenhouses and food processing factories are constructing around the community, local residents are mostly did not involve in the operation of the new objects. Young girls graduated from medical or even financial and transport colleges also experienced invisible discrimination when employers mostly reject their job application because of lack of experience and gender. They prefer to hire boys due to possible future marriage and maternal leave expenditures.

A lot of construction works are going on around our makhalla but nobody is giving job places to our local people. As we see, the big managers are inviting cheaper workers from other regions of the country. Maybe they trust to the people who they know but who is living next to their farms and greenhouses. Nobody is thinking about the people who are unemployed here, who are just sitting at home without any job while they have to feed their kids and family in general. This quarantine was very difficult for us.

27 May, 2020, From female FGD, Saidovul-Baht community, female resident

The results of the FGS revealed that most women of the Saidovul-Baht community are

involved in the dairy production business. As female participants shared, they are selling

dairy products such as milk, yogurt, curd, dry yogurt at the “Qoyliq” wholesale market of the Tashkent city. In order to reach the market women, use public bus or *Damas* (type of *minibus*). Usually they spent 40 minutes or more to reach the market and paid in average 6 thousand UZS per day for public transport. The average monthly income of the dairy business is around one million UZS. However, as women stated, this income allowed to cover only basic need of the households. During quarantine time women of the community lost their incomes, their children and students were needed to study from home. In addition, they stressed that planted vegetables and fruits at their *tomorkas* but they have no extras to sell them at the market and have sufficient incomes. During quarantine time the public transport did not work. In addition, *dehkan* farmers emphasized that income from their land plots is not enough to sustain adequate living standards. *Dehkan* farmers sell their products to local markets and they receive the prevailing market price. Most of the land plots are too small to reap benefits of economies of scale, making farming in *dehkan* farms rather subsistence farming.

The division of labor in the family depends on the structure of household income, as well as how many generations live together. Female and male respondents proved that mainly women are responsible for cooking, cleaning of house, washing, taking care of livestock. Together with elder children, women feed, water and milk the livestock; grow vegetables, beans and wheat for family consumption. All these chores occupy most of the women’s time. Although men were at houses during lockdown their support to their wives in terms of household responsibilities was the same as they worked out of home before the quarantine. Rural women’s status and involvement in decision-making in agribusiness is extremely low. The interviews and

qualitative data based on FGDs demonstrate that the reform processes in rural areas face significant hurdles and challenges and gender stereotypes related to women’s role in a patriarchal society are widespread. The specific features of rural women’s employment (low labor participation rate, high unemployment, occupation of low paid positions) are in many respects related to women’s lack of professional education. As FGD participants stressed only few young ladies from their community are study at the universities in Tashkent city. Majority of girls graduated from the colleges and usually getting married. Women expressed their interest to be involved in the business training in order to open their own small enterprises.

One of the female participants shared that nowadays some people do not want to get the responsibilities of increasing incomes by themselves, they are waiting for the state’s or *mahkala*’s financial benefits. “*Sen menga tegma - Men senga tegmayman*” (“You do not touch me, I will not touch you”) has become popular among local residents. They hoped that young generation will be able to change this life strategy and develop new business structures in their own communities. While one part of older generation expressed their hopes another one shared with their problems of the farm operating business. A female farmer with 15 years’ experience from Tashkent Region said “Of course, for the first time, it was difficult for me to farm by myself. I inherited this household and farm from my spouse. It was also difficult to hire employees, borrow tractors or other agricultural machinery. While a woman does not have enough money, and when additional money is needed at the time of harvest, acquaintances do not agree to borrow money, probably because I am a woman. And, taking a micro-loan in the bank is very difficult. Bankers come up with hundreds

of reasons not to give me such credit. I didn't have enough collateral to borrow money".

Lack of access to internet. The survey revealed the limited women's access to information and property rights as compared to men. It also identifies main bottlenecks and barriers for involvement of women in the horticulture sector. Some rural women demonstrates high interest in improving their skills in horticulture products growing, processing and marketing during phone interviews. This survey, conducted in quarantine time, revealed one more significant problem which negatively impact employment opportunities of women and men. Due to lack of access to internet and lack of laptops at household level, some children and students in their families cannot study appropriately. This was one of the main mother's concern. It is hard for families with 2-3 students of the schools and colleges to study on-line. Although parents are trying to provide best conditions for their children but buying of laptops and cell phones was not in their priority list, particularly of unemployed ones. The poor internet connection also requires additional financial allocation from family budget. In addition, the lack of access to internet hampers not only students' opportunities for education but the professional development of their mothers. In addition, women often use social media for communication with other female farmers in their district.

Lack of access to properties. Women working in agriculture, including female entrepreneurs, represent an important economic resource. In many ways, the issues faced by women in agricultural business are similar to those encountered by entrepreneurs operating small-scale

enterprises in rural areas. For instance, female farmers generally do not hold legal titles to land and lack access to other productive resources, such as credit and microfinance. Although the legislation provides equal rights to both women and men for properties, there are still gender disparities in land and real estate ownership. Most of residential houses and land are acquired through inheritance, which favors men over women. Other assets such as cars, agricultural machines, equipment and livestock are also owned by men. Thus, men access and control financial resources in the family. The income earned by the men and women belongs to family budget, which is framed by culture. Therefore, women can hardly accumulate resources to start their business. Access and control over resources depends on their market value - the higher the market price is, the more are the resources controlled by men. During phone interview with female farmer from "Uygur" makhalla it was stressed that a lack of access to properties inter

Limited access to social infrastructure. Lack of access to kindergartens in the rural areas negatively influence on female employment in agriculture sector. In average, in rural area, around 25% of children from 1-6 years old were covered by pre-school education system.⁵ Due to a smaller number of kindergartens in rural areas mostly female elders or daughters in big families are responsible for child care. Thus, it reduces female employment opportunities as well as limit potential of achieving education of women in general. In addition, pre-school education fee-based.⁶ In 2017, by decreasing the cost of pre-school facilities and costing it according to rural/urban and region specifics, the GoU increase opportunities of rural children to pre-school education. Specifically, women of the

⁵www.gender.stat.uz

⁶Updated Country Gender Assessment, ADB 2018

FGD stressed that they urgently need a kinder garden to their community.

Although head of the “Saidovul-Baht” makhalla reported that there are no female-farmers in this community, their neighbors from “Uygur” makhalla shared about active women empowerment in agriculture sector of local women by phone interviews. The deputy head of Uygur makhalla shared that after the restructure of the Women’s Committee and establishing the Ministry of makhalla and families support, many former women issues advisors have become unemployed and lost their stable incomes. This factor negatively impacted their family budget and forced women to diversify their livelihood strategies. Muhabbat opa shared that makhalla committee allocated around 20 ha of garden land for horticulture goals. **(Photo 3, 4)**. As a women leader she helped to allocate parts of this land to vulnerable groups from their community. Currently, women who lost their incomes in formal sector are actively involved in agriculture production and find new ways for generating new livelihood strategies. Muhabbat opa also leading women of their community for developing and contributing to the silk industry of the country as well as increasing living standards of their families. **(Photo 6)**. It

was revealed that one month ago she received 10 boxes of the silk caterpillars and shared with unemployed women and neighbors from her community. Due to lack of mulberry trees in their community she hired two workers from the makhalla and paid them for 100 000 UZS every day for provision of the mulberry bushes from other farms. Their sample of active participation in the horticulture sector was exemplified in the local newspapers. In spite of difficulties, women of their community will be able to sell silk cocoons and significantly contribute to their family budget.

During COVID 19, the GoU ensure to provide country’s population with horticulture products without interruptions. The horticulture development and food security were prioritized as one of the important state policies. The phone interviews revealed that during first days of the lockdown households of Uygur makhalla shared with their harvest of fruits and vegetables with each other for free in order to support vulnerable families and provide healthy nutrient food on their tables. Moreover, the farmers of the community have received the special stickers from khokimiyat which allowed them to get an access to markets.



Photo 1.

June - May 2020, From interview with female farmer from Uygur makhalla:

Summer is a hot season for all farmers but it is very hot in all meanings for women. I am leading the number of agriculture activities in Uygur makhalla with aim to provide food security for our vulnerable groups, unemployed and young boys and girls.

Photo: Land of the female farmer activist of the Uygur makhalla



Photo 2.




June 2020, In parallel with working on dehkan plots women are baking bread at the tandur (traditional mud oven).



Photo 3.

9 June 2020

The land allocated to low-income families in Uygur makhalla of the Urta-Chirchik district

	<p>Photo 4.</p> <p>8 June 2020 From interview</p> <p><i>Currently zucchini is in high demand at the local and international market</i></p>
	<p>Photo 5.</p> <p>9 June, Female dehkan of the Uygur makhalla Interview with female dehkan</p> <p><i>“24/7 – summer is a hot season, we are working on our tomorqa and additional lands to provide a sufficient income for our families”</i></p>
	<p>Photo 6.</p> <p><i>At the silkworm’s lab in the Uygur makhalla, Urta-Chirchik district</i></p>

CONCLUSION

In general, the obtained results from the FGDs and interviews in the Tashkent region as well as other regions of the country can be summarized in the following group of problems where women are faced with a lack of access to natural and financial resources, as well as access to internet and local infrastructure. The Gender Action Plan was developed and proposed for this project where the specific number of business training for female dehkans and farmers are considered as one of the main results. In addition, the formal employment in the Agro-Logistic centers with 30% of women representation at the decision-making position will empower women not only

in dehkans plots but at the management level in the horticulture sector.

REFERENCES

1. Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Uzbekistan, FAO, Budapest, 2019
2. Tashkent region statistical bulletin, State Committee on Statistics of Uzbekistan, 2019
3. Asian Development Bank (2015): Country Operations Business Plan: Uzbekistan, 2016–2018. Manila.

- [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.adb.org/documents/uzbekistan-country-operations-business-plan-2016-2018> (date of treatment: 12.15.2020)
4. Asian Development Bank: Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department (2018) [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.adb.org/projects/documents/uzb-48414-006-rp-0> (date of treatment: 12.15.2020)
5. Asian Development Bank: Uzbekistan Country Gender Assessment, Updated (2018). [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.adb.org/documents/uzbekistan-gender-assessment-update> (date of treatment: 12.15.2020)
6. Ganieva M.Kh. (2018) “Well-being of the family as one of the main tasks of the social policy of the state government”, “Sociologiya ukitish va sociologist tadqiqotlarini tashkil etish dolbzar masalalari” materials of the scientific-practical conference 04.23.2018.
7. Human Development Report, UN, New York, USA (2019). [Electronic resource] URL: <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2019.pdf> (date of treatment: 12.15.2020)
8. L.I. Ivankina. Well-being and the problem of sustainable development of society. Blagopoluchie I Problema Ustoychivogo Razvitiya Obshestva, Tomsk Polytechnic University. Bulletin of science of Siberia. No. 2 (17) (2015). [Electronic resource] URL: <https://jwt.su/journal> (date of treatment: 03.15.2021)
9. Resolution of President №-5325 (2018) "On Measures for radical enhancement of activities in the sphere of support of women and strengthening of institute of family" 02.02.2018. [Electronic resource] URL: <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=122686> (date of treatment: 03.15.2021)
10. Resolution of President № RP-3808 (2018) "On Approving the Concept of Strengthening the Family Institute in the Republic of Uzbekistan" 06.27.2018. [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.lex.uz/docs/3797628> (date of treatment: 03.15.2021)
11. Resolution of President №-3827 (2018) “On measures to improve the system of social rehabilitation and adaptation, as well as the prevention of domestic violence”. 07.02.2018. [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.lex.uz/ru/docs/3804813> (date of treatment: 03.15.2021)
12. Resolution of President № RP-4235 (2019) “On measures for further strengthening the guarantees of the labor rights and support to women’s entrepreneurship activity”. 03.07.2019. [Electronic resource] URL: <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/4230938> (date of treatment: 03.15.2021)
13. [Electronic resource] URL: www.stat.uz (date of treatment: 03.15.2021)
14. [Electronic resource] URL: www.gov.uz (date of treatment: 03.15.2021)
15. Azizova N.M., Azizova L.K. (2020) “Implication Of Infrastructure Development On Rural Women’s Welfare: Case of Uzbekistan” Scientific Reports Of Bukhara State University, Buxoro Davlat Universiteti Ilmi Axboroti, Научный Вестник Бухарского Государственного Университета, October 2020/5(81) page-254-261.

-
- [Electronic resource] URL:
<http://buxdu.uz/index.php/uz/> (date of
treatment: 03.15.2021)
16. Azizova N, Tursunova Z, Azizova L
(2017) “Social Policy and
Empowerment of Women in the
Agriculture Sector in Uzbekistan”,
Economic Science for Rural
Development Conference
Proceedings, 2017, Issue 44, p29-35. 7p.