

DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY IN KAZAKHSTAN: THE ANALYSIS OF POLICY DOCUMENTS

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Abstract. This article analyses the development of gender policy in Kazakhstan, with a focus on two key policy frameworks: Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016 and the Concept of Family and Gender Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030 (2016 – present). These documents define the main directions that have shaped Kazakhstan’s gender policy over the past two decades. The study critically evaluates both frameworks, highlighting their achievements and limitations. It first assesses outcomes associated with the Strategy for Gender Equality and then examines the implementation of the current policy to clarify ongoing priorities and initiatives. The research draws on document analysis and statistical data. It also considers the effects of gender policy across multiple sectors, with particular attention to women’s representation in leadership positions.

Keywords: *gender policy, gender equality, female leadership, public policy.*

ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ ГЕНДЕРЛІК ТЕНДІКТІ ДАМУ: САЯСИ ҚҰЖАТТАРДЫ ТАЛДАУ

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Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада екі негізгі саяси құжатқа: Қазақстан Республикасында 2006-2016 жылдарға арналған гендерлік теңдік стратегиясы және Қазақстан Республикасындағы 2030 жылға дейінгі отбасылық және гендерлік саясат тұжырымдамасына (2016 - осы уақытқа дейін) баса назар аударатырып, Қазақстандағы гендерлік саясаттың дамуы талданады. Бұл құжаттар соңғы екі онжылдықта Қазақстанның гендерлік саясатын қалыптастырған негізгі бағыттарды айқындайды. Зерттеу осы саяси құжаттардағы жетістіктер мен шектеулерді көрсете отырып, сыни баға береді. Алдымен гендерлік теңдік стратегиясын іске асыру нәтижелері талданады, содан кейін ағымдағы бастамаларды нақтылау мақсатында тұжырымдама қарастырылады. Зерттеуде статистикалық мәліметтермен қатар құжаттарды талдау қолданылады. Сондай-ақ онда басшылық лауазымдарға баса назар аударатырып, гендерлік саясаттың әртүрлі секторларға қалай әсер ететінін қарастырылады.

Түйін сөздер: *гендерлік саясат, гендерлік теңдік, әйелдер көшбасшылығы, мемлекеттік саясат.*

РАЗВИТИЕ ГЕНДЕРНОГО РАВЕНСТВА В КАЗАХСТАНЕ: АНАЛИЗ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ ДОКУМЕНТОВ

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Аннотация. В данной статье анализируется развитие гендерной политики в Казахстане с акцентом на двух ключевых политических документах: Стратегия гендерного равенства в Республике Казахстан на 2006-2016 годы и Концепция семейной и гендерной политики в Республике Казахстан до 2030 года (2016 -

настоящее время). Эти документы определяют основные направления, которые формировали гендерную политику Казахстана на протяжении последних двух десятилетий. В исследовании дается критическая оценка этих политических документов с указанием как достижений, так и ограничений. Вначале анализируются результаты реализации Стратегии гендерного равенства, а затем рассматривается Концепция с целью прояснить текущие инициативы. В исследовании используется анализ документов наряду со статистическими данными. В нем также рассматривается, как гендерная политика влияет на различные секторы, с особым акцентом на руководящие должности.

Ключевые слова: гендерная политика, гендерное равенство, женское лидерство, государственная политика.

Introduction

In the modern world, issues of social justice and equality for all citizens remain prominent topics of discussion in many countries. Consequently, states seek to ratify international conventions in order to align with the global community's commitments to equal opportunities for all citizens. Kazakhstan is no exception. Since gaining independence from the Soviet political system in 1991, Kazakhstan has introduced democratic principles of gender equality, including through the signing and ratification of key international instruments [1, 2, 3].

To frame this analysis, the study draws on Taylor's conceptualisation of the "policy phenomenon," which emphasises the meaning of policy, its effects on society and the state, and the forces that shape policy formation [4]. A "policy phenomenon" is a complex social process that must be analysed across three dimensions: the context in which policy emerges, the text of the policy document itself, and the practical consequences of its implementation. This framework also distinguishes three levels of policy operation: macro (global/international), meso (state/institutional), and micro (local/individual) and holds that what a policy leaves unsaid can be as analytically significant as what it explicitly articulates. In this approach, policy is understood in line with the Oxford Dictionary definition as a "plan of action" and a "statement of aims or ideals." Building on this framework, the present study considers gender policy in Kazakhstan, analysing both its implementation and the approaches that have been realised in practice. It also seeks to identify the reasons and conditions that have contributed to the emergence of the current policy content, taking into account national, geographical, political, and historical factors. In particular, the study examines how the "policy phenomenon" and "gender policy" are interpreted in the Kazakhstani context in comparison with Western frameworks [5]. Finally, it assesses the impacts and societal consequences of these policies in a context where the concept of gender equality was previously unfamiliar and largely absent from public and institutional consideration.

This study examines Kazakhstan's state gender policy by analysing two core national policy documents: Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016 [6] and the Concept of Family and Gender Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030 [7]. The aim of this article is to analyse the development of state gender policy in Kazakhstan through a critical evaluation of two key policy documents assessing their achievements, limitations, and practical consequences for society. To achieve this aim, the following objectives are addressed:

1. to apply Taylor's theoretical framework of the “policy phenomenon” to the analysis of Kazakhstan's gender policy as a state “plan of action” shaped by the interplay of the state, economy, and civil society;
2. to examine the historical, political, cultural, and national factors that conditioned the formation of gender policy in post-Soviet Kazakhstan;
3. to conduct a comparative analysis of the two key policy documents, tracing continuity and change in Kazakhstan's approach to gender equality over two decades.

Societal attitudes towards Kazakh women, who constituted a significant component of the state, fluctuated throughout the twentieth century in response to multiple historical and political influences [8, 9, 10, 11]. Prior to its integration into the Soviet Union, Kazakh society maintained a nomadic structure informed by Islamic traditions: women were primarily responsible for family caretaking, while men served as breadwinners. Following the Second World War, widespread male casualties prompted the Soviet government to advance gender equality measures and incorporate women into the labour force. Nevertheless, as Katz observed, women remained underrepresented in positions of authority and received lower compensation than men, despite performing work of equal value [10].

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan confronted multiple challenges that required rapid policy responses. Like other post-Soviet states, it experienced a deep economic crisis that led to rising unemployment and poverty. In this context, the state prioritised the mobilisation of well-educated and qualified human resources, which contributed to a gradual expansion of women's participation in decision-making and leadership roles to support national development. Early gender policy initiatives therefore focused primarily on poverty reduction, including the adoption of a government action plan to advance women [12]. However, the Kazakhstan gender assessment suggests that weak policy design and implementation can sustain gender gaps across key domains [12]. As a result, women remained more vulnerable to poverty and unemployment than men. These challenges contributed to subsequent efforts to strengthen the policy framework, including the introduction of the Concept of Gender Policy until 2006. In addition, an international report prepared by independent experts representing civil society and women's organisations identified persistent shortcomings in civil society engagement [13]. It emphasised the importance of institutionalising feedback mechanisms from civil society and ensuring continuous policy improvement to advance gender equality.

Furthermore, efforts to advance gender policy during this period also aligned with the state's strategic interests by strengthening Kazakhstan's international reputation. A key objective of the newly independent state was to build trust within the international community and to signal its commitment to democratic principles [6]. At the same time, in parts of society, narratives advocating a return to pre-communist Kazakh family traditions began to gain prominence as Soviet ideological frameworks weakened [14]. This traditional family model, where men are positioned as heads of households and women are primarily responsible for childcare and elder care, remains particularly prevalent in southern regions of the country. These historical dynamics have shaped Kazakhstan's gender policy trajectory, which reflects an interplay of Kazakh cultural traditions, Soviet-era centralised governance practices, and the contemporary influence of liberal democratic values [1].

Methods

The article employs document analysis to examine two key national gender policy documents. A comparative analysis of these documents enables tracing the evolution of gender policy in Kazakhstan. Additionally, the article utilises a multi-level analytical approach: from the philosophical underpinnings of the documents to specific implementation measures, applying the theoretical framework developed by Taylor et al. [4]. Quantitative data are drawn from the Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and from reports by WEF, UNDP, UN Women, the Asian Development Bank, OECD, and Human Rights Watch.

Taylor's framework is a strong choice for this paper because it enables policy to be analysed not simply as an official document, but as a broader social and political phenomenon shaped by context, institutional actors, and implementation outcomes. This is particularly relevant to the present study, which examines Kazakhstan's gender policy through the historical conditions of its emergence, the content and framing of the policy texts, and their practical consequences for society. The framework is especially suitable because it captures the interaction between international agendas, state-led governance, and local sociocultural realities, while also drawing attention to policy silences and omissions that are analytically significant in the Kazakhstani case.

Results

Kazakhstan's gender policy is outlined in two main documents, with the second serving as a logical continuation of the first. The development of core principles began when the country joined the Beijing Declaration. The National Commission for Family and Women's Affairs, created in 1998, played a major role in developing and enforcing gender policy. This advisory body was set up to increase women's representation in leadership roles across all sectors. Besides planning and implementing gender policy, the Commission also monitors compliance with gender equality.

In 2004, the former president instructed the government to develop the Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016. This strategy outlined key areas of activity - economic, social, and political - to create time-bound measures ensuring equal opportunities for women. It also addressed legal literacy, education, reproductive health for both men and women, prevention of gender-based violence, and the growth of gender-sensitive public consciousness. According to the Strategy, all prescribed actions were subject to regular monitoring. Although the official term of the Strategy ended in 2016, many sources continue to reference it as a foundational gender policy document.

Kazakhstan is a geographically huge country with a relatively small population; therefore, one of the government's essential objectives since independence has been to increase demographic growth. For this reason, the state has adopted various approaches to address demographic challenges. In connection with demographic policy and Kazakh traditions rooted in Eastern mentality, both gender policies have incorporated measures to strengthen the role of the family and emphasise the importance of family values in contemporary society. Consequently, the subsequent national document, The Concept of Family and Gender Policies in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030, placed greater emphasis on family policies compared to its predecessor. According to the Concept, gender equality within families enhances the effectiveness and stability of relationships and strengthens family unity.

The advantage of policies is that they provide a detailed analysis of the current situation, including a description of the strengths and weaknesses. This approach allows understanding the reasons for the proposed additional ways to develop gender policy. For example, the Concept provides statistical data on negative dynamics in the number of divorces in the country. Despite the central role of the family institution in Kazakhstani society, both divorce rates and the incidence of childbearing outside marriage have been increasing. Nearly one in three marriages ends in divorce [7]. An increasing number of divorces has become a significant problem for the country. Perhaps this is one reason why the current gender policy has been supplemented with a large family demographic bloc.

Table 1. Comparative Overview of Kazakhstan's Key Gender Policy Documents

Criterion	Strategy for Gender Equality (2006–2016)	Concept of Family and Gender Policy (until 2030)
Period	2006–2016	2016–2030
Primary focus	Equal opportunities, employment, legal literacy, reproductive health, violence prevention	Family policy, demographic growth, gender equality within the family
Document structure	SWOT analysis per section; glossary of key terms	Review of previous strategy outcomes; international examples
Combating violence	Preventive measures; support for women in difficult situations	Expanded measures; support centres in all regions
Education	Dedicated section on gender and legal education	Theme largely absent
Monitoring	Annual reporting by state bodies	Annual reporting + review of 2016 outcomes
Civil society engagement	Limited; noted as a weakness in international assessments	Remains limited; women's organisations underutilised

Source: compiled by the author [6, 7]

Gender policy impact

In general, Kazakhstan's gender policy had a long-term plan for the steady advancement of equality of opportunity for men and women. As it has been noted earlier, one of the first steps towards the implementation of gender policy was the accession to many international conventions such as the Beijing Platform of Action for improvement of the women's status, Agenda-2030, Millennium Declaration of the United Nations and Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, Convention on the Political Rights of Women [1,2,3].

The following Table 2 consolidates the most current data from authoritative international sources, providing a comprehensive empirical baseline for evaluating Kazakhstan's gender policy outcomes.

Table 2. Key Gender Equality Indicators for Kazakhstan (2023–2025)

Indicator	Value
Global Gender Gap Index rank (2024)	76th out of 146
Gender Inequality Index (2024)	0.325 (50th out of 172)

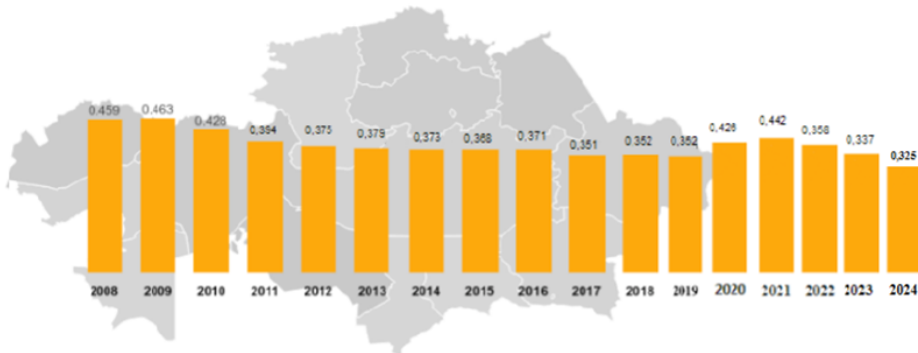
HDI loss due to inequality	8.5% reduction
Women in parliament (2025)	19.4%
Women in cabinet (2025)	4 out of 21 ministers (19%)
Gender pay gap (2023)	25.7%
Women's earnings as share of men's	67%
Criminal cases — domestic violence (2024)	3,382
Domestic violence complaints (2023)	99,026
Women's time in unpaid domestic work	19.9% vs 6.3% (men)

Source: compiled by the author [14-18]

All gender policies were built in line with the listed international standards and systematically assessed by international organisations. According to the Constitution of Kazakhstan [19], all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to participate in the management of state affairs.

Kazakhstan has steadily worked to reduce the disparity between men and women. However, Gender Inequality Index has decreased from 0.459 in 2008 to 0.325 in 2024 (Figure1) [21] (Bureau of National Statistics, n.a.) reflecting consistent policy effort. According to the UNDP Human Development Report 2025, Kazakhstan ranks 50th out of 172 countries on the GII, while its HDI declines by 8.5% when adjusted for inequality – indicating that systemic disparities persist beneath headline progress.

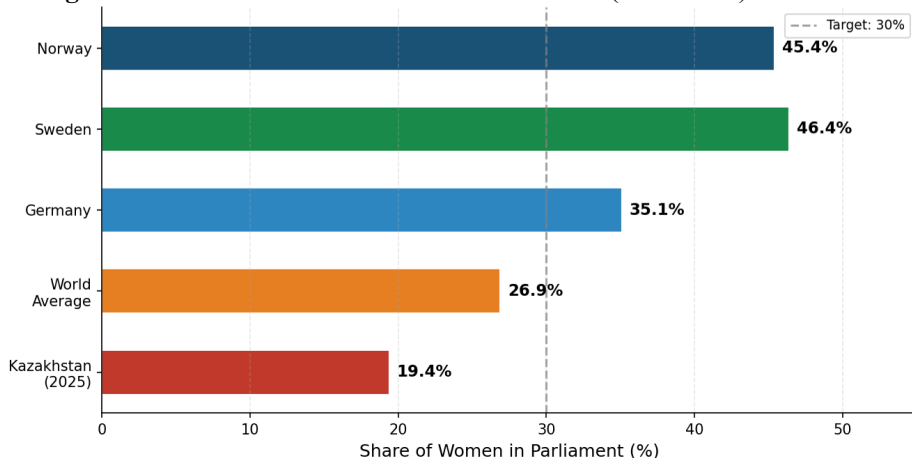
Figure 1. Gender Inequality Index (2008 - 2024)



Source: Bureau of National Statistics

As of 2025, women hold only 19.4% of seats in Kazakhstan's parliament - significantly below the 30% target set in the Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016 and the global average of 26.9% (Figure 2). Kazakhstan lags considerably behind Scandinavian countries, where women account for over 45% of parliamentary seats. In the cabinet, only four of 21 ministers are women, heading ministries of culture, healthcare, labour, and education, ministries conventionally associated with feminised roles, reflecting the persistence of gendered occupational stereotypes in the upper echelons of power.

Figure 2. Share of women in National Parliaments (2024-2025)



Source: [14, 22]

The significant result of the practical work of the Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016 was initiation to create the laws “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women” and “Prevention of Domestic Violence”, which occurs in support of women’s movements and civil organisations [2, 6, 23]. The law on equal rights stipulates that all organisations must adhere to a gender policy and any form of discrimination is suppressed. In Kazakhstan, women most often seek legal assistance in cases of domestic violence and housing.

In 2020, a draft law ‘On Combating Domestic Violence’ was submitted to the Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The draft law was drawn up in response to public demand and the pressing issue of addressing domestic violence and its increase. As a result, the Head of State issued instructions to address the problem and toughen penalties for crimes against individuals and domestic violence. In 2024, the Law ‘On Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Ensuring the Rights of Women and the Safety of Children’ was enacted. The law aims to prevent violence against women and children, as well as to strengthen the institution of the family and the safety of minors [24].

The Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016 showed that there is a low level of gender education among the population, insufficient awareness of their rights, and a lack of information on the need for gender knowledge [6]. Especially, gender education is needed among civil servants involved in the formulation of gender budgeting. The introduction of a course on gender budgeting is seen as a significant step towards the development of gender equality in society, since the state's program in this direction, including future projects and actions, depends on it [19]. According to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, any law and political decision-making process should be informed by consideration of gender relations; therefore, gender training for civil servants is essential.

Therefore, the inclusion of a mandatory gender assessment clause is a positive long-term step towards promoting gender equality. Ideally, gender expertise

should equally take into account the interests of men and women in the legislative framework and check the content of educational programs, courses, and textbooks to eliminate gender stereotypes in society. In the case of Kazakhstan, a positive factor of development is the inclusion in the Concept on Family and Gender Policy of the need to assess legislation about the equal interests of men and women. Nevertheless, recently, it has not been possible to find official supporting information on the gender review of legislative documents [25]. It should be added that the introduction of compulsory gender expertise in legislation and government programmes had been on the implementation agenda earlier in the 2006, and ten years later, it has been reintroduced in the new document.

According to Kuzhabekova et al. , due to the pursued gender policy, some successes have been achieved in developing women's leadership, most often manifested in the educational, health care, and social fields [26]. This indicates that society is still subject to a stereotypical distribution of professions between women and men [2]. Moreover, these areas are low-paid, and therefore, the distribution of wages on a national scale between men and women remains unequal.

Thus, one of the tasks of the Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016 was to address equal employment of men and women in the economic sector. At the initial stage, there was an acute problem of a large number of self-employed women in rural areas who were either unemployed or engaged in unpaid domestic work. There is a big difference between men and women employed in different spheres of work. There is widespread public opinion about female and male occupations, in which female spheres are less well paid. As mentioned before, it is the fields linked to health care, education, and social services. Male professions are considered technical, with high wages. As a result, the unequal distribution of wages between women and men was widespread in the state [13]. Consequently, women were the most vulnerable part of the population to poverty and needed government support. Thus, the Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016 was designed to solve this problem as well. For example, the government provided loans to women to start their own businesses. Women were trained in new skills and specialities in demand in high-paying production areas [7].

According to national statistics, Kazakhstan has achieved strong educational indicators [20]. As statistics show, Kazakhstan has almost reached gender parity at the primary and secondary levels of education, and the number of women in higher education even exceeds that of men. The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan says that all citizens of Kazakhstan are obliged to receive a school education and all have the right to receive state scholarships for higher education [19].

Another positive factor in the development of gender policy is the maintenance of official statistics with gender-disaggregated data, which enables gender analysis across different areas. The disadvantage is the lack of data on some issues or incomplete data, making it challenging to fully consider the situation.

Discussion. Kazakhstani gender policy limitations

Despite progress in implementing gender policy, there are still limitations, some of which were mentioned in previous parts. According to researchers the Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016 is, in some respects, overly idealised and not fully implemented in practice [26, 27]. For example, Kazakhstani researchers criticised the lack of a specific action plan to achieve 30%

women's representation at the highest levels of power. As a result, Kazakhstani women remain underrepresented in leadership positions, particularly in politics and the civil service. Currently, the government is headed by 21 ministers, of whom four are women. They head the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Healthcare, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population and the Ministry of Education [28]. According to the official site, women in Parliament (upper and lower houses) were 18% in 2025 [29]. It should be noted that the sphere of political decision-making has a significant impact on the overall development of the state. If statistics show that women make up more than half of the population in Kazakhstan, it follows that not all citizens are equally represented in power. Perhaps this fact could be a constraint on the development of gender policy. Additionally, another significant critique is the lack of expertise in legislative documents regarding gender sensitivity, as required by gender policy [26].

One of the reasons for the persistence of gender inequality might be women's legal illiteracy. Despite introducing the current gender policy, there may be a need to strengthen public recognition of gender legislation. Perhaps a low level of gender awareness stems from gender policy being discussed only in certain expert circles, without widespread societal involvement. However, discussions are conducted on a prescriptive basis, from time to time, without a clear understanding of the need for gender equality. Local authorities rarely implement gender policies, treating them as non-urgent [25].

Another severe issue in Kazakhstan remains the high rate of domestic violence. Domestic violence and sexual harassment, including in the workplace, have been repeatedly raised and discussed in both national documents. Throughout the years of gender policy, several measures to prevent violence against women have been planned, and centres to support women in difficult life situations have been opened in all regions, but the problem remains acute.

Framework analysis of gender policy

It should be noted that all countries have gender policies that take into account their unique characteristics. The formation of policy is influenced by many factors: the management system, culture, historical background, mentality, and national characteristics. Although the state can use international documents as a basis and draw on another country's experience, the government cannot ignore specific features when creating a new development path.

National policy agendas evolve in response to multiple contextual forces and historical developments. Taylor et al. argue that policy outcomes frequently emerge from the interplay among the state, the economy, and civil society [4]. In Kazakhstan, the first gender policy framework was introduced after independence from the Soviet Union, and it developed within a governance context shaped by legacies of Soviet administration. These inherited traditions included a highly centralised style of decision-making, which influenced how gender policy was designed and implemented.

After introducing the gender policy, the state bodies were then required by presidential decree to report annually to the National Commission on Women's Affairs and Family and Demographic Policy on the implementation of the plan [6]. Therefore, according to framework of Taylor et al., Kazakhstan's gender policy belongs to the 'meso' level, where its objective is the development of the whole

state, and all public institutions are involved in its implementation [4]. The gender policy of Kazakhstan is more evident in social support for women, and this is another paternalistic idea characteristic of the Soviet state, which most likely leads to the preservation of patriarchal traditions [28].

Political, economic and social factors influenced the initial gender policy. As noted earlier, in the early 1990s, the country needed recognition from the world community as a new democratic state, where all citizens have the right to freedom. According to Dugarova, the creation of a gender policy in Kazakhstan is, to some extent, a demonstration to international organisations of the state's viability to gain trust and attract investment [28].

Additionally, and probably more importantly, was to restore the economy and support the population, which found itself in a difficult situation, especially women. Following this, the government decided to publish many new national programs, including a gender policy. Moreover, any public policy is not a static phenomenon. In the contemporary world, when all countries are part of the globalising world, their policies must always be dynamic and evolve.

Regarding the analysis of the structure and morphology of the gender policy documents, they are written in language that is understandable to the reader. Both national documents have a clear structure and a strict sequence of sections. The Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016 begins with a glossary, making it easier to understand new gender-related terminology. Each section contains a SWOT analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for each area, from a gender perspective. The advantage of the Concept of Family and Gender Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030 is the analysis of the outcomes of the 2016 gender policy. This approach enabled scheduling tasks and planning to implement a gender policy for a specific period. A distinctive feature of this policy document was the inclusion of examples of successful gender policy in other countries. In the Strategy Gender Equality, a whole section was devoted to gender and law education, which is absent in the subsequent policy document. Meanwhile, the latter document includes a significant part of the content about family policy. This is probably due to the need to increase the country's population growth and reduce the high divorce rate through government regulation. At the same time, it may have been inappropriate to combine family and gender policies, as this could lead to an associative view of women, closely tied to family responsibilities, rather than as distinct individuals with their own values. In the country assessment, prepared by the Asian Development Bank, it claimed: "However, the combination of the two issues reinforces the message that gender equality is about strengthening families as opposed to being about women's rights and ensuring equality between women and men in all spheres [31: 12p.]. The context is that Kazakhstan's approach creates an environment for expanding opportunities for families and overcoming difficult life situations, and while this recognizes that addressing gender relations in the family is important for achieving gender equality in other spheres, combining family and gender policies sends a message that gender equality is primarily about strengthening families rather than women's rights.

The OECD has classified women empowerment issues into three "E"s: education, employment and entrepreneurship. Since Kazakhstan aims to become one of the 30 most developed countries in the world, OECD indicators have become fundamental to the republic's development. For this reason, ensuring gender equality in education,

employment, and entrepreneurship has become an urgent matter for Kazakhstan [26]. Although the sphere of education was almost overlooked in the Concept of Family and Gender Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030, it seems essential to introduce a compulsory course on gender equality and justice in schools or, at least, at universities. This approach could help young citizens better understand their rights and opportunities, and eliminate gender discrimination across different fields. The need for gender education is indicated at least by the fact that among students, there is still a choice of specialities according to the gender stereotype of “female” and “male” professions [7].

Taylor et al. argue that what a policy leaves unsaid can be just as revealing as what it explicitly addresses [4]. A major limitation of Kazakhstan’s gender policy is the limited involvement of civil society. The policy documents devote little attention to the role of civic actors, particularly women’s organisations, in shaping agendas or supporting implementation. Stronger engagement of these organisations could enhance policy delivery and make efforts to advance gender equality more effective [28].

Thus, the analysis shows that gender policies still need to be refined and continually evaluated by the state, civil society, and international organisations. It should be added that this is only a part of the analysis of gender policy, which could still be continued.

Conclusion

An analysis of gender policy helps understand how gender equality is implemented in the state, what contributed to the formation of the current policy, and why some issues remain. To achieve democracy and a high quality of life, one crucial condition is equality of opportunity for all citizens, regardless of gender. To obtain a more objective picture and assess the results of gender policy in Kazakhstan, this study used Kazakhstani sources, foreign reports and some statistical data. During the analysis of gender policy, it was observed that English-language sources from both Kazakh and foreign researchers take a more critical view of policy documents, whereas articles and reviews in Russian and Kazakh focus only on the policy's effectiveness. This paper has identified both Kazakhstan’s achievements in implementing gender policy and weaknesses that require improvement. As noted above, some researchers have criticised the way gender policy, in their view, is only formal and minimal in terms of actual action. The country continues to face systemic challenges: women hold only 19.4% of parliamentary seats; the gender pay gap stands at 25.7%; and domestic violence remains a pressing social problem. The combination of family and gender policy in a single document risks narrowing the conceptual scope of gender equality, potentially hindering progress on women's rights as an autonomous policy priority.

As can be seen, Kazakhstan has made significant progress in advancing gender equality across various public sectors. However, there is still much work to be done, many works in this path, particularly in increasing the role of women in leadership positions. Nevertheless, it can be emphasised that the Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016 was a good start, offering a clear and detailed plan for advancing gender equality. The Concept of Family and Gender Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030 continues the gender policy initiated and remains an action towards the implementation of gender equality.

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