# THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD INSTITUTE IN ENSURING THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND YOUTH IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSFORMATION

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**Annotation**

This thesis analyzes the strategic role of the mahalla institution in ensuring the rights of women and youth in the process of transformation from a scientific, theoretical, and practical perspective. The study highlights the functions of the neighborhood as a citizen self-government body, its importance in social protection, gender equality, and youth policy. The decree of the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated March 1, 2022 “on measures to improve the system of work with family and women, support of neighborhoods and luminaries”No. 81 of PF-2022 and decrees of the neighborhood Institute “No. 209 of December 21, 2023”on measures to radically increase the role in society and ensure its functioning as a first link in solving population problems, The legal and institutional foundations of the "Youth Book" and the mahalla budget system were analyzed.

The areas considered include increasing the socio-economic activity of women, supporting youth employment and entrepreneurship, and improving social services through digital platforms.The results of the study show that the neighborhood institution has become an important mechanism for ensuring social stability in the country, supporting women and youth. However, there is a lack of gender expertise,

weak public oversight, and digital security issues. Proposals have been developed to improve the legal framework, organize regular training courses for neighborhood activists, and strengthen digital management systems to eliminate them.

**Keywords:** Neighborhood Institute, women's rights, youth policy, gender equality, neighborhood seven, social protection, digital transformation, public administration, "Women's Book", "Youth Book", social integration, sustainable development.

**Introduction.**The mahalla institution in Uzbekistan is an important link in the system of self-government of citizens. Historically, the neighborhood has been at the center of the social, spiritual, and cultural life of the community, fostering an atmosphere of mutual support, solidarity, and social responsibility among residents. During the years of independence, the importance of the mahalla institution in state and public administration has increased, and its legal foundations have been strengthened. In particular, Article 127 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted in a new edition in 2023, recognizes the makhalla as a citizen's self-government body.

In recent years, the transformation processes taking place in the country have further expanded the functions of the mahalla institution. Based on the Presidential Decrees No. PF-81 and PF-209, new mechanisms for working with women and youth in mahallas have been introduced. In particular, systems such as the neighborhood seven System, the women's notebook, the youth notebook, and the Iron notebook are gaining importance in social protection and addressable support for the population.

**Main part.** Supporting women and girls socially, economically, and legally is one of the priorities of state policy. Decree of the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated March 1, 2022 PF-81 “on measures to improve the system of work with family and women, neighborhood and support of luminaries”of March 1, 2022 was aimed at stimulating the education of women, vocational training, finding a decent job and

engaging in entrepreneurial activity. This decree identified the improvement of women's education and professional skills, their economic support, ensuring gender equality, and strengthening their socio-political activity as priority areas of state policy..

The introduction of the institution of women's activists in neighborhoods has created an opportunity to address women's problems. Through the "Women's Notebook," needy women are identified and provided with:

-preferential loans;

-subsidies;

-vocational training;

-medical services;

-psychological assistance is provided.

Vocational training centers established in neighborhoods also play an important role in ensuring women's economic independence. In particular, women's activity is increasing in the fields of sewing, service, national crafts, and small business.

The role of the neighborhood Institute in the field of youth policy has also increased significantly. On the basis of decrees and decisions of the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan aimed at supporting the state policy on youth, the activities of youth leaders in the neighborhoods were improved. In particular, within the framework of the" neighborhood seven "System, the mechanisms of employment of youth leaders, the development of professional interests of young people, as well as targeted work through the" youth book " were strengthened. This decree identified the main tasks as working individually and specifically with youth issues, early identification of their professional interests, ensuring their employment, and strengthening the system of social support through the "Youth Book". Special attention was also paid to the implementation of socially useful projects at the mahalla level by youth leaders, the

widespread promotion of the "Five Initiatives Olympiad", and the development of entrepreneurial skills among young people.

Their main tasks are:

-ensuring employment of young people;

-vocational guidance;

-supporting entrepreneurship;

-strengthening the spiritual education of young people;

-attracting them to digital technologies.

Through the "Youth Book", educational grants, subsidies, and loans are being provided to young people in need of social protection. At the same time, sports, cultural and art clubs are being organized in neighborhoods, and special attention is being paid to meaningful organization of young people's free time.

The introduction of digital platforms in the mahalla system is increasing the efficiency of working with youth. It is planned to monitor the social status, level of education, and employment of young people through the “Youth Balance” platform.

The Samarkand Declaration, adopted at the international conference held in Samarkand in 2024, recognized the importance of the mahalla institution in ensuring social cohesion and human rights. The Declaration states:

-gender equality;

-children's and youth rights;

-support for persons with disabilities;

Special emphasis is placed on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the neighborhood level.

The UN, UNICEF, and UN Women also consider the mahalla institution an effective mechanism for social protection of the population, support for women and youth. In particular, UNICEF's analysis of the situation of children and adolescents in Uzbekistan notes the mahalla system as an important institution that brings social

services closer to the population. UN Women reports also recognize the mahalla institution as an important social platform for promoting gender equality, increasing the socio-political participation of women, and involving young people in community life. UN programs for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Uzbekistan also list the neighborhood Institute as an effective model of address work with the population.Especially in the neighborhoods, the programs implemented to support women and youth are positively evaluated by international experts.

However, there are also some problems in the neighborhood system:

-lack of knowledge on gender issues;

-weak community control;

-risk of corruption;

-problems with digital security;

-insufficient protection of women's rights in certain cases.

This demonstrates the need for neighborhood activists to set up special human rights and gender equality training courses.

**Recommendations**

1. Training of education and community activists: It is necessary to continue organizing training courses for members of the community seven on gender equality, human rights, social policy, and cybersecurity. It is recommended to expand the continuous and multi-participant model of UNFPA trainings to all regions.
2. Ensure equality and inclusion: Increase grants, scholarships, small business incubators, and mentorship programs for women and youth. It is necessary to attract young girls to STEM fields and support them through successful female leadership programs.
3. Transparent management of the neighborhood budget: Involvement of civil society and media representatives in the neighborhood budget processes, holding

tenders and purchases in open spaces, and publishing the results online. Strengthen transparent communication between deputies, neighborhood councils, and citizens.

4. Comprehensive measures against violence: the establishment of comprehensive, survivor centric (victim Central) Relief Centers for victims of violence in neighborhoods. Strengthen cooperation between inspectors dealing with offenders and law enforcement agencies, learn from the criticisms noted in the HRW report, and help women access legal assistance.

5. Data protection: Implement rules in line with international standards for the protection of personal data in the “Youth Balance” and “Women's Notebook” information systems. Conduct cybersecurity training and audits, and increase digital literacy among the population.

6. Expanding international cooperation: Implementing joint projects on gender equality, youth entrepreneurship, rural development, and digitalization in collaboration with UN agencies, the European Union, the ADB, and other donors.

**In conclusion**, in the context of transformation, the neighborhood Institute is being formed as a social integrative mechanism between the state and society. This institute is becoming an important strategic platform in ensuring the legal, economic and social interests of women and young people. The digitalization of the mahalla system, the improvement of the activities of the "Mahalla Seven", and the development of targeted social protection mechanisms will further increase its effectiveness. Mechanisms such as the "Mahalla Seven", "Women's Register", "Youth Register", and the mahalla budget are playing an important role in providing targeted support to the population, ensuring youth employment, and increasing the economic activity of women.At the same time, it is important to improve the legal framework, enhance digital security, and expand public participation to address some of the challenges in the system.

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